

Watsonville

Some Place Not Here

Cherríe L. Moraga

Watsonville: Some Place Not Here had its world premiere on May 25, 1996 at the new Brava Theater Center in San Francisco, under the artistic direction of Ellen Gavin. It included the following cast (in order of appearance):

Dolores Valle	Lee Garay Toney
Don Arturo/Chente/Monsignor Mendez	Gary Martínez (Robert Varea Gutiérrez)
JoJo	Peter Gómez
Amparo	Tessa Koning-Martínez
Lucha	Minerva García
Juan Cunningham	Jesus Mendoza
Susana	VIVIS
Stage Musicians	Francisco Herrera and Lorena de la Rosa
Guadalupanas/Strikers/Rappers/Dancers	Verónica Arana, Cat Callejas, Raquel Haro, and Nigel Toussaint

This play is dedicated to the Mexican women workers of Watsonville and Barbara García, amiga-activista, in gratitude.

It was directed by Amy Mueller, with sets by Shevra Tait, lighting design by Lonnie Alcaraz, sound design by Rona Michelle and costumes by Gail Russel. The stage manager was Liz Murtaugh. Original musical compositions by John Santos and Gilberto Gutiérrez.

This published version is based to large degree on the Premiere production, with some changes.

Watsonville: Some Place Not Here was initially commissioned and developed by Brava Theater Center of San Francisco. It was presented as a staged reading at the following theatres: the Brava Studio Theater on May 1, 1995, directed by Tony Kelly; the Traveling Jewish Theatre, produced by Brava Theater, on June 5 and 6, 1995, directed by Amy Mueller; South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, California, as part of the Hispanic Playwrights' Festival, on August 4, 1995, directed by José Luis Valenzuela; the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. on February 19, 1996, directed by Amy Mueller.

Watsonville is a recipient of the Fund for New American Plays Award, a project of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, with support from American Express Company, in cooperation with the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Also thanks to Theatre Communications Group's National Theatre Artist Residency Program which helped support this project. TCG is the national organization for the American Theatre, and is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Notes from the Playwright:

The story of *Watsonville* is pure imagination, based loosely on three actual events that took place in a central Californian coastal farm worker town by the same name. Those events include the cannery strikes from 1985 to 1987, the 7.1 earthquake of 1989, and the appearance of the Virgen de Guadalupe on the face of an oak tree in Pinto Lake County Park in 1992.

Many of the images, ideas, and cuentos in the play grew out of interviews I did with various people (mostly Mexican immigrant women) in the actual town of Watsonville. Their stories have been excerpted, adapted, and re-constructed in order to develop the fictionalized characters of the play. Any resemblance the characters bear to actual individuals is purely coincidental.

About the language:

One of the major challenges in the creation of *Watsonville* was how to best represent the various languages the townspeople would use. The majority of the immigrant Mexican population in the real town of Watsonville speaks a beautiful fluent Spanish. (Most of the interviews I conducted took place in Spanish.) An occasional English word enters the conversation only when there is no exact Spanish equivalent. Spanish is the private and public voice of this Mexican community, its voice of prayer, of passion, and of protest. To have that voice truly resonate in this play, at least 70% of the dialogue should have been written in Spanish.

So, in many ways, even the language of *Watsonville* is a fiction, one writer's attempt to communicate to a larger multi-cultural audience something of the Mexican immigrant experience, filtered through her own Chicana (i.e. U.S.-born-Mexican) imagination.

The languages in *Watsonville*, the play, occur along the full spectrum from Spanish to English. Those characters who in real life would be Spanish-only speakers employ a greater and more fluid use of Spanish in the play. (Spanish phrases are interwoven to retain the "sabor" and sensuality of the original Spanish). On the other end, the mono-lingual and/or dominant English-speakers may at times speak entirely in English. My hope is that this balancing act between the two languages ensures both cultural authenticity and accessibility to a new (more broadly-defined) American audience.

Characters

(in order of appearance)

DOLORES VALLE	Cannery Worker and Guadalupana, Nearing 60.
DON ARTURO	DOLORES' husband, 70s.
JOJO	LUCHA's fifteen-year-old son.
AMPARO	Cannery Worker and Community-Organizer, early 60s.
LUCHA	Cannery Worker and mother of two, early-30s.
CHENTE	Shop steward at cannery, early-50s.
JUAN CUNNINGHAM	Half-breed, Ex-Priest and Community Organizer, early 40s.
SUSANA	Physician's Assistant at Community Clinic, early 40s.
MONSIGNOR MENDEZ	Aging diocesan priest.

Also: STRIKERS, GUADALUPANAS, DANCERS, and RAPPERS.

The Setting

The time: the ongoing present, with the future just around the turn of events and the century—the late 90s.

The place: Watsonville, California.

The Set

In Spanish, the word “pueblo” means both “town” and “people.” The set for *Watsonville* most closely reflects the latter definition, a setting for “a people”—a Mexican immigrant worker, indio-catholic people—where private property is the land on which they work, represented by chain-linked and barbed-wire fences and corrugated aluminum walls. Still as Mexicans of Indian descent, el pueblo remembers the land as belonging to no one but the earth itself. To that end, the cannery, the kitchen, the union hall, the picket line, the park, the hospital, the warehouse—in short, all the action of the play—is housed within the circle of a grove of aging oaks. The central image of the play is Dolores’ altar, always candle-lit and sainted, which opens through a window to the oldest and tallest oak of the grove. Here, miracles take place.

ACT ONE

“LA HUELGA”

DOLORES (*Offstage*): Nos vamos a poner en tus manos, Espíritu Santo, para que nos ilumines, y que todo esto que va a sacar de Watsonville esta muchacha, sea un beneficio, sea una historia tan linda.

[In the darkness, a lone mariachi trumpet is heard]

Scene One

[Late afternoon in the Valle home. It is the eve of Día de los Muertos. A danzón on the record player. DOLORES opens the refrigerator, its light washes over her face. She wears a calavera mask, an apron and housedress. As the music rises, she begins to dance with her imaginary partner. Very elegant. A great love is leading her around the sala floor. After a few minutes, she hears DON ARTURO entering from the offstage bathroom. She rushes to the record player, turns it off, removes the mask. DON ARTURO wears a cleanly-pressed guayavera. He has a cigarette in his mouth and a constant cough. He turns on the Spanish TV station at low volume, sits and watches it, occasionally sipping from a pint of mezcal. DOLORES has crossed to the kitchen table. She wraps a tray full of enchiladas in foil. She ties a ribbon around it. In the upstage room is an altar to La Virgen de Guadalupe. It is illuminated by candlelight.]

DON ARTURO: Somone’s gointu come and steal those enchiladas right off of her grave.

DOLORES: Es el Día de los muertos. No one’s gointu steal them.

DON ARTURO: You think anybody cares what holiday it is? People are hungry! I bet you somebody's going to sneak in at night and clean up every Mexican grave en el cementerio.

DOLORES: Pues, por lo menos, she knows I tried.

DON ARTURO: She don't know nothing. She's dead.

DOLORES: One of these days, when I get enough money, I'm going to move Cerezita to San Francisco, so she can be with her brother.

DON ARTURO: Ay, muy cozy. Who gives a damn where you are when you're dead. You think it matters to them?

DOLORES: Cerezita quería mucho a su hermano.

DON ARTURO: Están muertos ¿no entiendes? No les importa a ellos what their graves look like, who's laying next to them, what comida you put on top of their tombstone.

DOLORES: ¿Qué sabes tú? What do you know about their feelings? Dead or alive, you never cared nothing for your children. If you did, maybe Mario and Cerezita would still be alive right now.

DON ARTURO: Oh sí, I told my son to be a maricón. I told him, "Toma, hijo, traga este veneno, suck it down your throat and up your culo!"

DOLORES: Y la Cerezita?

DON ARTURO: Bueno . . .

DOLORES: Ni la Yolanda quiere estar con nosotros. She go as far away as she can to get away from you.

DON ARTURO: Es una pu—

DOLORES: Cállete la boca. My world is black with you. You make everything ugly. Lo peor posible. *(There's a knock on the door.)*

DON ARTURO: No contestes. I don't want to see nobody right now.
(Another knock)

DOLORES: ¿Eres tú, JoJo?

DON ARTURO: Díle que se vaya.

DOLORES: *(Whispering)* Cállate tú. You know he comes on Tuesdays to help me. *(DOLORES goes to the door, answers it.)* Pásale, hijo.

JOJO: *(Enters, carrying his backpack and a small paper sack)* Hola, Doña Lola. I brought you limones from our trees. *(He hands her the bag.)* Buenas tardes, Don Arturo. *(DON ARTURO grunts, turns his attention to the tv.)*

DOLORES: *(Taking out a lemon)* ¡Son grandotes!

JOJO: We got a whole orchard full in our backyard.

DOLORES: Te lo creo. I saw your sister con su limonada stand out there on Main Street.

JOJO: It's really my stand. Elenita works for me. *(He takes out a small writing pad and a pen from his backpack, sits down at the table. DOLORES goes to the refrigerator, takes some pills.)* She's good for business. People buy more from little kids. *(Beat)* I'm ready.

DOLORES: ¿No quieres un vaso de leche?

JOJO: No, gracias.

DOLORES: I just buy it for you kids. We don't need milk no more. We're done growing.

JOJO: Gracias, Señora. No tengo sed.

DOLORES: Bueno ¿una fruta?

JOJO: No . . .

DOLORES: *(Bringing over the bowl of fruit)* Toma. ¿Siquiera una manzana?

JOJO: Okay. Gracias. *(JOJO takes the fruit, sets it down by his writing pad.)*

DOLORES: Bueno ¿listo?

JOJO: Sí.

[He takes the pen in his hand. As DOLORES dictates, JOJO writes, repeating after her aloud. Periodically, DON ARTURO throws in his "two cents," the dialogue overlapping between the three.]

DOLORES: *(Dictating)* Mi querida hija, Cerezita.

DON ARTURO: Estás loca ¿sabes?

DOLORES: Espero que esta carta te encuentre bien.

DON ARTURO: You expect her to answer you from the grave?

DOLORES: *(To JOJO)* You can put it into English, mijo. She reads English better. ¿Qué iba a decir yo . . . ?

JOJO: *(Reading)* "I hope this letter finds you well."

DOLORES: Bueno. *(Dictating)* La situación en mi trabajo está peor.

JOJO: *(Writing)* "The situation . . . at work is . . . getting . . . worse."

DOLORES: Hoy recibimos un notice—

JOJO: "Today . . . we received . . . a notice—"

DOLORES: Que otra vez nos van a cortar nuestro sueldo—

DON ARTURO: ¿Qué dices?

JOJO: They're gonna cut your salaries again?

DON ARTURO: ¡Ya nos 'stamos muriendo de hambre!

DOLORES: Sí. By one dollar, twenty-five cents.

DON ARTURO: ¡Ladrones!

JOJO: Wow.

DON ARTURO: Why dint you tell me?

DOLORES: ¿Para qué? You going to go out and get a job? *(Dictating to JOJO)* Ya sabes que es casi imposible—

JOJO: "You know . . . that it's almost . . . impossible—"

DOLORES: De vivir con lo poco que gano.

JOJO: "To live . . . on the little . . . bit . . . I make."

DOLORES: Tu padre ya no puede trabajar—

DON ARTURO: You keep me out of this!

JOJO: "Your father—"

DON ARTURO: If I got something to say to her—

JOJO: "can no longer work."

DON ARTURO: I'll tell her myself!

DOLORES: Hay rumores—

JOJO: "There's rumors—"

DOLORES: Que va a haber huelga.

DON ARTURO: ¿Cómo qué huelga? ¿Es la verdad?

JOJO: You're going on strike?

DOLORES: No sé. There's a lot of talk en la canería.

DON ARTURO: *(To DOLORES)* ¡No te vas a meter tú en esas cosas!

JOJO: Is my mom gonna strike, too?

Act 1

DOLORES: Bueno, toda la compañía, dicen.

DON ARTURO: ¿Me oyes? Los sindicatos son corruptos. They just use the workers nomás.

DOLORES: (To DON ARTURO) ¿Qué sabes tú?

DON ARTURO: Yo sé mucho. I seen the same thing in México. The unions come in and fill your head with ideas and then when things go bad, they dump you por otra causa.

DOLORES: (To JOJO) I don't remember where we were.

JOJO: You were talking about going on strike.

DON ARTURO: Es pura política. ¡Los obreros son los títeres de los sindicatos!

DOLORES: (To JOJO) I think we finish the letter some other time, hijo.

JOJO: Sí, señora.

DON ARTURO: That's what happen to me in the mines.

DOLORES: (To DON ARTURO) And that was a hundred years ago!
(Putting some fruit in a plastic bag) JoJo, toma esta fruta para tu hermanita.

JOJO: Gracias. (She escorts him to the door)

DON ARTURO: (To JOJO) And you tell your mother que she better stay out of this strike business if she wants to keep food en tu estómago.

DOLORES: JoJo doesn't gottu say nothing to his mother. She's not your wife.

DON ARTURO: That's her problem. Le falta un hombre para mandarla.

DOLORES: (To JOJO, softly) Andale, mijo. He doesn't know what he's saying.

DON ARTURO: Oh sí. Su madre se cree muy independiente. I even seen her at the bars by herself con otras divorciadas.

DOLORES: (To JOJO) Don't pay no attention to him, hijo. Está tomado nomás. (Gesturing that he's been drinking) Nos vemos pronto, mijo.

JOJO: Hasta mañana. (JOJO exits. DOLORES turns around, glares at DON ARTURO.)

DON ARTURO: (Suddenly sheepish) ¿Qué? ¿Qué? I'm just telling the truth.

DOLORES: She's the boy's mother.

[DOLORES takes her rosary out of her pocket and crosses to her altar. Large image of la Virgen de Guadalupe is illuminated by candlelight. She begins to pray. Music rises softly in the background.]

DOLORES: Te necesitamos, Virgencita de Paz. Tú sabes que con unos anuncios buenos muchas gentes van a despertar. (Pause) Porque ya sabes que estamos dormidos.

[DON ARTURO crosses himself guiltily. Lights fade with the illuminated image of la Virgen on the altar lingering for a few moments. The silhouette of an oak tree emerges from behind the image, leaves stirring slightly in the breeze.]

Scene Two

[The next day. Sounds of a working cannery open to LUCHA and AMPARO on the broccoli line with other workers. The lunch whistle blows. They freeze. Then they remove their work gloves, grab their lunches and cross together to the cannery lunch room. LUCHA is quite "dolled-up," which is how she appears throughout the play, full make-up, stylish heels (when not on the line), and colorful outfits. Not tacky, but definitely lively. As LUCHA and AMPARO sit down to eat their lunches, DOLORES joins them.]

LUCHA: On the night shift me dijeron que la Cookie, the forelady, she stood outside the bathroom con un stopwatch . . . to see how long it took each worker to do her business.

AMPARO: No me digas.

DOLORES: (*Overlapping*) ¡Qué barbaridad!

LUCHA: Then she told them that from now on they could only go to the toilet on their break.

DOLORES: She expect everyone to hold it that long?

LUCHA: So, on their 10:15 break, eighty-five women line up all at the same time to go to the bathroom. It took them almost two hours before everyone got back to work. By then it was time to punch the clock. (*Everybody cracks up.*)

AMPARO: ¡Ay, la Cookie musta been so mad!

LUCHA: When you gotta go, you gotta go.

AMPARO: It's not right that you can't even go to the bathroom when you haftu.

DOLORES: Hay mucha presión.

AMPARO: Yo soy rápida para trabajar, pero the quota they're asking of us is too much.

LUCHA: (*Looking into her compact*) Ay sí, this job is giving me wrinkles.

AMPARO: I don't wanna hear nothing about las arrugas. Ya tengo el mapa de Michoacán en la cara. El desierto, montañas rocosas, arroyos por todas partes.

DOLORES: Ay, Amparo, no es tan vieja.

AMPARO: (*To DOLORES*) Are you gointu eat ese burrito, comadre?

DOLORES: Sí—(*AMPARO snatches it from her.*)

LUCHA: (*After a beat*) Did you see? They took Margie off of "set-up" and put her back onto la linea.

AMPARO: That means somebody on la linea, just got kick out the door.

DOLORES: Esa new girl, Sarita . . . y su cuñada.

LUCHA: Margie told me que los patrones are losing money, that they're going to have to close down the company and move it to México.

AMPARO: They're trying to scare you ¿no entiendes? So you'll go along with this new cochino contrato.

LUCHA: Yo sé.

AMPARO: Did you see your check this week?

LUCHA: ¿Cómo?

AMPARO: Look at it. You, too, comadre.

[*CHENTE enters, carrying a coke. The women take out their paychecks from their aprons, examine them.*]

AMPARO: Chente!

CHENTE: ¿Qué tal, Señoras? (*He starts to sit down next to LUCHA, giving her the coke. AMPARO stops him.*)

AMPARO: Sientate aquí. I wanna show you something. (*He sits next to AMPARO.*)

CHENTE: ¿Qué pasa?

AMPARO: Mira. (*She takes out her paycheck from her pocket.*) This is my pay. (*Handing him it*)

CHENTE: And . . .

AMPARO: It's more than it's supposed to be.

LUCHA: El mío también.

CHENTE: No se quejen. Maybe you worked some overtime that you . . .

AMPARO: No, mira. They didn't take out my union dues. (*CHENTE examines the check stub.*) It's eighteen dollars.

CHENTE: Tiene razón. *(To the others)* Are your checks the same?

LUCHA: Sí. Es igual.

CHENTE: ¿Dolores?

DOLORES: Sí. It's eighteen dollars too much.

AMPARO: ¿Qué significa, Chente?

CHENTE: I guess they figure if you get a bigger check in your hands, you'll be happy. No questions asked.

LUCHA: Pues, yo tengo mis preguntas.

DOLORES: No entiendo.

CHENTE: Shea, the owner. He knows we've been meeting. They say he's trying to squeeze out the union.

LUCHA: ¿Cree que somos pendejas? Does he think we'll just go along with them for a lousy eighteen dollars a month?

CHENTE: Miren, let the other mujeres know. See if their checks are the same. I'm going to call the union office and tell them to keep their doors open late tonight. Everyone should go down there and pay their dues as soon as they get off work.

LUCHA: Chente, va a haber huelga?

CHENTE: They want another 40 "take-aways," vacations, sick leave, seniority, you name it.

AMPARO: *(To LUCHA)* Prepárate. We're going to strike.

Scene Three

[Mid-morning. A few weeks later. In black out, voices can be heard shouting. "¡Huelga! ¡Huelga! ¡Huelga! ¡Huelga!" Lights rise to strike in full swing. DOLORES, AMPARO, LUCHA, CHENTE, and JOJO as well as other strikers stand in front of the "Pajaro Valley

Cannery." There is a bus bench on the corner; traffic can be heard in the distance. The strikers break out into song.]

HUELGUISTAS: *(Décima Alegre)*

"Vamos juntos que la unión
muchacha fuerza nos dará
y nadie nos quitará
la fuerza de la razón." *(repeat last two lines)*

[One passerby honks her horn in support. The strikers respond.]

LUCHA: ¡Qué viva la huelga!

THE HUELGUISTAS: ¡Qué viva!

"La justicia en la balanza
mas pareja debe ser
para el hombre y la mujer
derechos y no esperanza. *(repite)*

[The song ends and the strikers gather round to form the "audience." The stage becomes an agit-prop stage set. CHENTE unrolls a sheet-like curtain that reads, "Teatro de las Bravas." From behind it, emerge LUCHA and AMPARO who wear shower caps, aprons and oversize gloves. LUCHA wears a sign saying "obrera" and AMPARO wears one saying "veterana."]

[Acto]

[The WORKERS stand shoulder to shoulder, simulating a cannery assembly-line. They "chop, sort, pack."]

OBRERA: Oye, veterana. How many fingers chu got left now?

VETERANA: Déjame ver, obrera. *(Counting)* Todavía tengo three talls ones on the left hand. Y en la derecha, tengo . . . *(Counting)* un medio dedo in the middle, a half a pinkie, y un pedacito de pulgar. ¿Y tú, obrera?

OBRERA: Bueno, yo . . . yo soy *(Shaking out her fingerless gloves)*
ALL THUMBS!

[They crack up. The FORELADY and MRS. OPRIMIDA (Indicated by signs and played by JOJO and DOLORES, respectively) enter the acto. MRS. OPRIMIDA uses a cane. She is quite ancient.]

FORELADY: There's too much socializing going on. The only talking I should hear is you ladies training Mrs. Oprimida.

OBRERA/VETERANA: Bruja!

[A satirized cumbia comes on as LA VETERANA and OBRERA proceed to train "MRS. OPRIMIDA." The WORKERS' pace begins normally then gradually quickens to the point of the ridiculous.]

LA VETERANA: They want the first cuts a certain size, five or six inches . . .

[FORELADY prods them on.]

FORELADY: *(Clapping her hands)* ¡Andenle! ¡Andenle!

OBRERA: And la prómixa persona cuts it again según los pedazos que quieren . . .

FORELADY: Con las dos manos! Use both your hands!!

LA VETERANA: Luego más después pasa por donde it gets cooked.

FORELADY: Move those hands! ¡Rápido! ¡Rápido!

OBRERA: You pack it en cajas and then you weigh it . . .

LA VETERANA: And you got to be ready que all the boxes get filled.

FORELADY: ¡Andeles! ¡Andeles!

OBRERA: And then you send the boxes to be wrapped again y ya van al freezer.

FORELADY: You're laggin' ladies!

LA VETERANA: Los restos, they put through un molino—

OBRERA: And they grind it up and that gets weighed and empacado también.

MRS. OPRIMIDA: *(Cutting herself)* ¡Ay! *(The cumbia stops abruptly.)*

OBRERA: ¿Qué pasó?

MRS. OPRIMIDA: Me corté.

LA VETERANA: ¿Mucho?

[The women gather around her. The dialogue overlaps.]

MRS. OPRIMIDA: No sé.

FORELADY: What's the matter?
Why did you stop working?

MRS. OPRIMIDA: Traigo
el guante puesto.

OBRERA: She cut herself.

LA VETERANA: Pues, quíteselo.

FORELADY: Déjame verlo.

MRS. OPRIMIDA: *(Removing
the glove.)* ¡Ay, puedo ver hasta
el hueso!

FORELADY: It's down to the bone!

[For a moment, everyone stands around stunned.]

FORELADY: That's not a sign for the rest of you to stop working. Miren!
That broccoli is piling up.

LA VETERANA: ¡Pero mira la sangre que viene!

FORELADY: I'll tend to her. *(They still don't move.)* You heard me! Back to work, all of you. *(Pulling MRS. OPRIMIDA off by hooking her cane around her neck)* It's because everyone's too busy socializing and not paying enough attention to what they're doing. That's why accidents happen . . .

[They exit. The women start to go back to work.]

OBRERA: *(Beneath her breath)* Vaca fea.

VETERANA: ¡Eh, obrera! Don't "agonize." Organize!

OBRERA: ¿Qué quiere decir eso, Veterana?

VETERANA: *(Throwing off her gloves)* I mean, Ya Basta! It's time we go on strike!

OBRERA: *(Shouting out to the audience)* ¡Qué viva la mujer obrera!

ALL: ¡Qué viva!

[End of Acto]

[Everyone begins shouting ¡Huelga! ¡Huelga! ¡Huelga! as the song resumes and the ACTORS remove their signs & costumes.]

“Viva la unión, viva la unión
que no nos podrán negar
que tenemos la razón.” *(repite)*

[Mid-song, there is the sound of a bus approaching. One by one, the STRIKERS stop singing as they catch sight of the bus.]

JOJO: *(Crossing to LUCHA)* Mom, mire. *(As the bus stops, they all stand together in shocked silence.)*

LUCHA: ¿Quiénes son?

AMPARO: They're esquirols.

CHENTE: Scabs.

LUCHA: ¿De dónde viene?

CHENTE: They're from Salinas.

DOLORES: *(Softly)* Dios mío.

AMPARO: And we're har'ly two weeks on the line.

JOJO: Where'd they get 'em from?

CHENTE: Los files*, the bars, the airport . . . dondequiera.

[LUCHA suddenly rushes toward the bus.]

AMPARO: Lucha!	LUCHA: <i>(Screaming at the bus full of scabs)</i> ¡Pinches Cabrones! ¡Vendidos!
JOJO: <i>(Starting toward her)</i> Mom!	¡Hijos de la chingada! ¡Se venden por unos pinches pesos!

CHENTE: *(Stopping him)* No! Déjala. She's right.

*Spanish for fields, pronounced "fee-lez."

JOJO: But—

CHENTE: Once scabs start coming in, this strike could go on forever.

[Black-out. . . .]

Scene Four

[Eight weeks into the strike. JUAN and CHENTE sit at a local taquería, drinking coffee.]

JUAN: I don't know, Chente. I 'm working three other projects right now. This tenants' rights organization in San Francisco, the gang prevention project, the—

CHENTE: But this is different. With a strong support committee, the strike could be won in a month . . . two at the most.

JUAN: That's what you say now.

CHENTE: Cunningham, you don't know these women.

JUAN: I know a few.

CHENTE: Then you know you ain't gonna find a more dedicated bunch. Most of these ladies sleep no more than five hours a night. They work in the canneries y en su tiempo libre, they're out there en los files con el pepino, la mora, la manzana.

JUAN: Yo sé.

CHENTE: In between time, they feed their husbands, limpian la casa, raise their children and even their grandchildren.

JUAN: So, then why do you think they can stay with this strike?

CHENTE: Are you kidding? They're primed for it. They know how to take care of each other, how to cook cheap and for a lot of people, how to share babysitting, the carpools, every kind of resource.

JUAN: Bueno pues, si ya están preparadas—

CHENTE: Te digo, their comadre system is intact. It's just a question of getting them to believe they can win.

JUAN: Can they, Chente?

CHENTE: *(After a beat)* Claro que sí. *(CHENTE checks his watch)*
Vámonos. The ladies are probably waiting for us.

[As they rise, the lights crossfade to the strike support committee meeting. AMPARO and LUCHA are standing around a coffee machine.]

LUCHA: Last week, my kids and me fuimos a Santa Cruz, con una olla de tamales. Ni tenían carne los tamales. Puse queso y chile nomás. I charge \$1.50 a cada uno. In two, three hours we sold the whole pot of tamales and we came home with seventy-five dolares en el bolsillo.

AMPARO: You can't beat that.

[DOLORES enters.]

AMPARO: *(Teasing)* ¡Qué milagro!

DOLORES: No empieces, Amparo.

AMPARO: Pues, the way you talked on the phone I dint think we'd see you here.

DOLORES: *(To LUCHA)* Es mi marido. He's like a broken record that's scratching into my brain . . . all day long. "Where you going? ¿Con quién andas?"

LUCHA: ¡Qué gacho!

AMPARO: *(To DOLORES)* You're obligated to do your hours on the picket line. That's it. If you don't want to come to the meetings after this, está bien.

[JUAN and CHENTE enter.]

CHENTE: Buenas tardes, Señoras. Look who I brought with me.

AMPARO: I don't believe my eyes. *(AMPARO rushes to JUAN, embraces him.)*

AMPARO: Father Juan! What are you doing here?

JUAN: Ay, Doña Amparo. ¡Que gusto verla!

DOLORES: *(Softly)* Padre.

JUAN: *(Goes to her, extending his hands to her. She takes hold of them, tentatively.)* It's been a long time, no?

DOLORES: Sí. Mucho. You look so different . . . con barba—

AMPARO: Y sandalias. You look like a hippie, Padre. Where's the priest's collar?

JUAN: It got a little too tight for me, Doña Amparo.

AMPARO: Bueno, I never thought it fit you too good anyway.

DOLORES: ¿Qué quiere decir eso?

JUAN: I left the priesthood, Señora. It's been about . . . well about eight years. Soon after . . . McLaughlin.

DOLORES: Ya no es cura.

JUAN: That's right. I'm no longer a priest.

DOLORES: *(After a pause)* Oh.

CHENTE: Bueno, I want you to meet Lucha Lerma.

JUAN: Hello.

LUCHA: Halo.

CHENTE: You'll be working with her and Amparo—

AMPARO: Espérete un momentito. I think maybe I miss something.

JUAN: I know it's a kind of a shock—

AMPARO: Pero ¿qué está haciendo acá, en Watson?

JUAN: Well, I—

CHENTE: He's the person who's going to help us with the support work for la huelga.

AMPARO: That's you?

LUCHA: An ex-priest?

JUAN: Yes.

AMPARO: I can't believe I'm seeing you.

DOLORES: *(Softly)* Ni yo. *(There is an awkward pause.)*

CHENTE: Okay, everybody, siéntense. We need to get down to business here. Go 'head, Cunningham. Why don't you start by telling them a little bit about your work?

JUAN: Okay—

CHENTE: Tell 'em about the cells, Cunningham.

JUAN: Yes, well, the idea is to form small groups, como células pequeñas, deseminadas por toda la comunidad.

LUCHA: ¿De dónde es, Señor?

JUAN: Yo soy de Sanger, en el valle de San Joaquín.

LUCHA: Your family, ¿eran campesinos?

JUAN: Algunos. We moved to Los Angeles when I was still a boy. My mother raised me by herself. She was a factory worker.

AMPARO: She's checking out your credentials, Padre . . . digo, Juan.

LUCHA: Quiero saber. I got a right to know.

CHENTE: Lucha, this is about a larger strategy. We're already two months into the strike and the owner is still refusing all of our demands. The scabs are coming in by the hundreds, así que parece que this strike could go for a long time. We've got to get a bigger base of support.

LUCHA: Es comunista, Señor?

JUAN: No, I wouldn't call myself that.

LUCHA: Marxista? Leninista?

JUAN: I—

LUCHA: *(Sarcastically)* "Representante del partido de la liberación revolucionaria de los de abajo?"

CHENTE: Ya, Lucha.

JUAN: No, you're right. You have a right to know what I'm doing here.

LUCHA: *(Glaring back at CHENTE)* ¿Ves?

JUAN: I won't lie to you. I am a professional organizer. I've come to Watsonville to help this strike get off the ground. He trabajado con la juventud, las uniones—

LUCHA: Are you from the Teamsters?

JUAN: No. But I—

LUCHA: Who pays your bills then?

CHENTE: Lucha!

[SUSANA enters, watches from the door.]

LUCHA: Pues ¿qué quiere decir "professional organizer?" He works for somebody.

JUAN: Yes, I . . . it's an . . . organization. There's a fund. Some of us . . . well, we have ties to organizations throughout the Southwest, México, Honduras, Guatemala—

LUCHA: ¿Qué's eso . . . Guatemala? I just want to feed my children right here en Watsón.

JUAN: I want you to feed your children, too.

SUSANA: He's an ACARista.

LUCHA: ¿Qué?

[CHENTE motions to SUSANA to come in.]

SUSANA: Asociación Cristiana para Acción Revolucionaria.

CHENTE: This is Susana Robles, la directora de la Clínica para El Pueblo.

SUSANA: Hello.

CHENTE: Most of you know her already. Pásele, Susana. Have a seat.

[SUSANA takes a seat next to DOLORES, greets her.]

LUCHA: (To SUSANA) Go on with what you were saying.

SUSANA: About the ACARistas? They are a group of ex-priests . . . Jesuits . . . who have left the Church. They were liberation theologians.

DOLORES: ¿Ningunos son curas?

SUSANA: No, but they're still involved—

JUAN: In liberation.

SUSANA: Yes.

JUAN: It's true that I used to be a priest. If I wanted to hide that, I wouldn't have come to Watsonville.

AMPARO: That's right cuz Lola and I already know Juan from the valle.

JUAN: Yes. I only spent a few years in McLaughlin, but—

AMPARO: But he dint leave until we had burn down every pinche vineyard in that pueblo.

JUAN: And it still didn't stop the growers. They just moved their pesticides and their cancers to some other unsuspecting town. Ask these women what they got in compensation for the loss of their homes, their health . . . their children.

DOLORES: Recibimos nada.

JUAN: That's what I'm fighting. Owners who try and convince you that poison is food and slavery is a job. I'm not here to do anything against you. We have the same goals. First: maintain the strike. Get the community mobilized for food and clothing drives, fundraising, and shared child care. We picket banks, grocery store chains, brussel sprout fields, any place we can make an impact. We organize demonstrations, boycotts, and major publicity campaigns. I mean national campaigns! Second: negotiate with the cabrones and win.

AMPARO: ¡Adelante!

CHENTE: ¡Eso!

JUAN: Now, you all have to decide whether or not you'd like the support of the organization I represent. I'll respect your decision, whatever it is.

CHENTE: ¿Quieres decir algo más, Lucha?

LUCHA: No.

CHENTE: Entonces, can we go ahead and talk about forming the support committee? You came for that reason ¿no, Susana?

SUSANA: Yes . . . I'm . . . sorry I got here late. Quiero anunciar que la clínica will provide free health care to all the huelguistas y sus familias for the duration of the strike. (Applause all around. To JUAN) You talked about mobilizing the community?

JUAN: Yes.

SUSANA: Well, I just left about a dozen Hell's Angels outside la clínica with a vanload of cheese and milk for the strikers' families.

DOLORES: ¿No son drogadictos?

SUSANA: Ah, Doña Lola, they drink a lot of beer! Y, pues ni modo, they want to support the strike!

AMPARO: Está bien.

CHENTE: ¡Sí, todos juntos! Bueno . . . Lucha? ¿Tienes más preguntas?

LUCHA: No. Sigam con la discusión.

Scene Five

[Weeks later. SUSANA is speaking on a cellular phone. Her hair is down, hanging over her shoulders.]

SUSANA: I'm not gonna discuss this now. I got to get to the picket line. . . . Get over it, Carmen. . . . Get over it. It's my work. There's nothing more to talk about. I want your stuff out, it's pretty simple. . . . Just come and get it. . . . You can use Marta's truck. . . . She will. . . . This week. . . . Any time while I'm at work. . . . Right, I don't want to see you, Carmen. . . . It's been six months, for chrissake. . . . No, I'm tired of having your shit in my basement, that's all. Don't the girls miss their stuff? . . . Yes, there's all kinds of toys down there. . . . *(Pager sounds. She turns it off.)* It hurts, Carmen. Don't you get it? I miss the girls. . . . Listen, if you don't come this week, I'm movin' the stuff out myself. I know plenty of kids who could use. . . . No, I'm not bringing it to you. . . . No, I don't want to see you. Do you hear me, Carmen? I don't. . . . *(Dial tone. She looks at the receiver.)* Shit. *(She puts phone into her coat pocket, checks the number on the pager and dials.)*

[Crossfade to DOLORES' home. She is staring out the window as if in a trance. JOJO stands at a distance from her, holding medicine.]

JOJO: Doña Lolita? *(No response.)* Doña Lolita? C'mon, take your medicine.

[DOLORES does not respond. SUSANA can be seen through the window, coming up toward the house. She knocks on the door. JOJO answers it. SUSANA enters, carrying a small medical bag.]

SUSANA: *(Softly)* How long has she been like this?

JOJO: Since I paged you. She's just been staring out that window.

SUSANA: Doña Lolita, are you waiting for someone? JoJo tells me you haven't been taking your pills.

DOLORES: I dreamed with my daughter this morning.

SUSANA: Cerezita. *(She motions to JOJO that he can leave. He slips out.)*

DOLORES: I fell asleep praying, boca arriba and she came to me with wings at the foot of my bed.

SUSANA: Like an angel?

DOLORES: Sí. Un angel tan bello.

SUSANA: Why don't you sit down on the couch? Let me check your blood pressure. It'll only take a minute.

DOLORES: ¿Sabes que? When I first saw you come up the walkway, I thought you were my Cerezita. I thought you were a bird broke out of her cage with arms and legs like wings. Es el pelo. My baby had long hair like yours, "her beauty mark," I used to say.

SUSANA: I didn't braid it. I—

DOLORES: And then one day, she lost all her hair, and she left me in a cloud of smoke. Poof!

SUSANA: ¿Qué 'stá cocinando?

DOLORES: Caldo de albondigas.

SUSANA: Huele bien.

DOLORES: Es el ajo. That always makes a kitchen warm. Maybe like a dog, Arturo will stick out his nose and find his way back home from the bar tonight.

SUSANA: Just follow the garlic trail. *(DOLORES has crossed to the stove, ladles the soup into a large bowl, places it on the table.)* You're serving the soup already? Won't it get cold?

DOLORES: Arturo will come in without warning, de prisa, wanting to eat and I won't be ready. That's how angels come to you, too, without warning . . . at the foot of your bed.

SUSANA: Doña Lolita, I'm not leaving here til I've heard your heart, at least.

DOLORES: It won't tell you nothing you don't already know. Did you know I lost my daughter?

SUSANA: I . . . yes.

DOLORES: Do you want this soup, hija?

SUSANA: It's for your husband.

DOLORES: It'll get cold. I'm going to lay down over there on the sofá. Let me look at you eating,

SUSANA: Can I check you afterwards? Do you promise?

DOLORES: Te lo prometo. *(Pulling out a chair for her, SUSANA sits.)* Arturo wants me to leave the strike. He says that I'm a puppet . . . that I don't think for myself.

SUSANA: Then we're all puppets, Señora.

DOLORES: He left here so mad. *(SUSANA begins to eat. DOLORES watches her for a few moments.)* My daughter never held a spoon. She couldn't. *(She crosses to the couch, pulls a worn serape over her, prays softly)* ¡Oh Virgen Inmaculada de Guadalupe! Madre del verdader—*(And falls asleep.)*

[Lighting transition. Dream. The altar in the corner of the room grows bright with the image of Guadalupe. The oak grove appears in the background. SUSANA rises and crosses to it, her figure silhouetted in the moonlight. DOLORES awakens to the distant sound of sirens and gunshots.]

DOLORES: ¿Hijita? ¿Eres tú? *(Rising, spying SUSANA's figure through the altar window)* ¡Correle, hija! ¡Correle!

[SUSANA turns to look at DOLORES, then walks off into the darkness. DOLORES follows, crosses to beneath the shadow of the oak. A single oak tree is illuminated, standing out from the rest. There is a sudden chilled wind. DOLORES's robe stirs in the breeze. She draws the rebozo closer to her. Black-out.]

Scene Six

[Three months into the strike. AMPARO, LUCHA, SUSANA, and JOJO are on the picket line. There's a back beat coming out of JOJO's boom box. JOJO begins to rap. The STRIKERS cheer him on.]

JOJO:

"It was nineteen hundred and ninety-six
and patroncito tried the same ole trick,
cuttin' back wages of moms and dads
saying "\$4.25 that ain't so bad."
Raza, . . . Rise Up!"

LUCHA: ¡Andale, hijo!

AMPARO: Go, go home boy!

JOJO:

"So chisme started on the broccoli line,
va a haber huelga, if y'all don't mind.
Josie and Lupe and Yolanda, too.
Todos juntas, they were all too through."

JOJO: "Raza . . ."

ALL: "Rise Up!"

JOJO: That's as far as I got.

ALL: Ah!

SUSANA: *(Rappin')*

"Now we're movin' into week number twelve and . . . the food bank
. . . something . . . something is stocking up its shelves."

AMPARO: Sueña bien.

JOJO: Yeah, but you gotta make it all fit right.

SUSANA: Well, I almost did.

LUCHA: *(To JOJO)* Write something about the scabs. *(LUCHA and SUSANA continue down the picket line.)*

JOJO: *(Jotting down some notes as he and AMPARO cross to picket line upstage)* "Scabs comin' in . . . scabs comin' out." *(To AMPARO)* What rhymes with "out"?

AMPARO: Doubt.

[JUAN and CHENTE join the picket line downstage right. LUCHA is within earshot.]

CHENTE: I came to the United States for the first time in 1958 through the Bracero Program. I was just kid, really. 'Bout JoJo's age. In those days when you crossed the border, they'd take your clothes off, fumigate you . . . like an animal.

JUAN: God, I can't imagine going through that.

CHENTE: It's hard. You just pretend in your mind that you're someplace else. Then in 1962, I migrated legally. Been with Pájaro Valley Canning ever since.

JUAN: That's a long time.

CHENTE: Almost 35 years. The union's been with me the whole time. I got my GED and started climbing right up the ladder.

LUCHA: That's cuz you're a man!

CHENTE: You could go back to school, Lucha. Dicen que nunca es tarde para comenzar.

LUCHA: When do you want me to start my college career, Chente? After la guardia, I go to los files to make a horseshoe of my body until the sun goes down.

CHENTE: ¡Hijo! They don't call you "Lucha" pa'nada! *(She ignores him, keeps walking on down the line.)*

JUAN: She's pretty hot under the collar.

CHENTE: And few other places, too, I think. *(He laughs at his own joke.)* Pero, she's one of the most go-getter womans you'd ever wanna meet, always working, hustling, but still keeps herself up real nice. *(Pause, observing her)* I like that in a woman.

JUAN: . . . and your wife?

CHENTE: Hey, don't get me wrong, Cunningham. I love my wife. Pero, I'm no saint.

[They cross upstage to the line. LUCHA sits on a busbench, takes out her lunch. SUSANA is picketing nearby.]

LUCHA: The scabs will be coming out for their lunch break pretty soon. We should eat before they do.

SUSANA: You go 'head. I'll keep up the line.

LUCHA: The line está bien covered.

SUSANA: Bueno . . . I didn't bring a lunch.

LUCHA: Véngase. I'll share mine con usted. I got plenty.

SUSANA: Gracias, no. I . . . I'm not hungry.

LUCHA: ¿Qué es? Anorexic? *(Laughs)*

SUSANA: No, I'm just not that organized. I forget.

LUCHA: I thought you *were* the organizer. You don't got any kids, do you?

SUSANA: No. Not really.

LUCHA: Por eso. Cuando tiene hijos, you organize every minute of your life. *(She sits for a few moments in silence, appraises SUSANA)* Está muy flaquita, not like the rest of the bunch here.

SUSANA: I—

LUCHA: And we should all be huesos by now, after so many months con la huelga y cuando nos dan unos pinches 75 dollars a week nomás. Pero no. Seguimos siendo panzonas!

SUSANA: No 'stá gorda.

LUCHA: Miente. *(Holding up a tamal)* ¿Segura? Tiene chile verde . . . ?
I made them special.

SUSANA: What's the occasion?

LUCHA: I don't know. *(Laughing)* Maybe for going four months without a man.

SUSANA: Gracias, no.

[Suddenly, there is the sound of a car driving by. It screeches to a halt. LUCHA and SUSANA watch the scene in the distance. A bottle is thrown and someone shouts out an obscenity at the strikers. JUAN and CHENTE shout back.]

JUAN: Hey, what the hell're you doing?

CHENTE: ¡Cobardes!

[The car takes off, wheels screeching.]

LUCHA: ¡Cabrones! *(SUSANA crosses to LUCHA, sits. LUCHA gives her a tamal.)*

SUSANA: Do you ever get afraid, Lucha?

LUCHA: ¿De qué?

SUSANA: La violencia. Maybe losing the strike.

LUCHA: I don't think about losing, I think about winning.

SUSANA: Yeah, but are you ever afraid?

LUCHA: Fíjese. If we got the guts to come here por el desierto como mojados, we got the courage to fight hasta que les ganemos. ¿Verdad?

SUSANA: Sí. Where you from, Lucha?

LUCHA: Yo? Ay, de un pinche rancho. Tres horas al pueblo.

SUSANA: ¿What pueblo?

LUCHA: Coalcomán, Michoacán. *(Teasing)* You never heard of it?

SUSANA: *(Teasing back)* No. We didn't get too much Mexican geography in school.

LUCHA: Well you must of learned something. Es doctora.

SUSANA: I'm not a doctor exactly. I'm a P.A., a Physician's Assistant.

LUCHA: Pero tenía que asistir a la universidad ¿no?

SUSANA: Sí.

LUCHA: I'd like that for my daughter, for her to become something special, to go to college, estudiar.

SUSANA: Of course.

LUCHA: But she doesn't like to read. My son loves it. JoJo even reads the back of the cereal box for breakfast. La niña dreams nomás.

SUSANA: How old is she?

LUCHA: Ten.

SUSANA: When I was that age, I just dreamed, too.

LUCHA: Yo no. I thought only boys could dream. I ask God, decía a veces, "Ay diocito, por qué me hiciste mujer? Why didn't you make me a man instead?"

SUSANA: I know that prayer.

LUCHA: But I didn't really want to be a man, I only wanted the same chances. Por eso, vine al norte.

SUSANA: For more "opportunity."

LUCHA: Sí, for my children. Los niños aquí tienen toda su mesa completa de comida. They can go to school, pueden mejorarse. Even if los padres tienen que trabajar como burros.

SUSANA: The American dream.

LUCHA: What's wrong with that?

SUSANA: Nothing. I just don't believe in it.

LUCHA: Cause you don't have to, you already live it. I see you come and go from the meetings. You live free.

SUSANA: Free.

LUCHA: Sí, free. Aunque es mujer, you don't got nobody telling you what to do.

SUSANA: I'm forty-two-years old, Lucha.

LUCHA: And Dolores is almost sixty. Look at the life que lleva la pobre.

SUSANA: And we're both mexicanas.

LUCHA: No digo que usted no conoce prejuicio.

SUSANA: No?

LUCHA: Mire. I see a lot of people come through town to give us help. It seems like every person got something they want to bury or dig up acá en Watsón.

SUSANA: I've been here ten years, Lucha. Watsonville is not a political phase for me.

LUCHA: No quiero decir que—

SUSANA: La clínica started in an apple shed. We had nothing. We were giving people check-ups from right out of los files, hanging sheets up with clothespins for privacy. We'd see fifty kids a night . . . and after that, their parents.

LUCHA: Sí, pero. . . ¿Por qué, Watsón? Con la educación que tiene usted, you could do anything . . . go anywhere?

SUSANA: I don't like "anywhere." I like it here.

LUCHA: Bueno, sí hubiera tenido su educación, you wouldn't find me with the dirt under my uñas or chopping up my fingers on some assembly line. I'd move to a big city like Los Angeles or San Diego, I'd dress up con stockings and lipstick every day of my life, and I'd work in a clean place without a pinche time clock to punch.

SUSANA: Yeah, but it'll be different for your children.

LUCHA: Ójala.

SUSANA: No, I mean maybe when your kids get the education you didn't, maybe they won't want that office job in L.A.

LUCHA: Bueno, they could—

SUSANA: Maybe they won't be able to forget that dirt under your fingernails.

LUCHA: *(Glancing down at her nails, then back at SUSANA)* Tal vez, but I know I'd like to forget it.

Scene Seven

[Fall. Early evening, many months later. Lights rise on several scenes at once. JUAN and SUSANA are working at the strike office. At the Valle home, DON ARTURO sits in front of the TV with a remote in one hand and a beer in the other. DOLORES prays before her altar. She lights a candle, moving her lips softly. . . . Across town at the cannery, a striker with guitar sings solo. He and the other strikers appear in silhouette against the setting autumn sun. It is a somber photograph of resistance.]

HUELGUISTA: *(Décima)*

“Mi patria es pura riqueza
pero está mal repartida
en el campo allá no hay vida
solo miseria y tristeza.

Cuando a crecer uno empieza
ver que al norte todos van
y no quedando otro plan
me fui de la tierra mía
y hoy no sé si vuelva un día
ay dios, a mi Michoacán.”

[DON ARTURO keeps changing stations. Clips of sit-coms, gameshows, talk shows, a spanish-language variety hour, etc. Canned laughter. A news anchor comes on.]

“Well, in spite of yesterday’s Columbus Day blizzard, the weather looks bright for Republicans here in Washington, Liz. The surprisingly swift passage of Senator Casanova’s bill, #1519, cracking down on illegal immigration, met with little to no resistance from Democrats. The bill effectively bars employment, education and health services to all illegal aliens and their children. The Florida Senator was all smiles—”

[DON ARTURO changes the station. A Mexican drama comes on as LUCHA and AMPARO cross from the picket line to the Valle home. The singer continues in the background.]

HUELGUISTA:

“Por tener un mal gobierno
nuestra patria mexicana
el campesino no gana
vive como pobre eterno

Y El Norte es un infierno
mas si se gana esta guerra
vive mejor que en su tierra
porque se halla la manera
y en México aunque uno quiera
al campesino se encierra.”

[AMPARO and LUCHA appear at the door of DOLORES’ house. AMPARO knocks.]

DON ARTURO: ¿Qué? ¿Quién es?

[LUCHA nudges AMPARO in the ribs.]

AMPARO: Amparo. Venimos . . . digo vengo por Dolores. *(DON ARTURO slowly pulls himself out of his seat, gets another beer. To LUCHA)* No contesta. ¿Qué vamos a hacer con éste?

LUCHA: *(Pounding on the door loudly)* Don Arturo, ¿Está Dolores?
We got a meeting tonight.

DON ARTURO: Está rezando. She’s praying for all you viejas y sus pecados!

LUCHA: *(To AMPARO)* Es un sangrón. I don’t know how Dolores puede soportarlo.

AMPARO: *(Sarcastic)* Religion. *(Pounding with more force now)*
¡Compadre, soy yo! ¡Por favor, ábreme la puerta!

DOLORES: *(From her altar)* ¿Quién es, Arturo?

DON ARTURO: ¡Son tus amigas comunistas!

DOLORES: ¡Ay, tú! (*DOLORES goes to the door, opens it. DON ARTURO stands at the refrigerator drinking the beer.*) ¡Ay, lo siento! A él no le gusta tener visita.

LUCHA: Venimos por tí nomás.

DOLORES: ¿Para qué?

AMPARO: To go to the meeting. (*The women enter.*)

DOLORES: Amparo, how many years you know me?

AMPARO: No sé. más de treinta.

DOLORES: Thirty-five years and you're still trying to change me?

AMPARO: I'm not. Now Lucha's working on you. She doesn't know no better.

LUCHA: Dolores, you heard the news.

DOLORES: Sure. I couldn't sleep all night on account of it.

AMPARO: It's the story of our lives, comadre, not that many years ago. Imagine without our green cards where would we be at right now?

DOLORES: Yo sé.

AMPARO: Even the children born here won't be able to go to school, ni ver a un doctor, ni—

LUCHA: This bill could kill la huelga. If the workers get divided between who's legal and who's not, we'd be almost a year on the line para nada. We got to get all the mujeres to the meeting tonight. We got to confront the union.

DOLORES: ¿Por qué?

LUCHA: To take a stand against the bill.

AMPARO: So far the union's said nothing. When I talked to Juan, me dijo que—

DOLORES: I don't trust him no more, Amparo.

AMPARO: Juan?

DOLORES: He's changed too much. Ahora anda a los bars—

LUCHA: ¿Qué importa si?—

DON ARTURO: I told her I saw him at the bar. She makes a big deal about it.

DOLORES: (*To AMPARO*) You remember before he could hardly get down a beer? (*She takes a long swig from DON ARTURO's beer.*)

AMPARO: Juan está muy dedicado a la huelga.

DON ARTURO: She doesn't want the man to be a man, she wants him to be a saint. She don't live in the real world.

DOLORES: Go back to your televisión. Es lo único que sabes hacer.

DON ARTURO: She 'spects a man to be un angel, living en las nubes . . .

AMPARO: ¡Compadre, ya!

DON ARTURO: No me mandes. I'm not your child. (*DON ARTURO exits.*)

AMPARO: . . . Comadre.

DOLORES: I got nothing to fight for now. I got no more kids.

AMPARO: And when you had kids, you were too busy protecting them.

DOLORES: I lost them anyway.

LUCHA: Fight for my kids, Dolores.

DOLORES: It's not my business to be en los meetings, Lucha. I'd rather be on the picket line or packing the food baskets. There, all the womens speak the same way, "How is your kid doing in the junior high?" "Who's going to bring the frijoles para el fund-raiser?" I understand

that . . . mejor que “the working-class struggle.” A veces I look inside myself to see if those words touch me someplace . . . some place que tiene corazón y me siento fría. I feel completely cold inside.

LUCHA: *(Grabs DOLORES' rebozo off the back of the couch, hands it to her)* Not me. I feel on fire.

[Soft fade on Valle home. Full rise on strike office as JUAN crumples up a piece of paper in disgust and tosses it into the wastepaper basket.]

JUAN: I don't know what to write. I can't pretend. If this bill becomes law, the strike's dead.

SUSANA: Write that.

JUAN: I can't write that. They need encouragement. They need—

SUSANA: Dreams?

JUAN: Maybe. That's better than despair. *(Lights up a cigarette)* I still don't see how they could really enforce a national law. It'd be a bureaucratic nightmare.

SUSANA: No? Read this. *(She hands him a newspaper, points to a paragraph.)* Right out of the Casanova's mouth.

JUAN: “The enforcement of the law would begin in labor camps and food-processing plants throughout California, moving on to the garment industry in towns and cities along the Mexican border, including Los Angeles. Since the majority of illegal aliens—”

SUSANA: This wasn't supposed to happen.

JUAN: What?

SUSANA: Juan, I came of age in 1970.

JUAN: And?

SUSANA: And it gave me a very skewed view of reality. In '68, my brother's dragging me over to Garfield High School to go barricade the East

L.A. streets with our bodies. I went from school walk-outs on a weekday to grape boycotts on the weekend. Standing out there in front of the Safeway passing out UFW leaflets and bumper stickers. Then in 1970, I am kissing Teresa Treviño, a verifiable brown Beret, behind the loud speakers at the Chicano Moratorium.

JUAN: That was your political awakening?

SUSANA: That's how I remember it. I don't know what was beating louder, my heart or the bass of the conjunto on the stage. *(JUAN smiles.)* I never thought things would go this way. Always imagined that each year of my life would bring us all closer to—

JUAN: To what?

SUSANA: I don't know . . . equality. Is that naive? A little piece of land and a little peace of mind for everybody.

JUAN: That's a lot.

SUSANA: I guess. Then in '76, after a decade of marches, and boycotts, and door-to-door canvassing, and school lunch programs and self-help groups, I'm booted out of MEChA for being a dyke and there's a whole women's movement, white as it was, to break my fall.

JUAN: So, you're gay, huh?

SUSANA: Is that a problem?

JUAN: No. I—

SUSANA: Good.

JUAN: I just wasn't . . . sure.

SUSANA: Really? Since the strike got started, you can read it on the walls of most public buildings.

[JUAN smiles, snubs out his cigarette, returns to the computer.]

SUSANA: So, Juan . . . what were you doing in 1970?

JUAN: I was reading Paul Tillich under the shade of the seminary live oaks.

SUSANA: He was the pervert, wasn't he? The guy with the pornography stash?

JUAN: Yeah, but that came later.

SUSANA: If I were a priest, that's what I'd want, to be locked up in a library somewhere, studying the "great thinkers." Yeah, give me monkdom, Gregorian chants all day and night.

JUAN: Do you have any idea how monasteries smell?

SUSANA: Oh please . . .

JUAN: (*Teasing*) Do you realize how little monks wash, brush their teeth, change their underwear. . . ?

SUSANA: Another fantasy bites the dust. Truth is, all this anti-immigration mess . . . it's escape fantasies I'm having, not the hermitage.

JUAN: Where to?

SUSANA: I don't know. Some place not here. Some place that doesn't feel like a foreign country.

JUAN: Ironic, huh?

SUSANA: (*A touch of sarcasm, but meaning it*) So, where's home, carnal? Where's home for the dispossessed chicanada?

JUAN: I honestly don't know.

[*CHENTE enters very agitated.*]

CHENTE: Do you have the statement ready?

JUAN: No, I'm still working on it.

CHENTE: What did you write? Let me see.

JUAN: It's not done.

CHENTE: (*Scanning the monitor quickly*) No, no. We got to let them think there's nothing to be concerned about.

SUSANA: But there is!

CHENTE: The bill's passage means nothing. The law's unconstitutional. The courts will rule that.

JUAN: We can't count on that—

CHENTE: We got to convince the huelguistas that they must go on with the strike no matter what. We have to make them believe that we believe, that this is no wrench in the works. That—

SUSANA: If this bill really becomes law, the strike goes down the toilet. Half of the workers don't have papers. They'll have no legal right to their jobs.

JUAN: (*To CHENTE*) But if we can get the union's support, get them to make some public statement that they are not in accord with the law—

CHENTE: You expect the union bosses to go to jail for the huelguistas?

JUAN: No, I mean only to say that they oppose the spirit of the law.

CHENTE: We got to be realistic here. We've got to find out who's legal, who isn't.

SUSANA: What?

CHENTE: Really get a sense of the numbers and let the union know. Maybe it's fewer than we think. Maybe the loss of a few workers won't—

SUSANA: You can't do that.

CHENTE: I didn't say turn them in, I said just find out cuantos son ilegales.

JUAN: And panic everyone? No, we'll just wait and see. We'll just tell the strikers they've got to wait and see—

[Lighting transition. Spot on JUAN as he continues speaking, then full rise on Strikers' Meeting. AMPARO, DOLORES, and LUCHA are present.]

JUAN: We all have to just wait and see.

LUCHA: A la chingada . . . wait and see! Los gringos are not waiting to see. I went to get on the bus yesterday en Santa Cruz. The bus driver stop and let on everybody else and then when I tried to get on, me dijo que he didn't have to pick me up, that he didn't have to give service to no wetbacks. He just shut the door on Elenita and me and he just drove away.

JUAN: But he doesn't know si eres legal o no.

LUCHA: I got el nopal estampado en la frente, that's all they need to know.

JUAN: Then report him, Lucha.

LUCHA: To who? The INS? *(She walks away, disgusted.)*

SUSANA: Lucha's right. The fall-out's already coming down. If this law is upheld in court, lots of workers won't have jobs, even if we were to win the strike. Neither the union nor the cannery is going to break the law to protect the undocumented workers. The government will put sanctions—

CHENTE: We're getting way ahead of ourselves here.

AMPARO: Pero, no es justo. We all go out on strike together. Todos juntos! No solamente la gente con sus papeles.

JUAN: You're right, but—

AMPARO: Esta ley me da mucho miedo. I didn't have to suffer, como muchos otros, la desgracia of coming here ilegal. But I suffer the same consequences. En eso de nada me servían los papeles. From the beginning—

CHENTE: The union is with you. Haven't they stuck with you this whole year? The most important thing is we keep up the momentum, that

we show the union and the community that we are a united front, that we aren't afraid of these anti-immigrant measures, that —

DOLORES: *(Feeling suddenly overwhelmed by the heat)* No me gusta. It's too hot. Va a haber un temblor.

AMPARO: Anytime it gets over 80 degrees, she always thinks it's an earthquake coming.

DOLORES: Por lo menos, la naturaleza don't got no prejudice. She hits everyone and she don't ask for your green card to shake you hasta los huesos.

AMPARO: Tiene razón la mujer.

[A silence falls over the room. Outside a lone striker with guitar holds up the picket line. He plays softly in the background.]

DOLORES crosses to her kitchen, sits. She fans herself with a union pamphlet. SUSANA and the other women go to her. They join her at the table. Lighting transition.]

SUSANA: ¿ . . . Doña Lolita?

DOLORES: *(After a pause)* Yesterday, on my way home from la guardia, I heard the news about the law they make against nosotros mexicanos. I got so sick I went right to bed. Así que this morning, bien tempranito, I go out to get the clothes on the line. I forgot about them the night before. And my son's tee shirts were still there . . . I had washed them to give . . . para tu JoJo, Lucha.

LUCHA: Gracias, Señora.

DOLORES: I figure he's big enough for them now. Y allí estaban colgando como white ghosts with their arms all stretched out en la neblina. Fue una mañana muy gris. By the time I got all the clothes down and folded, I saw the sun coming out, peaking up over las lomas. It was so orange, it was almost red y la luz, bien fuerte. Y luego it passed over the top of the hills and spilled its light all across los files. De repente everything was covered en luz. I turn my eyes away, it was so bright. Y miré p'arriba un pedacito de luna. The moon look like a small smile in the sky, un poco chueca. Y por alguna

Act 1

razón, I thought of México así, desapareciéndose, que mi México es la noche, la oscuridad, the place of dreams. And I saw the sun como el norte, stealing our dreams from us. El sol era brillante y maravilloso pero México was fading from its light.

LUCHA: And now the light is going to burn us out completely with its laws.

DOLORES: Eso fue lo que pensaba yo.

[The lights and guitar gradually fade out.]

End of Act One

ACT TWO

“LA APARICIÓN”

JUAN: *(Offstage)* “A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth.”—*The Book of Revelations*

Scene One

[Three months later. A cold and wet January morning. LUCHA stands on the street in front one of the gates to the cannery with her picket sign. AMPARO and a few of the other strikers can be seen in the distance, holding up the line. Suddenly JOJO enters, goes to his mother, grabs her by the arm, starts pulling on her.]

JOJO: C'mon, Mom, they're coming. I saw the bus waiting for them over there at the Kmart.

LUCHA: No. Go home if you're afraid.

JOJO: I'm not afraid.

LUCHA: Son esquirolas.

JOJO: They don't care, 'amá. They just wanna work.

LUCHA: Well, so do I. I just wanna work, también. I been just wanting to work already for fifteen months. Aren't you tired of the food baskets?

JOJO: Yeah.

LUCHA: Seeing your mamá stand in front of the Safeway and beg for donations?

JOJO: Yeah.

LUCHA: Digging through a stack of old clothes to find a damn pair of pants for you to wear to school?

JOJO: Yeah, yeah.

LUCHA: Seeing your sister with patches in her dresses?

JOJO: You know I'm tired of it.

LUCHA: Pues, I'm tired, too. I'm tired of the pinche landlord always on my back . . . que la renta, y que la renta . . . y que cuándo vas a trabajar. Every scab bus you see means another month on the picket line for your mother.

[There is the sound of a bus approaching in the distance.]

JOJO: Mom, the scab bus is coming.

LUCHA: Good, estoy lista.

JOJO: ¡'Amá!

LUCHA: Vete, ya. Go stand on the other end con Amparo.

JOJO: No. I'm staying with you.

LUCHA: Then stay out of the way.

[As the bus pulls up, LUCHA comes downstage to meet it. JOJO, AMPARO, and the strikers look on. They are stunned.]

AMPARO: ¿JoJo, pa' dónde va tu mamá?

JOJO: She's gonna talk to the scabs.

AMPARO: She's going on the bus?

JOJO: Yeah.

AMPARO: ¡Ay, Dios!

[Sound of bus door swinging open. LUCHA walks down the center aisle of the audience, as the center aisle of the bus. She passes out fliers about the strike and the anti-immigration bill.]

LUCHA: Yo tengo 15 años en los estados unidos. I came here alone, without a husband and I worked in the grapes in the Central Valley. También trabajé, picking cotton a mano, dragging the sack y a mi bebé recién nacido. Quizás en ese tiempo you saw algún americano wearing a cotton shirt que yo pizqué. Una camisa muy bonita, muy blanca, and made with the cotton that I picked. Y después acá en Watsonville, I've worked en las canerías, packing todo el proceso de comida. ¿Para qué? So that us inmigrantes could fill the gringos' table con comida.

Gente, no vaya a trabajar. En esta canería, they had us working como esclavos. If you go in there to work today, you'll be hurting us. Es verdad que you get a day's pay, pero ¿qué pasará mañana? They'll do the same to you as they done to us. If you don't go in, we can negotiate a contract and later you can come in as real workers, también. Los patrones son americanos. The people they are exploiting es nuestra misma raza. La gente mexicana.

[LUCHA watches as we hear the sound of the bus door closing and the bus pulling away. A smile comes over her face as the strikers all cheer and wave "Adios." Suddenly there is the sound of a tear gas bomb being tossed and exploding. Smoke fills the air. Screams and the muffled voice of the police trying to disperse the crowd.]

[In the darkness, the brutal sounds of a physical assault are heard: heavy blows to a body with fists and sticks, grunts of pain, the distorted voices of young males, shouting obscenities. They are full of rage and violence. Police sirens interrupt the beating. The stage becomes a maze of spinning red and blue police lights. An ambulance

* Actual fliers regarding a current local cause affecting Latino/people of color workers can be used here.

is heard in the distance, speeding across city-blocks. DOLORES appears in the oak grove, wearing a rebozo around her shoulders. The colored lights whirl dizzingly about her. Then as the light of the midnight moon rises behind her, the sirens and police lights fade. The wind blows. DOLORES draws the rebozo more tightly to her.]

DOLORES: Virgencita, how many more faces can death wear? Tonight La Muerte put on the clothes of the gringo and beat my JoJo into the ground. He can't wake up. Without your touch, Madre, JoJo can't wake up.

[The wind begins to rise. Sound of sea birds in the distance. Upstage in shadow, the figure of JOJO in a hospital gurney, LUCHA and SUSANA at his side.]

Mi Virgen, te ruego don't take our son from us. Es un inocente. Dígame, ¿Qué haga yo? ¿Qué quieres de mí? *(Pause, she extends her hands.)* Enséñame el camino and I'll walk that road, te lo prometo. Just don't take the boy! You can't have the boy! *(Suddenly full of rage)* Wake him up! ¡Te lo mando!

[The sound of the wind begins to take on the resonance of female voices becoming increasingly distinct as they rise in volume. Gradually in the shadow of the oaks, the women appear chanting in nahuatl. They are ghostly, but not threatening in manner, their faces veiled in white. One holds a bundle as a child in her arms. Her loose hair dances with the wind.]

VOICES: *(Chanting)* Chihuacoatl, Quilaztli, Tonan, Centeotl, Centeotlcihuatl, Xilonen, Teteoian, Chicomecoatl, Citlalicue, Chinipa, Yoalticilt . . .

[The light of the crescent moon passes onto DOLORES' face.]

DOLORES: Virgencita ¿me hablas?

VOICES: Coatlicue, Teotenantzin, Tlaliyolo, Toci, Tonantzín, Madre . . .

[The voices continue in their incantations. The glow of the moon drops into the leaves of the oak.]

DOLORES: Tonantzín, why do you call me Mother?

[The oak's branches are washed in the light as is the faint impression of la Virgen de Guadalupe in the center of the tree. The figure shimmers iridescent. DOLORES falls to her knees.]

DOLORES: ¡ . . . Mi hija!

[The women retreat. The figure of la Virgen intensifies. A powerful wind smelling of the sea passes over DOLORES. The song of pelicans and other sea birds fill the air. There is the slight tremor of an earthquake. Black-out.]

Scene Two

[Weeks later. Late winter, 1998. A "Bolero" plays on the record player. DOLORES is cutting lemons on the kitchen table. JOJO is squeezing the cut lemons into a pitcher. He has a bandage around his head and his arm is in a sling.]

JOJO: That's what Ghandi did.

DOLORES: ¿Quién es Ghandi?

JOJO: An Indian revolutionary.

DOLORES: Un indio?

JOJO: Not an Indian from here, from India. He'd fast until he got what he wanted.

DOLORES: What did he want?

JOJO: Justice.

DOLORES: Justice.

JOJO: For poor people. He wanted people to make their own clothes with their own cotton and use the salt from their own oceans to sell. He wanted them to be independent.

DOLORES: Did he die, too, like César Chávez?

JOJO: Yeah, but not from fasting. Even César didn't die exactly from fasting. He just went to sleep one night in Arizona and never woke up.

DOLORES: That's a nice way to go.

JOJO: But the newspapers said that all that fasting he did in his life wore his heart out.

DOLORES: *(After a pause)* Oh.

JOJO: You sure you wanna do this?

DOLORES: How did the Hindu die?

JOJO: Ghandi?

DOLORES: Sí.

JOJO: Some one shot him. Another Indian.

DOLORES: That's how it usually happens. ¿Qué no? Your own people hurt you the most.

JOJO: I guess. *(Showing her the half-full pitcher of lemon juice)* Is this enough?

DOLORES: Debe ser . . . for today. *(She pours water into the juice, adds sugar. JOJO watches her.)*

JOJO: Have you ever looked into a gringo's eyes real close-up?

DOLORES: No sé.

JOJO: They got nothin' inside 'em. Nada. You just look into them and it's like . . . there's nothin' there. It's like somebody just squeeze the brown outta their eyes and took their soul.

DOLORES: No todos los gringos have blue eyes, JoJo.

JOJO: Those punks that beat me up did. They were empty inside. You could see it in their eyes, Doña Lola.

DOLORES: Es triste.

JOJO: *(Beat)* They knew my Mom's name.

DOLORES: ¿Cómo?

JOJO: They said her name, called her stuff.

DOLORES: But why didn't you say nothing—

JOJO: I was afraid. I didn't know what she'd do. I was afraid she'd get hurt.

DOLORES: Verdad.

[DOLORES takes a long drink of lemonade. It is bitter; she adds more sugar.]

JOJO: How long you going to do this, Doña Lola?

DOLORES: *(Taking another drink)* Until I get what I want.

[Black out.]

Scene Three

[Days later. Strike warehouse. LUCHA, AMPARO and SUSANA are packing boxes with food items. In the background, DOLORES can be seen speaking in low whispers to JOJO who records what she is saying into a small torquoise book.]

SUSANA: That oak grove is sacred. The Ohlones Indians buried their dead out there.

AMPARO: ¿Holones?

SUSANA: Ohlones. They worshipped oak trees.

AMPARO: You think Dolores is worshipping a tree?

SUSANA: No. I mean, it doesn't matter. To her, she's worshipping la virgen.

AMPARO: No te entiendo, Susana.

SUSANA: Miren, tengo una amiga, Dakota . . . es india, she knows about the history from here.

AMPARO: ¿Y qué dice?

SUSANA: Well . . . I was living with someone for awhile and she had two little girls.

LUCHA: ¿Con quién vivías?

SUSANA: No la conoces. Anyway, when she moved out, she left a lot of stuff behind, especially a lot of the girls' toys. So, I just moved it all into my basement.

AMPARO: Susana, ¿qué tiene que ver esto con Dolores?

SUSANA: I'm getting to that. Anyway, I finally got Carmen to come and pick up her stuff.

LUCHA: ¿Es mexicana?

SUSANA: ¿Quién? Carmen? No, es filipina.

AMPARO: Ay, Lucha ¿qué importa la raza de la señora? I want to hear the story!

SUSANA: Well, for every night after that, I'd hear all this racket like there was someone down in my basement moving furniture around.

AMPARO: Pudiera 'ber sido un racoon.

SUSANA: No. Every morning, everything was in the exact same place.

AMPARO: ¿Qué fue entonces?

SUSANA: So my friend, Dakota, comes over and she's looking at the big oak outside my kitchen window and she says to me, "The Ohlones are buried out there. They miss those children's spirits in those toys."

LUCHA: ¡Qué mentiras!

SUSANA: "You need to make an offering." So, I did some prayers and burned some sage—

AMPARO: ¿Qué es eso . . . "zage"?

SUSANA: Salvia. I never heard a peep in my basement again.

AMPARO: Ah, pues you think la virgen is one of these Holones.

SUSANA: Well, not exactly, but I just think Dolores found a holy spot.

LUCHA: ¿Qué opinas tú, Amparo?

AMPARO: Bueno, I know she's not lying. I know she believes la Virgen spoke to her.

LUCHA: Pero dice ella que she saw her . . . de carne y huesos, que la virgen apareció entre muchas mujeres, dressed just like us . . . bueno like you, Amparo . . . como una cannery worker.

AMPARO: Gracias, Luchita.

LUCHA: Y la Virgen left her estampa on one of the trees.

SUSANA: You can see it right there on the face of the trunk.

AMPARO: ¿Fuiste tú?

SUSANA: I had to go.

AMPARO: Yo no. I'm not going. I'm scared. If I really see la Virgen, it's going to scare me.

SUSANA: They already got a line of gente out there praying to the tree, bringing ofrendas. You should see it. Rosaries hanging all over it, pictures of people's loved ones . . . flowers and velas everywhere.

LUCHA: So, you believe.

SUSANA: I believe there's something out there. You can feel la fuerza, even if it's just the faith of the people.

LUCHA: Tú sabes mejor que yo, Amparo, Lola's not all there all the time.

AMPARO: Yo sé que ha sufrido mucho.

LUCHA: Exacto. She's got a lot of problemas. So she sees what she needs to see.

[CHENTE enters with JUAN.]

LUCHA: I worry, though, que it's going to pull la gente away from la huelga.

AMPARO: Juan. ¿Qué cree usted? What you think the Church is gointu say about la aparición?

JUAN: I don't know what the Church will do. But, I know what I think and I agree with Lucha. It's a distraction.

[The men help the women stack the boxes.]

LUCHA: Now is not the time to escape into the heavens. The rosary's not going to get us our jobs back. Necesitamos más acción, más—

CHENTE: I don't know. Maybe la aparición is a good thing, to believe in something—

LUCHA: I believe in god, but I don't believe in praying away our troubles.

CHENTE: I didn't say that, Lucha. But if la aparición can bring people together, especially when we're on the brink of losing what faith we got left.

AMPARO: It's this damn law. Everybody's walking around holding their breath, wondering what's gointu happen.

CHENTE: Pero también es que we been over sixteen months with the strike and—

JUAN: And we're still at an impasse with the cannery.

CHENTE: People need something to keep their confidence up. Anytime you got numbers, that gives you strength. You can't go wrong with that.

JUAN: That's true. Maybe we can use this apparition—

AMPARO: No. You don't use nothing. You either believe that is la Virgen on the tree or you don't. That's all there is to it. If you believe, go down on your knees and try to listen to what she got to tell you about where we're supposed to go next. If you don't believe, pues 'stá bien. Jus' go on with your work like you was doing already.

[Silence falls over the room.]

LUCHA: Bueno, se hace tarde. I gotta get back to my kids.

AMPARO: Ay sí. I got the early line por la mañana.

LUCHA: Susana, ¿me puedes llevar?

SUSANA: Me? Sure.

CHENTE: I can take you, Lucha.

LUCHA: That's okay, Chente. Gracias. She said yes already.

[They all exit.]

Scene Four

[Crossfade to LUCHA's home. SUSANA is helping JOJO with his homework.]

SUSANA: It gets easier once you get to geometry.

JOJO: Thanks, Susana. Algebra's kickin' my butt. *(LUCHA enters with a couple of beers.)* Susana's smart, Mom.

LUCHA: Es doctora. Debe saber algo de "math."

SUSANA: A physician's assistant, te dije.

LUCHA: Sí, sí, but it's too long to say. ¿Terminaron?

JOJO: Yeah.

LUCHA: Bueno, go in there and watch TV con tu hermana. Quiero un poquito de tiempo con Susana antes de que se vaya.

JOJO: All right. See ya.

SUSANA: Later, JoJo.

[He exits. LUCHA hands SUSANA a beer.]

SUSANA: You gotta great kid. You raised him good, Lucha.

LUCHA: I think he raised himself mostly or maybe we just grew up together.

SUSANA: Nah, he admires you.

LUCHA: He defends me. De todos modos, gracias por ayudarlo. Once JoJo pass the eighth grade, that's about as far as I could go with the homework.

SUSANA: He's gonna do fine. Besides, it was fun, I've kind of missed it.

LUCHA: ¿Qué?

SUSANA: The kids I used to live with, helping them.

LUCHA Carmen's children?

SUSANA: . . . Yes.

LUCHA: Is that who you called when you came in?

SUSANA: Carmen? God, no. That's long over.

LUCHA: Entonces tienes otra novia.

SUSANA: Who? Marta? My lover?

LUCHA: No sé.

SUSANA: She's just a friend. She paged me.

LUCHA: Oh. *(Beat)* Why didn't you tell the mujeres en la huelga que eres lesbiana?

SUSANA: I didn't think I had to. Why didn't you tell them you were straight?

LUCHA: No juegues conmigo.

SUSANA: I'm not playing with you.

LUCHA: It hurt me.

SUSANA: What?

LUCHA: Que everyone seem to know, menos yo. I see all the time lots of women around you. Filipinas, negras . . . But I don't think nothing of it, then I feel like a pendeja cuando Amparo tells me. ¿No tienes confianza en mí?

SUSANA: I trust you, Lucha. I just am who I am. I thought it was obvious. I'm not hiding anything. If you didn't know, I wasn't hiding it.

LUCHA: Do you sleep with all those women?

SUSANA: Who?

LUCHA: All those mujeres you hang around with.

SUSANA: *(Enjoying it)* Some. Not always. Most are friends.

LUCHA: Friends.

SUSANA: Friends.

LUCHA: No entiendo. When a man and a woman are together, he's got men friends and the woman's got woman friends. The other way, it's

too confusing. How do you know who is who? How do you know when to be celosa?

SUSANA: Oh, you know. Always trust your instincts.

LUCHA: Your instincts.

SUSANA: Bueno, it's just like men and women, you can always tell when something's going on.

LUCHA: How can you tell?

SUSANA: Well, I . . . people flirt.

LUCHA: They flirt.

SUSANA: Yeah, they tease each other and smile a lot. *(Smiling)*

LUCHA: No, it would make me crazy. Every woman could be your lover.

SUSANA: Well, not every woman.

LUCHA: You're making fun of me.

SUSANA: I'm not making fun of you.

LUCHA: You are. Your eyes are laughing at me.

SUSANA: You started it!

[Black-out.]

Scene Five

[A month into Dolores' fast. Lights slowly rise on the oak grove and sacred tree. DOLORES and the Guadalupanas sing "Desde el cielo," accompanied by guitar. They pray in the background as JUAN enters.]

GUADALUPANAS: Virgen preciosa, te rogamos y te pedimos, traigas la paz y prosperidad a esa comunidad pacífica, a nuestro hogar, Watsonville querido.

[Moments later, AMPARO approaches JUAN standing at a distance from the tree.]

AMPARO: ¿Por que viniste, Juan? To see how you could use la virgen for your strike campaign?

JUAN: I'm sorry, Doña Amparo. Sometimes, my political fervor gets ahead of me.

AMPARO: It used to be religious fervor.

JUAN: Are you reprimanding me? You who once told me that religion was no more than an insurance policy for. . . How did you put it?

AMPARO: For peepo too scare to face up to the real sinners.

JUAN: And . . . now?

AMPARO: I still think that, pero la verdad es que after my husband die, I feel different about . . . things. I believe more.

JUAN: I understand.

AMPARO: No, not like I go to Church more or follow all the rules so much, pero es más que—

JUAN: What?

AMPARO: Bueno, que I know that there's something more than lo que vemos con los ojos. I don't know what, but a'lease I know que . . . I believe in the dead now. *(Pause)* My viejo talks to me, Juan. I hear him as clear as you and me. And that change my opinion about a lot of things. I understand Dolores' ghosts.

JUAN: You've changed, Doña Amparo.

AMPARO: ¿Crees que sí?

JUAN: Yes, you're . . . softer now.

AMPARO: Ay, porfavor, don't call me soft.

JUAN: No, no. Don't worry. You're still tough as nails when you need to be but—

AMPARO: But what?

JUAN: I just didn't think I'd ever hear you defending religion.

[DOLORES has crossed to them. She is visibly weak from her fast.]

DOLORES: *(To JUAN)* And I didn't think I'd see you rechazándola.

JUAN: Señora Valle.

DOLORES: Have you rejected God, Juan?

JUAN: I think that's between me and my God, Señora.

DOLORES: Entonces tiene fe todavía.

AMPARO: Lola.

JUAN: I have faith.

DOLORES: ¿Verdad?

JUAN: Sí, faith in what my hands can build, where my feet can take me. Faith in what I can see and touch and make manifest right here on this ground.

DOLORES: Yo no. On the ground, I got nothing to hold onto. Yesterday, I see Amparo go to the picket line, she's got her pockets filled with pierditas.

AMPARO: Comadre—

DOLORES: I know what the stones are for and my heart turns to stone.

JUAN: You'd rather see her tear-gassed by the police?

AMPARO: That's not what she's saying, Juan.

JUAN: Then what is she saying?

DOLORES: *(Turning to the Virgin's image)* ¿Puede ver a la virgen, Juan?

JUAN: I see an image that appears to have the shape and color of La Virgen de Guadalupe. Yes.

DOLORES: ¿Es todo?

JUAN: Well, I see the faith of the people.

DOLORES: ¿No lo toca a usted? If you read it in your books, will it touch you then? Does your heart go on fire when you read?

JUAN: I don't know what you mean.

DOLORES: The tree is the beginning, Juan. It's the beginning of everything. It makes the paper you read for your revolutionary ideas, for la biblia you used to carry under your arm todos los días.

JUAN: *(After a beat)* Piel de Dios.

AMPARO: ¿Cómo?

JUAN: Skin of God. What los indios called the Bible the first time they saw it.

DOLORES: Pues, allí 'stá. One of the huelguistas me dijo que she try to take solamente un pedacito from the bark, and it bleed.

AMPARO: ¿Verdad?

JUAN: *(Not believing)* Señora.

DOLORES: I only have them write down what they tell me, Juan. Mire.

[She opens the small turquoise book, points to the page, gives it to him.]

DOLORES : Léalo. . . (JUAN looks away.) Hazlo, Amparo. (Passes the book onto AMPARO) Página doce, donde dice "Clara Olivares."

AMPARO: (Labeled) "Cuando traté de quitar la corteza del árbol sagrado—"

JUAN: That's enough.

DOLORES: You don't believe it happen.

JUAN: I believe your book says it happened.

DOLORES: (Takes the book back from AMPARO) There was blood on the knife. Piel de Dios, Juan. That bark is the skin of god. (Pulling him toward the tree) Touch the skin, Juan Cunningham.

JUAN: (Pulling away from her) No! Why did you ask me to come here, Señora Valle.

DOLORES: Because I want you to bless the tree con una misa.

JUAN: A Mass? But the parish is against this.

DOLORES: Mire. No soy tan estúpida. I know what those priests in their fancy church think of us, que somos locas, campesinas brutas.

JUAN: Entonces. . . ?

DOLORES: I'm not asking those priests, I'm asking you.

JUAN: I'm no longer a priest.

DOLORES: You are to God.

JUAN: Please, Señora Valle, tiene que entender—

DOLORES: No, I don't got to understand. No puedo entender que God gives you this gift and you spit on it.

JUAN: I can't . . . I don't believe.

DOLORES: Why do you come back into my life? To torture me with your words, with your eyes?

AMPARO: Comadre.

DOLORES: They're like dark mirrors every day in my face.

JUAN: I'm not here to torture you.

DOLORES: Then what. . . ?

JUAN: I—

DOLORES: If you have rejected God, don't keep my daughter's memory - in prison with you.

JUAN: Prison?

DOLORES: You were my daughter's novio.

JUAN: Her groom? What are you—?

DOLORES: You went into that fil together.

JUAN: . . . Yes.

DOLORES: She was a bride, vestida de blanco. She died for god.

JUAN: She died for change.

DOLORES: Era una santa.

JUAN: She was a hero.

DOLORES: Is that what they teach you in your revolutionary books? To take the God out of everything?

JUAN: I know what I saw. There was no god out there.

DOLORES: No quiero saber lo que vió.

JUAN: Fine. (He starts to walk away.)

AMPARO: Juan, no se vaya.

[He stops. Turns around, looks at AMPARO, then to DOLORES. Their eyes lock.]

JUAN: Señora Valle, your daughter was a martyr. She knew she'd never come out of that vineyard alive. She knew it better than I. Her death was a protest against the same people who crippled her at birth. Why is that so difficult to accept?

DOLORES: You don't accept it. You're angry all the time.

JUAN: You're right. I can't accept it. I tell you, I saw the way she died. And it has marked me more indelibly than any priestly vow.

AMPARO: Juanito.

JUAN: No. *(His eyes still have not moved from DOLORES)* She wants to know, Amparo!

AMPARO: Lola?

[There is a pause.]

JUAN: By the time Cerezita and I were in the middle of the vineyard, we got separated. I still don't know how. There was so much smoke, and in the distance, the flames had climbed as high as the pecan trees. I remember looking up at them, a wall of giant flaming torches. And then I got hit . . . in the gut. I didn't even realize the growers were shooting at us. But the next thing I know, I'm on the ground. I don't know how long I was there. The fire was just sucking up the fields all around us like a magnificent tidal wave, just drowning everything—all that poison into this great ocean of flame. I figured I was drowning, too. *(Pause)* And then suddenly, the smoke cleared and—

DOLORES: And?

JUAN: I see Cerezita. *(Pause)* Someone had torn the cloth, the veil, from her head. And they had stuck her . . . the head . . . onto a thick grapevine post—

AMPARO: ¡Ay, Dios!

JUAN: They had forced the post through her mouth and had hung the veil like a sign around her neck. And on it, in blood . . . her blood, they had written the words: "THOU ART WRETCHED." *(Pause)* And then I understood—

AMPARO: What, Juan?

JUAN: How profoundly those men, with all their land and all their power, hated us. And I knew that they would do anything, anything not to know their hate was fear. *(Pause)* And I knew I would never be afraid again. Not even of God.

[DOLORES faints.]

Scene Six

[A few days later. Simultaneous scene. DOLORES' home and the Diocese Office. JUAN sits before MONSIGNOR MENDEZ. MENDEZ sits behind a large desk. Cross-stage, JOJO sits at DOLORES's kitchen table. DOLORES lies on the sofa, covered by a serape. She sips from a glass of water. There is a pile of lemons on the table. She is visibly weaker, as she dictates to JOJO who writes in the turquoise book.]

JUAN: Well, there are many versions to the story.

MONSIGNOR: So, I've heard.

DOLORES: Yo sé lo que ví.

JUAN: "Era una mujer humilde," she told me.

DOLORES: Una campesina valiente, vestida de blanco.

JUAN: Dressed like herself, except all in white. She smelled of the sea, she said.

DOLORES: Llevaba una cuna.

JUAN: And she carried a cradle.

MONSIGNOR: A Madonna figure.

DOLORES: Pero, estaba vacío.

JUAN: Well, no. There was no child in it.

MONSIGNOR: Strange.

JUAN: Around the Virgin's head was a crown of stars.

DOLORES: Tenía una corona de muchas estrellas y letras que formaban—

JUAN: With letters forming words, but she couldn't understand them.

DOLORES: Palabras extrañas.

MONSIGNOR: They were illegible?

DOLORES: Pero yo no sé leer.

JUAN: No, she couldn't read them.

MONSIGNOR: What do you mean?

JUAN: She doesn't know how. To read.

MONSIGNOR: Oh . . . oh.

DOLORES: Pero yo recuerdo un número bien claro.

JUAN: But she distinctly remembered the number . . . 77 with an x.

DOLORES: Setenta y siete con equis.

JUAN: Well, monsignor. You know to what that refers . . .

MONSIGNOR: No, what?

DOLORES: The priest at the Church told me that the numbers meant—

JUAN: Why to the New Testament, Sir.

DOLORES: Que tengo mucho coraje contra mi esposo.

JUAN: When Peter asks, "How often do I forgive those who have sinned against me? As many as seven times?" Christ answers, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

DOLORES: *(To herself)* It's true I blame him . . . que two of my children turn out . . . different.

MONSIGNOR: Yes, yes. Now I know.

DOLORES: *(To JOJO)* Don't write that.

JUAN: You see this woman, she's full of rage, Monsignor. She's suffered a great deal.

DOLORES: Y de repente la virgen se desapareció entre un multitud de mujeres.

[Lights fade on the kitchen.]

JUAN: Her husband is an alcoholic. He left her many years ago and came back useless. He hasn't held a job in years. The priest over at St. Patrick's told her it was a message, that she must open her heart, forgive her husband his offenses.

MONSIGNOR: Good advice, I'd say.

JUAN: But that's all the Church ever tells these women.

MONSIGNOR: . . . So?

JUAN: Do you remember the words of the Virgin Mary when she says: "The mighty will be put down from their thrones. And the lowly will be lifted up in their place."

MONSIGNOR: Yes. "And the hungry will be fed." Is this another test?

JUAN: "And the fat and over content will be sent away empty."

MONSIGNOR: I know the passage, Mr. Cunningham.

JUAN: Well, those are the words of an angry woman, sir. Not some passive long-suffering santa.

MONSIGNOR: Mr. Cunningham, what's evident to me, merely by the little you've told me is that, well . . . this was a private revelation. It may do the woman some good on a *personal* level, but in terms of something larger—

JUAN: It may be personal, Monsignor, but it's left a public mark. Politically, it could mean—

MONSIGNOR: Oh, I've seen that marking.

JUAN: You have.

MONSIGNOR: Well, pictures. I sent my aide. You know as well as I do that that impression could be anything. Go to any other oak of its kind and you'll see a dozen possible Virgins of Guadalupe, Black Madonnas, Niños de Atoche, San Martíns. Tell a person what to look for and the eye will shape it. My aide said the image appears in two other places on that same tree.

JUAN: Yes.

MONSIGNOR: People see what they need to see. This woman, she's only trying to draw attention to herself.

JUAN: But she's fasting—

MONSIGNOR: This fast of hers is no more political than this apparition.

JUAN: She's fasting against the anti-immigrant bill, Monsignor. That's more than the Church is doing.

MONSIGNOR: Did you come here to insult me?

JUAN: No, sir. It's just that she's getting weaker daily. Her condition could become critical.

MONSIGNOR: Then stop her, if you want to help her.

JUAN: I don't want to stop her. I want to give her and those strikers praying in that oak grove some kind of hope. The Church's blessing could do that. *(Pause)* Monsignor?

MONSIGNOR: She's a lonely woman, you said that yourself. The Church can't hop on every train that comes into the station. Now if you'll excuse me, I have an appointment. *(He begins gathering up papers on his desk, stuffing them into a briefcase.)*

JUAN: I know Señora Valle, Monsignor. She feels it a *manda* to share what she has witnessed, a *carga* I know she'd rather not carry. Hasn't she carried enough? The burden of nearly a decade of working twelve-hour shifts at a cannery that is on the verge of dismissing her without a cent of compensation.

MONSIGNOR: Tell it to your ex-Jesuit *compañeros*, Mr. Cunningham.

JUAN: Two dead children. One from AIDS, the other deformed from pesticides—

MONSIGNOR: Wait a minute. Is this the same woman from that Valley town?

JUAN: McLaughlin.

MONSIGNOR: Who claimed her daughter was *la virgen*?

JUAN: Yes, but—

MONSIGNOR: And you expect the Church to believe this woman now?

JUAN: That girl was murdered, I witnessed it myself. The Church was nowhere to be found then, either.

MONSIGNOR: It is you, not I, Mr. Cunningham, who have abandoned the "Church of the Poor." *I* am still a priest.

JUAN: Yes.

MONSIGNOR: And, unlike you, I know there is protocol to follow concerning these matters. Lourdes, Fatima, La Virgen del Tepeyac, these have survived the tests of decades . . . centuries.

JUAN: But what crime is there in meeting with Señora Valle and giving the tree the blessing she seeks?

MONSIGNOR: Because any action on the clergy's part is tantamount to sanction. We might as well proclaim that we believe that the face of Jesus really did appear on a burnt tortilla in some farm worker's breakfast in Texas and that Guadalupe announced her presence in the rear bumper of a Chevy in East Los Angeles. It's ludicrous. *(Slamming shut his briefcase)* Now, as I said, I have an appointment. *(He indicates the door.)*

JUAN: One thing I know for sure. Whatever was moving in the collective hearts of the people of this town was just waiting to come out. Whether that apparition originated with God, the pure exhaustion from the strike or the absurdity of this anti-immigrant bill, it doesn't matter. The people in this town want some change, Monsignor. And I'm going to see that they get it, with or without your support. *(JUAN starts to walk out. Stops.)* You're wrong, Monsignor. I may have abandoned the Church, but I have not abandoned the poor.

[JUAN exits. Crossfade back to DOLORES' kitchen. AMPARO enters with an empty shopping bag. She crosses to the refrigerator and opens it. It is overflowing with lemons, which all come tumbling out. She begins stuffing the lemons into the shopping bag. DOLORES looks on from the sofa in shocked amusement. JOJO stands next to her.]

DOLORES: ¿Qué 'stás haciendo? Don't take my lemons! *(Pulling herself up from the couch)* No son tuyos. *(They struggle over the bag, stumbling over the lemons rolling all over the floor.)*

AMPARO: I'm not gointu let you kill yourself.

DOLORES: Hice una promesa a la virgencita.

AMPARO: Did you promise to kill yourself?

DOLORES: It's not your business.

AMPARO: Dolores! ¡Séntate! *(DOLORES sits down right on the floor.)* JoJo, I don't know why you listen to her above everybody else. Can't you see how sick she's getting?

JOJO: It's better she's eating lemons than nothing, isn't it? *(JOJO gets another bag, starts picking up the lemons.)*

DOLORES: You shouldn't blame the boy.

AMPARO: No, I should blame you. No sé, comadre. I've know you for thirty-some years, and I still don't understand you.

DOLORES: What are you going to do with my limones?

AMPARO: I'm going to drink them.

DOLORES: ¿Cómo?

AMPARO: I'm going to follow your way. I'm going to squeeze them into some water, poner una cucharita de azúcar and I'm gonna drink 'em. I'm gointu follow your way because I can't change you from your way.

DOLORES: No, Amparo.

AMPARO: *(Putting the last of the lemons into the bag)* Tú dices que la virgen wanted a sacrifice. Pues, nobody likes to eat better than me. And for as much as I like to eat, it's probably worth three people on a hunger strike.

DOLORES: You don't have to do this, comadre. It's my own prayer.

AMPARO: Yo sé. I do it anyway. Just to keep you company. *(To JOJO)* Go on home now, hijo, I'll stay here con Dolores until Susana gets here. We're going to watch you like a hawk, m'entiendes?

JOJO: Are you really gonna fast?

AMPARO: Yeah, but I'm not gonna keep my mouth shut about it.

Scene Seven

[The next day. The strikers are preparing for a fund-raiser. JOJO is hanging a sign that reads: "PACHANGA/PARTY. EXPAND THE STRIKE

TO THE FARM WORKERS." SUSANA, LUCHA, CHENTE and JUAN are setting up chairs, the mike system, etc.]

JUAN: Our thinking is that it's time to move the strike out to the fields, to the farm workers.

CHENTE: But the farm workers aren't on strike.

JUAN: But we're not gonna win this thing without farm worker support. We expand the strike to include every aspect of food production in this region. Farm workers, cannery workers. We boycott the grocery stores—

CHENTE: That's a mistake. It'll put too much pressure on the union.

LUCHA: It's supposed to put pressure on los patrones!

CHENTE: I'm a week outta town and the support committee votes this in?

SUSANA: The union is ready to throw in the towel, Chente.

JUAN: They're ready to concede almost everything to Shea: health benefits, seniority, the cut in pay.

CHENTE: That's because the strike's gone on too long. It's straining the union's resources.

SUSANA: And what about the huelguistas' resources? Every day another striker comes in with an eviction notice.

JUAN: With the farm workers out on strike at the peak of the season, we'll all win! In two weeks tops, everyone will be back to work with better contracts! In the long run, the union saves money!

CHENTE: It's too big of a risk.

LUCHA: And you're too big of a gallina. Listen to Juan, what do we got to lose?

CHENTE: The support of the union.

LUCHA: ¡Adió! But they don't got a union without workers!

JUAN: You yourself told me we needed a more aggressive strategy.

CHENTE: Sí, pero there's got to be another way.

SUSANA: Like what?

CHENTE: Bueno, I know we don't like to talk about it, but as long as those scabs keep coming, the strike isn't even making a dent in the cannery's output.

SUSANA: That's the union's lame excuse. Those scabs aren't doing the quantity or the quality of work trained workers can.

CHENTE: Still, as long as they got workers to replace us, we don't got a leg to stand on.

LUCHA: I stand on my own two feet. That's what everybody in this room needs to be doing.

JOJO: . . . Mom?

LUCHA: Sí, hijo.

JOJO: Doña Amparo went on the hunger strike with Doña Lolita.

JUAN: She did?

JOJO: Yeah, she started yesterday.

LUCHA: *(After a beat)* I think we should join, too. Dolores needs our support. She can't do it alone no more. Time is running out for her.

SUSANA: And for the huelguistas. Any day now, the courts are gonna rule on #1519.

LUCHA: Verdad. Either the union is going to dump us cuz half of us are illegal or we dump the union cuz we won't accept their concessions. Either way we need a back-up plan.

CHENTE: What? Starving ourselves to death?

LUCHA: It's better than giving into them, no?

JUAN: Yes, we do it along with a farm worker strike.

SUSANA: Look at the impact Cesar Chavez had at one time because of his fasts.

CHENTE: This is not 1968!!

JUAN: No, it's 1998! You see any improvement?

[There is a pause.]

SUSANA: Bueno, I'm down for the fast, but tonight we party, right?

JUAN: Right!

LUCHA: Eso!

[Lighting transition. "Banda Music" plays on the sound system. Fundraiser in full party-swing. Dancers enter in couples "quebradito"-style, along side CHENTE and LUCHA. JUAN and SUSANA watch them. They sit at a table drinking beer.]

JUAN: So, Chente's finally getting his time with Lucha.

SUSANA: He ain't gettin' shit. I don't even think Lucha likes men.

JUAN: What? You think she's gay? She sure seems to be enjoying herself right now.

SUSANA: She likes to dance. And no, I don't think she's gay. Not liking men does not a lesbian make.

JUAN: Thou protests too much.

SUSANA: She's straight, Juan. Straight women always gotta keep their dukes up more, that's all.

JUAN: I see you've studied this.

SUSANA: On occasion. In the past. What about you, Juan?

JUAN: What?

SUSANA: What do you like? Girls? Boys? Both?

JUAN: Books.

SUSANA: Books.

JUAN: Ask Amparo. She thinks I sleep with them. *(Imitating her)* "That's why you don't got nobody in your bed. There's no room."

SUSANA: She's right. Books can't keep you warm at night. Nah, I don't believe you. Everybody's got somethin' lurking. C'mon, no secret fantasies? Tú sabes, no dream-life.

JUAN: *(After a pause)* Okay, I'd love to make love to Ché Guevara.

SUSANA: Get out! Really? But he's dead!

JUAN: Doesn't matter. You're talkin' fantasy, right?

SUSANA: Right.

JUAN: Well, that's my fantasy. The oldest one I've had. You had Teresa Treviño at the Chicano Moratorium. Well, I had my revolutionary pressed into the smooth sheets of a paperback.

SUSANA: You are too crazy.

JUAN: Always wanted to kiss that Jesus Christ mouth, stare dreamingly into those brooding never-satisfied eyes. Ché, the lover.

SUSANA: *(Raising her beer in a toast)* Fidel, our Father who art en Cuba. *(They clink their beer bottles.)*

JUAN: *(Sadly)* Ay, pobre de Cuba! The only island left in the world! *(They are momentarily nostalgic, then they both bust up.)*

SUSANA: Now, I'm really depressed.

JUAN: Why?

SUSANA: Two queers without a date on a Saturday night.

JUAN: Just queer for the revolution, baby.

SUSANA: Well, that's awful!

JUAN: Why?

SUSANA: That's as bad as being a priest. I mean it's the *same* as being a priest. Your religion is Marx, your lover is Che, your Father is Fidel. All thoroughly inaccessible men.

JUAN: Pretty pathetic, huh?

SUSANA: You need to get laid, carnal. By somebody! (*Shouting out to the crowd*) Somebody help this man out! He needs to get laid!

[They both start busting up again. A "Cumbia" comes on. CHENTE and LUCHA return to the booth.]

CHENTE: ¡Chinga'o! I was getting thirsty. She's wearing me out!

LUCHA: (*Overlapping*) What's so funny?

SUSANA: I'm trying to get Juan here a sex life.

CHENTE: Why? You thinking about providing one?

SUSANA: No.

CHENTE: (*Giving LUCHA a squeeze*) Cuz I'd like one, too.

LUCHA: No seas grosero, Chente. You're married.

CHENTE: That don't mean I'm dead.

LUCHA: It does to me. (*She takes a swig from her beer, then grabs JUAN's hand across the table.*) Vente, Juanito. (*To SUSANA*) I'll show este pochito, como bailamos los verdaderos mexicanos!

JUAN: (*Jumping to his feet*) ¡Vámonos!

SUSANA: ¡Orale! But, I'm next, Lucha.

LUCHA: (*To JUAN, indicating SUSANA*) ¡Que brava es! ¿No?

JUAN: Susana? No más que tú.

LUCHA: Pues, gracias.

[They dance, stopping periodically for LUCHA to give him a pointer. CHENTE and SUSANA look on.]

CHENTE: Ah, if only I wasn't married for a day.

SUSANA: You couldn't keep up with her, Chente.

CHENTE: I could try.

[Suddenly the music changes to a slow number. JUAN takes the lead and brings LUCHA into his arms. They dance. CHENTE and SUSANA sit in silence with their beers watching the couple dance. The music and lights fade out.]

Scene Eight

[CHENTE sits at a desk, adding figures on a calculator. JUAN enters, he is livid. He lunges at CHENTE, pulls him up by the collar.]

JUAN: You sonavabitch. You sonavabitch.

CHENTE: ¿Qué chinga'o haces? ¿Estás loco, buey?

JUAN: You turned them in, didn't you?

CHENTE: I—

JUAN: You bastard! You put la migra on them.

CHENTE: Let me explain.

JUAN: How could you do that, man?

CHENTE: Cálmate, hombre, I don't wanna fight you.

JUAN: (*Pushing him away in disgust*) Give your own Raza up to la migra.

CHENTE: They were scabs. They were vendidos—

JUAN: No, they're just people, man, just people trying to make a living.

CHENTE: That's very nice, Juan, pero not too practical.

JUAN: Is it practical to split up families?

CHENTE: I couldn't think about that.

JUAN: Apparently not.

CHENTE: I had to show the union we could win. The union bosses were caving in on us. They weren't going to go for no farm worker strike. All they saw was a strike with no end in sight. They wanted to settle. If we were to have settled this week, we would have lost everything. Everything we'd done for the last eighteen months would've been for nothing.

JUAN: You gonna turn us in, too? You gonna turn the huelguistas in too, Chente?

CHENTE: I wouldn't do that.

JUAN: No?

CHENTE: No!

JUAN: That's right. Why bother when Congress will do it for you.

CHENTE: Listen, Cunningham. I did the right thing. It was a hard decision, but the right one. That cannery has come to a complete halt. Chingao, after that migra raid, ni un esquirol has gone near the place. Have you been down there?

JUAN: Yeah. Nobody's celebrating.

CHENTE: Ni modo. They'll be thanking me in a few days. Now we can really begin to negotiate. Te digo, we're holding the cards, camarada.

JUAN: You're a fool, Chente. You think that union is your friend?

CHENTE: Yes!

JUAN: You don't know who your friends are. Where's your heart, man?

CHENTE: Where's your heart? In your pants?

JUAN: What are you talking about?

CHENTE: You know how I feel about Lucha.

JUAN: . . . What?

CHENTE: I saw how you danced with her the other night.

JUAN: When? At that fundraiser? You danced with her, too.

CHENTE: And you took her home.

JUAN: Ah, Jesus!

CHENTE: I see how she's taking your side on everything now. De repente es Juan aquí . . . Juanito allá—

JUAN: You're a bigger fool than I thought, Chente.

CHENTE: And you're a faggot.

JUAN: Then you got nothing to worry about now, do you?

[JUAN exits. CHENTE watches him, then crosses back to his desk, sits down, checks his watch, and turns on the radio. Sportscast comes on.]

"A win tonight would vault San José into second place."

[CHENTE takes out a soccer ball and pair of old soccer shoes from under his desk, changes his shoes. Lights rise on DOLORES and AMPARO in DOLORES' house. They are squeezing lemons. LUCHA appears at home. She is sewing a patch onto JOJO's jeans.]

JUAN: *(Pushing him away in disgust)* Give your own Raza up to la migra.

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JUAN: Yeah. Nobody's celebrating.

CHENTE: Ni modo. They'll be thanking me in a few days. Now we can really begin to negotiate. Te digo, we're holding the cards, camarada.

JUAN: You're a fool, Chente. You think that union is your friend?

CHENTE: Yes!

JUAN: You don't know who your friends are. Where's your heart, man?

CHENTE: Where's your heart? In your pants?

JUAN: What are you talking about?

CHENTE: You know how I feel about Lucha.

JUAN: . . . What?

CHENTE: I saw how you danced with her the other night.

JUAN: When? At that fundraiser? You danced with her, too.

CHENTE: And you took her home.

JUAN: Ah, Jesus!

CHENTE: I see how she's taking your side on everything now. De repente es Juan aquí . . . Juanito allá—

JUAN: You're a bigger fool than I thought, Chente.

CHENTE: And you're a faggot.

JUAN: Then you got nothing to worry about now, do you?

[JUAN exits. CHENTE watches him, then crosses back to his desk, sits down, checks his watch, and turns on the radio. Sportscast comes on.]

"A win tonight would vault San José into second place."

[CHENTE takes out a soccer ball and pair of old soccer shoes from under his desk, changes his shoes. Lights rise on DOLORES and AMPARO in DOLORES' house. They are squeezing lemons. LUCHA appears at home. She is sewing a patch onto JOJO's jeans.]

"That's three points behind the undefeated Los Angeles Galaxy. Missael Espinoza, the Mexican mid-fielder from Guadalajara, will start. With Espinoza in the lineup, you can be sure there will be a large Mexican crowd at the Spartan Stadium tonight, Beth. Well, that's it for Sports, now back to you."

"Well, Sal, we may be seeing a large Hispanic turnout in front of the federal building tonight as well. Just hours ago, in a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court ruled to uphold Senate Bill 1519—"

[Everyone freezes.]

"A key piece of legislation in Florida Senator Casanova's 'American Mission.' The law prohibits illegal immigrants and their children from obtaining employment, education, and all social services, including non-emergency health care. The INS is preparing to send thousands of agents into the chiefly agricultural regions of California and Texas within the month."

[CHENTE exits hurriedly. Black-out.]

Scene Nine

[A neighborhood park. CHENTE arrives with the soccer ball. JOJO has been waiting for him.]

JOJO: I thought you weren't gonna come practice with me today.

CHENTE: You heard the news?

JOJO: Yeah . . . they announced it on the P.A. at school. *(Pause)* What's gonna happen with the strike, Chente?

CHENTE: I guess we just gotta wait for the union to give us the word. But it don't look good.

JOJO: That sucks, man.

CHENTE: Well, you can't expect the union to go against the law for us, vato.

JOJO: Why not? That's what my sister's principal's doing.

CHENTE: What is she doing?

JOJO: Breaking the law. She's gonna keep kids in school until the feds force her to shut the doors. That's what Elenita told me. That they'd have to come and put her in jail first.

CHENTE: That's really something. Is that Mrs. Covarrubias?

JOJO: Yeah.

CHENTE: What about the high school?

JOJO: Our principal's a punk, man. He just shut the whole school down for now. He said he was trying to prevent "further violence." Shit, we didn't even really wreck nuthin', not compared to how we was feeling.

CHENTE: What happened?

JOJO: I dunno. We were all just kinda stunned. After they made the announcement, everyone just stopped and looked around the room at each other. It was like allavasudden we were trying to read on each other's faces who was "legal" and who wasn't. Thinking real quick about who had an accent and who didn't, who dressed like a Mexican, who brought tacos to school, stupid stuff like that. It was crazy the stuff going on in our minds.

CHENTE: Yeah, está bien loco.

JOJO: And then it was like everybody in the class just allavasudden got scared and really pissed off all at once. And I could see that the teacher was kinda scared too, like he didn't know what to expect from us. And without sayin' nothing, we all just got up out of our desks and ran out to grounds outside, and then into the streets. Everyone was shouting and crying and hella pissed off and hurtin'. The whole school was out there. Just kickin' down trash cans, climbin' up on bus shelters, jus' screamin' and hittin' things out of bein' so mad.

CHENTE: *(After a pause)* ¿Mijo?

JOJO: Sí.

CHENTE: ¿Tiene papeles tu mamá?

JOJO: *(Softly)* No, my mom's only got fake papers.

CHENTE: . . . Es duro.

JOJO: *(Suddenly wraps his arms around CHENTE)* I'm scared, Chente. I don't wanna go back to México. I never even been to México.

CHENTE: I know, hijo. We're all scared. *(Rising, pulling JOJO to his feet)* Come on, I'll walk you home. I kina lost my ganas to play.

JOJO: Me, too.

CHENTE: You don't got a school no more and we probably don't got a union. We gotta stick together.

[CHENTE puts his arm around JOJO's shoulder. They start to exit. Black-out.]

Scene Ten

[One week later. A Spring morning. DOLORES has been on the fast for over six weeks. She is very weak. A soft blue glow from DON ARTURO's TV set washes over her figure lying on the couch. She is covered by a serape and prays the rosary. A barrage of crowd sounds and music from a live telecast of a political rally can be heard, as a newscaster speaks.]

"Well, Roger, today is May Day. And you couldn't ask for a more fitting commemoration of International Workers Day than this. Thousands of people have come out this morning in support of a Wildcat Strike against Pájaro Valley Canning. Now, for those viewers who don't know what a "wildcat strike" is, the strikers have refused to accept the contract their union representatives have negotiated with the Pájaro Valley. Since the Supreme Court's ruling on the illegal immigrant bill, the Teamster's contract now, by law, must deny all undocumented workers a return to their jobs. This is

what the workers are protesting. Hunger strikes in solidarity with the workers and in opposition to the new law have erupted throughout California and the Southwest. As I understand it, Roger, the strike support committee will be meeting with strikers within the next few hours and hope to arrive at a final decision on the contract. We'll have more for you then."

[A montage of music and speeches can be heard. They gradually fade out as the lights crossfade to the oak grove. SUSANA sits at the picnic table. It is covered with burning velas. She is making tobacco ties. LUCHA approaches.]*

LUCHA: I thought maybe I'd find you here.

SUSANA: Lucha.

LUCHA: The rally's already started.

SUSANA: Allí voy. I just took a little detour.

LUCHA: To pray?

SUSANA: . . . Yeah.

LUCHA: Is it so hopeless?

SUSANA: Bueno, how long can we stay out on strike without a union?

LUCHA: No sé.

SUSANA: We might not win this.

LUCHA: No digas eso.

SUSANA: You're not tired of fighting?

LUCHA: I've always had to fight. This is nothing new.

SUSANA: Yo sé.

*See appendix.

LUCHA: (*Snapping back at her*) No, tú no sabes. It's different for me than it is for you.

SUSANA: I didn't mean—

LUCHA: From the time I was a little girl, I've always had to defend myself . . . whether it was from my brothers, del papá, o en la calle. I've lived con los puños así.

SUSANA: You don't have to fight me, Lucha. We're not that different . . . really.

LUCHA: No?

SUSANA: No. Maybe one of these days you'll believe me.

[*SUSANA crosses to the tree. She buries a tie at its base.*]

LUCHA: (*After a pause*) ¿Qué 'stás haciendo?

SUSANA: Burying tobacco ties.

LUCHA: ¿Qué's eso?

SUSANA: They're like . . . little prayers. Dakota taught me.

LUCHA: ¿Pero por qué lo haces tú? You're not an Indian.

SUSANA: I've got Yaqui blood.

LUCHA: Bueno, any Mexican can say that, pero ya no somos indios. That's like starting all over.

SUSANA: . . . Maybe. (*SUSANA grabs an acorn off the ground, holds it up to LUCHA.*) You see this?

LUCHA: Sí.

SUSANA: When this holy tree we're standing under is long dead and gone, this little acorn may have grown into a tree as great as this one.

LUCHA: Así que—

SUSANA: Así que this acorn is the future, a future you and I will never see. In the same way . . . this old tree is our history. The very acorn that birthed this tree spilled off of some momma oak the Ohlones were worshipping five hundred years ago. (*Beat*) Do you have any idea what this place looked like when all it knew was indios?

LUCHA: No.

SUSANA: Paradise, Lucha, true paradise. And not like some postcard from Santa Cruz. There were marshes, savannah, redwood forests for days. Elk, antelope, deer, coyotes. And every kind of sea bird imaginable. (*She crosses back to LUCHA, sprinkles a bit of tobacco in her palm. She presses LUCHA's palm closed, holding her fist.*) You put your faith in the workers y bueno, I do, too, pero creo en algo más también. I'm praying to this holy oak cuz it's the only thing that seems right to do right now. Call her Tonantzín, Guadalupe, call her whatever you want. This is as close to a God as it gets for me.

LUCHA: You really see la diosa on that bark?

SUSANA: (*Looking straight back at LUCHA, big smile*) Oh yes, I see her perfectly clear. (*Suddenly, gathering up her things*) Vámonos, let's get to the rally. I think JoJo's got a surprise for you.

Scene Eleven

[*A Political Rally. Protesters are shouting. "Wildcat! Wildcat! Wildcat! Wildcat!" A rap beat comes up over the rally p.a. system. JOJO stands before the assembly with his "back-ups." LUCHA and others look on.*]

JOJO: After many long months on the picket line, it got harder and harder holdin' up that sign. Scabs comin' in . . . and scabs comin' out, the Teamsters boys started havin' their doubts. Raza,

ALL: Rise Up!

JOJO: To try and make matters just a little worse, Washington's revvin' up its hearse.

Talkin' bout wetbacks "get your butts back home."
 Gente knowin' home is in the bones.
 Gente knowin' home is in the bones.
 Raza,

ALL: Rise Up!

JOJO: Raza C6smica's our middle name
 Aveces we don't hear it, 'mid all the profane.
 But every-so-often, la virgen comes down,
 dice a su gente, "y'all gather round."
 Raza,

ALL: Rise up!

JOJO: Les traigo un mensaje, in case you might forget,
 you were here first by the name of Aztec.
 Tarahumana, Apache, Yaqui —
 Indio bloodlines to name just three.
 Raza,

ALL: Rise up!

JOJO: With the strike comin' round to year number two
 ladies on the line wanna try somethin' new
 "Huelga de hambre" is the battle song
 Legal or not, we all belong
 we're obreros unidos, one thousand strong.
 Raza,

ALL: Rise Up!.

JOJO: So, the union's chicken and leaves us flat,
 knowin' wetback ain't the back to scratch.
 But a river's flowin' up and over that skin,
 with a force so strong, raza gotta win.
 with a force so strong, raza gotta win.

Raza,

ALL: Rise Up!

JOJO: Raza,

ALL: Rise Up!

JOJO: Raza,

ALL: Rise Up!

*[Music and lighting transition to the Strike Committee nearby.
 AMPARO, CHENTE, SUSANA and JUAN are present.]*

CHENTE: Now, I know you all don't approve of what I did with
 the scabs—

AMPARO: No we don't.

CHENTE: But, regardless of what you think of my tactics, it won us
 the strike.

SUSANA: The threat of the farm workers coming into the strike, that's
 what got Shea to concede.

CHENTE: Ni modo. We can have our jobs back.

AMPARO: *Some* of us can have our jobs back.

CHENTE: All we have to do now is sign the contract. This is the best deal
 we'll ever get from Shea. You return to work with your full wages,
 complete health benefits, paid vacation. We should be celebrating.
 This is a victory for la huelga!

AMPARO: No es una victoria cuando nuestra raza sufre por ella.

JUAN: It's your same old strategy, Chente. Screw all the undocumented
 workers.

AMPARO: Fuiste mojado! How can you forget that. You came to this
 country crawling on your belly like every other pobre mexicano!

CHENTE: I don't care lo que opinan de mí! This is where each person's
 got to think about your own families, your own future. Es verdad
 que not all of the huelguistas will be able to return to work.

AMPARO: Which child should we give up to the slaughter, Chente?
Which one of México's children doesn't deserve a decent living?

CHENTE: How many people could we really be talking about, Amparo?
También what good will a job do those workers anyway, when they
won't be able to send their children to school or get a doctor to see
them when they're sick?

AMPARO: You wait, Chente. A year or two from now and the gov'ment's
gointu take away the same rights from legal inmigrantes. Where will
you be then? With your green card stuck up your culo.

[LUCHA enters with JOJO.]

JOJO: Juan, they're asking for you guys at the stage. You're up next
to speak.

[Sudden silence. They all look at one another.]

SUSANA: Let's face it. We don't know what we're going to tell these
people. We don't know what we're going to do next.

AMPARO: Pero, we're doing everything we can. This hunger strike, even
los kids aren't eating. The gov'ment won't let *them* starve to death?

SUSANA: No? We're talking about Mexican kids, Amparo.

AMPARO: Yo sé.

JUAN: *(To JOJO, after a pause)* Tell them . . . tell them we're coming.

JOJO: . . . Okay. *(He starts to exit. LUCHA stops him.)*

LUCHA: No espérete. *(To JUAN)* What are you going to say out there?

JUAN: *(After a pause)* I don't think we should do it.

AMPARO: ¿Cómo?

JUAN: I don't think we can tell the huelguistas not to sign.

CHENTE: Now you're thinking.

SUSANA: What do you mean?

JUAN: How can we ask the strikers to keep on striking? They're worn out!
Marriages are falling apart. Husbands are just walking out on their
families. People are sleeping in their cars, for chrissake!

AMPARO: So, now you want us to give up?

JUAN: This Wildcat doesn't have a chance against a federal law!

LUCHA: What are you going to tell them, Juan?

JUAN: I don't know. I guess we should tell them . . . that each person has
to follow their own conscience, that each person has to do whatever
their conscience directs them to do.

LUCHA: What is this mierda?

JUAN: What?

LUCHA: ¿Por qué hablas así?

JUAN: Because I—

SUSANA: Lucha, maybe Chente's right. Maybe you do need to think
of your kids. Without a job—

JOJO: *(Anxiously)* Mom . . . ?

LUCHA: Don't worry, we won't come begging to you.

SUSANA: What?

LUCHA: You're no better than Chente. Things get hard and everybody
wants to turn in los ilegales.

SUSANA: But how can I ask you to turn your back on a job you struggled
almost two years for. I have a job!

LUCHA: Ask me.

SUSANA: What?

LUCHA: To stay here, to fight this.

SUSANA: To stay here . . . ? (*LUCHA holds SUSANA's eyes.*)

CHENTE: You can't take on the whole U.S. government.

AMPARO: No? What happened to solidarity, Chente?

CHENTE: I'm talking facts here, Amparo, not idealism. You can't eat idealism. You can't pay your rent with solidarity.

AMPARO: And who's paying your rent now, Union-man?

CHENTE: What do you mean by that?

AMPARO: You going back to the assembly line with us once we sign this contract?

CHENTE: No. Well, I've been offered—

AMPARO: You got an office job now ¿verdad?

CHENTE: Yes.

AMPARO: Con la unión?

CHENTE: Bueno . . . sí.

AMPARO: Nice salary?

CHENTE: It's all right.

AMPARO: Pero mejor que what Lucha and me will making on the line ¿Que no? Even with all these great benefits we'll be getting.

CHENTE: Lucha? She won't be getting nothing.

LUCHA: Y ¿por qué, Chente? Díme en voz alta en frente de toda d'esta gente, why Lucha Lerma won't be getting a thing after eighteen months on the picket line.

CHENTE: Because you're illegal.

SUSANA: Lucha!

LUCHA: And because I won't open my legs to you.

JOJO: Mom!

LUCHA: Tell him. Tell my son to his face, how you got him to confide in you, cabrón, so you could turn your back on his mother when she doesn't give you what you want. Tell him how you lied about wanting to help me and my kids out. That you could fix my papers, if I needed. Pues, I needed bad, but not that bad. Mándanos a México si quieres, pero por lo menos regreso con mi dignidad.

CHENTE: (*After a beat*) What's done is done. Those of you who have the proper documents will be allowed to vote on the contract and return to work. Any fraudulent papers and the government hits the company with sanctions and the workers with arrest.

SUSANA: You bastard.

CHENTE: The rest of you—

AMPARO: The rest of you, what?

CHENTE: You know the law. There's really nothing more to discuss. You boycott this contract vote and everybody loses. (*He exits.*)

AMPARO: (*Shouting after him*) ¡Sinvergüenza!

LUCHA: And the rest of you sit around with your hands crossed and wait for La Migra to take you away.

SUSANA: It's gonna be a goddamn witch hunt.

LUCHA: Sin trabajos, sin escuelas, sin hospitales, they won't have to hunt at all. We'll come crawling out of the walls, como las cucarachas!

AMPARO: No, mi corazón. (*Going to LUCHA*) Un pedacito de papel no puede separar un pueblo. If they gointu send you back to México, they gointu have to move toda la población mexicana de California. "Solidaridad." ¿Te acuerdas? It's one of the most beautiful words en mi nuevo vocabulario. "Solidaridad." Creo mucho en su fuerza.

Nobody's going to go back to work on the backs of other workers.
Who could hold their head up in this town afterwards?

LUCHA: Pero ¿que vamos a hacer?

[There is a pause. Everyone looks at one another.]

JUAN: We continue with the hunger strike. We go back to our original plan and bring the farm workers into the strike. They have even more reason to join us now. There's thousands of undocumented workers out there in those fields.

AMPARO: Es verdad.

JUAN: Legal and illegal, we all stop working. Without workers, there're no profits. Without profits, the growers and cannery owners will be pounding down Washington's door to turn back this law.

SUSANA: But we've got thousands of people here right now. They don't know what to do. To vote. To boycott the vote. To vote no. Everybody's all fired up.

AMPARO: Sí. Hay que aprovechar el momento—

[DOLORES enters, very pale and weak. She grabs hold of JOJO.]

DOLORES: *(Softly)* ¿Por qué no hacemos una caminata de rodillas a la virgen?

SUSANA: ¿Qué dice, Señora?

DOLORES: Que we make a procesión on our knees to the holy tree.
(JUAN turns away.) We stop en los files, we pick up los obreros, we go from fil to fil, asking the workers to join us in the strike y en nuestra peregrinación.

LUCHA: You want the mujeres on their knees, Dolores?

DOLORES: Lucha, te digo una cosa. I go down on my knees for God, but not for any man. ¿M' entiendes?

LUCHA: Sí, Señora.

SUSANA: Pero, Doña Lola, you're not that strong.

DOLORES: JoJo will help me ¿no, miijo?

JOJO: Sí, señora.

DOLORES: We've got to make ourselves un ejemplo. No 'stamos solos. Está Dios. And the newspapers.

SUSANA: She's right, the press is just hanging around, waiting for something to happen.

DOLORES: Pero tiene que ser una ofrenda sincera. ¿Lucha, me vas a acompañar o no?

LUCHA: *(After a beat)* Sí, yo la sigo.

AMPARO: I go, too, comadre.

SUSANA: Yo también.

DOLORES: ¿Y tú, Juan Cunningham?

JUAN: *(Turning to her)* Go on out there and ask the people to join you.

DOLORES: ¿Yo? No, no sé nada de hablar en público.

JUAN: La Virgen will give you the voice, Señora.

DOLORES: Entonces, you will come with us también, Juan?

JUAN: Sí. La sigo, Señora.

DOLORES: Gracias . . . Padre. *(Extending her hand to JOJO)* JoJo, ven.

[Crowd and rally sounds rise again as they cross to the stage area. JOJO helps DOLORES onto the podium. Lighting transition.]

DOLORES: *(Standing before the crowd)* No estoy acostumbrada a hablar en público . . . pero . . . many people have asked me, what did la virgen say to you? And I didn't know if or when to say. Ahora sí,

I know now is the time. *(There is a slight tremor. DOLORES stops.)*
 La Virgen 'stá con nosotros. *(Another soft rumbling)* La Virgen de Guadalupe is our mother, la Virgen de todos, más de los mexicanos. When we pray, who do we call for? Pues a la madre, porque desde nuestra niñez we always knew que la madre is the one who listens to her children, who cares for her children. Even before God, we call for the mother. Acá en Watsón la madre has travel thousands of miles to show herself to us, los mexicanos, to tell nuestra gente que pertenecemos aquí, que we belong here as much as el gringo. Plant yourself here, dice ella. Like that holy tree, tan fuerte, tan viejo, tan sagrado, ustedes tienen raíces that spread all the way to México. *(Pause)* Esta ley nueva no vale nada. They think they can kill la huelga with this law pero seguimos siendo huelguistas whether we got a union or not. Seguimos siendo americanos whether we got papeles or not. This land is the same land as México. Todo es América y la Virgen de Guadalupe es la Emperatriz de América, una América unida. *(Pause)* Ahora, mi raza, come with me, on your knees si pueden, para demostrar a la Virgen y a toda américa que somos gente de fe y fuerza.

[Processional music. DOLORES comes down from the podium with JOJO supporting her. He removes the serape from around her shoulders, folds it in half vertically and lays it down on the ground. The others do the same, laying down Mexican cloth after cloth into a narrow path of color and texture. DOLORES kneels onto it and begins to slowly move herself along on her knees. The rest, in single file, follow her. There is another tremor. As the rumbling increases, the light begins to gradually darken and narrows into a circle on the figure of DOLORES with JOJO behind her. The shadow of the leaves of the sacred oak pass across her face. They begin to tremble ever so slightly, then shake with increasing vigor as the sound of the tremor rises in intensity. Ocean sounds blend into distant female voices chanting in Nahuatl.]

VOICES: Chihuacoatl, Quilaztli, Tonan, Centeotl, Centeotlcihuahli, Xilonen, Teteoian, Chicomecoatli, Citlalicue, Chinipa, Yoalticiti, Coatlicue, Teotenantzin, Tlaliyolo, Toci, Tonantzin . . .

[The earth begins to quake. The stage darkens. The image of la virgen in the tree is illuminated for a brief moment. Black-out.]

End of Act Two

Epilogue

"EL TEMBLOR"

[A maze of lights criss-cross, collide and intersect with one another on a dark stage. Sirens can be heard in the distance and the muffled conversation from a police radio. Amid the collision of sound and light, a news report is heard:]

"A major earthquake, registering 7.5 on the Richter scale, struck the central coast of California. Its impact was felt from Santa Barbara to Sacramento and has left much of San Francisco and Oakland thoroughly devastated. The quake's epicenter was located in the town of Watsonville, which was completely leveled by the quake. Reports just surfacing from the area, however, have confirmed that some ten thousand survivors, mostly Mexican residents, were found gathered together in an oak grove in a County Park just outside of town."

[The lights rise onto a make-shift sign that reads: "Camp Milagro." It is night time, several days later. An awe-struck quiet pervades the Tent City. It is ablaze in candle light. A man stands by the sign, sings softly with a guitar.]

"Allá donde la montaña se levanta fresca y verde en la memoria se pierde como en una telaraña sentimiento que te araña cada que al tiempo regresa que cada día más te pesa terminas por olvidarlo por no tener que llorarlo cada vez que no regresa."

[The lights crossfade to the interior of a tent where DOLORES, very weakened, lies in a small cot. She is attended by SUSANA and AMPARO. LUCHA and JOJO stand nearby.]

DOLORES: Comadre . . . ?

AMPARO: Sí.

DOLORES: My children . . . they are traveling to me. They got their arms out to me. I see my Cerezita, con cuerpo entero. She holds out her arms like the arms of the tree.

AMPARO: (*Grabbing DOLORES' hand*) That's beautiful, Lola.

[There is a pause. DOLORES takes the small torquoise book from beneath her covers, hands it to JOJO.]

DOLORES: Toma, hijo.

JOJO: It's your miracle book, Señora.

DOLORES: No, now it's yours.

[He throws his arms around her. She holds him. DOLORES stretches out her hand to LUCHA. As she takes hold of it, JUAN enters.]

SUSANA: I think we should let her rest now.

AMPARO: I'll take over for you a little later, Juan.

DOLORES: (*Weakly*) The graveyard shift? (*She laughs at her own joke.*)

AMPARO: ¡Ay chihuahua, Lola! I still haven't figured you out yet.

[They all start to file out.]

DOLORES: Susana?

SUSANA: Mándame, Señora.

DOLORES: Mañana, a la madrugada, go to the holy tree and thank la virgencita por el milagro.

SUSANA: Se lo prometo.

DOLORES: Light a candle por mi parte.

SUSANA: There's already a thousand candles out there.

DOLORES: ¿De verdad?

SUSANA: Sí. But, I'll add yours to it.

DOLORES: Bueno. Oye, don't let them bring an ambulance.

SUSANA: There aren't any, anyway, Señora. Not for us.

[They exit. JUAN stands at DOLORES' bedside. He waits.]

DOLORES: I only got one thing to confess.

JUAN: Señora . . .

DOLORES: I hope Arturo got buried back there in town. I don't want him to burden no body no more.

JUAN: That's not a sin.

DOLORES: Good cause I don't feel guilty about it. You got a prayer for me, Padre? (*JUAN hesitates.*) Anything, mi'jo.

JUAN: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life. A river as bright as crystal, flowing through the middle of the streets of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life. . . . And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of nations." (*Beat*) She was out there, Señora Valle.

DOLORES: La virgen?.

JUAN: Cerezita. The motherless child coming back to mother us all.

DOLORES: I was not the mother I could've been.

JUAN: But you loved. . . . The voices in my head have never allowed me peace. You pitied that in me, I know, how I lived always in my head, separate . . . apart. But just days ago, I stood in the midst of a moving crowd and I could not be spotted apart from it. I found God, Señora. God in the dissolution of self. God in the disappearance of me into a we so profound, the earth shook open to embrace us. (*Pause*) I'm sorry. (*DOLORES grabs JUAN's hand.*) Bless me, Madre.

[As DOLORES raises her hand in blessing, the lights crossfade to SUSANA, outside the tent. It is nearly dawn. She holds a candle. LUCHA approaches.]

SUSANA: Lucha, what are you doing here? Are you okay?

LUCHA: *(Visibly nervous)* ¿Cómo está, Dolores?

SUSANA: She's resting. *(Glancing at her watch)* It's five am. Lucha, what's—

LUCHA: I—

SUSANA: ¿Qué te pasa?

LUCHA: I . . . I brought you this. Ten.* *(LUCHA holds out a letter to her. SUSANA hesitates a moment, then takes the letter.)*

SUSANA: *(Tenderly)* Lucha, what is it?

LUCHA: Léela.

SUSANA: You want me to read it . . . now?

LUCHA: Sí.

[SUSANA opens the envelope, takes out the letter, begins to read it, as LUCHA recites its contents by heart.]

LUCHA: *(Haltingly)* I learn to write English, for the letter, so maybe better you understand me. I want to talk you the way I hear you talk to other womans. Your voice is more low and you forget where go your hands. You laugh more. I want that you forget like that with me, so we can talk with our hearts. I am no a child. I am a woman who know what she want. Te quiero. *(SUSANA looks up at her, holds her eyes.)* No like sisters. With my sister, Isabel, we sleeped together like angels silence. I no notice her there, but I notice you. You touch me and the place stay forever touch. *(There is a pause. SUSANA looks away.)* ¿Quieres decir que 'stoy sola? Am I alone in this?

SUSANA: No.

LUCHA: Pues dime algo.

SUSANA: I don't know what to say.

*Not the English number. Spanish, for "have (this)."

LUCHA: La verdad. Es una cosa muy sencilla.

SUSANA: It's not so simple.

LUCHA: ¿Por qué no?

SUSANA: It's a beautiful letter. Probably the most beautiful letter I've ever gotten.

LUCHA: Pero you don't feel the same.

SUSANA: No, I . . . it's hard.

LUCHA: No es difícil. It was hard writing the letter.

SUSANA: Yo sé.

LUCHA: ¿Por qué te ves triste? Does my love make you sad?

SUSANA: In a way . . . yeah.

LUCHA: Lo siento. I didn't mean to burden you. *(Starts to walk away)*

SUSANA: I didn't say you were a burden.

LUCHA: Mira. No soy pendeja. He sido pendeja con los hombres, y no voy a repetirme el escenario.

SUSANA: No eres pendeja.

LUCHA: No?

SUSANA: No.

LUCHA: What am I then?

SUSANA: Eres guerrera. You're a warrior woman, just like your name says.

LUCHA: "Lucha!" I hate my name. It's a hard name, hard sounds. ¡Chinga'o! You and your words. You have words for everything, everything menos para mi pasión, mi coraje, mi fuego. But I go around trying to choose the right ones. I think si pudiera encontrar las palabras correctas, I could convince you that you love me.

SUSANA: No tienes que convencerme.

LUCHA: Estoy despierta, mujer.

SUSANA: Sí, se ve.

LUCHA: ¿Y qué? What do you do with a woman who has woken up?
Con una mujer que se 'stá amaneciendo?

SUSANA: ¡Ay, Lucha!

LUCHA: *(Mimicking her)* ¡Ay, Lucha! Lucha. ¿No entiendes? I'm sick
of being Lucha, of being una madre, obrera, luchadora. Is that all
I get to do in this life, fight all the time?

SUSANA: No digo eso.

LUCHA: I want to love. Like you. You work and you love. I've seen the
women around you. Quiero ser lesbiana como tú. I want to be your
lesbiana.

SUSANA: Mi—

LUCHA: *(Coming to her)* Lesbiana. Un nombre sensual. Una palabra tan
suave, me hace temblar el sonido de ella.

SUSANA: *(Softly)* Lesbiana.

LUCHA: Sí.

SUSANA: Tú.

LUCHA: Sí.

SUSANA: Luch—

LUCHA: *(Pressing her fingers to SUSANA's lips)* No. Ya no Lucha.

*[She kisses her. SUSANA responds. Lighting and music transition.
LUCHA takes down SUSANA's hair, then slowly steps away from her
and exits. SUSANA stands alone in the sacred grove, her face illumin-
ated in the rising light of the dawn She places the candle at the tree.]*

SUSANA: I am going back before the burial
before they laid my town to rest
before blight
before plague
before the final earthquake I am going back
to salvage what is left of my mexicanismo
my womanhood, my honesty going back
into your arms, the arms of my teacher
that is not home, but the place of journeying,
transformation, revolución.

I am going back

a la tierra sagrada rising up
through the limbs of the aging oak
and the thick torsos of redwood mourning
I am going back
to live in those days in resurrection of the past
of the ancient
of the miraculous

I am going back to find my future.

*[SUSANA crosses to DOLORES' deathbed, stands at its foot.
DOLORES sits up at the sight of the illuminated figure before her.
SUSANA holds out her arms to her. DOLORES stretches out her
hand to meet her.]*

DOLORES: Mi hija.

SUSANA: I grew wings, 'Amá. Flew over the prison walls, and came to you.
I heard you were dying.

[The lights gradually fade. There is the trumpet call of a lone mariachi.]

End of play

Appendix

Act Two, Top of Scene Ten: Rally Clips, Voices from the Podium

Elder Irish female Immigrant: I came here as an immigrant in 1923. This country grew rich on the immigrant labor!

Mexican female striker: Una vez una policía put his gun at me y me dijo que he shoot me if I didn't leave. Me iba a disparar. Y le dije yo, "Yo tengo cuatro hijos que te van a mantener, but go 'head and shoot me." No me dió miedo, me dió más coraje!

White male Worker: The rich own the factories, but they don't own us. They can't work those factories without us!

Mexican male striker: Eight-five percent of the workforce are women and to me, if we win this strike, it's because the women won it for us. They're on the picket line day and night, rain or shine, cold or hot . . . ! Los hombres no se enfrentaron a la policía. Las mujeres era en frente siempre!

Mexican female striker: Esta huelga para mí es algo fuerte, fuerte. Me ha enseñado a hablar, a defenderme, a decir . . . "No. ¡Ya no! ¡Ya no es justo!"

White male lefty supporter: This is apartheid! The economic base of Watsonville is sustained by the Latino workers, but they have no power base!

Black preacher: *The Book of Revelations* prophesized a New Jerusalem. Watsonville is that New Jerusalem, that holy city, where God dwells amongst us! And as promised in the Scripture, "God will wipe away every tear . . . and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain . . . for the former things have passed away."

Mexican female striker: Los patrones nos hicieron fuertes a nosotros con el matrato que nos han dado. Y ya uno enojado, a ver cuál va a ganar!

PROTEST & PICKET SIGNS & BANNERS:

Standard (Printed by the Union) Picket Signs:

Pájaro Valley Cannery
ON STRIKE
Teamsters
Union
Local 911

Banner at Fundraiser:

PANCHANGA/PARTY
EXPAND THE STRIKE TO THE FARM WORKERS!

Banners at the Rally:

HUELGA DE HAMBRE/HUNGER STRIKE

FE, LUCHA, & VICTORIA
(FAITH, STRUGGLE, & VICTORY)

JUSTICIA, DIGNIDAD, Y VICTORIA!
(JUSTICE, DIGNITY, & VICTORY)

Protest Signs:

Stop the Scabs!
Support Immigrant Labor!
¡Viva la mujer obrera!
Stop Anti-Immigrant Violence!
¡Viva la huelga!
¡No nos vencerán!
Stop #1519.
¡No pasarán!
¡Solidaridad!
Solidarity!
No Human Being is Illegal!

Appendix

LAS CANCIONES

(Songs used in the premiere production.)

"Himno de las razas," danzón by John Santos. Performed by J. Santos and The Machete Ensemble.

"Viva de la unión," décima by G. Gutiérrez. Performed by musicians and cast.

"Mi Patria," décima by G. Gutiérrez. Performed by Francisco Herrera.

"Flores y la felicidad," bolero composed by John Santos. Performed by Enrique Ramírez (lead vocals), Greg Landau (guitars) and J. Santos (percussion, voice).

"Oigan compañeros," duo composed by John Santos. Vocals by J. Santos and Enrique Ramírez.

"Buenos días paloma blanca," canción tradicional. Performed by Musicians and "Guadalupanas" (Veronia Arana, Cat Callejas, Raquel Haro and Nigel Toussaint).

"Desde el cielo," canción tradicional. Performed by Musicians and "Guadalupanas" (Veronica Arana, Cat Callejas, Raquel Haro, and Nigel Toussaint).

"Sabrina," cumbia composed by John Santos. Performed by Enrique Ramírez with J. Santos.

"Raza, Rise Up," lyrics by Cherríe Moraga. Performed by Peter Gómez and his "Back-ups," Veronica Arana, Cat Callejas, Raquel Haro and Nigel Toussaint.

"Como en una telaraña," fandanguito composed by Gilberto Gutiérrez. Performed by Francisco Herrera.

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"The Women of Watsonville," during Wildcat Strike Rally, composed and arranged by Pat Wynne.

Circle in the Dirt

El Pueblo de East Palo Alto

A Stage Play in One Act
by Cherríe L. Moraga