

HIT SONG!

Book, Music and Lyrics by Keith Edwards



© 2015 by Keith Edwards
Registered WGAW

252 W. 30th Street #15
New York, NY 10001
Phone: (520) 780-9336
Email: HitSongMusical@Gmail.com

Synopsis

“Hit Song!” is a new musical about an autistic 12-year old boy who along with his mother is abandoned by his country music star father. When tragedy strikes and his mother takes her own life, his father returns and finds that his son helps him as much as he helps his son as they connect with their mutual love for music.”

Characters

BILLY Phoenix: Johnny’s twelve-year-old son, on the Autism Spectrum. As with many people on the Autism Spectrum, Billy is quirky and has large mood swings. Under stress Billy presents with “hand flapping” and other symptoms. He avoids eye contact and does not like to be touched. Billy has a rich inner-life where he is creative and perceptive.

Johnny “Phoenix” Canyon: Johnny is around 45 years old, and BILLY’s father. He’s a real authentic Nashville country music star, tall and lanky with a great voice, really good rhythm guitar player, and a lot of charisma. He dresses in “Country” style cowboy boots, hat, blue jeans, etc. Johnny tends to drink too much and is prone to telling “half truth’s”.

Lexie Le Barnes: Billy’s school Guidance Counselor about 35 years old. Lexie has beauty, and she’s got grit. She possesses a strong singing and speaking voice. Lexie practices “tough” love.

Karaoke Sue: Attractive “bar fly”. Two-Time Inn Karaoke singer in her 20’s.

Edna Hollobowitz/ Crossing Guard: BILLY’s classroom teacher. Portly, in her early 50's, Edna is somewhat insensitive toward special education students’ needs. Edna sprinkles her vocabulary with Yiddish phrases and words. Doubles as school crossing guard.

Jesse: Bartender at the Two-Time Inn. Very handsome in a rugged way. Jesse is a barroom philosopher in his Late 40's. He has a good singing and speaking voice.

Billy’s Mother: Beautiful, with a great figure, about mid 40’s.

Student: 15 -16yr old school boy(s). Tough guy, and a bully.

Bass Player: 30-something wise-guy bass playing member of the band in Nashville at the Two-Time Inn bar. Often clashes with Johnny.

Jodi Smith: Children’s Social Services agent.

Musical Numbers

ACT 1

1. *Country Rock P.4 JOHNNY*
2. *Let's Get Trivial Pointless facts- BILLY p.7*
3. *Is, When, So, BILLY – P10*
4. *She's One Of A Kind When He's Three Sheets To The Wind p.16*
5. *I Dress Casual – Karaoke Song p18*
6. *Whiskey & Teardrops – JOHNNY/RUSTY p.20*
7. *Sandcastles in the Rain – LEXIE p.27*
8. *Blue – BILLY p30*
9. *The Furniture Song – Instrumental p.32*

ACT 2

10. *Is it true? – BILLY p.35*
11. *Emotional equations - BILLY & Johnny p.37*
12. *I Give My Heart To You – JOHNNY & LEXIE duet p.41*
13. *Songwriting Lesson p.42*
14. *Hit Song – p.46*
15. *Where is There? p.48*
16. *Emotional equations reprise BILLY & LEXIE p.50*
17. *Uh-Oh! BILLY, BILLY – BILLY p.51*
18. *It's A Good Day - Cast – p.55*

ACT 1 SCENE 1

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome back to the Grand Ole Opry Grammy Award winning singer and songwriter, Nashville Country music legend (*like a boxing match introduction*) Johnneeee... Cannnnyonnnn! Cannnnyonnnn!

(JOHNNY CANYON takes the stage. A white-hot spotlight slams into his sequined Wrangler shirt, Studded Wrangler jeans, and a cowboy hat and snakeskin cowboy boots. He holds his red white & blue American flag guitar. He is about forty years old, tall and lanky. A beautiful woman in a cowgirl outfit walks on-stage with a bottle of beer in one hand and a microphone in the other... she appears tipsy).

(JOHNNY addresses the audience).

JOHNNY

Hello, I'm JOHNNY CANYON it's great to be back here in Nashville at the Grand Ole Opry! Say hello to my beautiful wife in the cowgirl get-up. Here's a new one. Its called "COUNTRY ROCK".

(Mumbling into the microphone "To his wife... The wife hasn't even heard it yet – but darlin' just chime in when ya' hear the rhymin!).

(JOHNNY & the BAND rip into a rocking rendition of "COUNTRY ROCK" His wife begins doing a sexed-up country-dance to the music).

Verse 1

I'VE BEEN PLAYIN' WOOD AND STRINGS SINCE I WAS SIXTEEN
BEEN SINGIN' COUNTRY MUSIC SINCE BEFORE ANYTHING
MY FIRST TRUE LOVE WAS THIS FENDER GUITAR
I HELD HER IN MY HANDS KNOWIN' THAT I WOULD BE A STAR

Verse 2

BUT A FEW YEARS LATER I FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL

(JOHNNY motions to his wife, who blows him a kiss, takes a swig of her drink. She seems to be even more “tipsy”).

SHE LOVED MY MUSIC BOY THAT GIRL ROCKED MY WORLD
BUT SHE GOT JEALOUS OF MY SONGS AND NOW THEY DON'T GET ALONG
NOW I'VE GOT TO MAKE A CHOICE BEFORE IT ALL GOES WRONG

I'M CAUGHT BETWEEN MY COUNTRY ROCK AND A HARD PLACE
IT'S EITHER HER OR MUSIC I CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS
WHICHEVER I CHOOSE I'M BOUND TO LOSE
AND IT'S MORE THAN I CAN TAKE
I'M CAUGHT BETWEEN MY COUNTRY ROCK
AND A HEART – ACHE

Verse 3

WELL I'VE LOVED HER SINCE I MET HER I WANT TO STAY TOGETHER
BUT FOREVER'S A LONG TIME TO BE ON THE TETHER
SEEMS I GOT TO MAKE A CHOICE BETWEEN MY MUSIC OR HER
THIS CAN'T HAVE A HAPPY ENDING THAT'S FOR SURE...

(As the WIFE hears the lyrics she stops dancing, obviously displeased with what they are saying. She turns to JOHNNY, and begins to scold him yelling into the microphone. She's definitely drunk.).

WIFE

Wait, wait a minute. WAIT A MINUTE!

(The band, rather than stopping keeps vamping like pro's even under her rant).

Who was it that kept you in guitar strings and beer back when I was waitressing at that shit bar the “Two Time Inn” to finance your music career?

(To the music hall audience).

It was me, that's who, God Damn right! *(Back to JOHNNY)*. You and your motley band would stumble onto the stage drunk, play some crappy cover songs then stumble off the stage even drunker. I got you sober, *(slurring her words)* although that's a relative term. I got you paid a living wage, I did everything for you!

(Turning to the band)

And for you - all ya' worthless shitheads.

*(Sloppily, the band stops playing...
JOHNNY tries to calm the wife down. He
signals for her microphone to be shut off).*

JOHNNY

Honey, Darlin', it's just a country song. It don't mean shit... I mean it don't mean nothin'!

(The people in the audience of the Grand-Ole Opry start to get up and leave).

WIFE

That's right, go home, and "f" you! Just remember, I made.. I made a legend *(like a boxing match introduction)* Johnneeee. Canyon!! Can-Y-onnnn! (To the audience) and that's not even his real name! It's the name I gave him!

(JOHNNY signals for the curtain to be closed. His wife gives him the finger and stumbles off the stage).

JOHNNY

Well folks, that's real country if you ask me. As Hank Williams said in his classic song "Family Tradition" ; Why must we live our lives like the songs we wrote!". See you' all next time.

(Someone shouts from the audience).

AUDIENCE HECKLER

There won't be no next time for you, Phoenix!!

(Stage goes dark).

End of Scene 1

ACT 1 SCENE 2

(Lights come back up. Johnny's wife is in her bedroom, still wearing the cowgirl outfit. She looks older, and is showing the effect of being heavily drugged. She does a few dance moves in front of the mirror).

WIFE

Song: A Woman Scorned

Last time I wore this outfit was at that concert at the Grand Ole Opry. These last six years since JOHNNY divorced me have felt like sixty. I took custody of BILLY, our son. Only decent thing I've done. But who knew anything about Autism when BILLY was four years old? Not me. I've been lonely, one step from being broke, always tired, drunk a lot except when I'm stoned. Cheers!

(She takes her pill bottle and swigs a mouthful of pills, washes them down with a bottle of booze and lies down on her bed).

End of Scene

ACT 1 SCENE 3

SONG: Let's Get Trivial

BILLY

(A classroom had been darkened but we can see tables and chairs pulled to the walls creating a little "performance area". Electronic club music starts in the "dark" and over it we hear a male MC like a boxing match referee, introducing the show).

ANNOUNCER

"Welcome to LETS GET TRIVIAL – POINTLESS FACTS written and hosted by BILLY PHOENIX!!..... PHEEEEE-Niiiiix!!

(BILLY throws a few uncoordinated punches into the air as he walks to the center of the space as a spotlight illuminates BILLY "on stage." He is 14; he is sporting a boom microphone headset a la Michael Jackson, cool blue sunglasses, and a baseball cap skewed to one side, a "hoodie" and light colored pants. We see that BILLY has wet himself but he does not know it.

His audience goes deadly silent as they see this collectively – then they start to get restless and don't know what to do

Through his i-phone BILLY switches on a colorful ever-changing "apple visualizer" which rotates overhead – painting the room

in brilliant ever-changing color - the music amps up).. - the kids start to snicker – the adults look at each other).

BILLY

Are we using the APPLE Visualizer? We are!!

(EDNA Applauds BILLY's opening. Music changes again to Pointless Facts music - BILLY changes his stance).

EDNA

(To LEXIE)

It's a big deal for him to perform in front of us – you have really helped him Lexie.

(A students gets unruly).

STUDENT

What a weirdo! Get off the stage, retard!

LEXIE (to EDNA)

I think we should stop this now!

EDNA

LEXIE, let him finish!

(LEXIE stops the show and turns on the classroom lights – BILLY reacts by flailing arms).

BILLY

(BILLY is shouting).

No, no, no - BILLY isn't finished!

STUDENT

OH GOD! Look he just wet himself! He shouldn't be in our class. Weirdo BILLY.

(Low voice)

Does a Butterfly taste with its hind feet?

(High)

Is it true? It is!

(Now BILLY begins nervous laughter)

Can a Giraffe go longer without water than a camel? Yes it can!

(LEXIE gives him some freedom... and turns off the overhead lights. BILLY takes it, MANIC now).

LEXIE

BILLY, It's a wonderful list - We'll come back and finish it later.

BILLY

Finish it later? No, NO, NOW!

(BILLY can't stop his kinesthetic movements and tries to take his audience back - getting a little more physically in control of himself).

BILLY

Pointless Facts!

(LEXIE seizes the opportunity, takes him by the hand and leads him out).

LEXIE

We just have to get you out of these clothes and we'll come back –

BILLY

(Rocking and fighting as they exit)

No back!

(BILLY spontaneously performs one of his rap poems).

BILLY

Song: Is, When, So,

Is BILLY Phoenix wearing
His COOL blue sunglasses?
He is, BILLY wears them
To all of his classes

When BILLY bought these glasses
He paid a dollar bill
The man said BILLY owed him
Another dollar still

So BILLY asked his Mom
For another dollar more
And so they cost two dollars
At the Dollar Store

Did BILLY Phoenix get his Cool Blue sunglasses at the Dollar Store? He did!

LEXIE

Did you just make that up BILLY? That was wonderful.

(LEXIE addresses the class - BILLY in hand).

(They leave. The class is restless – EDNA HOLLOBOWITZ begins to take charge).

EDNA

(Sternly)

Put the room back – and pack up – the bus will be here soon.

(They are all finished and stand at their desks).

Your behavior earlier was disgusting – no, it’s worse than that – much worse – you were unkind. There is nothing more unattractive than an unkind person.

(Some children listen remorsefully and a few are just making fun all over again – they all tramp out – LEXIE has changed BILLY into fresh clean clothes - a hoodie over a headset, blue sunglasses and sweatpants with the letter “B” embroidered on it. He has forgotten what happened. They are all now outside - at a bus stop - a CROSSING GUARD holds the group before they can cross the street - BILLY catches up to them).

(BILLY begins getting “razzed” by another, older and bigger student).

OLDER STUDENT

There's something wrong with you, BILLY.

(BILLY points to his headset and signals he can't hear).

BILLY

Text someone who cares!

OLDER STUDENT

Everybody thinks you're weird. Like some kind of space monkey with those weird headphones on all the time.

(BILLY takes his headset off, and shouts)

BILLY

Tweet someone who cares!!

OLDER STUDENT

(Sarcastically).

Hey BILLY here's what would happen if you called that girl you like. She'd be like "Oh it's you, you "had an accident" in front of your class! Baby! Click"

(BILLY is getting agitated – hand flaps and hyperventilating).

Oh, it's you again "CLICK", oh it's you, don't call me you weirdo! "CLICK", "CLICK", "CLICK"

(BILLY starts to get out of control. The CROSSING GUARD sees the commotion. She tries to take BILLY'S hand but he recoils).

CROSSING GUARD

BILLY PHEONIX! You should be wearing your headphones. *(To the OLDER STUDENT)* Now you leave BILLY alone he's had enough. Any more of this and I'll call the school AND your mother right now.

(BILLY puts his headphones back on and "hides" inside his "hoodie" shakes his head, sticks out his tongue at the OLDER STUDENT. The Crossing Guard tries again to touch BILLY, who recoils and jerks away).

BILLY PHOENIX. You go home now or I'll tell your mother you've been arguing again with that boy.

(BILLY now speaks with his un-natural alternating low-pitched high-pitched voice).

BILLY

(High) Use your cellphone call *(Low)* someone who cares...

CROSSING GAURD

BILLY, you know you're supposed to use your normal voice. Listen to yourself, please. Try to be self-aware.

(BILLY'S attention goes to what he is hearing through his headphones).

BILLY

Does BILLY listens to music? He does.

(BILLY takes off the headphones and lets the CROSSING GUARD listen to the music. It's just audible to the audience, - it's country music).

CROSSING GUARD

BILLY. You know your mother only wants you to listen to classical music, like Elvis Presley; none of that country music.

(BILLY is back to feeling good and runs off ...and we find his home very close to the school. He is at his gate).

BILLY

Are we in my yard? We are. Exactly ten steps to BILLY and MOM's front door.

(BILLY turns and dances up the steps to his front door counting steps- opens the door and enters his house).

BILLY (cont.)

MOM, BILLY PHOENIX is home! Mom...

(No answer. Ominous music. BILLY looks around but doesn't see his mother. Something is wrong, BILLY looks puzzled. He enters her bedroom looks around and

stares at the bed where his mother, in her cowgirl outfit is lying down,, very still her back to BILLY).

BILLY (cont.)

(Billy enters his mother's bedroom and finds her on her bed apparently sleeping dressed in her cow-girl outfit).

MOM, wake up. *(Laughing)* MOM'S a cowgirl. And I'm the cowboy! Is MOM a cowgirl?

(BILLY moves over to the bed. He shakes his mom but she isn't moving. BILLY finally realizes that there is something very wrong with his mother).

BILLY (cont.)

Mom? MOM!

(BILLY starts manically going through the house, presenting with hand-flapping and other repetitive movements).

BILLY (cont.)

Mom's not waking up. Is Mom sleeping? STUPID CROSSING GUARD! She didn't help Mom. She's supposed to help! Do I know what to do? I know what to do!

(BILLY throws his headphones off and dials 911 on his phone).

911 DISPATCH (Voice)

Emergency services please state your name and the nature of your emergency.

(BILLY struggles to communicate with the person on the emergency line).

BILLY

She's not waking up!! Help!

911 Dispatch

Who am I speaking to?

BILLY

This is BILLY.

911 Dispatch

How old are you? What is the location of the emergency?

BILLY

I'm...

(Low voice) BILLY is at home!! *(High voice)* BILLY is fourteen!

911 Dispatch (Voice)

Where is the emergency?

BILLY

It's at my house! Is it at my house? It is, BILLY is at his house! She won't wake up! Is it true? It is.

(Frustrated, BILLY throws down the phone and screams. He runs out of his house back toward the CROSSING GUARD).

BILLY

She's not waking up!! Help!

(BILLY runs right past the CROSSING GUARD onto the street. The screeching sound of a car skidding is heard).

CROSSING GUARD

BILLY!

(End of Scene)

ACT 1 SCENE 3

(We are at a small, dingy bar called the "Two Time Inn" with a small dingy stage and a small band set up on it).

BASS PLAYER

(Drunkenly) Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome Grammy Award winning Country legend Johnneeee... Cannnnyonnnn! Cannnnyonnnn! Singing his song from yester-year ahhhh. *(Grinning)* Oh Yeah! Country Rock!

(JOHNNY is dressed the same as at he Grand Ole' Opry, but definitely looking "worn" and "threadbare").

JOHNNY

(To Bass player) Listen asshole cut that yester-year shit, or you'll be lookin' for a yester year – job. *(To the audience)* The girls are twice as pretty and the drinks twice as strong here at the Two-Time Inn. Remember your servers... *(Sarcastically)* they got ta' make a fine livin' here just like us on stage... So, Thanks everyone for comin' to the Two-Time-Inn, this very stage is where my career started.

BASS PLAYER

And where it'll finish it by the look of ya'!

(The band members look uncomfortable as JOHNNY shoots the BASS PLAYER a murderous look. The BASS PLAYER gets nervous).

Hey listen y'all, I was just teasin' Johnny about that yester-year shit, wasn't I, JC?

JOHNNY

Ok ladies, gentlemen, and the rest of ya', like I was sayin' here's one you may know, it's called "She's One of a Kind at the Two Time Inn"

(The band starts up. JOHNNY waves his finger around signaling the band to keep playing as he walks over the BASS PLAYER an pours his beer onto the BASS PLAYER'S head).

This Bud's on me, Bud. Just having a little country fun, folks. Here's a song dear to my heart 'cause it happened right here in the Two Time Inn. Don't forget to take care of your server, they got ta' make a livin' too.

Song: One of a Kind.

ONE, TWO, THREE...

LIKE TRYIN' TO STOP A FREIGHT TRAIN
THERE WAS NOTHIN I COULD DO
THE DRINKS JUST KEPT ON COMIN'
AND SLAMMIN' INTO LOU

HE DRANK TO EVERY LIVIN SOUL
AND SOME UNDER THE GROUND
EVERY TIME I TURNED MY HEAD
HE BOUGHT ANOTHER ROUND

HIS WIFE SHE STARTED WORRYIN'
THE WAY THAT WIVES WILL DO
HE WASN'T HOME HE DIDN'T PHONE
SHE BEST COME LOOKIN' FOR LOU

SHE TOOK THE FOUR – WHEEL DRIVE TO THE TWO-TIME INN
WHEN HER SIXTH SENSE SAID HE'D BEEN AT IT AGAIN
SHE'S ONE OF A KIND WHEN HE'S THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND
SHE'S ONE OF A KIND WHEN HE'S THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND

HE WAS ALWAYS GLAD TO LEND A HELPIN' HAND
TO LOU, HIS OLD FRIEND,
SO HE DIDN'T THINK TWICE HE JUST HELPED LOU'S WIFE
GET HIM HOME AGAIN.

WHEN LOU PASSED OUT ON THE COUCH
BACK HOME FROM THE BAR
SHE TOLD HIM THROUGH HER TEARDROPS,
THIS TIME HE'S GONE TOO FAR.

HE FIRST HELD HER RESPECTFULLY,
THE WAY A FRIEND OUGHT TA' DO
BUT SHE HELD HIM LIKE LOVERS DO,
SO HE HELD HER THAT WAY TOO

IT WASN'T LONG 'TILL THINGS WENT WRONG
THE WAY THEY'RE BOUND TO DO
WHEN WHISKEY CAUSED HER TEARDROPS
LOU THE BOOZER WAS BOUND TA' LOSE

THEY TAKE THE FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE PAST THE TWO TIME INN
WHEN HER SIXTH SENSE SAYS LOU'S BEEN AT IT AGAIN
SHE'S ONE OF A KIND WHEN HE'S THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND
SHE'S ONE OF A KIND WHEN HE'S THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND

*(JOHNNY goes to bar, sits and squints with
one eye at the stage.. A woman goes on
stage to sing KARAOKE. JOHNNY and
JESSE THE BARTENDER talk over the
back-round noise of the song).*

KARAOKE SUE

VERSE 1

THE WORKIN' WEEK IS OVER
IT'S FINALLY FRIDAY NIGHT
FELT LIKE FOREVER GETTING' HERE
BUT THAT'S ALRIGHT
DON'T WANNA' LIVE TOO FAST
AND LET IT ALL RUSH BY IN A BLUR

JESSE

Pouring beer on that fella's head is about the least professional thing I've experienced; except for the crappy song she's KAR-A-OK-E-IN' to... Yeah, Sexy KARAOKE SUE, Friday night, right on time.

JOHNNY

DAMN Jesse! I know you know I wrote that song. Why do you have ta' do that? I mean if you don't like the Damn song take it off the Damn Karaoke machine.

JESSE

Well shit JOHNNY, that song makes more money Karaoke-in' in this bar than it did for the guy who wrote it... you! So I can't take it off! Besides, you're supposed to be getting' seven and a half cents every time it gets played.

(Johnny can't help but to laugh at the irony of the situation. He calms down).

JOHNNY

Shit, and you charge the customers what, like two dollars for three songs? And how in Hell do I know that you're reporting the times the song is played so I get paid?

JESSE

Ouch, that hurts, JOHNNY.

JOHNNY

Well, anyway, I just can't wait for that promoter to green light my new tour. I promised him a new song – a hit to promote on the road! ...Haven't written it yet... guess that could be holdin' things up.

JESSE

Can't put the cart before the horse, uh huh.. That Karaoke Sue is a sweetie. Maybe JOHNNY CANYON songwriter extraordinaire should introduce himself to her...

possibly “get some”. Just make sure you don’t “get somethin’” if ya know what I mean.
Haw haw!

(KARAOKE SUE sings far in the background).

KARAOKE SUE

VERSE 2

BUT THE WEEKEND’S HERE
AND I KNOW WHAT I’M SEARCHIN FOR

NOT A WEEKEND FLING
I’M GOIN’ AFTER SO MUCH MORE

I GUESS I LOOK Ok
AND SO I’M OUT THE DOOR

JOHNNY

JESSE, Didn’t you take sex education in school, read about “protection” – or even read any book ... do you ever read anything ‘cept the labels on beer bottles??

JESSE

Hell JOHNNY, I must have read more than twenty “tweets” just today!

JOHNNY:

I rest my case

JESSE

Yes sir, insult my intelligence, will ya’, I’m just as illiterate as the next guy

(JOHNNY’S phone vibrates - he answers it)

Hello? The police? (Pause) Now listen. That DUI class I missed... I can explain.
It’s... WHAT? My ex-wife? Identify her? My son? What kind of accident?

(To JESSE)

Man, it’s my wife. She OD’d herself! My son BILLY found her! He ran into the street and was almost hit by a car, but he’s all right!

BRIDGE

(Playing in the background).

SOME FRIENDS COME EASY
OTHERS COME HARD

SOME YOU HATE TILL'
YOU KNOW WHO THEY ARE
I CAN WAIT TILL' IT'S REAL
NOT ONE NIGHT GONE TOO FAR

(JOHNNY back on the phone)

BILLY is staying with Child Services 'cause of what?

(We see things getting serious as he listens).

Look, I know my last DUI gave me a criminal record, but to deem me unfit to act as a guardian - I'm his father.

(JOHNNY is stunned).

JESSE
Shit Johnny, I'm sorry!

(Pouring Johnny a shot and beer).

This one's on the house. I didn't even know you was married, or had a son.

SONG: Whiskey and Teardrops

JOHNNY

ONCE I HAD IT ALL
FELT LIKE I OWNED THE WORLD
SONG ON THE CHARTS, EXPENSIVE GUITARS
AND A BEAUTIFUL GIRL

I NEVER ENTERTAINED
THOUGHTS OF MY DESTRUCTION
NEVER THOUGHT A GIRL COULD CAUSE
SUCH CAREER DISRUPTION

NOW I'M FEELIN' LOW
SINCE I LEARNED THAT SHE IS GONE
FEELIN TIRED, UNINSPIRED
CAN'T SING A DECENT SONG

I'M THE LONELIEST
MAN IN ALL CREATION
RIGHT NOW MY ONLY FRIEND
IS THIS HERE LIBATION

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
SALT IN MY BEER DROPS
WISHIN' SHE WERE HERE DROPS
BUT SHE'S GONE, GONE

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
THOSE LITTLE CLEAR DROPS
SEE THROUGH MY VENEER DROPS
BUT SHE'S GONE, GONE

THERE'S A PAIN IN MY SOUL
CAUSE SHE CALLED THE OTHER DAY
SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS FLAT BROKE
JUST TWO DAYS SINCE SHE GOT PAID

I SAID IT MIGHT JUST HELP
TO PUT HER FEELIN'S IN A LETTER
SHE ASKED ME TO SEND CASH
BUT I'M NOT DOIN' ANY BETTER

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
SALT IN MY BEER DROPS
WISHIN' SHE WERE HERE DROPS
BUT SHE'S GONE, GONE

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
THOSE LITTLE CLEAR DROPS
SEE THROUGH MY VENEER DROPS
CAUSE SHE'S GONE, GONE

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
SALT IN MY BEER DROPS
WISHIN' SHE WERE HERE DROPS
BUT SHE'S GONE, GONE

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
THOSE LITTLE CLEAR DROPS
SEE THROUGH MY VENEER DROPS
CAUSE SHE'S GONE, GONE

I KNOW THAT MY VICIS
RUIN BETTER MEN THAN ME
PUSH COME TO SHOVE HARDER TO QUIT HER LOVE
THAN TO QUIT MY WHISKEY

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
SALT IN MY BEER DROPS
WISHIN' SHE WERE HERE DROPS
BUT SHE'S GONE, GONE

WHISKEY AND TEARDROPS
THOSE LITTLE CLEAR DROPS
SEE THROUGH MY VENEER DROPS
BUT SHE'S GONE, GONE

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1 Scene 4

(Johnny is waiting in a small room; On a wall a placard says "Department of Child Services." A portly woman in conservative business dress enters).

JODI
Hello, I am Jodi Smith from Child Services.

(JOHNNY shakes her hand)

JOHNNY

Johnny Canyon. I'm sorry – what with the arrangements for my ex-wife's funeral may she rest in more peace than she found in life... I'm... late.

JODI

I am sorry for your loss. I asked to meet with you to explain the “situation” with your son BILLY. I left you several messages... Apparently you have not seen BILLY for 8 years and ...

JOHNNY

Where is BILLY?

JODIE

He has the perfect arrangement actually. He has a councilor with whom he has worked for a number of years at his school – I know her, she is a wonderful woman and she has a spare bedroom and we knew you were on your way...

(Enter MS. LEXIE LE BARNES. She is well groomed, well dressed, and a very attractive thirty-something).

JODIE (cont.)

Oh perfect timing. I'd like to introduce you to Ms. Le Barnes. Billy's Counselor.

(JOHNNY and LEXIE recognize each other).

JOHNNY

Why hello LEXIE. It's been a long time.

(LEXIE flushes when she sees JOHNNY).

LEXIE

Johnny? JOHNNY CANYON? OH MY GOD!

JODI

I take it you two have met?

(JOHNNY and LEXIE lock each other's eyes).

JOHNNY

Long ago. How've you been LEXIE? You sure look great. How's my son BILLY?

(LEXIE is dumbfounded and suddenly sad and angry).

LEXIE

BILLY PHOENIX is your son? I spent two years, two years together with you and not a word about your being married, or having a son, not to mention a son with Autism. Oh my God! Is your name even Johnny?

(JODI is horrified as she senses the brewing storm between LEXIE and JOHNNY. She checks her watch).

JODI

I'm sure I'm late for something! I'll check back later.

(JODI exits. JOHNNY responds earnestly).

JOHNNY

LEXIE, my real name is JOHNNY. I was born JOHNNY PHOENIX, but...

(JOHNNY is flustered and embarrassed - trying to make light of it but can't).

JOHNNY (cont.)

... you know JOHNNY CANYON has a much better ring to it, more "Country", you know, Canyon - Country!

(LEXIE stars disgustedly at JOHNNY).

LEXIE

I can hardly stand to look at you.

JOHNNY

Yeah, I know what you mean. I'm sorry Lexie. I guess I was still chasin' my youth back then. That don't make it right.

(LEXIE tries to stop emotions from spilling out of her).

JOHNNY (cont.)

I have a lot to make up for. I feel like this whole thing with my ex-wife is my fault. I've decided that I'm gonna' raise BILLY like he's my own.

LEXIE

(Incredulously).

He is your own!

JOHNNY

I know. What I mean is ... I am so tired. This is a mess. Where is BILLY now?

(LEXIE pauses not sure she should tell JOHNNY where BILLY is).

LEXIE

He is at my house with an assistant from Child Services. He was too distraught to go to school today. I told him his father was here. I don't know if he remembers you.

JOHNNY

How did he take that?

LEXIE

He didn't react and I didn't push. I am not sure if he is hiding how he feels or not. Autistics can be surprisingly unemotional.

JOHNNY

He sure is lucky to have you to care for him.

LEXIE

I am the lucky one. It's easy to love Billy. He is a great kid. But right now he is disoriented after finding his mother like that. He is not engaging with anyone... not even me. You should know it can be exhausting to raise a boy on the Autism Spectrum.

(LEXIE measures her words).

Especially as a single parent.

(JOHNNY doesn't get the veiled reference LEXIE is making to JOHNNY about leaving his late ex-wife to raise BILLY by herself. Instead, he applies it to himself, and announces haughtily).

JOHNNY

LEXIE, you know when I put my mind to it I can do just about anything, even raise somebody Autistic by my self. I will step up and do the right thing. I know I have a lot to learn about BILLY. What's he like? Does BILLY have a gift? I hear that sometimes-Autistic people are genius's in certain ways, and given that I'm his father, well, you know...

LEXIE

He is talented - he makes lists. It's ... poetic. Lists of color and lists of facts.

JOHNNY

A poet?

LEXIE

Maybe ...and he loves to share! But sometimes Billy spirals down into himself - he becomes subjective - unaware that there is a world out here. But my hope is that - well, sometimes children grow out of autism - they become more conscious of "us" being here - more able to interact and sometimes really excel in some field. In Art, or Mathematics or music. *(Pause)* At school the other day, the morning before his mother passed, BILLY performed a five minute show he wrote for English class called "Let's Get Trivial". It's ironic – a breakthrough step we were hoping for; came and went the day she died.

(JOHNNY can only relate things as they apply to him).

JOHNNY

I would like to take a step myself.

(Pointing a finger at JOHNNY).

LEXIE

Step lightly Johnny. He blames you for his mother's suicide.

(Stubbornly)

JOHNNY

I expected that. God Lexie, how am I going to handle this?

LEXIE

Moment by moment.

(Pause –JOHNNY'S facade crumbles, and he becomes earnest and emotional).

JOHNNY

All I know is that I can't live with myself unless my wife in heaven can look down and see that in the end I'V DONE RIGHT BY HER AND BILLY!! *(Pause)* And I want to do right by you, LEXIE, by us.

(Music begins to vamp. LEXIE responds forcefully, incredulously. She is powerful, angry, and emotional)

LEXIE

There is no “us”! All those sweet things you whispered to me turned out to be lies, lies in the night. Midnight Lies!

SONG: “Sand Castles in the Rain”– Lexie

YOU KEPT
EMOTIONALLY
ONE STEP
AHEAD
THAT’S HOW YOU
CONQUERED ME

I THOUGHT
SO INNOCENTLY
I BOUGHT
IN YOU
BLINDLY I
DIDN’T SEE

CHORUS 1

SANDCASTLES IN THE RAIN
BUILT GRAIN BY GRAIN
ON YOUR MIDNIGHT LIES

SANDCASTLES IN THE RAIN
FELL GRAIN BY GRAIN
LIKE YOUR MIDNIGHT LIES

GUITAR SOLO

CHORUS 2

SANDCASTLES IN THE RAIN
WASH AWAY
GRAIN BY GRAIN

THE FORTUNE AND THE FAME
EVEN YOUR NAME
BUILT ON MIDNIGHT LIES

SANDCASTLES IN THE RAIN
WASH AWAY
GRAIN BY GRAIN

THE FORTUNE AND THE FAME

EVEN YOUR NAME...

SANDCASTLES IN THE RAIN
WASH AWAY GRAIN BY GRAIN

SANDCASTLES IN THE RAIN

LEXIE

For BILLY'S sake I hope you have become a man who can make a commitment and keep it.

JOHNNY

LEXIE, I am that kind of man,. I slipped and fell; I'm only human. That's how it is. But in my heart I'm still committed to you. There IS an "us"... sometimes if a person is in love it's forever – can't take it back, not ever!

(LEXIE begins to soften up her countenance & body language).

LEXIE

Oh God Damn it, JOHNNY I wish you were wrong.

JOHNNY

Wishes don't often come true, LEXIE....

When can I see BILLY?

(Lexie answers with finality).

LEXIE

As far as it goes with Billy for now you may see him at school in the morning for an hour a day. But remember; Child Services ultimately decides on custody for Billy. That's Jodie Smith's job. So now it's very much about you. *(Sarcastically)* You should be quite comfortable with that. Tomorrow. 8:45.... AM

END OF SCENE

ACT 1 SCENE 5

(Next day, LEXIE leads JOHNNY into the classroom. He sits awkwardly on a wooden chair. LEXIE gives JOHNNY a "briefing" on BILLY).

LEXIE

BILLY is traumatized, confused, and recalcitrant. Stubborn. Unruly. Disobedient. Filled with dread and anger and uncertainty.

JOHNNY

The works!

(LEXIE brings out her I-phone)

LEXIE

Look at this, it's something you should see. It's a YouTube video BILLY posted yesterday.

(BILLY, appears on the other side of the stage, and he acts out the video he posted on YouTube.)

BILLY

(Low voice)

BLUE for Mom. Is it BLUE? It is.

(Stage lighting transitions through shades and shapes of different hues of BLUE).

BILLY performs the song with wide emotional range).

SONG: BLUE

BILLY *(Spoken - in INTEREST)*

SKY BLUE, BLUE MOON, BLUE-GREY, CLEAR BLUE,
STEEL BLUE, TEAL BLUE, CYAN, BLUE SUEDE SHOES

BABY BLUE, NAVY BLUE, BLACK 'N BLUE, BLUE MAN GROUP
ALICE, CHALICE, INDIGO, THEATER TROUPE

COOL BLUE, LAPIS LAZUL, EGYPTIAN BLUE, BLUE GROTTA
ULTRA-MARINE BLUE, DENIM JEAN BLUE, COBALT BLUE, BLUE HOLLOW

ROYAL BLUE, SAPPHIRE, AQUA BLUE, DARK BLUE GREEN
CERULEAN BLUE, MIDNIGHT BLUE, FRESCO BLUE, ULTRA MARINE

BLUEBEARD, BLUE BLOOD, ROBIN'S EGG, LITTLE BOY BLUE
BLUE IN THE FACE, BLUEBERRY PIE, BLUEPRINT OF A PLACE, BLUE BAYOU

METALLIC BLUE, MIDNIGHT BLUE,

BLUE JELLO ON BLUE WATER CRUISE

STEEL BLUE, BLUE CRUSH, SING THE BLUES,
PERIWINKLE, TURQUOISE, AZURE, VIOLET HUE

ETON, HAN, MAYA, TURQUOISE, BLUEGRASS MUSIC

(JOHNNY is dumbstruck by BILLY's song.

JOHNNY

Lord have mercy! That boy can string some words together! Easy to tell he's my son!

LEXIE

He plays guitar as well.

JOHNNY

Twelve years old, hmmm. Time to put that boy on the payroll...

(Lexie gives JOHNNY a disapproving glance. BILLY'S scene fades - Lights go dark blue red and out).

Act 1 Scene 7

NARRATOR

Next morning in the classroom BILLY arrives.

LEXIE

(LEXIE addresses BILLY).

BILLY. This is JOHNNY CANYON...He's your father!

(BILLY doesn't acknowledge JOHNNY. Instead he takes his hair and pushes it to hang over his face).

BILLY

Does BILLY PHOENIX have a father? He doesn't, no father. Why is he here?

(JOHNNY speaks earnestly to BILLY)

JOHNNY

I'm so sorry about your mom. I came here to help ...I came here to help you, BILLY.

(BILLY speaks into his smartphone. Voice Recognition software speaks his words).

BILLY

Did JOHNNY PHOENIX leave forever? It is true; he left forever.

JOHNNY

BILLY if I left forever, then how can I be here right now?

(BILLY is getting more upset).

BILLY

BILLY PHOENIX doesn't have a father!!

LEXIE, decides to allow JOHNNY to have time alone with BILLY).

I have a meeting; you two get to know each other.

(LEXIE exits the stage. As soon as she leaves, BILLY starts to lose control).

CUE *The Furniture Song/I Want Mom!*

(BILLY circles the table, knocking over the chairs one by one. JOHNNY follows BILLY for a few laps, righting the chairs. Then JOHNNY starts moving the chairs out of the classroom, leaving only one chair in the room, on which he sits).

BILLY is dumbfounded then enraged as he surveys the nearly empty room. JOHNNY tries to stay calm and sits on the chair and starts to strum his guitar, ignoring BILLY).

(BILLY, angry, to stomp out of the room but he halts. He screams at JOHNNY.)

BILLY

I WANT MOM!!

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2 SCENE 1

(JOHNNY's 2nd morning with BILLY. The chairs are still out of the room except for the one JOHNNY comes in - he sits in the only chair in the room, and starts strumming. LEXIE enters the doorway and pauses, listening to JOHNNY play.)

JOHNNY

That was quite an exciting hour with BILLY yesterday. How is he today... did he come to school?

LEXIE

He didn't want to come – threw a fit – but he is here.

(BILLY walks into the classroom. He puts down his things, walks over to a cabinet and takes out a Chess set. With hoodie up, and sunglasses on BILLY hands a note to LEXIE. She reads the note out loud).

BILLY PHOENIX challenges Mr. Canyon in a game of Chess. Winner gets the chair.

(LEXIE says sarcastically)

Maybe he'll even speak to you.

(LEXIE turns and goes into her office. JOHNNY gets up, and BILLY puts the Chess set on the chair. The two of them sit on the floor facing each other across the Chess set. Without a word BILLY makes the first move).

JOHNNY

Hell, son, that's not much of a first move... there's still time to back out no hard feelin's. After all, me bein' so much more experienced than you; this can hardly be a fair contest. And JOHNNY CANYON is nothin' if not fair...

(JOHNNY makes his move. BILLY scribbles something on paper, walks over to LEXIE's office, and hands her the note. She follows BILLY back to the chess game and reads the note to JOHNNY "You talk too much". She hands the note to JOHNNY and walks back to her office.

(BILLY puts his hands over his face and chuckles.

BILLY

Har-dee-har....

(He makes a move and the two trade moves back and forth. BILLY scribbles a note, walks over again to LEXIE's office and hands her the note. LEXIE follows BILLY out of the office and once again reads the note to JOHNNY. The note reads "Check". JOHNNY looks perplexed).

LEXI

Check.

JOHNNY

Check what, son?

(BILLY looks directly at JOHNNY, scowling and speaks to JOHNNY for the first time).

BILLY

CHECK MATE! CHECK MATE! CHECK MATE! CHECK MATE!

(BILLY violently sweeps the chess set off the chair).

Does BILLY PHOENIX get the chair? He does! GIVE BILLY THE CHAIR!!

(Stunned, JOHNNY concedes the chair to BILLY. BILLY takes control of the chair like it is a trophy. He gets out his smartphone and takes a "selfie").

JOHNNY

Well, son. Ya' sure fooled me.

BILLY

True? Not true. JOHNNY CANYON fooled himself.

JOHNNY

Yeah son, you got me. It is true.

(Slowly, painstakingly JOHNNY draws BILLY into a conversation. JOHNNY puts on his guitar).

BILLY

It is true.

JOHNNY

Son, you remember this one? Just Chime-in when you hear the Rhyme-in'.

(JOHNNY begins to play "Country Rock") BILLY recoils).

BILLY

Mom didn't like that song. She said its garbage? It is. We think its garbage! *(pause)* I THINK IT'S GARBAGE – BILLY thinks its garbage. MOM and I were here first. And MOM and MS LE BARNES were good for BILLY. But now you're here too! And I know you love MS. LE BARNES!

Song: Is It True? It Is! - BILLY

YOU TOOK MOM
NOW YOU WANT LEXIE TOO
IS IT TRUE, IT IS – (High Voice)
IT IS TRUE

IT'S YOUR BETRAYAL
THAT'S OFF THE SCALE
LIKE SOME VIDEO GAME
THE AV-A-TAR'S MY NAME

YOU TOOK MOM
NOW YOU WANT LEXIE TOO
IS IT TRUE, IT IS – (High Voice)
IT IS TRUE

WELL YOU'RE NOT SURE
OF WHO YOU ARE
YOU'RE TOO OLD
TO BE A STAR

ALL ALONE
ALONG THE TRAIL
YOUR COLOR FADED
PALE

YOU TOOK MOM
NOW YOU WANT LEXIE TOO
IS IT TRUE?– IS IT TRUE? (High Voice)
IT IS TRUE!

Drum Fill

WE WERE DIFFERENT
YOU AND I
FOR YOU IT WAS TOO HARD
YOU LEFT US HIGH AND DRY

Break

Bridge
DON'T YOU RECALL
YOU HAD IT ALL

HAPPINESS WITH YOUR FAMILY?
HIT SONGS, A WIFE, AND YOU HAD ME.

YOU SAW SOMEHOW
I WAS DIFFERENT THAN YOU
IT WAS TOO HARD
YOU DID WHAT YOU ALWAYS DO

RUN AWAY,
HIDE AWAY
IT WAS TOO TOUGH
FOR YOU TO STAY

IS IT TRUE? IT IS... (High Voice)
IT IS TRUE! IT IS

IS IT TRUE? IT IS...
IS IT TRUE? IT IS...
IT IS TRUE!

(JOHNNY pauses... he is totally flabbergasted)

JOHNNY

What? BILLY, believe me. IT'S **NOT** TRUE!

BILLY

But JOHNNY CANYON loves MS. LE BARNES! YOU TOOK MOM
NOW YOU WANT LEXIE TOO!

(JOHNNY, looking at BILLY cannot bring
himself to deny it. He takes his hat and
exits).

(BILLY to himself).

Ms. Le Barnes says emotions are like equations (Low tone). EMOTIONAL
EQUATIONS! Think BILLY (High tone). Think BILLY, Think!

1.) MS. LE BARNES + BILLY – JOHNNY = MS. LE BARNES MISSES JOHNNY

2.) MS. LE BARNES + JOHNNY – BILLY = EQUALS BILLY MISSES MS. LE
BARNES, AND HAS NO FAMILY.

3.) BILLY + JOHNNY – MS LE BARNES = EQUALS BILLY AND JOHNNY MISS MS. LE BARNES AND BILLY STILL HAS NO FAMILY.

4.) MS. LE BARNES + JOHNNY + BILLY = BILLY AND MS. LE BARNES STAY FRIENDS, BILLY HAS A FATHER, MS LE BARNES STAYS WITH JOHNNY.

5.) JOHNNY STAYS AND BILLY GETS HIS FATHER BACK.

6.) STEP 4 + STEP 5 = BILLY HAS A FAMILY!

THAT'S IT!!

(The nut has been cracked! There is hope that BILLY can cope. Everything seems finally be ok between them).

END OF SCENE

ACT 2 SCENE 2

(EDNA HOLLOBOWITZ's classroom. BILLY is seated with his head on his desk as MS. HOLLOBOWITZ speaks).

EDNA

Today's assignment will be your Term Paper. The topic will be yourself, your life. This assignment will count for half of your grade. And remember, English is a core subject... if any of you fail this class, well, to put it plainly you will have to attend summer school.

BILLY

(Freaks, Yelling)

No summer school!

(MS. HOLLOBOWITZ tells BILLY to stop yelling. She hands out an instruction sheet. Suddenly BILLY bolts from his desk, out the door, and straight to LEXIE's office. BILLY hands LEXIE the assignment, he is distraught, shaking.)

BILLY

NO STUPID TERM PAPER!

(LEXIE, alarmed, sets BILLY up on a computer and makes a call to JOHNNY.)

LEXIE

Hello, JOHNNY, it's Lexie. BILLY is melting down because of an assignment he either doesn't understand it or just won't do.

JOHNNY

I'll be there in ten minutes.

(EDNA enters LEXIE'S office. LEXIE checks watch).

LEXIE

Go back to class now Billy. We will solve this - it will be ok.

(BILLY exits)

EDNA

I've had enough of these never-ending disruptions... I probably should not have signed off for BILLY to be in a mainstream class.

LEXIE

His father will be here shortly.

EDNA (cont.)

Good – because I am required to notify him formally

(JOHNNY arrives)

JOHNNY

Notify me formally of what?

(LEXIE introduces JOHNNY to MS. HOLLOBOWITZ)

LEXIE

JOHNNY Canyon, I would like to introduce you to BILLY'S English teacher MS. HOLLOBOWITZ. MS. HOLLOBOWITZ. This is Johnny Canyon, Billy's father.

EDNA

Good to meet you. I am required to formally notify you that BILLY will not earn a passing grade in my English class unless he fulfills the requirement to write an autobiography. Today as I was assigning the Term Paper he stormed out of my class. I am aware of Billy's Autism and the recent tragedy you and he have experienced, and I would like to extend my condolences. However, the best course of action is for Billy to be held accountable for his responsibilities. A failing grade in English will hold Billy back; "pushing him through" because he is Autistic is out of the question. He'll have to complete the work. I do not believe special needs students should be treated "special." All students have problems, ambitiously propping them up, Mr. Canyon, solves nothing.

(JOHNNY is combative, matching her aggressiveness)

JOHNNY

I don't have-enough *ambition* to prop anybody up! Me and you have something in common, we both want to teach BILLY.

(EDNA corrects Johnny's grammar).

EDNA

That would be "You and I" Mr. Canyon. *You and I*. *You* have something in common, and *I* have something in common. You always place yourself last. Simple grammar.

JOHNNY

Put myself last huh?

(LEXIE tries to make light)

LEXIE

Well, that's not always Mr. Canyon's style...

(JOHNNY is visibly put off).

JOHNNY

No teacher's going ta' keep my son back 'cause of an autobiography? MS. HOLLOBOWITZ ain't it occurred to you that BILLY'S "autobiography" will end with his mother's suicide? Sweet Jesus, what are you thinkin'?

EDNA

Correction; hasn't it occurred, not "ain't" it occurred. You can murder the English language in your country songs; however I will not be complicit in that crime in my own classroom. In any case an autobiography is the story of someone's life in his or her own words... refusing to write it won't change BILLY'S past.

(JOHNNY reacts angrily. No-one really knows what to do for a few moments; and then LEXIE gets an idea.)

LEXIE

What if Billy writes an autobiographical song? A list of his life as he views it. It might take pressure off of him. Johnny, you can help him - that will give you a chance to connect with BILLY through your music... Edna, I think that is a fair deal. What do you say?

EDNA

Agreed. (To JOHNNY) Lexie always leads the charge to resolution! But remember Mr Canyon, proper grammar counts toward BILLY'S grade!

END SCENE

ACT 2 SCENE 3

(LEXIE'S apartment, BILLY is in bed already. LEXIE and JOHNNY are having a drink).

LEXIE

I have a feeling you might be able to really help BILLY... and me.

(They laugh at the dig)

JOHNNY

How's that? I want to right some of the wrongs in the past. I want to take care of BILLY... what if I said I want to take care of you too, LEXIE? You've always been the one for me, that hasn't changed. Somethin' tells me you might still feel the same about me.

SONG: *I Give My Heart To You* LEXIE & JOHNNY

LIKE A RIVER TO THE SEA

YOUR LOVE ALWAYS REACHES ME
SOMETHING KEEPS IT ON ITS WAY
IT'S FATE AS SURE AS NIGHT AND DAY

IN THIS CRAZY WORLD WHERE
THINGS CHANGE SO FAST
I STILL BELIEVE IN LOVE THAT LASTS
STANDING HERE FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE

I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU
JUST LOOK AND I'LL BE THERE
YOU KNOW THAT I'LL BE TRUE
I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU
IT'S WRITTEN IN THE STARS
I WON'T EVER BE TOO FAR
MY HEART BELONGS TO YOU

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES
THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE TO ME
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

IN THIS CRAZY WORLD WHERE
THINGS CHANGE SO FAST
I STILL BELIEVE IN LOVE THAT LASTS
STANDING HERE FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE

I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU
JUST LOOK AND I'LL BE THERE
YOU KNOW THAT I'LL BE TRUE
I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU
IT'S WRITTEN IN THE STARS
I WON'T EVER BE TOO FAR
MY HEART BELONGS TO YOU
MY HEART BELONGS TO YOU

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 2 SCENE 4

(JOHNNY teaches BILLY to write a song. LEXIE is there filming it)

JOHNNY

OK, “A” is the Verse. “B” is the Chorus, C is the Bridge. The verse begins the song, sets it up, get’s you in the mood. The Chorus is the “hook”, it gets you “hooked” into singing it in your head. The Bridge takes a step back and reflects on the Hook.

(Indignantly)

BILLY

What? No. BILLY makes lists, not reflections. No reflections.

JOHNNY

It’s simple, like the alphabet. A is the Verse, B is the Bridge, C is the Chorus. So we say the form of a song is AACBC –

Verse

Verse

Chorus

Bridge

Chorus

That’s a song, that’s it!

(BILLY is paying attention, nodding his head but not really “Getting it”.)

BILLY

AACBC... Verse, Verse, Chorus, Bridge, Chorus. What is a “Verse”? What is a “Chorus”? I know what a “Bridge” is... it crosses the river...

(JOHNNY realizes this business of teaching BILLY may not be as easy as he thought).

JOHNNY

Hmmm... Well, anyway now let’s get to the rhyming.

(BILLY lights up)

BILLY

Like Hit Song! Chime-in with the rhyme-in’.

JOHNNY

Excellent!!

(JOHNNY moves toward BILLY to give him a hug but BILLY recoils. JOHNNY remembers that BILLY doesn’t like to be touched, and sadly lowers his arms.)

BILLY do you remember your nursery rhymes?

BILLY

Mary had a little lamb it's fleece was white as snow. Did the lamb have white fleece? It did. What is a fleece?

JOHNNY

Hmmm. It's like a winter coat. Moving right along. BILLY, here's what we call "Meter." It's just like rhymin' words only you're rhymin' the beat instead.

Da ta Da Ta Da Ta Da Ta Da Ta - Da Ta Da
Mar-y had A lit - tle lamb- whose feet-were white as snow.
Da ta Da Ta Da Ta Da Ta Da Ta - Da Ta Da
And Ev-ry where that Ma-ry went the lamb was sure to go

BILLY

Do the "Da Ta Da's rhyme? They do, the rhythms rhyme.

(BILLY'S a little confused but JOHNNY pushes on).

JOHNNY

So that's a "verse" right there BILLY! What shall we call this new song?

BILLY

We can call it HIT SONG! Is it a HIT SONG! It IS!

JOHNNY

HIT SONG! I like that- but what's a HIT SONG like?

(BILLY concentrates on rhythm and rhyme, and spontaneously creates a list. JOHNNY feeds off of BILLY'S creativity).

BILLY

Like wearing a super cool bathing suit

JOHNNY

Ahh Haa.. A HIT SONG'S LIKE WEARIN' A REAL NICE SUIT

BILLY

Like goin' into school in alligator Cowboy boots

JOHNNY

LIKE GOIN' TO THE BAR IN THOUSAND DOLLAR COWBOY BOOTS

BILLY

Like on Fourth of July shootin' off a bottle-rocket

JOHNNY
A BULLET ON THE CHARTS RISIN' LIKE A BOTTLE ROCKET

BILLY
It's like a pack of M & M's in your front pocket

JOHNNY
A HIT SONG'S A LUCKY CHARM IN YOUR POCKET

(JOHNNY starts to take off with the song)
IT'S A LOT LIKE A TWENTY DOLLAR BILL
SO THE MATRA-DEE SEATS YOU AT A REAL NICE TABLE

LIKE A TEN-DOLLAR TIP GETS YOU A FREE SHOT

BILLY
A HIT SONG surely does help a lot... What's a "free shot"?

*(Johnny panics a little as to what to tell
BILLY).*

JOHNNY
AHH, WELL, IT'S LIKE PLAYIN SOCCER – A FREE KICK).

JOHNNY, BILLY, & JESSE" the BARTENDER
(In harmony).

HIT SONG!
HITSONG!

*(JOHNNY stops singing... Billy can't stop,
goes on alone).*

BILLY
Like goin' to school in' really cool sunglasses

JOHNNY
OK BILLY, THAT'S IT

BILLY
Like a snow-day when they cancel your classes!

OK BILLY!! THAT'S IT GIVE IT A REST!

(BILLY stops singing, he's giggling, LEXIE Narrates to the audience).

LEXIE

JOHNNY thought he had found a new calling, a new self-fulfillment helping BILLY in a way that he felt only he could do. Learning that BILLY knew how to play a little guitar, JOHNNY did what JOHNNY always had done; created a platform to launch another "HIT SONG!" He couldn't help himself, and he used every means at his disposal... including the Pathos BILLY's Autism could muster from his audience..

JOHNNY

BILLY, I do believe I've done it! It's a hit!

(Johnny takes out his cellphone and calls RUSTY at the Two Time Inn).

RUSTY! Listen man, I need a gig pronto. You're booked? No man, just bump that Karaoke girl off the schedule. I'm gonna' get that Record Company man to come to the show at Two-Time Inn.... and I'm gonna' blow him away!

End of scene

Act 2 Scene 5

(Johnny is at the Two Time Inn, on-stage with a small band and BILLY who is sporting an acoustic guitar. They are "auditioning" this new act and new for the "Record Man". They perform part of the new "HIT SONG!" song (a teaser) for the RECORD COMPANY MAN is "knocked out" by the new song, and, the "slant" JOHNNY creates; a twelve year old autistic wordsmith savant onstage performing HIT SONG! with his father, the veteran JOHNNY CANYON).

BASS PLAYER

Ladies, gentlemen, welcome to the Two Time Inn, where the drinks are twice as strong, the women twice as pretty, and the music twice as good. Let me introduce Two - Two Time Inn guests JOHNNY CANYON and his twelve year old son, young BILLY PHOENIX... Pheeeee - Niiix!!

(BASS PLAYER to JOHNNY)

Hey there Mister Cannn yy oonnn... You been holdin' out on us....

(JOHNNY gives the BASSIST a “Shut Your Trap!” look).

JOHNNY

Ladies and gentleman, and all the rest of ya’. You may be aware of somethin’ called “Autism”. It’s kind of a different way of acting and of thinkin’ that is being diagnosed in our kids more and more. I think in a way it’s like borrowin’ talent in one thing, and addin’ it back somewhere else. So for example my boy BILLY PHOENIX he’s not one for talkin’ much or socializin’ ... but he’s got a way with words, makin’ lists and since he and I got back together after his mom’s passing, BILLY’s turned all that into, well, writing songs! Just listen to this one BILLY wrote the words to. It’s called **HIT SONG!** Right to the point, he’s his daddy’s son, sensational!!

(JOHNNY acknowledges someone out in the audience).

Hello Mr. Record Company man!! Here’s somethin’ to “Tour about”!!

SONG #1: Hit Song! – JOHNNY & BILLY

(JOHNNY leads the band, and sings. BILLY strums his guitar playing chords).

Two, Three, Four...

(Short musical Introduction)

A HIT SONG'S LIKE WEARIN' A REAL NICE SUIT
GOIN' TO THE BAR IN THOUSAND DOLLAR COWBOY BOOTS
A BULLET ON THE CHARTS RISING LIKE A BOTTLE ROCKET
A HIT SONG'S A LUCKY CHARM IN YOUR POCKET

IT'S A LOT LIKE A HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL
SO THE MAITRE' DE SEATS YOU AT A REAL NICE TABLE
LIKE A TEN DOLLAR TIP GETS YOU A FREE SHOT
A HIT SONG SURELY DOES HELP A LOT

HIT SONG!
HIT SONG!

(Song ends).

End of Scene

ACT 2 SCENE 5

(LEXIE, BILLY and JOHNNY, arrive home from the TWO TIME INN. It is late everyone is tired. BILLY goes into his room OFF STAGE. We see that LEXIE is somehow disappointed and emotional - as the moments go by she becomes angry, righteous, and can't stay silent. JOHNNY does not notice, He is drunk).

JOHNNY

LEX, did you see how that Record Company Man practically cornered me after we did "HIT SONG? He's gonna' set up a tour for me and BILLY... you can home-school him on the road! Man, he's gonna' be the Autistic kid hit songwriter, with his dad the veteran country music star. Hell of a great way to start a tour! It's like I been given a new life!

(LEXIE is distracted - she doesn't know how to approach this situation. JOHNNY takes a drink).

LEXIE

I've got to say, that hook in HIT SONG Leaves you with something to think about. When did you write that? It sounds familiar.

JOHNNY

LEX, you know great songs always sound familiar.

LEXIE

The songwriting lessons you gave BILLY...

JOHNNY

Yeah, that's it...

LEXIE

Do you think I'm a fool! Do you? Whether they play guitar or not, no-one twelve years old, even an Autistic savant can take a few songwriting lessons and come up with that.

JOHNNY

Why Hell, LEX. Thanks for joggin' my memory. Songs are somethin' we discover, we don't write 'em. I just helped BILLY find this one. LEXIE, you heard the Record Company man... I blew him away...middle of the night and he's probably on the phone settin' up the tour.

(LEXIE looks astounded)

LEXIE

You're using BILLY, aren't you? You can't write a Hit Song of your own... so you steal BILLY'S ideas, pump them up, put a spin on it and out comes your incredible son, BILLY PHEONIX, Autistic songwriting savant. A curiosity guaranteed to fuel another tour for you.

JOHNNY

What are you sayin'? It's like, all in the family, ya know!

LEXIE

It's about ethics. Honesty – but what did I expect from you. It's my own fault.

(Silent pause).

LEXIE

BILLY doesn't even realize what you have done, taken his creativity, and you, acted as a “ringer” setting him up as a “songwriting Savant”. He's got talent but you are abusing your position as his father.

JOHNNY

Listen LEXIE; some of the money I make will go into a college fund for BILLY! What else do you want? It's too late anyway, LEX. Cats out of the bag. What do you want me to do?

LEXIE

Start with telling Billy the truth. You have a chance to give him pride in himself, but what you're doing is setting him up for a fall. He can't realize how he fits into the bigger picture; he is Autistic – don't you get it?

Song: Where Is There?

LEXIE

WE SAY WRITE YOUR LISTS YOU'LL MAKE IT
JUST CREATE AND YOU'LL GET THERE
BUT THE CAVEAT WE ALL FORGOT
IS WHERE OH WHERE IS THERE?

IF HE'S HEADED WHO KNOWS WHERE
THEN DON'T ALL ROADS LEAD HIM THERE
IF HE'S THERE RIGHT FROM THE START

(Spoken)

HE WONDERS, “WHY SHOULD I DEPART?”

WHERE, WHERE OH WHERE IS THERE?
WHERE, WHERE OH WHERE IS THERE?

(JOHNNY just can't do it).

JOHNNY

It's too late for hindsight LEXIE.

LEXIE

The courts wouldn't think it's too late! Especially when you take the money.

JOHNNY

You're threatening me? I'll give him money! I'll fix it so he'll learn to write a hit song himself, so back the fuck off. What are you going to do... sue me for crediting somebody... my son, with authorship? Besides, Jesus Lexie what's the big deal? Don't you remember the Monkees? Milli Vanilli, Paula Abdul!! THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY!! It's called the Music *BUSINESS!! Everybody steals from everybody! I'M NOT EVEN NOT STEALIN', I'M GIVIN' SOMETHIN' AWAY!*

LEXIE

I'm not buying it, even if it's free. I am no longer someone you can tell half-truths to, I won't listen to your Midnight Lies even in broad daylight!

(JOHNNY calls BILLY into the room).

JOHNNY

"BILLY, please come out here". *(To BILLY)* You know the words in that song, the one we call "HIT SONG! I shouldn't have said you wrote those words without asking you first. Truth is you have some real wisdom Billy and a lot of talent, but son, you gave me some ideas but I wrote the song; it's wrong for me to say you wrote it. That'll make sense to you someday. I'm sorry for lying to you, son. Can you forgive me?

BILLY

Can BILLY PHOENIX keep a secret? He can, he can keep a secret. "BILLY PHOENIX lets JOHNNY CANYON off the Hook!!" Get it? The Hook to a song!!"

(BILLY laughs as his own humor. He takes a few steps away from JOHNNY and LEXIE and becomes lost in thought. He speculates out loud).

SONG 11

"EMOTIONAL EQUATIONS II"

BILLY

- 1.) MS. LE BARNES - JOHNNY + BILLY = MS. LE BARNES MISS JOHNNY? SHE DOES. MIGHT SHE LEAVE BILLY FOR JOHNNY?
- 2.) JOHNNY – MS. LE BARNES + BILLY = JOHNNY TAKES BILLY FAR AWAY. BILLY MISSES MS LE BARNES. NO FAMILY! NO LET’S GET TRIVIAL!
- 3.) MS. LE BARNES + JOHNNY + BILLY = BILLY AND MS. LE BARNES STAY FRIENDS. MS. LE BARNES STAY WITH JOHNNY AND BILLY HAS A FAMILY!!
- 4.) BILLY STAYS WITH HIS FAMILY = BILLY CAN PERFORM LET’S GET TRIVIAL!
- 5.) LET’S GET TRIVIAL + BILLY = NEW FRIENDS!

END SCENE

ACT 2 SCENE 7

(In the schoolroom as in Act 1 scene 2, the chairs and tables dragged off to the side and the class is dark. A light falls on BILLY).

BILLY

Good morning Murphysborough Middle School! I’m BILLY... BILLY PHOENIX! Welcome to my show “LET’S GET TRIVIAL”. Is this the special “TERM PAPER AUTOBIOGRAPHY” episode?

CAST

It is!

BILLY

(Billy takes a piece of paper from his pocket and reads out-loud).

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY is an account of a person's life written by that person. Lets all do it! A Musical Autobiography is the story of... ME!!

(The light hits a new pattern featuring Fractal Chaotic Images The Cast race onto the stage to perform "Pointless Facts" a song/ dance production number - a big number in a little room!!!!)

Cue Let’s Get Trivial – electronic club music

(On backlit screen, or any chosen media, the words "LETS GET TRIVIAL!" are projected along with swirling psychedelic lighting framing lists of colors. BILLY has perfected his dance moves he is doing the "Robot", the "Moonwalk", and other moves he is improvising. He dances flawlessly.)

BILLY

Song: Uh Oh Billy Billy!

HELLO I'M BILLY...
BILLY PHOENIX
I JUST TURNED 13

I GET UP EARLY
EVERY MORNING
TO START MY ROUTINE

BE KIND ENOUGH
AND PLEASE ALLOW ME
TO OFFER YOU MY
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BILLY PHOENIX
ASTRONOMICAL - MAN
GRADUATES SCHOOL
WITH A BOLD PLAN

RIGHT AFTER COLLEGE
NOT MUCH TIME GOES BY
HE JOINS THE SERVICE
HE LEARNS HOW TO FLY

HE SEES SOME ACTION
FLYING HIS MISSION
COMPLETES EACH NEW TASK
WITH GREAT PRECISION

UH OH! UH OH! UH OH! BILLY BILLY
UH OH! UH OH! B-BILLY BILLY

BILLY PHOENIX

SPACEFLIGHT AVIATION
FLIES THE SHUTTLE,
WORKS ON THE SPACE STATION

UH OH B-BILLY BILLY
WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE
SPACEWALK'S TO
FIX THE HUBBLE

COMMANDER OF
OP-ER-ATIONS
VIRGIN GALACTIC
SPACE VACATIONS

BILLY PHOENIX
PIONEER
CHOSEN PERSON
OF THE YEAR!

UH OH! UH OH! UH OH! BILLY, BILLY
UH OH! UH OH! OH! BILLY, BILLY

THIS GUY'S CRAZY
JUST LIKE A FOX
AT HIS ZENITH
OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

AT HIS APOGEE
BILLY'S REALLY HOT
MONETIZING HE
REALLY MAKES A LOT

UH OH! UH OH! UH OH! BILLY, BILLY
UH OH! UH OH! B-BILLY, BILLY

ASTRONAUT
BEYOND COMPARE
SPACE COWBOY
EXTRAORDINAIRE

*(On the other side of the stage a spotlight
slams into JOHNNY who is wearing a white
sequined shirt, cowboy hat, cowboy boots,
and sports an acoustic guitar with an
American Flag design. He and JESSE
launch into a Full version of Hit Song!*

BILLY crosses the stage and strums rhythm guitar with them).

SONG #1: *Hit Song!* – JOHNNY, JESSE

TWO, THREE, FOUR...

A HIT SONG'S LIKE WEARIN' A REAL NICE SUIT
GOIN' TO THE BAR IN THOUSAND DOLLAR COWBOY BOOTS
A BULLET ON THE CHARTS RISING LIKE A BOTTLE ROCKET
A HIT SONG'S A LUCKY CHARM IN YOUR POCKET

IT'S A LOT LIKE A HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL
SO THE MATRE' DE SEATS YOU AT A REAL NICE TABLE
LIKE A TEN DOLLAR TIP GETS YOU A FREE SHOT
A HIT SONG SURELY DOES HELP A LOT

HIT SONG!
HIT SONG!

WHEN YOU GOT A GOLD RECORD THAT'LL SAY IT ALL
LIKE A HARVARD DIPLOMA HANGIN' ON YOUR WALL
PEOPLE SEE IT AND CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE
YOU'RE A BIG SHOT WITH HALF A MILLION UNITS MOVED

AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS THAT TOOK A LONG TIME
A THREE-CHORD DITTY WITH THIRTY-TWO LINES
LIKE GREASIN' THE WHEEL WITH A THOUSAND DOLLAR BILL
INSTEAD OF PUSHIN' ROCKS UP AND OVER A HILL

HIT SONG!
HIT SONG!

A HIT SONG WILL MAKE YOU A HEAVY HITTER
THEY'LL ALL BE TALKIN' BOUT' YOU ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER
YOU'LL SING YOUR SONG ON LATE NIGHT PRIME
YOU'RE AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS IT ONLY TOOK A LIFETIME
(WITH A THOUSAND PEOPLE WAIT'N OUTSIDE IN LINE)

LADIES LOVE A MAN WHO'S GOT A HIT SONG
WHEN YOU'VE GOT A HIT SONG NOTHING CAN GO WRONG
EXCEPT IT GOES FROM NUMBER ONE TO NINETY-TWO
AND YOUR PRETTY GIRL DECIDES IT'S TIME TO LEAVE YOU

HIT SONG!
HIT SONG!

HIT SONG!
THREE MINUTES OF FAME
HIT SONG!
SO THEY KNOW YOUR NAME

HIT SONG!
HIT SONG!

(As the intro to the next song plays; “It’s A Good Day to Believe”, a multi-media projection begins with photos of BILLY, JOHNNY and LEXIE as they could be in the future. It’s a “This is Your Life” kind of scene that portrays BILLY living out a normal, worthwhile, “fulfilling” life despite the difficulties and stigma associated with his disability).

(Montage of the possible future with JOHNNY, LEXIE, and BILLY:

- *JOHNNY with BILLY and LEXIE at amusement park*
- *JOHNNY with BILLY and LEXIE—on stage with him in concert.*
- *BILLY graduates college.*
- *LEXIE & JOHNNY have a child.*
- *BILLY getting married*
- *JOHNNY, BILLY and LEXIE along with BILLY’s newborn.)*

ENTIRE CAST FINALE In front of the images

SONG: “It’s a Good Day to Believe”

Verse 1

WHEN YOU LEARN TO BELIEVE
THAT DAY WILL BE A GOOD DAY
IT’S LIKE ONCE YOU WERE BLIND
BUT THEN YOU SEE ALL THE WAY

Pre Chorus (Walkup)

JUST, BELIEVE,
THAT’S THE WAY THAT WE’LL ACHIEVE

Verse 3

CON-VEY-ANCE TO OUR HAPPINESS
TAKE OUR PLACE IN SPACE AND TIME
WITH OUR LOVE WE WILL LIBERATE, INVIGORATE
COMMISERATE, OUR MIND

LIBERATE, PREDOMINATE
COMMISERATE YOUR FATE AND MINE

Chorus 1

I JUST WANT TO SAY
IT'S A GOOD DAY TO BELIEVE
LISTEN WHILE I SAY
IT'S A GREAT DAY TO BELIEVE

Verse1- a

WHEN YOU LEARN TO BELIEVE
THAT DAY WILL BE A FINE DAY
IT'S LIKE ONCE YOU WERE BLIND
AND SUDDENLY YOU CAN SEE

4 bar interlude

Pre chorus (walkup)

JUST, BELIEVE,
THAT'S THE WAY THAT WE'LL ACHIEVE

Verse 3

CON-VEY-ANCE TO OUR HAPPINESS
DES-TI-NY IN SPACE AND TIME
WITH OUR LOVE WE WILL COMMISERATE
PREDOMINATE YOUR FATE AND MINE

Chorus 2

I JUST WANT TO SAY
IT'S A GOOD DAY TO BELIEVE
LISTEN WHILE I SAY
IT'S A GREAT DAY TO BELIEVE

Verse1- c

WHEN YOU LEARN TO BELIEVE
IT'S A GOOD DAY

Pre chorus (walkup)

JUST, BELIEVE,
THAT'S THE WAY THAT WE'LL ACHIEVE

Verse 3

CON-VEY-ANCE TO, OUR DES-TI-NY
TAKE OUR PLACE IN SPACE AND TIME
WITH OUR KISMET WE COMMISERATE
PREDOMINATE YOUR FATE AND MINE

END OF PLAY