

# **LOOSE HOG**

By  
T.K. Lee

# LOOSE HOG

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## LOOSE HOG

*He who learns must suffer...  
By the awful Grace of God.*

- *Aeschylus*

LOOSE HOG

**LOOSE HOG** was originally produced under the title *Loose Hog in the House of God* through Billiam Tree Productions and premiered at the Rose Firebay Theatre, in Bloomington, Indiana, on September 9, 2004, under the direction of Danielle Bruce with Amanda Renee Baker as assistant director. Set design was by Jim Hetmer; sound/lighting design by Michael Paolini, and with the following cast:

YINNIE.....Nicole Bruce  
MACON.....Mike Price

**LOOSE HOG** was the 2004 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival One-Act award in 2004, presented as *Loose Hog in the House of God*, in its festival run March 15-20, 2005, in conjunction with the 2005 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival, both at the University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center, and again, on the stage at One-Eyed Jack's, in New Orleans, Louisiana, directed by Lori DeWitt. Scott Cally served as technical director; Jordan Scott, stage manager; Jessie Tyson, props; Gordon Smith, sound; and Rachel Levine, lights, with the following cast:

YINNIE.....Suzie Johnson  
MACON.....T. Joe Siebert

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**LOOSE HOG** was produced, again under the title *Loose Hog in the House of God*, by Starkville Community Theatre, at the Playhouse on Main in Starkville, Mississippi, on January 15, 2006, for the Mississippi Theatre Association Festival receiving Outstanding Achievement in Acting for both leads, and Runner-Up for Best Production, under the direction of Marcus Vowell with Andrew Watkins, assistant director; Thomas LaFoe, scenic/lighting design; Krista Vowell, costume design, with the following cast:

YINNIE.....Deanna Dye  
MACON.....Gabe Smith

**LOOSE HOG** was as an official showcase selection of Jook’s Third Annual Southern Playwrights Showcase, sponsored by Jook Productions, and subsequently remounted as *Loose Hog* in a professional staged reading, on April 24, 2023, at The Arcade in Memphis, Tennessee, under the artistic direction of Randy Redd, with Taylor Newby as dramaturg, and directed by Ashley Kate Adams with the following cast:

YINNIE.....Vivie Myrick  
MACON.....Will Draper

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## Cast of Characters

MACON                      in his early 20's, at most  
YINNIE                     in her indistinguishable youth

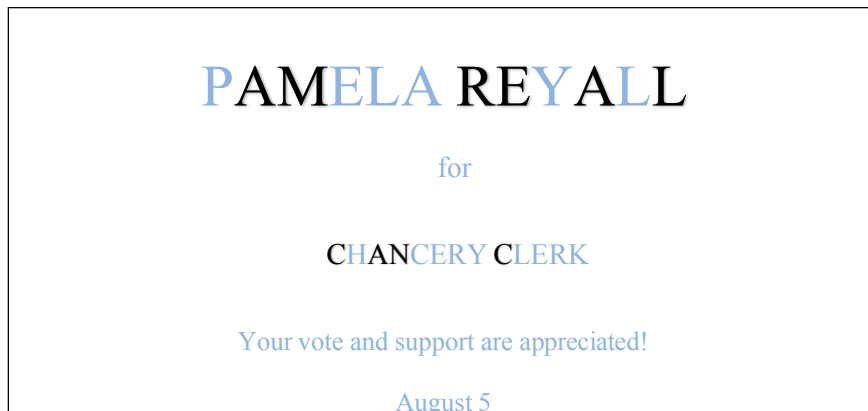
### Setting

An off-ramp, defunct from lack of use, sitting high above a quiet country highway, in the red clay hills of eastern Mississippi, populated by nothing but a few tall loblolly pine trees, scattered scrub bush, and an old billboard sign.

### Time

The world of this play is caught in the myth of a present moment in which Time has been stopped, if you will—a consequence of the actions of one man—and where we find a typical, warm evening, hanging over a forgotten off-ramp that rises above an old highway winding through the quiet red clay hills of eastern Mississippi. Only a portion of a neglected guardrail can be seen, curving away in both directions from a weathered billboard sign that is somewhat centered and nestled among a few loblolly pine or mockernut hickory trees, perhaps a stray patch of switch cane. The billboard is dimly lit both from the footlights attached along the thin catwalk in front of it and from the two ground lights, one of which might flicker brighter and then duller on occasion, positioned at the base of it. The billboard is adorned with writing that is mostly faded but for in a few distinct places. The action of this play is continuous.

NOTE 1: Regarding the writing on the billboard: **On the sign**, though barely legible, is a political candidate's vote reminder. The background is, by now, a dirty eggshell white. The lettering is very weathered and badly faded dark blue with an obvious effect across the entire billboard of age and wear & tear. The following letters, though, have retained enough of their ink to be legible: **A, M; R, E, A**, and one **L; C, A, N** and then the last **C**. It should read as follows:



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*AT RISE: We catch the last light of day and dusk, making its exit, and leaving before us, in its retreat, a section of a decommissioned off-ramp, that sits up above a quiet, old country highway in the eastern part of rural Mississippi, a region known for its red clay hills that, when looked at, with sentiment, against the light of dusk or dawn, can momentarily give the illusion of mountains, perhaps in their untested youth, basking in an orange wash; in fact, they are hills shouldered together in clumps of such natural order that, when pressed, will buckle into fleshy, earthy heaps of ocher clag, at the first gathered fall of rain. At center, though not at true midpoint, and in dominant fashion, rises an aged billboard sign fenced in by a dented, rusted section of metal guardrail that appears from upstage and runs in front of the billboard and out of sight downstage. It is a warm evening—a new moon hangs in a starless sky.*

*YINNIE is sitting behind the billboard sign, and perhaps we may see her feet dangling, but we are not necessarily drawn to the fact of her. Headlights signal a car approaching, a car that we will have heard is in trouble, barely making it this far up the hilly exit before dying. After a handful of disturbing stalled cranks, the last one held for far too long, until it becomes clear the engine has not survived, and apparent that the car is now useless. For several uncomfortable minutes, we bear witness to the rise of an unseen wild and live anger. An anger that should sound desperate, unhinged and then re-hinged. The young man we are about to meet is a wounded animal.*

**MACON.** *(off stage) Goddamit! (A car is kicked, hit, punched, beaten, and a car door is slammed, a hood is popped and slammed, etc.) Goddamn...shit, shit, shit. Motherfu— You piece of shit— fuck. Fuck. Shit. (MACON continues kicking and cursing for several minutes, subsiding into a panicked rise and fall of shock as he runs*

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*momentarily onstage and into the quivering glow cast off from the footlight or two pointed toward the billboard from the ground, facing up as the ones on the billboard itself are feeble or broken. He swings back and forth between emotions: anger, panic, desperation, shock, etc. In those few moments when shock grounds him still long enough, he holds his cell phone up, moving about in different spots onstage for “reception,” but after several attempts, he cannot find a signal and he gets enraged again as he comes further downstage, frantically trying to get his bearings about him, looking furtively left to right and becoming a tangle of emotions: mad, angry, exhausted. He paces, trapped. He checks his phone again, nothing, and in a moment of frustration, he throws it away from himself, collapses to the ground. A moment passes and he pulls himself up by the guardrail, stares up at the sky, takes a deep breath and then hollers out to the wild around him. He may at this point begin to cry, to heave, to sob, to collect himself before dissolving again. After another round of this hysterical cycle, he appears to reach a more stable level of calm and in this moment, he retrieves his cell phone. Still no signal, a battery weakening by the minute. He affirms a private thought to himself and exits: He intends to grab his backpack, and gun (which he hides under his shirt, in a belt, perhaps) and start running. We hear more rummaging in the car, and a final solid door closing shut rather than slamming shut. During his tirade, Yinnie, has briefly appeared from behind the billboard, standing; she has been silently watching him through his earlier throes of angst, bemused as much as amused in her ethereal way, but she slips back behind the billboard out of his sight, though not ours, when he returns. She remains standing still, but now we can see her watching as he re-enters, panic rising as he looks about to see which way he wishes to run. A direction chosen, he takes off but stumbles and we see the gun fall away from him. He pulls himself to his knees, clearly stressed, but picks up the gun and holds it in hand. He mutters to himself, and makes his way back toward the guardrail. He decides not to run and instead to climb over and then*



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*pull the trigger, but he stumbles again over his own step, and drops the gun again. He retrieves it; fidgeting, he checks the gun cylinder for the bullets. There's a long moment of silence as he contemplates. During this moment, she starts humming, softly at first, barely audible it seems, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." He becomes aware, and she hums a little louder. She stops after one whole verse and chorus and we are left to sit in silence. She slips behind the billboard again. It's a tense silence. As he tries to look around without looking around, the four remaining bullets in the cylinder - he forgot to close and lock after checking - fall out. He tries to retrieve one; he can't manage to do that and look around for the threat he fears is hiding behind him now. He's shaking and angry; eventually, he gives up trying to retrieve the bullets, and pretends to load the gun. He cautiously straightens up, raising the gun to face his threat as he turns. Nothing is there. Then, she steps out from behind the billboard, and he responds as if in a dream, or as if he isn't sure he's really heard anything at all, a tilt of his head perhaps. She slips back behind the other side of the billboard and as he comes back into himself, suddenly becomes anxious, even as he begins shaking, overwhelmed, again. He points the gun in the opposite direction, unsure of where she's gone).*

**YINNIE.** *(A sweet but pointed laugh)* Like I didn't see you drop them bullets on the ground. Ain't much of a gun without the bullets. Ain't even a gun then, really, is it. *(He looks at the ground at the bullets and then up and finally at the billboard but doesn't clearly see anything)*. It's also rude to point. It's rude to interrupt, too, which you have done, by the way, interrupting me, but that can't be helped now...however, you can stop pointing. *(He hesitates but lowers the gun; however, he holds onto it. She moves further into the light)*. Thank you. I hum every day at this exact time, in this exact spot. You wouldn't know that, I suppose, but that's what you've interrupted, all the same. And while you're not the first to do it, and you won't be the last one either, I do believe you about

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the loudest one. Did you like it, though, the song I was humming? It's "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." The name of the song, in case you wondering. It has the distinction of being the first ever song I learned by myself from reading the words on my own, I mean. I was six or, maybe, I was seven. It was a long time ago, so that's why I hum it every day so I don't forget the words or how the song goes. *(She steps around to the front of the billboard. He isn't sure that he's seeing what he's seeing, and he watches perplexed unable to see her clearly just yet. He says nothing)*. Can you understand me or do I gotta have a dirty mouth like you... *(He says nothing)*. One of those huh. Quiet type. Takes all kinds, they say. *(And now we can all see her fully in the light, and she gives a small, short laugh)*. When I was eleven, or, maybe I was twelve, yeah...yeah, I was. Twelve. Good, old twelve. That's that age, twelve. When you start to hate the playground, like the swings but not the seesaw, yet, like one day you're on the monkey bars, and the next, you're behind them. Silly, ain't it. But. Still. Twelve's the last good year any of us ever get, I'd argue...*(she looks at him coyly, and he's still silent, so she continues)* Maybe it's different for boys but, I'm getting ahead of myself. Sorry. I was telling you about when I was twelve, and in school, and the teacher had us go around the room saying out loud what we want to be when we grow up, and when she got to me I said I wanted to be whoever They was when I grew up. The teacher said what does that even mean, who is They? And I said I don't know. And she said why on earth do you want be that then? And I said because They know everything! Because They always saying This and That and she interrupted me, said to give her an example. So I looked her right in her face and said, Like, you know what **They** say, *Hindsight is 50-50*. And she said, that's not correct, *They say Hindsight is 20-20*. And before I could help it, I hollered out, So you do know who They is?! That's the They I'm talking about. She turned flat red as a tomato, and said, My god, They isn't a

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person, it's a pronoun. She said, Don't you know all the pronouns and what they're called? To which I said, No ma'am, it don't appear I do any more than you know the names of all the people on this earth, or above and below! She didn't say another word to me the rest of the day...but she couldn't have even if she'd wanted to because she sent me to the principal. *(She's paced in and out of light, and around the billboard, etc. during that explanation but now she stands in the fullest light; he hasn't moved, or not much, and still tight-lipped)* Still nothing, huh. *(a noticeable sigh; she then pretends he's said something)* What was that? *(he reacts physically, but says nothing, but she carries on as if he's asked her a question)* Oh! I sit up here all night long sometimes — I like it right here...better than up in one of them trees. Or even down on the ground like you. I like this height, but only this high. I desire a smidge of height which you can't get easy in one of these trees. I didn't figure that out until I'd decided this one time to climb every single tree you can lay your eyes on up here. I had to because I was dared to do it. By me. My mistake was starting out on the wrong tree. I'd told myself to take it slow on account of siding with caution, which came out to about one and a sixteenth of a limb every ten minutes, with me meaning to go all the way to the top, but I didn't make it and I've had to live with that fact. *(He says nothing and she cocks her head as if she's listening to him ask another question, which he isn't. but she responds accordingly)* Because I believe in facing a fear, that's why! Which I did and it counts even if I didn't get to the tip-top. All They say is to face your fear, not fight it, or feed it, or fix it, or anything. Just to face it. And I did. Besides, more than half the reason why I didn't reach the top was because I couldn't, on account of the leaves. They gave me the itch, a terrible itch. *(He doesn't answer, resolutely trying to avoid this sudden change in plans; he begins slowly pacing, a thinking tiger, pacing, looking in all directions, eventually coming to a rest staring*

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*out into the night*). How do you fit that many dirty words in one mouth...your Mama nurse you on mud? *(He says nothing but he stops moving; she steps in and out of the light again)*. I bet nobody ever beat you at the Quiet Game. I for sure couldn't...no, my strength is in a different kind of patience. I ain't going anywhere, so when you find you some other words, or wash and towel off the ones you know, then maybe we can introduce ourselves, like the civilized do. It might be nice to have a conversation.

**MACON.** *(finally)* Then, don't hide.

**YINNIE.** I don't believe I am.

**MACON.** You don't have to hide.

**YINNIE.** I don't hide.

**MACON.** I can't see you. That's hiding.

**YINNIE.** I know what hiding is.—/

**MACON.** I don't like talking to what I can't see.—/

**YINNIE.** You can't see what you don't look at. *(He reacts to that; she remains unseen)*.

**MACON.** Let me get a good look at you then, let me see you.

Lemme see who's talking to me... *(She stays hidden somewhat)*

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Fine. Fine! Stay where you are then, fuc—.... *(A small pause)* I, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. *(A studied laugh)* I

don't...don't mean...to—I realize I'm imposing, by being here, and I'm, I apologize. I don't mean to. I don't. I shouldn't even be here, and I'm, forgive me, I do better with my thinking out loud, that's all I'm doing. You'll have to forgive me please. Please. I'll be on my way soon as I can work out how, sorry if I interrupted your, your song...*(Pause. Complete silence. He's looked out to the highway, he sees the gas station but acts as if he hasn't)* I have a question, if I...can I ask you a question?

**YINNIE.** So far. *(He is a barely able to contain a rising fury and, perhaps nearing a complete breakdown but despite being almost beyond the pale, he struggles with staying present even as he catches her tone, and it forces him to re-assess his situation, to breathe through and to consider the few angles he has left if he hopes to get*

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*on his way. He looks every which way and, out of any other ideas at the moment, he grabs the guardrail, looks out into the night and exhaling, he drops the gun, bows his head. Whatever he's motivated by at this point, it does have a genuine feel to it. This causes her to step into full view on the billboard, as she gives him a good long look. He wrestles with his urge to cry, perhaps losing a small time or two. She simply stares at him until he collects himself by breathing in and out away from her direction, and after he steadies himself, somewhat, tries a new angle, suddenly quite calm and gentle).*

**MACON.** *(He takes a moment to fully look at her)* I'm lost. *(She stays on billboard but moves closer to him).* I promise I, I don't mean to to bother you, I took a wrong turn, obviously, I'm only passing, uh, through, and *(he gestures to the car off stage)* I need to find, or I need to get to...to—help. Or, or even. Or a phone. And. Can you help me? That. That's my real question.

**YINNIE.** It's also your second question. I don't like it as much as your first one. So, I'll let you ask a third one for good measure—*(She suddenly moves toward him, in a friendly way, and he is transfixed by her presence, watching her every move as she walks the length of the billboard toward the ladder to descend. He appears to be staring at the billboard sign itself. She waits until she reaches the ladder to speak. She leans her head against the billboard. A moment passes and she nods her head as if she'd been talking with the billboard before she begins to walk the length of the billboard, tracing the letters of the name spelled out across it)* Go ahead, if you want. Read it on out loud. I'd like that! I mean, that is, if you can read. I don't know what you were learning to do when you were seven. But if you can, then do it. *(He doesn't understand what she means exactly).* These are all good words, and you need some of them to chew on in that mouth. I'll help you, I'll pretend I'm the teacher... *(She repeats the tracing out of the first letter a couple of times until he understands)*

**MACON.** P? P?

**YINNIE.** *(She gestures to the last name next)* Yes!

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**MACON.** P-A, M-, E-, Pam, Pamela—

**YINNIE.** Mmhmm.

**MACON.** R-, E-, it's an R-, and an E-, Re—(*He moves closer to the billboard*) I can't. It's too faded, the other letters—/

**YINNIE.** A “Y” comes next. R-E-Y.

**MACON.** Y, Rey—(*frenetic but appeasing*)

**YINNIE.** And that's “A-L-L.”

**MACON.** Oh. Ok, then, “Pamela Rey.”

**YINNIE.** (*She realizes his mistake and laughs*). I was reading out to you the other letters, A-L-L. That's R-E-Y and that's A-L-L. Reyall.

**MACON.** Pamela Reyall.

**YINNIE.** It's a pretty name. I wish it were mine, sometimes I pretend it is... (*He becomes impatient again, and anxious*) She wouldn't mind one bit. She was a good sister. (*He stops suddenly and tenses up*). But now, I only pretend it's my name! I wouldn't never take it. You shouldn't never take names from the dead, period. Well, you shouldn't never take names from the dead, comma, especially the dead you knew, period. Everybody knows that. She was Chancery Clerk. But. She used to tell anybody who'd listen that she wasn't no politician. That's a bad word to a lot of people—hey!, you ought to add it to your collection; see, I'm fair!—no, she said, she was an elected official, that they didn't necessarily mean the same thing. So to please never call her no politician. (*She has now chosen to climb down and he moves toward her slowly, mesmerized*). And people liked that. They liked her! And the rest, as They say, is history, kinda like a fairy tale. Once upon a time, there was a Chancery Clerk, and every day she was a Chancery Clerk, then one day she was re-elected to Chancery Clerk, and then she always was Chancery Clerk, over and over, until she wasn't...because they had a habit of re-electing her, but things happened she didn't like, to be fair, and she had to help the bad people too, not just the good. Politics makes for strange bedfellas, that's something else They like to say—/ (*He starts to interrupt but she's disappeared around the back of the billboard. We see only her feet as she comes around*

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*again, and he becomes alert, waiting, inching closer to the billboard. She pops around in full view from the opposite end of the billboard). In fact, in some bed, probably, right now, asleep, in some house right out there, one you likely drove right on by, is the very person who knows what happened to her. Since they the ones who did it to her. But they ain't talking unless it's in their sleep. (This throws him off, he is consumed again with remorse).*

**MACON.** *(This makes him very aware; he looks very deliberately and slowly out into the night)* I'm sorry. I didn't know.

**YINNIE.** That's good. Because I'd sure have more than three questions for you, if you had. *(She scoots closer in his direction, but from the billboard still)* Speaking of... you got one more to ask.

**MACON.** *(Back to reality)* Right, yes, thank you, thank you. How, how far it is to the next gas station—/

**YINNIE.** *(Pointing)* That one right there that we can see, that you musta drove past...is the only one. For miles and miles if you looking from that direction, and from the other direction, for just miles. Or no, maybe it's five miles. Which is almost to Sugar Lock. You don't look like you drove through Sugar Lock. Believe it or not, they isn't a single gas station in town here...That's all we got right there. *(She points offstage and looks in that direction; perplexed; she looks again)* I guess they ain't got all the lights on. *(He moves closer, looking in the same direction. After a moment, she sees more lights. He, for the first time, begins to feel he may make his escape after all).*

**MACON.** *(Looking where she points)*—that, that won't be too bad a walk, then, I guess. Not if we can see it from here, like you said, right, means it can't be too far to walk to.

**YINNIE.** Everything's too far when you want to get to it. *(He moves toward the end of guardrail closest to the gas station).*

**MACON.** I can see it from here, though, so so if we can see it, it can't be too far. Right.

**YINNIE.** I wouldn't say that about the moon.

**MACON.** I don't need the moon.

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**YINNIE.** *(Casually)* I didn't know...*(He continues)*.

**MACON.** That, that, it can't be, what, much more than a mile...*(He tries to figure out what his next move should be)*

**YINNIE.** It ain't...for a crow.

**MACON.** ...for a crow?

**YINNIE.** Unless you go by wing, you gonna have to get back down, and then walk up and down a gulley or two, that's what you drove over, if they were flat, it'd be more like—/ *(He's already collecting his thoughts and making new plans, and he gathers up anything he's dropped and exits to the car for other things, perhaps)*.

**MACON.** *(off stage)* That's all right, that's all right, thank you, thank you...for your help—/ *(We hear a door creak open)*

**YINNIE.** I got more help to give! *(A brief silence and we hear him perhaps in the car, digging for change, etc. and then the car door shuts; he barely enters the light)*

**MACON.** I'm good. I'm good. Thank—/ *(He exits)*

**YINNIE.** Now no number of quarters will work on that pay phone they got. Because they don't got a pay phone. They just got the...booth, guess that's what you call it. Phone's long gone. So that makes a phone booth, nothing but a booth. *(We hear his crunching gravel as he walks away)*.

**MACON.** *(off stage)* Thank you...it'll be—/

**YINNIE.** *(She moves to the side of the billboard closest to where he exits)* It'll be better to likely go your way, if they're open. *(Dead silence. A moment, and then we hear the crunching gravel get closer, as he returns)*.

**MACON.** Why wouldn't they be open. You said. They. They're open. It's a goddam truck stop. It's a goddam truck stop on a goddam highway. They. Are. Open, they're open, they have to be open, they have to be, I see lights, now, see? See the lights, we can see the lights, lights mean they're open. *(He might pace again, planning)* They're open, they have to be...

**YINNIE.** That ain't the right kind of lights. Stand still a minute so you can get done seeing and start looking. *(He stops and stares off at*



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*gas station*). That there.. That's the outside lights. There aren't any lights on inside. *(She gets as close as she can from the billboard toward the gas station; indignant)*. No, I don't believe those are on—they should be *(intrigued)* that's a first. *(He stares out at the night and we may see him ball up fists and struggle with controlling another outburst, which he does, for the moment; he slumps and drops the backpack)*. I'm having quite a day of Firsts. If you asked me, just this morning, for instance, who I thought the most hot-collared, red-blooded man I knew was, I'd have said my daddy, but I never seen a man holler so long and kick so hard and curse so loud at a car, not like the way you did...and to come out looking as clean. No, this morning, I'd have said if you'da asked me, I'd have said my daddy, but even though you and my daddy seem to be cut from the same piece of raw split leather, you got a little bit more of the split...

**MACON.** *(He takes several sharp breaths and mumbles, perhaps counting to occupy his mind and temper. He stares hard in the direction of the gas station; a move catches his eye further and then he decides to walk to the gas station)*. It's open. It's open, I, someone's down there. Or they will be by the time I get there. *(He gestures at the gas station)*. Or maybe...they must've pulled around back...*(He nods, renewed energy)*.

**YINNIE.** A bad habit of his. I 've told him and told him, don't pull around back. People think you closed! *(He pauses and is confused. She moves away from him, but turns and sizes him up)*. We sure are different, me and you. I'm starting now to think you lack imagination! You wasted one question, but that turned into two questions, which, on account of my good nature, I made into three, and you still haven't asked me why I'm up on this billboard? That right there boggles the mind...if I saw someone just standing at random on a billboard, I'd feel almost compelled to ask. I mean it's a little late in the day for standing at random on billboards, wouldn't you say? That's what I wish your question had been...because it's the kind of question what shows you're interested in your company ...so I'm gonna pretend you had manners enough to know that. *(A*

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*change in tone and playfully aware*) Like this: What another great question you have thought to ask of me concerning this billboard, and one that shows you are interested in my company! *(She disappears momentarily to move toward the ladder to climb down. Her silence suddenly catches him off guard and turning he notices she's gone. He moves to the billboard, almost beneath it. She suddenly reappears; it startles him)*. I like being on this billboard. It's a sweet spot of not too high, not too low. It's a perfect split in the middle, I can look up and look down without getting a crick in my neck or a nosebleed. I don't get light-headed. That's the beauty of The Middle. That's why it is always the safest place to be, the world over! You should strive to be caught in the middle, I always say. I guess you are, huh. Caught in the middle of nowhere ...so don't waste it. *(She disappears again, he moves closer; then she reappears next to the ladder again, but in the light; she suddenly stops, exhales and smiles)* Listen to me! The Lord. Up here talking away like I don't have any manners myself. I need to do better setting an example. Forgive me and let me correct that right now: My name is Yinnie. Your name is? *(No response; she steps into the light more)*. That's right, you gotta be able to look at me, to talk. Here I am. Now, you do it back. I am Yinnie and...no, wait, wait, this is awkward, me all the way up here... *(She heads to the ladder to climb down and some of this line may be heard more than seen)* We need to meet proper on equal footing, toe-to-toe. *(She begins to climb down but she misses a rung and nearly falls, which causes him to rush to her to help but she catches herself before he can get to her)*. I been practicing how to sleep standing up lately and I think I've gotten too good at it. *(She gets one foot on the ground, but the other gets caught a second on the last rung. She frees her other leg from the rung, and briefly falls into his apprehensive arms; an awkward moment)*. Jelly for legs. Jam for feet. *(He feels uncomfortable suddenly being so close to her. He pulls away towards the guardrail again. She moves toward him and offers a hand)*. Hello again, and for the first time. Name's Yinnie...

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**MACON.** *(She still has her hand extended but he doesn't take it).*

Macon. I'm...Macon.

**YINNIE.** Macon. Ma-con. Perfect name for an angry man.

**MACON.** I'm not, it's not that...it's not just that, I'm in a hurry...and I, I have a headache, uh, uh, a migraine. I get them a lot...*(He takes off his glasses for emphasis)* and, and when I do get a migraine, it messes with my vision. Gets me all confused, sometimes. And these glasses, I couldn't see, to—/

**YINNIE.** They break? *(She mindlessly reaches out for the glasses but he pulls them away quickly and puts them back on).*

**MACON.** No, no, I meant with the migraine, couldn't see well enough to pay attention to where I was going, and that's that's how I ended up here. Now that I think about it, I think I thought I was turning into that gas station. I don't mean to be in your way...just need to be on mine, so I can, uh, get...to Kentucky, eventually, if I can get, at least, get to Tennessee, tonight. But *(he gestures again to the car)*

**YINNIE.** Your car.

**MACON.** Yeah, yes, my car, and *(He gestures with the cell phone)*

**YINNIE.** Your cell phone.

**MACON.** No reception, battery about dead , no charger...

**YINNIE.** You don't know how lucky you are then. Imagine if you'd gone on up this road—you woulda gotten stuck and you woulda gotten out of that stuck car thinking you could get it unstuck and then you'd have drowned...because, if I'm being honest, you strike me as the drowning sort...convinced that stubborn ain't nothing but smart looking for a way to shine.. The road runs out about half a mile on up and then what dirt that counts as road past that the rain took out...and the bridge too. And I think, barring you dying from drowning that it'd be kinda worse to have a car stuck but still running than to have one that isn't running but still could. If it's a lot of rain, if it's a little rain, doesn't matter...every rain, takes out that wood bridge, it sits too low over the creek anyway, but nobody complains because the Mennonites build it right back each time off

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their own dollar...they use it for baptizing. The road on the other side of the bridge ain't nothing but more of this kind of loose gravel. *(He reacts to this slowly in his body, a deep breath that exhales into an assault on the guardrail, as he begins to kick the guardrail, further denting it, and continues kicking even as she reprimands him.)* Stop that. Stop! Stop it! Stop that right now! *(She moves toward him and he stops).* You are defacing public property which is illegal. Kicking a guardrail qualifies as defacing public property. You can go kick and curse your car long as the Lord leaves you a leg to swing, but that guardrail don't belong to you. In fact, where that guardrail is concerned, it belongs to me, like it does everyone else who lives here...which you don't. You seem bound and determined to be mad, though I can't figure out over what...other than the car, and while, as far as troubles go, that might be enough to be considered unfortunate, it surely is not worth defacing public property...for that matter, it ain't gun-worthy neither. But since you wanting to get mad, I'll just go on and let you know this ain't the road anyway to get you to Kentucky, or Tennessee—it's a dead end. Comes up to this side of Mr. Gerald's cows...they'll bite you and look at you while they do it. What you wanting is Highway 25. *(She points at the highway, but he isn't looking at her. He doesn't respond. He braces against the guardrail and looks down, heaving but collecting himself. She moves further away and inspects the ground when she comes across his bullets. She picks them up, one at a time. He doesn't notice. After inspecting them, she decides on the bullet she thinks is "prettiest," and throws the rest down the hill, except the one she chose which she puts in her pocket)* I'm glad I don't have no car to break down, myself, but that don't mean, now that, I'm not sorry about your car. *(He doesn't respond; she repeats it with emphasis)* I said I'm glad I don't have no car to break down, myself, but that it don't mean I'm not sorry about your car. Is what I said.

**MACON.** I heard you.

**YINNIE.** I never had me a car, so maybe I shouldn't have said what

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I said. *(He curses under his breath and starts pacing, his mind racing to the point that he is jarred by her presence again when she speaks).* I hate you're in such a hurry.

**MACON.** *(He stops and looks up at her, almost as if he'd forgotten she was there).* I am. Though. Yes, yes, right, I should be. I gotta, get on my way, uh...uh...thank, thank you again, thank you, I'm sure somebody at that gas station can help. I'll, I'll take my chances...

**YINNIE.** I doubt that. *(He crosses to his backpack)*

**MACON.** *(He hesitates)* Doubt what...?

**YINNIE.** You, to take your chances. *(He looks perplexed).* What if this here's a chance? All you busy trying to do is walk away from it. *(This gives him pause to consider that, after all, nobody knows he's here).* I know you needing to call somebody and let them know where you are but you don't even know that. *(He begins to nod slowly, accepting this news).* The things you don't know! You didn't have any manners in conversation, proven before and after interrupting my song, and now you stand there without any manners still on complimenting...hadn't said a word to me about my new dress. My brand-new dress! I guess I'll forgive you that, too, because, again, you wouldn't know it's new...but you would know whether you liked it or not. Not that I mind if you do or don't because I happen to like how I look in it. But manners being manners...? *(A little presentation at first).* This is my new dress. My Aunt Gilly made it. *(She lifts dress up to her knees to show the underside of the seam).*...see how fine and thin that is...like a doll's dress. That's what I asked her for—/

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