

THE WIND FARMER

a play by Dan O'Neil

SYNOPSIS

A rookie field representative makes an unannounced visit to a remote farmland in an attempt to both purchase a portion of the farmer's land for wind development and to help him save the farm from collapsing under a mounting debt soon to come due. As a storm blows in, the two men face off over the windiest land in America. The farmer's daughter has other ideas and sees the field rep as her way out. By morning, the futures of both the field rep and the daughter as well as the that of the wind farm and perhaps the world hang in the balance of a dead man's signature. The powers shift. The pinwheels spin. The turbine takes over.

CHARACTERS

LEO, bright eyes focused on the future, gray suit, male, 30.

RAMONA, sun-bleached from a lifetime outdoors, female, 24.

PALMER, a farmer, often in bare feet, male, 50's.

TIME & SETTING

Present day: The windiest farm in America

SCENES

One. *A dirt road.*

Two. *A farm house.*

Three. *A dirt road.*

Four. *Inside the house / The front yard*

Five. *Inside the house but changed.*

Six. *A field.*

Seven. *Outside the house / Inside the house.*

Eight. *Morning (inside the house.)*

Nine. *The back yard.*

SCENE ONE

A dirt road.

Sudden excessive wind.

A car wheel rolls across stage.

RAMONA appears, stops the wheel with her foot.

After a moment, LEO appears, out of breath.

RAMONA

I thought you were part of a dream.

LEO (*assessing the wheel situation*)

Uh -

RAMONA

Last night I dreamt a man in a gray suit and hat kept rolling a wheel back and forth outside my house, back and forth until there was this worn tire track in the grass.

Right out here, by the perimeter, along the property line.

And, well, *you're* wearing a gray suit and hat and I thought maybe I was still -

I'm not still dreaming, am I?

What *are* you?

LEO

I'm...uh ...Leopold.

RAMONA

Hi Leopold, I'm a Ramona.

You a tire salesman?

LEO

Hi Ramona. I'm not a salesman.

Thank you for stopping my tire but can I grab it now?

RAMONA

You got dirt all over your suit!

It's such a nice suit too.

What are you doing, wearing a suit out here?

Where you from?

What are you *doing* here?

LEO

Uh, well if you just slow down for a second -

RAMONA

Am I talking fast? Sometimes I talk to the livestock, but they don't tend to talk back so I tend to talk fast because I'm not used to the response part. Let me get that dirt off your suit-

LEO

No, no, it's not dirt, it's grease.
From the wheel. I think I bent a rim or something.
I hit a pot hole the size of the Grand Canyon about a mile back.

RAMONA

I've never seen the Grand Canyon so that's not a helpful analogy.

LEO

I called Triple A.
They said response time was *three days*.
Can you believe that?
It's usually, I don't know, forty-five minutes.

RAMONA

What's Triple A?

LEO

Roadside assistance.
They send a guy in a truck?
I mean, it's not like this is the middle of *nowhere*.

RAMONA

It kinda is.

LEO

I'm not in the middle of nowhere right now.

RAMONA

You really are.

LEO casually tries to take the tire back but RAMONA holds on.

LEO

Tire still *rolls*, as you can see, but it makes an awful sound so I removed it, hurt my hand.
I thought I could maybe take it to a service station.

RAMONA

You mean a *gas* station?
Closest one is maybe twelve miles that way.
You want me to try and fix it?

LEO

Um?
Actually I should probably keep moving,
sort of in a hurry, behind schedule.

RAMONA (*inspecting tire*)

Rim ain't bent. Wouldn't roll true otherwise.
More likely you busted an axle or something.
Tire's a little flat though.
Too bad you can't just open the valve and let the wind blow it up, huh?

LEO

No kidding.
I mean it's *windy*.
This is the windiest place I've ever been.
And out of nowhere too, it was calm and hot about a mile back even, but up here...
Is it this windy, every day?

RAMONA looks at LEO strangely.

RAMONA

It's like a wind tunnel here, the wind can't get out, she's trapped.

She takes a step back.

RAMONA

You ain't one of them Wind Persons, are you?

LEO

A wind person?

RAMONA

Oh my *god* you are.

LEO

When you say wind person, what do you...?

RAMONA

You know, wind people, people from the big cities, each of 'em with a big lease agreement under their arm an' a checkbook in their pocket an' a smile on their face but the smile's never real. Let me see your smile.

LEO, awkwardly, smiles.

RAMONA

That's better than most, you got nice teeth. You floss?

LEO

Uh, sometimes.

RAMONA

A wind person, gosh. I didn't recognize you at first 'cause of the suit! Wind people are mostly older than you and a little bit fat and they wear polo shirts n' khakis. How old are you?

LEO

Thirty?

RAMONA

Are *not*.

LEO

How old are you?

RAMONA

That's impolite to ask but I'm twenty four, just turned bout a month prior. I thought I was older'n you. Your jacket makes you look like a teenager. Like you're wearing your daddy's clothes to the prom or something.

LEO

This *is* my father's suit.

RAMONA

What the hell you wearing your daddy's suit out in the middle of the prairie for? I mean, no offense, but you really stick out in that. You should take it off.

LEO

The suit?

RAMONA

People are gonna shoot you.
Nobody trusts a man in a suit.

LEO

I have a polo and khakis in my bag, you're probably right, I should change into them but...
The suit gives me a sense of purpose.

RAMONA

Like you belong in the world?

LEO

Like I can do anything, go anywhere.

RAMONA considers this.

RAMONA

My daddy's got me tied down.

LEO

Tied down?

RAMONA

To our kitchen table. Can't you see? It's connected right here, between my shoulder blades. I'm like a kite on a string.

LEO sees nothing (and neither does the audience.)

LEO

Well I should probably be on my -

RAMONA

If I had a suit like yours maybe I could go anywhere too.

LEO

Well, it's *mine*, stop looking at me like that.

RAMONA

I just never seen something like you before. Man 'n a suit with a tire named *Leopold*.

LEO

You see something new every day, I suppose.

RAMONA

Not 'round here.
You see the same things over n' over.
You see the land and the sky and the horizon and dust on the wind.
You lie out in the grass at night and all you can see is stars.
In the wintertime the snow piles up six feet deep.
You good with a shovel, Leo?

LEO

Decent.

RAMONA

Whose farm are you looking for?

LEO

Palmer Driscoll's.

RAMONA

Palmer Driscoll?

LEO

Yeah. Palmer - did I say it wrong?
Apparently he has scary dogs.

RAMONA

Okay well now you gotta scam on out of here, go.

LEO

Do you know something about Palmer Driscoll?

RAMONA

I don't think you understand, *Leopold*.

LEO

Just Leo, and- I'm gonna be honest, I've never done this before and I'm beginning to think I'm in a little over my head. I would like to ask you for your help.

RAMONA

My help, what'm I gonna do?

LEO

The suit versus polo information for example is very useful.

RAMONA

Yeah don't wanna get *shot*.
I ain't even supposed to be talking to the likes a' you.
Here's your tire.

*RAMONA rolls the tire at LEO.
He catches it but stands his ground.*

LEO

I don't know what you've *heard* but maybe it's not true - what *have* you heard?

RAMONA

'Bout wind people? They come and steal little corners of your land in order to build huge metal windmills all over it with propellers that make bats explode from the pressure changing and turn the sun into a strobe light and being near them makes you so dizzy you throw up?

LEO

...They're called *blades*, not propellers.

RAMONA

What're you gonna offer me in trade?

LEO

For information?
I'll give you a firm handshake.
I'll give you fifty dollars!

RAMONA

How 'bout your suit?
That grease n' dirt is gonna stain.
My momma always could take the stain out of anything, even if it was blood.
She's dead now, but maybe I can too, take the stain out, maybe it's genetical.
Take off your suit.

LEO

No!

RAMONA

Well you got underwear on, don't you?

LEO

Yeah.

RAMONA

I want to see your wind person uniform!

LEO

It's in my bag.

RAMONA

I want to see it *on* you.
Take off the suit and I'll help.

LEO

I'm just not comfortable stripping down in front of-

Sudden epic wind.

RAMONA

TAKE OFF THE SUIT I WANT TO WEAR IT LIKE YOUR LIFE IS MINE!
My Life Is So Boring Here.
I Will Take The Stain Out.

LEO

Oh my God, okay, I'm taking it the suit off, I'm taking it off!

*LEO takes the suit off and scrambles to put on his khaki's.
RAMONA gathers the pieces of suit. The wind subsides.*

RAMONA

This your daddy's suit?

LEO

Yeah.

RAMONA

He's dead, isn't he.

LEO

How can you tell that?

RAMONA

I thought so. So's my momma.
How'd your daddy die?

LEO

In an oil rig explosion.
He's at the bottom of the ocean.

RAMONA

My momma is in the back yard.

LEO

What?

RAMONA

Where the pinwheels grow.
What business you got with Palmer Driscoll?

LEO

I need to speak with him.

RAMONA

'Bout what?

LEO

About building wind turbines on his land, it's very important.

RAMONA

So you *are* like the rest —

LEO

No, no, listen, we're just trying to harvest it, the wind, you know? Turn it into power.

RAMONA considers this.

RAMONA

You wanna *farm* the wind?

LEO

It's for the Good of the Future.

RAMONA

The Good of the Future? Like, as in, you wanna save the world?

LEO

I don't see that there's anything wrong with-

RAMONA

You wanna save me?

LEO and RAMONA contemplate each other.

LEO

Well, sure.

RAMONA

What kind of car do you drive?

LEO

A Ford Focus.

RAMONA

Is it one of them *hybrids*?

LEO

No but it gets pretty good mileage.

RAMONA

You eat meat?

LEO

I'm not a vegetarian.

RAMONA

So yes, you do eat meat.

LEO

Yes.

RAMONA

You like turkey?

LEO

Turkey's fine.

RAMONA

You smoke pot?

LEO

No! - Well - no.

RAMONA

You're pretty fit-looking, you go to one of them gyms?

LEO

Yes, I do.

RAMONA

An *environmental* gym?

LEO

I think they recycle.
It's just a gym.

RAMONA

You're not what I expected from a wind person.

LEO

You're not what I expected from a -
well I don't know, a "local"?

RAMONA

I ain't no local, I'm an original. So.
I'm gonna tell you about Palmer Driscoll now.

LEO

Oh! Yes.

RAMONA

He's got dogs and guns and a dinner table that's made out of the family tree. He's got everything locked down in a specific order, like, all lies heavy around him, the dust can't even circulate but the wind blows and blows and blows. He's an excellent farmer and he's *always* working on the house, that's his obsession, and he's got a dead wife and a twenty-four year old daughter that's never left home with whom he hasn't exchanged a meaningful word in nineteen months and counting which also might be why I'm not used to the response part.

She waits to see if he gets it.

RAMONA (*cont'd*)

Palmer Driscoll's my daddy?
You're on his farm land right now.
Stay right here and don't move or else I won't be able to reach you.
I'll see what I can do for this stain.

SCENE TWO

A farm house.

RAMONA chops wood.

PALMER repairs a wall of the house.

RAMONA makes a decision to break the silence.

RAMONA

I saw a wind person today.

PALMER continues his repairs, does not acknowledge.

He was down by the road n' he had a wheel.

He seemed very nice.

He didn't even try to solicit me or anything.

I think we should have him for dinner.

I mean like "to dinner," not eating him, though you might prefer that, huh?

I'm talking now, I know we haven't talked that much.

There hasn't been much to talk about, I guess.

We both used to talk to Momma, I think, but not to each other.

Now all you want to do is work on that house.

I think, though, that you owe this to me.

Let me talk to this wind person, don't chase him off like the others.

Just let me play with him a little.

Okay?

Okay Palmer?

Okay Daddy?

You ever gonna speak to me again?

Okay?

You ain't as much fun as you used to be.

PALMER stops with his repairs.

RAMONA waits.

PALMER

I was never fun.

PALMER resumes his repairs.

RAMONA

Well not recently now that all you do is work on the house.
Daddy, just stop please and listen -

PALMER

Can't let him on my land.

RAMONA

He's *already* on our land. Right out by the perimeter.
I don't know how he got in but he did.
I thought I dreamed him up at first.
But, he's real.

PALMER ceases his repairs.

PALMER

He's on my land right now?

RAMONA

Our land. See, look, talking ain't so hard, is it, all we needed was something to talk *about-*

PALMER

Go make dinner.

RAMONA

For three?

PALMER

Just go make dinner.

SCENE THREE

A dirt road.

Far-away thunder and wind.

LEO sleeps using his tire as a pillow.

PALMER kicks him.

PALMER

Car trouble?

LEO

Yes sir, yes - up the road a mile or so, hit a pot hole the size of the Grand Canyon and -

PALMER

The sink.

LEO

What?

PALMER

That's the sink hole - every year I fill it in, every year something deep down in there pulls it under. We've learned to veer left.

What company you work for?

LEO

What?

PALMER

Might as well have a wind turbine tucked between your ass crack and back pants pocket, son. What company you work for?

LEO

United Wind.

PALMER

Why, I haven't heard from United since I set the dogs on that rotund fellah six months ago, what was his name, Jim? Jim something? How's he doin'?

LEO

He quit.

PALMER

That's probably for the best, he wasn't very good at his job and was afraid of dogs and didn't have polite manners. And so now they've sent you.

LEO

Not exactly, but -
It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance, sir.
You must be Palmer.

PALMER takes his hand and squeezes hard.

LEO

Leo Martin.

PALMER

Where you from, Leo?

LEO

Uh... Cleveland, sir.

PALMER

You best head back to Cleveland and quit wasting your time, Leo.
Wish you the best.

*PALMER lets go of LEO's hand.
LEO tries to hold on.*

PALMER

You like dogs, Leo?

LEO

I love dogs!

PALMER

That's a shame.
I always think it's funny when people are afraid of dogs.
People should be afraid of people - most dangerous animal out there, am I right?

LEO

I suppose we are?

PALMER

It's a pleasure meeting you, off you go.

LEO

I really need to-

PALMER

How about rifles, you scared of firearms?

RAMONA enters suddenly.

RAMONA

There's a storm coming.

Distant thunder.

PALMER

So?

RAMONA

I made a whole turkey.

It's in the oven now, ready in a little while.

With leeks n' potatoes stuffed inside, and gravy.

PALMER

That's a *special occasion* dinner.

RAMONA

If you make him leave, I don't know, I might have to throw it in the fireplace.

He'll have to walk back to his car in the rain n' hail and that's not neighborly.

PALMER

He's not our neighbor.

He's not from the neighborhood.

He's a wind person.

LEO

I'm a *field specialist*.

RAMONA

Leo, be quiet.

Daddy?

His father is dead.

PALMER considers.

PALMER

You ain't got no father figure?

LEO

No sir.

PALMER

Well that is a shame.

LEO

Yes sir, it is.

PALMER

Don't call me sir, it's ridiculous.
Even so, he's a *wind person*.

RAMONA

He ain't going to hurt anything!

LEO

I won't even take much of your time.

PALMER

Well I ain't so worried about *that*.

PALMER looks at the gathering storm, then back at LEO.

PALMER

What if you wrecked your tire on purpose.

LEO

...what?

PALMER

Say you drove through that storm already and deducted that it was your only chance, play the man in need, a broken wheel...

LEO

I don't deduct, sir.

PALMER

Call me Palmer.

LEO

I don't deduct, Palmer.

PALMER

That's too bad because if you admit to disabling your wheel *with* intention I will deign to offer you a drink and a roof over your head while the storm blows through, on one condition: No wind talk of any kind.

LEO

That's a strange condition.

PALMER

I'm a strange man, Leo, but I admire ingenuity and originality and a man who pitches his car into a gorge to secure a meeting is a man of at least *mild* interest to me. So what do you say?

PALMER exits.

RAMONA

Go on.

LEO (*calling after*)

I absolutely drove into the pot hole on purpose?

LEO follows.

RAMONA collects the tire.

SCENE FOUR

Inside the house.

A table & two chairs.

PALMER opens a wine bottle.

PALMER

Do you like my farm, Leo?

It's filled with historical items of meaning.

This table my great-grandfather built and finished himself.

Two hundred year oak, right there. It's rough, like me.

I feel it's important to surround yourself with real things, don't you?

None of this modernism, stark empty rooms, they give me the willies.

Sit.

LEO sits.

PALMER pours two drinks.

PALMER

Here comes the rain.

They both drink.

Close thunder and wind and rain.

LEO

Don't you get worried up here on the hill with the wind - I'm sorry, I mean the - with the - You know, always blowing like this?

PALMER

No. The only thing that worries *me* is if the crops fail, which they do then and again.

'Course, we don't have any control over that sort of thing, so even then, you mostly gotta shrug and go about your business. Being out here, you can choose to worry about everything, or you can choose to worry about nothing and just do your job, let nature take care of the rest.

What sort of things do *you* worry about, Leo?

LEO

Oh, I worry about everything.

RAMONA enters in a rush of wind.

Her hair is wet.

She holds, in her hand, a glistening pinwheel.

RAMONA

The pinwheels are blooming!
Daddy, look at the flower!

PALMER looks.

PALMER

Oh get that out of my house, I told you already-

RAMONA

You ever seen one of these, Leo?

LEO

Pinwheels?

PALMER

It ain't naturalistic, it's an invasive species, and I don't want it in my house.

RAMONA

It ain't hurting anyone.
Leo, blow.

RAMONA holds out the pinwheel to LEO.

LEO blows.

The pinwheel spins.

PALMER

I thought I got rid of those, they ain't been blooming since-

RAMONA

Since mamma died and you pulled 'em all up to bury her in the back yard?

PALMER

This is not a conversation to be had in front of a stranger-

RAMONA

The pinwheels came back and I think we should talk about whatever the hell we want to talk about. Leo, what do *you* want to talk about?

LEO

Yes, um, I'm actually here to talk about...

A look from PALMER.

Outside, the rain falls very heavily.

LEO

I see that your barn, out back there, could use some work.

PALMER

Barn is fine.

LEO

The structure is sagging a bit, and even the house, Palmer, it could probably use another coat of paint, you've got some paint peeling there, the foundation seems a little shaky-

PALMER

Foundation is firm.

LEO

The grasses are overgrown too, and your front fence has decayed-

PALMER

Don't tell me about my farm, you just got here, I live here.

LEO

I'd like to help out if I could.

PALMER

You'd like to help out.

LEO

I'm sorry but I need you to consider the merits of leasing a small portion of your land...

PALMER

Where's my dog?!

LEO

Just a small portion, allow United Wind to build a large-scale turbine...

PALMER

Get the dog and make it mad!

RAMONA

I like Leo...

LEO

Palmer, please-

PALMER

Please? Please *what*?

LEO

I tried to call ahead but nobody answered.

PALMER

That's because we didn't want to talk to you!

RAMONA

I woulda answered -

LEO

Unlike other folks I intend to be absolutely straight with you, I will be myself, that is to say, honest. I'm not like the rest.

RAMONA

He had on a suit earlier!

LEO

I could lose my job, Palmer, for even being here.

PALMER

What the hell kind of a company you working for?

LEO

I've studied your farm, Palmer.

PALMER

I, also, have studied my farm, what's your point?

LEO

United Wind is going to foreclose on it.
I can help save you.

PALMER

No one's foreclosing anything and I don't need saving.

RAMONA

I wouldn't mind a bit of saving-

PALMER

Check on the turkey.
Go. Check. Now.

PALMER lays his hand down on the table.

RAMONA

...*Fine.*

RAMONA exits.

PALMER waits until she's gone, then...

PALMER

Out of my house.

LEO

Palmer, I don't think you understand.

PALMER

We had a deal, no wind talk.
You violated that deal.
Get out of my house.

LEO

I guarantee once you've heard what's about to happen-

PALMER

I'll give you the courtesy of choosing how to leave - face first through the door by your own free will or backing up as you stare down the business end of a shotgun, it's really up to you.

LEO

...Then you'll have to shoot me.

PALMER considers.

The sound of rain, heavy, thunder.

PALMER

Well...

I'd have to go outside to get my rifle from the shed
...and it's raining.

So. Tell me why you're here and what makes you so different in one sentence.
It better be a good one.

LEO

You're one hundred thousand dollars in debt and unless you sign this lease agreement, like, *tonight*, you're going to lose your farm.

A loud crash.

RAMONA (*off-stage*)

I think a tree just fell down.

PALMER

Goddamn it -

LEO

I can explain it to *you* or to Ramona or both of you-

PALMER

Goddamn it-

LEO

Does Ramona know?

PALMER

After dinner.
STAY HERE.

Palmer stalks off-stage.

LEO

Right here?

LEO, confused, takes one step forward and finds himself in the yard.

RAMONA enters dragging a huge branch.

LEO

What do you think you're doing?

RAMONA

I'm helping you.

LEO

You're making him mad!

RAMONA

I'm distracting him from hating you.

Wind, then music; Something reminiscent of Aaron Copland, courtly yet colloquial, American Folk Music.

LEO

What is *that*?

RAMONA

Oh, you hear that too?
I always wondered about that.

LEO

Where's it coming from?

RAMONA

You know, on the wind.
We gotta dance.

LEO

I don't want to dance!

RAMONA

Any time I hear the music, I gotta dance.
You want to make it through this?
Learn the steps Leo.
Should be fun, I never had a partner before.

*They dance.
LEO somehow finds that he knows the steps.
They keep dancing.
After some time-*

RAMONA

Now ask me a question!

LEO

How did your mother die?

RAMONA

She did a flu shot at the clinic, got sick 'n died.
We buried her right here in the back yard.

LEO

In *this* back yard?

They spin.

RAMONA

You're spinning and you look out, right?
Palmer turned this into a fixed point,
like the inside of a circle dance or the eye of a storm.
Ask me another question!

LEO

Why are we dancing?

RAMONA

Spin me, hold tight!

They spin to the music.

RAMONA

This is what happens, it's all twirling and dancing and windy
and so long as I stay dizzy enough I don't get too sad.
You're gonna catch me when I fall, right?

The music ends.

RAMONA keeps spinning a couple of beats, then stops.

RAMONA

This is what it feels like to live *here*.

She falls backwards.

LEO catches her.

LEO

You know, there's no such thing as a pinwheel flower.
They're made of plastic sticks and foil and sold at carnivals for a dollar or two.

RAMONA

They grow here and when the music plays we dance.
Why, is it different where you're from?

LEO

Yes. It is.

RAMONA

Ain't no such thing as green energy either.
Nothing green in this world 'cept grass n' trees n' hundred dollar bills blowing on the wind.
I know it and my daddy knows it too.

LEO

Your eyes are like green energy.

RAMONA

They're gray like a storm.
Did you see the lightning?

LEO

Oh? No, I missed it.

RAMONA

So how does it work, wind farming -
You build these turbines, and then?

LEO

Should't we get back to the house?

RAMONA

Time's not really...
...An issue.
It doesn't move very fast 'round here.
He's patching up the roof.
He can't help it.
He's always working on the house.

LEO

What about the turkey?

RAMONA

It'll be done when it's done.

LEO

It's like you're shipwrecked here or something.
Except there's no ocean out there, just prairie.

RAMONA hesitates.

RAMONA

Tell me about the turbines.
The wind spins them, right?

LEO

And the turbine turns it into electricity.

RAMONA

And where does the electricity go?
It doesn't just stay here on the farm.

LEO

It goes into the main grid.

RAMONA

And lights up the world.

LEO

That's the theoretical model of it, yeah.

RAMONA

It goes *everywhere*.

LEO

Right.

RAMONA

That's what I like, that's why I'm helping.
You're gonna set the wind free.

*She leans over and tries to kiss him.
After a frozen second, LEO pulls back.*

RAMONA

Here comes the rain again.
Time to go back.

SCENE FIVE

LEO

Wind energy, if implemented effectively, can provide up to twenty percent of the countries energy needs, lessening dependency on foreign oil and strengthening America...

Back in the house, but the room has changed.

It's bigger, stretched, abnormal.

LEO is alone and stands by the dinner table, studying index cards.

LEO

Strengthening America through utilization of our natural and endless resources.

The wind farmer. The new frontier.

He flips a card.

A wine cork pops off-stage, PALMER laughs.

LEO

Proven to be of use, of great advantage, proven to work, and here are the numbers to prove...

PALMER enters with a fresh bottle of wine.

PALMER

Oh, he's got cards.

Come look at Leo's cards!

RAMONA drifts in.

RAMONA

Did you like the turkey, Leo?

LEO

It was amazing.

RAMONA

I slaughtered it this morning.

After I had my dream.

I had a feeling.

LEO

...It was very fresh.

RAMONA

So, I want to ask the questions, okay daddy?

PALMER

Fine, fine, go ahead.

RAMONA

Go ahead, Leo. Read the first card.

LEO looks at his card.

LEO

You have, in the past, refused to sign a wind lease energy agreement.
True?

RAMONA

Yes?

PALMER

It is.

LEO

I assume you know what the agreement entails, why won't you sign it?

RAMONA

Well, *I* don't know what the deal entails.
Plus, we're hold outs.
We should get special treatment.
A better agreement.

PALMER

Good, yes, a better agreement-

RAMONA

So that if I sell the farm-

PALMER

You are *not going to* sell the farm!

RAMONA

He doesn't want me to sell but I wouldn't want to be left out here all alone-

PALMER

You could get a farm hand!

RAMONA

I got hands, I need a farm heart, daddy, don't you miss Momma 'cause *I* do...

PALMER

What's your next card, Leo?

LEO takes out a heavy packet of papers.

LEO

Presentation of the lease agreement. 40-something pages of legalese, definitions, and numbers that don't mean a whole lot outside their context, so who cares, right?

PALMER

That's right, who cares!

LEO

But here's why you should.

RAMONA

See, this is *fun*, way better than watching a VHS like we usually do...

LEO

When you sign this document, you enter into a lease agreement with United Wind, a thirty year renewable agreement, that allows us to build up to five turbines on your acreage here, let's see, you've got-

PALMER

Two hundred fifty-four acres.

LEO

Right, two hundred fifty-four-

PALMER

Of which only ninety-eight are tillable -

LEO

Right, it's a lot of land with some space between fields-

PALMER

'Course, the non-tillable parts can be used for livestock, for the cattle and sheep.

RAMONA

Get to the electric part, Leo.

LEO

We propose to build up to five turbines with output capability of five mega-watts on this land, capable of generating, we think, possibly up to twenty *million* kilowatt hours per year.

RAMONA

Is that a lot?

LEO

How big is that town I drove through on the way out here?

RAMONA

Mount Ridge? Probably eight, nine hundred people left.

PALMER (*suddenly adrift*)

Used to be bigger, they had the old school house down by the railroad tracks, I went to school there, that's where I met Martha, that's Ramona's mother, you haven't met her-

LEO

No, I haven't.

RAMONA

Daddy -

PALMER

Wonderful woman, Leo, strong as an ox and as pretty as a mare - don't look at me like that, you know what I *mean* 'less you don't know nothin' about horses...

LEO

I don't know much about horses.

PALMER

I mean, look at her!

PALMER looks at RAMONA.

RAMONA

Daddy, I'm Ramona.

Pause.

RAMONA (*tries to recover the momentum*)

Leo, you were saying, five turbines.

LEO

It's just that - uh. Excuse me. What was I talking about?

RAMONA

Mount Ridge.

LEO

Okay! My point was that one turbine could power the whole city by itself. And we could build five, capable of generating up to -

PALMER

A billion kilowhatever's a year.

LEO

What I'm saying, Palmer, you're a smart man and are hopefully arriving at the same conclusion, is that your resources here, while fine for conventional farming, are not going to raise enough capital alone to... - what do you grow here, anyway?

PALMER

What does your *card* say?

LEO (*shuffles cards*)

You grow sweet corn, soy beans, sunflowers, potatoes, tomatoes, wheat, barley, and a few blackberries.

PALMER

As well as the turkeys, cattle and sheep!

LEO

You have twelve cows and seventeen sheep.

PALMER

I got eighteen sheep, one gave birth two days ago.

LEO

Eighteen sheep.

RAMONA

I named it Youtube.

PALMER

She likes the *naming* of things -

RAMONA

Tonight's dinner was named Harold.

PALMER

Bad habit but she won't stop.

LEO

Everything needs a name, don't you think? If you don't give something a name, you don't know... What it means, the significance, existence, you know...

PALMER

No I don't know, what the hell are we talking about?

LEO

How much do you want, per turbine, to allow us to build here?

PALMER

Oh. Name my *price*. I see.

LEO

You haven't made a payment on the interest in over two years, Palmer, and, I mean -

PALMER (*to RAMONA*)

Leave the room.

LEO

I think maybe she should stay?

PALMER

Get out, you've had your fun, now go.

Go look to the cows.

Make sure they're in for the night.

RAMONA

But I want to stay!

PALMER puts his hand forcefully on the table.

PALMER

Go outside, and see to the cows.

RAMONA

Wind tunnel, Leo.

RAMONA exits.

PALMER

Do yourself a favor, Leo, have yourself a *son*.

LEO

I'll keep that in mind if the opportunity presents itself.

PALMER

I don't owe anything to anyone.

LEO

You *do*, Palmer.

PALMER

I *don't*-

LEO

It's RIGHT HERE. You see that number? That's what you owe.

PALMER

That is a distortion-

LEO

United is about to purchase the debt from the collector and take your farm.

PALMER

They can't do that.

LEO

Understand how much private money is invested in this footprint, it's millions of dollars, and they'd build around you if they *could*, Palmer, but your farm is the centerpiece of the footprint and without it, they can't build the rest. You're holding up everyone. Everything. They *will* take you out.

PALMER

They?

LEO

Well, sure, we.
But I'm here to help *you*.

LEO (*cont'd*)

I've only worked for United for about a year, pretty low on the totem pole. When I found out their plan was to just take it all out from under you - well, it seemed really unethical, and I said so, and my boss laughed in my face. Said you wouldn't sign for nobody, that they'd tried for years, that I was naive for thinking otherwise.

I waited until the office closed last night, I took the lease agreement from Jim's file, and took off early this morning. They don't even know I'm here - at least not yet, I hope.

I'm literally putting it all on the line. This line (*he indicates the lease agreement*) right here. Name your price.

*PALMER considers, pours two more drinks.
His fogginess dissipates.
He writes something on the piece of paper.
LEO leans in with anticipation.*

PALMER

I name my price...
Toto.

LEO (*inspecting the paper*)

...Toto?

PALMER

The dog in the "Wizard of Oz," you ain't seen it?
Or I could name it Martha, after my wife, or I could name it Leroy after my father, or Amanda, after his wife, or I could name it John after my grandfather who first settled this farm back in 1886, or I could name my price Jesus.

LEO

How about five thousand a year, per turbine, for a total of twenty-five-

PALMER

You don't understand a single goddamn thing, do you.

PALMER refills his glass again, notices that LEO is not keeping up, gestures. LEO drinks.

PALMER

I'm going to do you a favor. Something your father should have done but he's dead. I'm going to explain something to you.

PALMER takes a framed document off the wall.

PALMER

This document here, is an land agreement.
Signed in black ink, that's my great-grandfather's signature.
An agreement presented by a man, a man probably like you Leo, convinced that his story was *true* and his business *good*. You are convinced of that, aren't you, the righteousness of your calling?

LEO

Yes I am.

PALMER

Well, *this* man came to my great-grandfather's door, a small farmhouse door in the heart of the mountains of Kentucky, and he told of dollars signs and mineral rights and the mining industry. My great grandfather, not knowing better, signed.
And then what do you think happened?

LEO

Something bad?

PALMER

Yes, something very bad.
The coal people came and raped his land.
I used the word raped with absolute intention.
They forced their way into the mountain until there was nothing left.
My grandfather did what he could, he built this table - right here - he carved this out of the heart of the greatest oak tree left standing, he prayed I suppose that he could make some good out of the destruction that had befallen his land, but nothing would grow after that.

Outside, renewed thunder and wind.

LEO

Bu that was two hundred years ago.

PALMER

It was, but Leo, now look here.

Another framed document.

The wall is covered with them.

PALMER

My grandfather was forced to leave Kentucky with no money, no prospects, no inheritance, no land. He came here with nothing but a table and yet - he set it down at the top of the ridge and he said, "I will build a house here." And he did. *This* house. Keep drinking, Leo.

PALMER (cont'd)

Once finished with that, he said, "I will turn this wild ridge into a farm for my family."
And he did!
He transformed it by understanding it, by living on and in and around it, by loving it.
So what about this document before us now?

LEO

I suppose it's another contract.

PALMER

Oil rights, this time, that the young man of righteousness was after.
My grandfather, poor, still providing for his family, had no choice.
That is his signature, right there. You see how he makes his D the same as his father?

LEO

Yeah.

PALMER

And what do you think happened?

LEO

I don't know.

PALMER

After one year, the contract was negated due to the lack of oil presence, and trucks never came.
The money he had been promised the year prior never came either, and his wife and children,
one of which being my father, nearly starved that winter as a result of their trust in a signature.

LEO

But he didn't starve?

PALMER

Or else I wouldn't be here, glad you seem to understand procreation, Leo.
No, my father did not starve that winter, or any winter following.
He tilled the fields, and one day, he purchased a machine, sort of the hot new gadget at the time.

PALMER stands swiftly, teeters just for a second, gains control, and pulls a cloth from an object in the corner that holds up part of a wall. It is a small four-foot version of a vintage wind mill.

PALMER

But you know what this is.

LEO

I'm afraid I don't?

PALMER

It's a Wincharger, sold to farmers by the fistful back in the 30's. It cost my father fifteen dollars and included a hand held radio.

LEO inspects the machine.

PALMER

Works just like a mini version of what you're selling, but for more personal and practical use. They advertised that it cost only fifty cents a year to operate, but it probably cost more like a dollar. Every farmstead worth its salt had one! So. Where'd they all go?

LEO

They broke down?

PALMER

This one didn't, Leo.

What happened is what always happens!

Big Electric came knocking on the door.

"Hello Mister Farmer!"

"How you doin', Big Electric?"

"We'd like to run a big ol' power line down to your farm so you can plug in day and night, twenty-four hours a day to eternity, and we'll take your cash monthly for the privilege, but before we get too far, what is *that*?"

"What, that? That's just a small windmill for chargin' batteries, small supplementary power source, everyone's got one."

And Big Electric, they looked at my father and his wind machine and they shook their head.

"No sir." They said. "That has to go if you want in to the grid. We don't want no competition. Sign right here."

LEO (*almost spilling his drink*)

Oh I don't believe *that*.

PALMER

The Congress passed an act, "The Rural Electrification Act," and the power companies denied access to any farmer so stubborn as to want to keep a windmill on his farm. It is in the books. You missed it. Wind already happened, and the government took it down.

LEO

Our turbines are very different.

PALMER

They're bigger and expensive enough that they can't belong to me.
That's the difference - it's control of resources, control of power, control of profits.
It's a big company that wants the farmer to sign *one more time*.

LEO

We're not a big company, Palmer, it's a very small office-

PALMER

You're a front for an investment net.
Wasn't that the next thing you were gonna tell me?
That I could chose to invest for a larger share in the profits - if there be profits?

LEO

That's an option that many farmers take advantage of.

PALMER

But then I ask, oh, well, that's interesting ain't it, can I buy a controlling interest?
And you say:

LEO

...No.

PALMER

That profit you make offa my land, offa my signature, that ain't mine.
So whose is it?

LEO

It's really not *about* profit so much as personal agency, we want to help-

PALMER

Agency?

LEO

Your capacity to act?

PALMER

Money and politics, that's what it's about!

LEO

I can't discuss politics, Palmer, it's strictly off-limits-

PALMER

Save the Polar Bears, save the - friggin' - purple pheasants, I don't know!
Save the world well that implies that there's something wrong with it, don't it?
You come in here with a little green folder selling a little green lie about how your magical turbines are gonna save the world, one spin at a time, but save it from *what?*

LEO

Palmer, we're getting off track here...

PALMER

I'm having a hell of a time, keep up with me.
Save it from *what?*

LEO

Global Warming.

PALMER

There is is! The big lie behind the little lie so who is funding the big lie?
Who is introducing tax incentives and huge kick-backs to all the companies that go out and do their bidding? Who is behind it, and why? Who provides the tax breaks?

LEO

The government, but-

PALMER

And why?

LEO

Many reasons! Job creation, rural economic renewal and environmental factors.

PALMER

Does it say that on one of your cards?

LEO

Actually, it does, yes...

PALMER

That sounded mighty rehearsed, Leo Martin.

PALMER rips up the cards, tosses them to the wind.

PALMER

Now your cards are gone and you're on your own.
Why are you really doing this?
You don't even *know*, do you?

LEO

I came here to save your farm!

PALMER

You *came* here to advance the interests of alternative energy and support the fallacy of global warming! And that, Leo, is politics, and if you follow the money trail all the way back, it's the same entity trying to screw me and mine over as it always has been and nothing you say or do can change that, so you can see why I didn't want to waste our time chatting about this but I sincerely hope that you enjoyed the turkey.

LEO considers this.

LEO

You really don't believe in global warming?

PALMER

I sure as hell don't.

LEO

You really don't care about the money?

PALMER

I don't even have a banking account, Leo.

LEO

You're one of those money-under-the-mattress guys, huh?

PALMER

I ain't tell'n you where it is.

LEO

I'm going to need another drink.

PALMER

We're going to need another bottle.

PALMER lurches off-stage.

The lights change. Strange music blows on the wind.

The house shifts and stretches itself out.

*A flash of lighting outside the window reveals
RAMONA, dancing a different dance this time.*

PALMER (offstage)

You want...a Red?! Or... A Red? Wait I said that, A whine?! White?

LEO

White.

LEO stands on his chair for a better view.

*Another flash of lightening, and suddenly,
he can see that something is attached between her shoulder
blades, a cord or root, that she's pulling against it so that
goes taut with each spin.*

RAMONA spins and spins.

*The music dissipates.
The house lights flicker, thunder.*

*PALMER re-enters, fresh bottle in hand and stares at LEO
standing on the chair.*

PALMER

Somethin' require a better view?

LEO

Just, the storm, the lightening.

LEO clammers down from the chair.

PALMER

So we done here?

LEO

I don't think we are.

PALMER

You know, it sure seemed to *me* like we had reached a reasonable conclusion.

LEO

Look out the window, what do you see?

PALMER goes to the window.

PALMER

I see my farm.

LEO

Why is that?

PALMER

Because... it's there?

LEO

No. Yes, but. Here's what you don't see.

You don't see other people!

You've pushed the property lines out past the field of vision and so you think nothing can touch you, that things out there don't matter. Nothing gets in but nothing gets out, does it?

Your house, all these things, piled up here inside.

Letters, signatures, tiny wind mills.

Collected personal histories that you somehow are compelled to defend even in the face of oncoming environmental disaster, of your daughter's future -

PALMER

So you, a man with nothing in the world except for a suit, a broken car, and a flawed idea - You come *here*, to me, and you want to take my history and tell me it doesn't matter?

LEO

I have history Palmer you can't say I don't have history until you've heard it -

PALMER

You think you need to *control and ration* things, this 'hope and change' disease -

LEO

My father - this, my history, if we must - he died in an oil rig explosion-

PALMER

You're untethered, disconnected from the earth!

LEO

He died in a wall of flames two stories high,

so hot the water boiled near the surface, can you imagine *that* -

PALMER

I don't care to imagine that, let's get back to the-

LEO

He was out there to extract the oil to feed this, this, addicted country, so *maybe*, if we had wind, if wind power kept us from pushing deeper into the ocean, digging deeper in mountainsides, mines to China practically, maybe he wouldn't have been *out there*, that's my history, o.k.? And you want to talk about controlling and rationing, what about Ramona?

PALMER

Leave her out of this.

LEO

You're afraid she'll go out and see the world for what it really is, on the verge of collapse and *you!* Clutching grimly to the kite string, everything else spinning into dust, I know you. At least my father had the decency to let go.

PALMER

And look what happened.

The door swings open, RAMONA wanders in. She stops at the sight of the two men.

RAMONA

I put the cows in.

PALMER

Go check for eggs.

RAMONA

It's the *middle of the night!*

PALMER

EGGS.

RAMONA shoots a questioning glance at LEO, exits.

PALMER

You ever had a farm fresh egg, Leo?

LEO

...No. I buy the brown ones.

PALMER

That don't make no difference, white hens lay white eggs, red hens lay brown ones.

LEO

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT EGGS RIGHT NOW?

PALMER

Rather talk about eggs than the oncoming apocalypse, which is what according to you, right outside my window? Come here. Stand beside me. Look! I don't see no smoke, no fog, no wildfire to put out. I see my farm and I see - well, if it was light out, I'd see the fields stretched from horizon to horizon and the sky is blue with white clouds and the grass is green, as it always has been, and I see nothing else to worry about. Leo. Son. I am sorry if you cannot see that.

LEO

I see Ramona.

I see an ocean and an oil rig.

And I see a man, or the reflection of a man holding tight to this idea that America is the land of the cowboy, the isolated, the individual bootstraps and all, God's Land, right?

PALMER

God's land, also *my* land.

LEO

And you, righteous in your meager wealth, deaf and blind to the larger collective American Story because you never leave home! What makes you so special, you *happen* to have land and history?

PALMER

The sins of others, your personal motivation for peddling wind?
They hold no - what's your five dollar word?

LEO

Agency?

PALMER

That's *right*. You hold no agency here.

LEO

But our future?

Is a collective future.

We live in a country populated with *other people*.

PALMER

So what do you want me to do about it?

LEO

Sign the *fucking* paper!

PALMER

Go. Fuck. Yourself.
Nothing personal.

LEO

You're *really* not going to sign it?

PALMER

No. No No No No No.

LEO

Oh my god.

PALMER

But thanks for stopping in.

Thunder.
Lights flicker.
Music plays.

PALMER

Damn music!
We should dance, I suppose.
Between the pinwheels and this, I don't what's gotten into the place.
I should try some stronger pesticides.

Music continues: Identical as to before.

The two men dance, an aggressive manly version, but with the same steps.

LEO

They're really going to take your farm.

PALMER

Let them try. They'll fail.
My roots are deep.
Watch your feet.

LEO

I'm *trying* to understand.

PALMER

Understand what?

LEO

You, Palmer.
About your farm,
your daughter,
your well-being,
and about what's best for the environment.

PALMER

Stop doing your job.
Stop playing your part.

LEO

I thought you'd listen to me.
The same way I listened to you.

PALMER

Look out for yourself.
Ask yourself:
What do *I* need to be happy?

LEO

What do you need to be happy?

PALMER

My farm.
My family.
A beer.

LEO

Is it that easy?

PALMER

Here's the spinning part.
Careful, I'm old.

They spin.

LEO

I've tried things -
Graduate School.
Peace Corps.
Road trips.
Wind development.
It's more difficult when there's no path set before you.

PALMER

What's hard about life?
Get yourself a piece of land, Leo.
Build yourself a house.
Build yourself a version of a history.
Build yourself a little fortress and forget the rest.

The music ends.

PALMER

That's the difference between me'n you, Leo.
You feel compelled to run after things while I am happy to stand still and just let them spin away until I can't see them anymore. I have earned the right to look out and see the fields, the sky, and nothing else.

SCENE SIX

A field.

*RAMONA stands in moonlight with a pinwheel.
LEO enters, drunk.*

LEO

Have you seen my wheel?

RAMONA

Why do you want it?

LEO

I'm fucking done, I'm just done here, I have to go.
Is there is hotel in Mount Ridge?
There isn't, is there.

RAMONA

No.

LEO

Then I'll just put the fucking wheel back on and drive...

RAMONA

You're too drunk to drive.
Plus didn't you bust an axel?

LEO

Then I'll just start walking.

RAMONA

Storm's just taking a break but it'll be back, you can't just -
Look, you can see a patch of stars there through the clouds.

LEO looks up.

LEO

They're very *bright*.

RAMONA

If you built those towers you're talking about-

LEO

Turbines.

RAMONA

Would we still be looking at the sky, or would we be looking at a big set a propellers right now?

LEO

I don't know much of anything right now.
Depends on where the turbines would be built,
but let's say it was right in our way.
All we'd have to do is take five steps over.

He takes five steps, she follows.

LEO

And then you'd see the stars, up above, and the turbine, or shadow of the turbine, just barely visible, reflecting the moon light just so, over to the left.
But it don't much matter.
Your dad said no.

RAMONA

'Course he did, you knew he would.

LEO

I thought, for sure - given the circumstances -
I had it *all* planned out.
He's gotta care about *something*, right?

RAMONA

What did he say?

LEO

He said "Go fuck yourself."

RAMONA

Oh well he does cuss a bit

LEO

He told me to get a piece of land.
Maybe he's right.
What the hell am I doing this for?

RAMONA

Why *are* you doing this?

LEO

I don't remember!

RAMONA

To save the wind, your job, and me.

LEO

I don't know.

RAMONA

Don't you? Want to save...

LEO

I...

RAMONA

Lie down.

LEO

It's muddy.

RAMONA

So take your clothes off.

LEO

What?

RAMONA

Just skin and air and wet earth and us.

LEO

I'm drunk.

RAMONA

I don't care.

LEO

Why?

RAMONA

Why don't I care, or...?

LEO

You don't know me.

RAMONA

Well geez Leo.

I see things here in a certain way.

I see how the horses - we used to have horses -

I'd see how when a new horse got put in the pen,

How the other horses'd come up to it and investigate,

and it takes them about thirty seconds to decide.

It's just a chemical sense, I think.

I'm attuned to it.

LEO

What happened to the horses?

RAMONA

We sold 'em.

Take your clothes off.

LEO

He sold the horses?

So those weren't part of his land or identity or...

RAMONA

We sold the horses because he wanted sheep, I think.

What the hell difference do the horses make?

I'll just take *my* clothes off.

She starts to do so.

LEO

I don't know, seems like the horses were part of his system and order of the land,
but he sold *those* so why won't he sell the wind?

Just outta sheer stubbornness?

And I got no argument, no recourse, no *agency*...

LEO notices RAMONA.

LEO (cont'd)

...Ramona?

RAMONA

Yes, Leo?

LEO

I should save *you*.

RAMONA

That's what *I've* been saying.

LEO

Can't save the farm, least I can save you.

RAMONA

Yeah but - what do you mean, the farm?

LEO

The farm, the *farm*, Ramona, the farm.
Is One hundred thousand dollars in debt.

RAMONA stops.

RAMONA

No.

LEO

Yes. It really really is.

RAMONA

Why would you tell me this now, what are you trying to -

LEO

I thought you had *some* idea. I didn't know!

RAMONA

You're wrong.

LEO

He borrowed a lot of money sometime around the time you were born.

RAMONA

Oh my God.
We'll lose the farm?

LEO

No - well - yes, you will *if* United buys the debt and forces you to sell off assets to pay.
That's why I came here, okay?
I'm not just using this as an opportunistic -
I *promise* -

RAMONA

What do we got to sell?

LEO

You've got a house worth forty-two thousand.
Couple barns worth fifty cents or so.
Crops bring in enough to pay the interest but that's about it.

RAMONA

How much does building turbines bring in?

LEO

Thirty thousand in bonus the first year, then up to twenty-five thousand a year after that...

RAMONA

Every year.

LEO

Yeah.

RAMONA

How long's the contract?

LEO

Thirty years. If you signed now, that's three quarters of a million dollars to the end of the contract.

RAMONA

You told him all this?

LEO

Yes.

RAMONA

And he won't sign.

LEO

Can I ask you something personal?

RAMONA

I don't care.

LEO

Why are you still here? On the farm, I mean.

RAMONA

He's all I got, Leo. He's the only person I know.

LEO

And what was that when he - did he mistake you for your mother?

RAMONA

I don't know where I am in his head.

I don't know if I ever knew.

LEO

He loves you.

RAMONA

I don't know.

LEO

He loves his family tree and you're tied to that.

RAMONA

I suppose. Yeah.

Family tree.

Wind.

LEO

I tried my best.

RAMONA

So he won't sign because?

LEO

Either he doesn't believe me or he doesn't care.

RAMONA

And it might be too late pretty soon anyway,
what with the ice caps melting and mine fields and what not.
Plus the money for this will get spent up on other wind farms.

LEO

Now or never.

RAMONA

Do you have a girlfriend?

LEO

No - well - No.

Wind.

RAMONA

We could get married.

LEO

...Oh?

RAMONA

You could get married, to me.

LEO

I've known you a day.

RAMONA

Ain't that what people do, meet up and get married in the same night?

LEO

Some people, unhappy people, yes.
But we're not... I mean, not *that* kind of unhappy.

RAMONA

Well you came here to save *something*, right?

LEO

Yes.

RAMONA

History. Agency.
Power to make decisions for this land.
This is how you *get* good land, Leo.

LEO

We *could* ...get married.

RAMONA

That's how people do it.

LEO

To *you*.

RAMONA

You like me, don't you? I can tell.
You wanna... see?

LEO

In the back yard. Through the window.

RAMONA

Oh, you saw that? You wanna see up close?
We can take turns rolling over so one of us can see by the light of the stars.

LEO

I don't know.

RAMONA

This is just a way that this can work.
I know it don't make sense to you, being from the city.
Rules don't apply here.
It's a different world.

LEO

It's *not* a different world - you and your father, acting like you can do whatever you want here because it's private land, music, dancing, tying each other to things, but it's not!
It's the *same* world, rules still exist!

RAMONA

Only if you *follow* them.

LEO

What happens when I go back? To the office.
“Oh yeah. Unauthorized visit to the Driscoll Farm.
Blackmailed him by marrying his daughter.
Here’s the paperwork?”

RAMONA

Why would you want to go back?

LEO

I have a job.
An apartment with my stuff in it.

RAMONA

What’s your favorite thing in your apartment?

LEO

I don’t have a favorite thing!
I’m fucking looking for it!
I should have a favorite thing!

RAMONA

Here. Just... lie. Relax.
Roll over, look up.
I could be your favorite thing.
Touch me, here, feel my heart, we’re just calm animals under a safe sky.
Maybe we both got the whole thing all wrong and you came here so I could save you.
My daddy will be so mad!
We’ll go away and get married, maybe in Cleveland?
Then we’ll go on honeymoon.
I always liked that phrase, honey moon.
Like there’s bees in space.
Crazy.
You’ll show me the world, the other world.
You think I’ll like it?

LEO

...No. I don’t know.
Maybe parts.
There’s a lot more music but no one dances.

RAMONA

Why not?

LEO

I don't know. I guess sometimes they do. But not the way you do here.

Wind.

RAMONA

So we'll do this? Tonight?
You'll come back with me and tell him?

LEO

We're really talking about this.
Okay. *Jesus*. Okay. What if he signs the papers?

RAMONA

Then you did what you came to do.

LEO

But what happens to you?

RAMONA

You'll set the wind free, that's enough.

LEO

I don't want you to stay here. I mean. I want you with me.

RAMONA

Yeah?

LEO

I want you to hold me like he holds you.

RAMONA

...I won't. Hold you like that. It's not a good hold.

LEO

I guess - yeah, sorry, it was just that -

RAMONA

I ain't a resource. I'm no one's history.

LEO

What if he *doesn't* sign?

RAMONA

We'll go get married.
And come back with... what's the word?

LEO

Agency.

RAMONA

This might bring the whole house down.
He's been bracing it for years and years,
trying to hold it up against the weight and wind.
History gets *heavy* when it gets old.

LEO

Where did you hide my tire?

RAMONA

In the cow barn.
Leo?
You think this is about the worst thing a daughter could do?

LEO

I don't know.

RAMONA

I think the worst thing a father could do is ignore his current living family's needs in order to defend some memory of a former one, that's what I think.

LEO

I see.

RAMONA

All my life I've wanted to see everything the wind saw.
Take the whole earth'n everything on it in my mouth like a marble and taste it.

LEO

What will it taste like, do you think?

RAMONA

Like a blueberry just after the frost.
You ever tasted that?

LEO

No.

*RAMONA kisses him, consumes him.
Heavy rain.*

SCENE SEVEN

Darkness and rain.

RAMONA

I'm leaving.

LEO

You're leaving.

RAMONA

Daddy? I'm leaving.

LEO

Mr. Driscoll, she's leaving.

RAMONA

We're leaving together.

LEO

Unless-

RAMONA

I'm ready to go in.

LEO

He better sign -

RAMONA

You gotta seem strong, okay?
Stay in control. Don't let him get started.
Here we go.

*They go into the house.
RAMONA tries to turn the lights on.*

RAMONA

The lights don't work.
There's no electricity.

LEO

Well isn't *that* just-

PALMER (offstage)

A transformer blew somewhere between here and town!
The generator needed gas -

*A motor starts off-stage.
The lights flicker back on.
PALMER enters, half-empty bottle in hand.
He sees RAMONA and LEO.*

PALMER

You're all muddy, as if you've been...

RAMONA

Fucking?

PALMER

Rolling around in a field...

RAMONA

Fucking.

PALMER suddenly rushes at LEO.

PALMER

She's mine!

LEO catches him, keeps him at arm's length.

RAMONA

I'm not your property daddy!

LEO

Palmer, calm down!

RAMONA

Daddy, will you sit?
Please sit down?

PALMER

Always taking isn't yours to have!

LEO

We didn't do anything-

RAMONA

Daddy, I'm leaving with Leo unless you sign the lease agreement.

*PALMER stops struggling.
He slumps down in a chair.*

PALMER

You are not.

RAMONA

Yes I am, I'll leave tonight if you don't sign.
And we'll get married.

PALMER

Married?!
To...
Who?

RAMONA

To Leo.

PALMER

Who?

RAMONA

Why didn't you tell me about the hundred thousand dollars?

LEO

Sir - you *told* me to get a piece of land and, well -

PALMER (*seeing LEO*)

Oh, it's You. I see.
Was the coal not enough?
The electrical grid?
Now you must own the wind and take my daughter from me.

RAMONA

Daddy, he's not taking me, I'm *leaving*-

PALMER

I think I heard you say that already, I think you've said all you can say.

RAMONA

Or you can sign the lease agreement and I'll stay.
That's the end of it.

PALMER

I'll lose my mind first.

RAMONA

And your daughter?

PALMER

I don't have a daughter.
I don't have a wife either.
I thought I did but then she was gone.
And if I close my eyes tonight,
If I dare sleep at all,
You'll try to slip in and take my farm.
What you don't realize is that you can *never* take that.

RAMONA

You can still have the farm and your daughter.
I'm still here, I'm right here. Momma's here too, blending in with the water supply.

LEO

Look, Palmer, we're *really* working towards the same - you know what?

PALMER (*overlap*)

You can talk all you want, you just came here to save your *job*, that's all you care about -

LEO (*overlap*)

I'm putting the lease agreement on the table -

PALMER (*overlap*)

You came into my house and subverted my daughter!

LEO (*overlap*)

She stole my suit.

PALMER (*overlap*)

What does *that*-

LEO

I'm putting the agreement on the table.

PALMER

You don't have the power to do this.

LEO

It's funny, but... I think that I do, now.
Yours seems to have went out.

PALMER

Power always comes back.

LEO

One day it won't.
That's why I came here, to *prevent-*

PALMER

I have the power to make my own decisions!

LEO

You still have that. For now.
The agreement is on the table.
I have to go to my car.

RAMONA

In the dark?

LEO

Yes, in the dark.
To sleep there tonight.

RAMONA

I'll come with-

PALMER

Yes, get out! Go!

LEO

Ramona, you stay here tonight.

RAMONA

You won't leave without -

LEO

I'll come back in the morning.
Palmer?

PALMER

Go Fuck Yourself.

LEO

Here's a pen.

LEO puts the pen down on the table.

LEO

The best we can do is to act in the present with hope for a better future.
That's what Ramona is doing.

LEO exits.

RAMONA

Momma told me to always look out for myself no matter what.

PALMER

They took your momma like they took everything else.

RAMONA

And you ain't got any responsibility in this?

You wouldn't let her go back to the hospital 'cause you were so mad that she got the shot in the first place! You said, 'Ain't Nothing Funded By Big Government Ever Helped Anybody!'

And she *died*. And now you want to hold me here to make up the gap, fill the hole in the wall, cook the food, yeah, well. I shoulda seen this a long time ago but I see how it is *now*. So. I'm leaving unless you sign.

PALMER stands and moves to the table.

He moves his hand as if to pick up the pen.

RAMONA

I love you.

PALMER violently turns the table over.

RAMONA flinches, something invisible torn from between her shoulder blades.

The lease agreement pages blow across the stage.

The generator engine cuts out.

SCENE EIGHT

*Morning light, post rain. Birds. Calm.
RAMONA, curled up on the floor, sleeps.
The table is overturned behind her.
Papers are strewn across the floor.
LEO enters.*

LEO (whispers)

Ramona!
Wake up!
Remember me?

RAMONA opens her eyes.

RAMONA

I was dreaming.

LEO

Don't you have a bed?

RAMONA

My room's upstairs, next to his, and... so I slept down here.
I was having a dream that all those big turbine propellers-

LEO

-blades-

RAMONA

Okay, blades, they're all connected to one huge switch buried deep underground.
The switch is in this secret military bunker and there were all these soldiers looking at me as I walked through the bunker but it was like they couldn't quite see me, just the movement of me, you know? And I climbed over all these colorful cables, all of them attached to turbines somewhere on the surface and all connected to a huge main switch and you were there!

LEO

Was I?

RAMONA

It was an older scarier you - you had beard and food in your teeth.
I pretended not to notice.
You said, "You ready?" and I nodded and you said "For the good of the present."

RAMONA (cont'd)

Then I pulled the switch and a little screen popped up like the kind they have at grocery stores and it said, "Sign here." So I signed. And above ground all the turbines started spinning at the same time in such a way that the wind gets churned up and confused and starts circling around the earth at dangerously high speeds and it creates this huge continuous storm that is so powerful that it knocks the earth of its regular axis and tilts it in the other direction, and everyone's weather changes and there are floods and plagues and it all happens in one second, right after I sign. And you look at me and say, "Well we couldn't have anticipated that, try it again." And I pull the switch again and the earth flies away like a spaceship.

LEO

I don't believe that could actually happen.

LEO looks at the overturned table, scattered papers.

LEO (cont'd)

It's a dead calm out there. No wind. Nothing.
What happened after I left last night?

RAMONA

You mean did he sign?
What's it look like?

LEO

Where's my pen?

RAMONA

Don't know.

LEO

Well.

RAMONA

Let's go back to sleep forever.

LEO

I think it's time to go.

RAMONA

I haven't packed-

LEO

It's fine, just go up and get a few days worth. We'll come back. We'll figure it out.

RAMONA

Yesterday you seemed gray, today you seem... blue.
Not sad blue, bright blue. Electric blue.

LEO

On the drive here, I was looking at myself in the rear view mirror and I thought, you can't lose. You've finally got all the cards. You've got this. I was gonna, you know, play the hero at work, play the hero here, I had it all planned out.

Then I met you.

Then I met him.

The speed in which it all... spun apart.

And yeah, maybe I do have a disease, sort of, like a restless brain syndrome or something. Why do I want to quote unquote "help others"? Maybe I don't. Maybe by helping *me* I can do more good than if I keep running around worrying about everyone else.

So, I woke up today in the back seat of a car parked in the ditch without any worry at all.

I just knew what I had to do.

RAMONA

You gonna say it? In the light? You thought for sure he'd sign, didn't you.

LEO

I don't know what I thought last night, it doesn't matter.

We're going to save each other.

RAMONA

You sure we can do that?

LEO

Let's go get married.

RAMONA

Oh my God you said it.

LEO

You said it first.

RAMONA

That was last night, there's a huge difference between when it's the middle of the night and after the sun comes up.

LEO

Did you mean what you said, last night?

RAMONA considers.

RAMONA

Why.

LEO

I care about you. And your - *our* future.

RAMONA

Or do you just care about the theoretical model of me?

LEO

I don't know, Ramona. I feel, this morning, like I care about You.
My dad, he wasn't unlike yours. We didn't exactly get along and I never had a chance to... Well.
I want to stand for something instead of against something.
Don't know what that *means*, or doesn't mean, I'm not sure what I'm capable of but -
I'm ready to find out.

RAMONA

This is pretty serious, Leo.
Who are you doing this for?

LEO (*thinks "me," says*):

Us.

RAMONA

Then I meant what I said.

LEO

Go get your things.

RAMONA exits.

LEO

Oh!
The suit!
Don't forget my suit.

LEO gathers a few of the scattered papers, looking for his pen.

LEO

Where the hell is that pen?

RAMONA re-enters.

She looks different, pale.

She holds LEO's pen in hand.

LEO

There it is!

What's wrong?

Is he still up there, did he say something to you?

What's wrong?

RAMONA

Nothing.

LEO

You seem upset.

RAMONA

Nothing 'cept he's dead.

LEO laughs, then stops laughing.

LEO

Are you *sure*?

RAMONA

I see dead things a lot, being a farm girl n' all, I'm pretty sure, yeah.

LEO rushes off.

RAMONA plays with the pen blankly.

LEO returns.

LEO

Okay. Holy *shit*. Okay.

What do you think happened?

A heart attack maybe, has he been to a doctor recently?

RAMONA

He don't believe in the doctor's office.

We have to bury him.

LEO

Shouldn't we call someone, an ambulance or the police or?

RAMONA

Don't much matter, he'll still be dead.

We didn't call no one when momma died until after we put'er in the ground.

No need fussing over it, he said.

There's a shovel outside the door there.

We have to bury him now.

LEO

Ramona, you can't just-

RAMONA

That's what you do with dead people.

LEO

There are formalities, there are rules to-

RAMONA

We don't *follow* rules here.

We should bury him next to momma in the back yard.

LEO

Where?

RAMONA points.

RAMONA

There, next to the pinwheels.

LEO (*hesitates*)

They're going to want to build there.

RAMONA

Who is?

LEO

That's where they're likely to put one of the towers.

This flat plane on top of the ridge, it's probably where they'll-

RAMONA

We ain't signed yet.

LEO

But if you bury him there, they'll just dig him up again, or-
They come and build roads, Ramona, there's infrastructure involved, cement bases,
it's not just like suddenly there are turbines on the land, it takes land movers, large vehicles-

RAMONA

Funny you didn't mention that last night.

LEO

They will want to *build-*

RAMONA

Who is this they?
They's you.
You want to build.
We ain't signed yet.

LEO

You should call a lawyer is who you should call.

RAMONA

MY FATHER IS DEAD N' I AM BURYING HIM NEXT TO HIS WIFE!

*RAMONA & LEO both look up, as though expecting
thunder or a gust of wind, but nothing happens.*

RAMONA

You *do* know how to dig?

LEO

I can dig.

LEO starts to exit.

RAMONA

We should bury him in the suit.

LEO

That's my father's suit!

RAMONA

He ain't gotta suit of his own.
And your father ain't had a proper burial.
That suit should 'a been buried a long time ago, Leo.
That's all you got. He's all I got.
We gotta mix our history together.

LEO

I just don't know that-

RAMONA

I will bury my daddy in a suit today.
You wanna dig or you wanna undress a dead old man?

LEO

...I'll go dig.

LEO exits.

He immediately re-enters with a very small shovel.

LEO

Is this the only -?

RAMONA (*It isn't, but...*)

Yeah.

LEO looks down at the very small shovel.

LEO

Okay.

Leo exits.

Sudden strong wind.

MUSIC: Identical as before.

RAMONA

No, please, don't-

PALMER enters, wearing the suit.

RAMONA goes to him.

They do the dance exactly the same as before.

RAMONA

You look nice.

PALMER

It's a nice suit! Fits well!

RAMONA

I'm sorry.

PALMER

No good to be sorry,
too late to be sorry,
too late too late too late.

RAMONA

I know.

PALMER

Why are you so sad?
Thought you wanted to leave.

RAMONA

You left *me*.

PALMER

Never said life was fair, did I?

RAMONA

Why didn't you tell me about the farm being so much in debt?

PALMER

Why worry?

RAMONA

I have to sign the papers, daddy.
Or else I won't even have a *choice* of whether to sell the farm-

PALMER

No talk about that,
just spin.
I like this part. The spin part.
Reminds me of spinning your mother, around and around.
Remember that swing I built you?

RAMONA

The one in the barn!

PALMER

Swung from inside out into the bright sunlight,
the big barn on the hill and my little girl,
swinging up and up and then-

RAMONA

I'd jump.

PALMER

And roll-

RAMONA

All the way down to the back yard.

PALMER

You wanted to keep rolling.

RAMONA

I did.

PALMER

All the way to the big city and beyond.

RAMONA

Yes.

PALMER

But the backyard was all there was.

RAMONA

Push me one more time-

PALMER

The backyard is big enough for the three of us.

RAMONA

Swing me, swing me, spin!

Ramona. PALMER

Yes, Palmer? RAMONA

Don't sell the farm. PALMER

The music ends.

PALMER, dead, crumples to the floor and lies still.

SCENE NINE

The back yard.

LEO enters.

PALMER's body remains on-stage, unmoved.

LEO

You think the hole is deep enough?

RAMONA

He's in it, ain't he?

LEO

I have blisters.

RAMONA

What do I do now?

LEO

I think we should go back to the house and get that lease agreement -

RAMONA

You don't waste much time, do you?

LEO

No, I'm just thinking, once the lawyers get involved they'll probably put the estate, the farm in probate and freeze the whole thing until they get things sorted out - I have a checkbook and authorization but I need a signature or else they can still seize the property.

RAMONA

I don't care.

LEO

You should - it's your farm now.

RAMONA

Yeah but I don't care, that's what I'm saying, I *should* care but I don't. I feel as though I did something wrong, like I forgot to say something a long time ago and now I'm trying to remember what it was even though it's too late to say it now.

Pause.

LEO

I'm just going up to the house to find that paper.

RAMONA

I won't sign it.

LEO goes upstage to the house, sorts through papers.

RAMONA (*to her father*)

I'll just leave, that's all.

The grass will grow up 'til it's just a field, just like it was three hundred years ago.

Is that what you wanted?

LEO (*upstage*)

Ramona!

RAMONA

I'll be like the wind and be everywhere all the time.

Maybe that's where you are now.

I always thought *I* was the wind but maybe I was wrong.

LEO runs back downstage, paper in hand.

LEO

Ramona, look at this.

LEO shoves the paper in RAMONA's face.

She looks at it.

Then looks again.

RAMONA (*without emotion.*)

He signed the paper.

LEO

Must've been after you fell asleep!

I found it pinned under the table, it was nearly the last piece of paper on the floor.

RAMONA

Let me see it.

She takes the paper.

RAMONA

His signature looks fragile.

LEO

But you know what this means, don't you?

RAMONA

That you're off the hook?

LEO

No, that I can write you a check! For...thirty-five thousand?
I don't know, maybe thirty is less suspicious.

RAMONA

Now what I see what he means.
I don't want your money either.

LEO

Well. Uh.
You *will*.
And you know, *our* money, once we...

RAMONA

Maybe.
Maybe not.
I don't know.
I have to stay here.

LEO

You mean, for a little while?

RAMONA

No, I mean, I HAVE TO STAY.
This is all because of me.

LEO

He didn't know he was going to die.

RAMONA

How d'you know what he knew and what he didn't know?
The 'D' looks funny on the signature.

LEO

Yeah?

RAMONA

Did you sign it, Leo?

LEO

No, but....It doesn't matter, does it?

RAMONA

It does, actually, matter.

LEO

It's signed, the papers are signed, that's what we wanted.

RAMONA

The day I was born, I had my mamma's cord wrapped around my neck. Different cord, same result. They had to cut me free, and the oxygen loss almost killed me so I had to live in one of them incubators, they had t'do a surgery, I was never supposed to find out but mamma, while she was still alive, she told me.

I was never a kite at all, I was an *anchor* and I thought he *hated* me - but if he signed it? If daddy signed that paper, I can't leave.

LEO

Yes, you *can*.

RAMONA

He gave up everything if he signed, can't you see that? For *me*. Means he's still here, still holding on, I can't go.

LEO

You want to leave, don't you?

RAMONA

I don't know! Yeah. No? I thought I did. This is what torn is. It's right here, between my shoulder blades. You want to save something? Save *this*. Take everything else away from me. Leave me with nothing, untether me, disconnect me from this place, I'll be just like you now, Tell Me You Signed It!

*LEO stares at the paper.
Then looks back up at RAMONA.*

LEO

I didn't sign it.

RAMONA squeezes her face closed, slowly nods.

RAMONA

You have to save the *other* world.

LEO

This one's a fantasy, Ramona.

RAMONA

So's yours, your world's a fantasy too.

LEO

Maybe. But my fantasy happens to be of the future, not the past.
His will be buried even as mine is realized, constructed.

RAMONA

You mean build turbines on my land.

LEO

You can turn things around and around in your head but that's not going to generate power.
If we keep moving, keep buying, keep building, we'll make a difference.

RAMONA

Now it's *we*.

LEO

I want you to come with me.

RAMONA

I have to stay.

LEO

There's NOTHING left here!

*LEO goes up to the house, pushes it.
The house sways and collapses.*

RAMONA

Leo, what i'the *hell?!?*

LEO

I'm sorry. I - Shit!

He tries to stand the house up again. It falls.

RAMONA

Now you blew my house down!

LEO

I didn't blow, I just sort of -
Without *him*, holding it together just out of sheer will,
Next breeze would have blown it over.

RAMONA

But *you* pushed.

LEO

We'll build the first turbine right here.
A new monument. In memory of.

RAMONA

Ain't it funny, though, how one man's vision of saving the world is built on top of another man's corpse?

LEO

Ramona-

RAMONA

A man in a suit rolls a tire down the road and he wants to build a big piece of metal machinery all over your hopes n' dreams, what would you do?

LEO

... I don't know.
I have to leave now.
Are you coming with?

RAMONA

You knocked the house down!

LEO

Yes, I'm sorry about that.

RAMONA

We were supposed to get married.

LEO

We can still get married.

RAMONA

I think we was in love already and now we're not anymore.
Funny how fast that goes.

LEO

They got a bank in Mount Ridge?

RAMONA nods.

LEO (cont'd)

I'll take you to the bank and we'll cash the check that I'm about to write for you.

RAMONA

For one hundred thousand. Or else I'm taking this piece of paper and tearing it up and letting it blow cross the plains and this whole thing won't have been for anything at all. Plus you knocked down my house.

LEO

Let's do one hundred thousand.

RAMONA hands LEO the contract.

LEO

...I'm sorry.

RAMONA

Go on.

I'll meet you in front of the driveway, back where we first met.

LEO

You mean yesterday?

That sounds crazy, doesn't it?

RAMONA

Told you, time seems frozen here.

Except now it's suddenly moving way too fast.

LEO

That's exactly how time has always felt to me -
Like a blur and me chasing after.

LEO looks down at the hole and PALMER.

LEO

Where's the cow barn?

RAMONA

I'll get it. Your wheel.

How we gonna get to the bank on a broken axel?

LEO stops, hesitates.

LEO

I don't know if he knew or not, but... yeah, I faked it.

Car's fine.

RAMONA

...It wasn't broken?

LEO

But everything else is true.

LEO exits.

RAMONA stares after him a moment, then looks down at where PALMER lies.

RAMONA

Palmer. Daddy?

The sound of huge wind turbines hum and we hear the blades turning as though a turbine already stands nearby, spinning methodically in the wind.

RAMONA

We'll keep the farm.

We'll lose the sky.

It'll be like the pinwheels just started growing - up and up and up 'til they look like wind turbines, but they'll be from the ground, natural, placed there by God and not man. They'll spin and catch the light in the morning and people won't know that you're here but you will be, here.

Spinning.

RAMONA squints up at the invisible turbines & sun. She takes five steps over and finds a corner of the sky.

RAMONA

Now the whole world's gonna run off your pissed-off electricity though.
You're part of the future whether you like it or not.

The light flickers every time a blade gets between the sun and the ground.

The wheel rolls onto stage and RAMONA catches it. She starts to roll it off-stage in the direction LEO exited but finds that PALMER's body is in the path of the wheel.

RAMONA hesitates, then rolls it around him, and keeps on going until she is out of sight and there is nothing left but the wind.

END OF PLAY