

start

JOHN. Well, hey, what are you doing here? Been waiting long?

EMILY. Yeah.

JOHN. You should have called.

EMILY. Called what, your service? Why don't you get a real phone? *(pause)* I want to talk. Can we sit?

JOHN. Let's go upstairs.

EMILY. Your roommates are there, right?

JOHN. Maybe.

EMILY. I can't deal with roommates.

JOHN. Okay, what's the matter?

EMILY. Please ... can we just sit?

JOHN. Okay. Talk to me.

EMILY. John ... Why do you want to marry me?

JOHN. You spring for cabs, you have a great apartment, what the hell.

EMILY. I'm serious.

JOHN. So am I.

EMILY. John!

JOHN. Emily. I love you.

EMILY. Okay. Tell me what that is. I bet you can't. I bet.

JOHN. Well, let's see. *(pause, looking at her)* Eyes.

EMILY. What about my eyes?

JOHN. Not yours, mine. *(a moment)* They can't look at you enough. *(a small smile, touching her ear)* Ears. The only thing mine want to hear ... is the sound of you. Even if it's just walking across a room. When my ears can hear you making any sound at all, I know you're close by. I don't know, I'm comforted by that. *(a moment)* The touch of you. I'm always wanting to touch you, Emily. When I pull

you into bed and we're making love, sometimes it has nothing to do with passion. I just want to get as close as I can to you. Closer ... than I can. *(a moment)* I've been waiting for you my whole life. Everything I've ever done and thought and felt, it was all just preparation for meeting you.

EMILY. *(moved almost to tears)* Oh, John, that was beautiful. *(forcing herself to snap out it)* But is that any reason to want to go and marry someone?

JOHN. Yes.

EMILY. *(without conviction)* You see, I am often of the opinion that love is not such a big deal. I mean, I bet I could stick you outside on a hot summer day when Columbus Avenue is an ocean of bouncing boobies in thin cotton tops and I bet you'd fall in love ten times in one block. Couldn't I do that? Uh-huh. I bet I could. So see, it's not a big deal.

JOHN. You're not talking about love.

EMILY. What am I talking about then?

JOHN. I don't know. You tell me.

EMILY. I'm talking about ... I'm talking about ... Oh! What I'm talking about is the fact that I can't marry you. Okay, go on, hate me, hit me, get it over with. I deserve it. I do nothing but mess people up and make people unhappy and—

JOHN. You know you don't do that.

EMILY. I do. I should go live in a leper colony. I should—

JOHN. Hey. Stop playing for my sympathy and tell me what's going on.

EMILY. What a mean, truthful thing to say. You always say such—

JOHN. Emily! Why can't you marry me?

(*Silence. The rumble of THUNDER. The pitter-pat of RAIN, quickly growing into a rush.*)

EMILY. I wasn't serious. When I asked you, I thought you'd say no. I never thought you'd ask me to marry you back. Why did you have to go and do such a dumb thing? Oh ... it wasn't a dumb thing. It was a wonderful thing. I'm a dumb thing. I ... I don't want to be married. (*silence*) We're going to catch pneumonia. (*silence*)

JOHN. You thought I'd say no.

EMILY. You hate me now.

JOHN. I'm just trying to understand.

EMILY. See, I thought I needed ... room.

JOHN. Room.

EMILY. To move.

JOHN. Where were you going to move, Emily?

EMILY. I ... don't know.

JOHN. Give me the ring, Emily.

EMILY. It's my ring.

JOHN. Give me the goddam ring. (*She takes it off and hands it to him. He looks at it a moment. He puts it into her hand and closes her hand around it.*) There. You save it for the next guy. (*He Exits without a word. She stands in silence.*)

EMILY. The rain pours down.

(*LIGHT change.*)

DROWNIN' YOUR SORROWS IN THE BLUES

(*A bar. EMILY and HALLIE are at a table, drinking. They have been for quite awhile.*)

EMILY. (*toasting*) To burnt bridges!

HALLIE. (*without enthusiasm*) Mmmm.

EMILY. The hell with love, Hallie. I have a job, a career. My father is buying me a company to run into the ground for him. I'm supposed to give all that up to marry some man? No way.

HALLIE. Some people get married and continue to work, Emily.

EMILY. Hah! Some people? Men people. Women people get pregnant.

HALLIE. And take maternity leaves.

EMILY. Hallie, once you're out of the rotation, you never make it back into the starting line up. (*toasting*) To independence from egotistical, overly competitive, insensitive men!

HALLIE. (*a sigh*) Emily, sometimes I think we're not beatin' those men, we're joinin' 'm. You can't fight nature, Emily. You can't fight the nesting instinct.

EMILY. Great. First we're women, now we're ducks.

HALLIE. Me, me, me. It's all we think about. We all have to have the best marks, go to the best schools, get the most blue ribbons. We're all so damn busy provin' how wonderful we are, we don't leave ourselves time to think or doubt.

EMILY. You have to prove yourself if you want any kind of a career.

HALLIE. Emily, don't get mad but ... know what a career is? It's some dumb, fancy name for havin' to work for