

MisLEAD

By Mary Nagle

Dedicated to four very powerful women:

To my Mother, Dr. Sarah Thompson, who gave me my life.

Dr. Jeanne Drisko, who has saved my life—several times.

Dr. Devra Davis, whose work and guidance has inspired me to work to save not only my own life, but the lives of others by recognizing the connections between our health and the environment.

And to Rebecca Jim, for continuously reminding us all of what is really most important.

And finally, this play is dedicated to all the men and women of the Tri-State Mining Area, both past and present, who have sacrificed their lives and health so that our Nation could become the most powerful and prosperous nation in the world.

Characters in order of appearance

Mary: A 21 year old college student at Georgetown University, Mary is vivacious and full of energy, except when her illness gets the better of her. She is a true peacemaker, and hates to see her family in conflict. She cares deeply for each and every one of her family members, and consequently she is struggling to deal with not only her illness, but each of her family members' coping mechanisms for dealing with her illness.

Rebecca: An 18 year old freshman in college, Rebecca is Mary's closest ally and soulmate of a sister. She is the one family member who puts Mary's health before all else, even her own fears and feelings concerning Mary's illness. She does not put up with bullshit. She is highly intelligent and very witty. She is quick with words. Most of all, she does not care what other people think of her. She just wants Mary to be healthy, and ultimately, happy.

Betsy: A 17 year old senior in high school, Betsy has chosen to respond to her rather dysfunctional family by removing herself from it. She spends most of her time at basketball or with her friends. When she is with her family, she doesn't have much to say.

Michael: A 57 year old general surgeon practicing in Joplin, Missouri, Michael loves his daughters dearly, especially Mary, for whom he holds a special place in his heart. However, or perhaps because of this, he is in denial when it comes to Mary's health. His solution to a dysfunctional family is to spend his life working at the hospital. Although he may disagree with Mary's "ideologies," he "admires her spirit." He really does read the encyclopedia during his spare time.

Sonya: Mary's stepmother, Betsy's mother, and Michael's wife, Sonya fulfills many different roles for different people. She is rather obsessive when it comes to keeping her house clean—perhaps this has something to do with the fact that the environment around her, both within and outside her home—is in utter chaos. She highly resents anyone who challenges her authority on any subject matter, thus she often times finds herself in conflict during casual conversations. However, she loves her family members dearly; she just wishes they would appreciate all that she does for them.

Dr. Drisko: Dr. Jeanne Drisko is an integrative, holistic medicine doctor that has literally saved Mary's life on several occasions. She is extremely intelligent, but more importantly, she is willing to think openly and acknowledge important relations between different organs, bodies, and their environment. Although she is perplexed by Mary's health, she refuses to give up, and instead works diligently to provide Mary with answers. Yet she is never afraid to be honest with Mary and tell her when she does not have the answer.

Ecuadorian Doctor: Doctor in Quito, Ecuador. He is very perplexed with Mary's case. He has treated several Americans with parasites, but he has never seen a body react the way Mary's has.

Sarah: Mary's mother, Sarah has her PhD in Nursing Research and is a professor and researcher at the University of Kansas School of Nursing. She is a very intelligent woman who wants more than anything in the world to see her daughter feel healthy and happy. She has not quite yet learned how to cope with watching her daughter suffer, if one can cope with this sort of thing, but she never fully breaks down during a crisis, only after. She may be a Professor/Researcher by profession, but she spends her life searching for the answers to the questions Mary's health poses.

Stewardess: A confused stewardess on a flight from Quito, Ecuador to Houston, Texas, who does not quite understand why a young girl won't leave the bathroom and return to her seat.

Average American Male: A young man in his mid-20s who is performing the role of the American male gender, as stipulated by the larger societal forces.

Dr. Connor: A gastroenterologist at the University of Kansas Medical Center. This younger doctor is a very polite and considerate doctor who performs a colonoscopy in October of 2002 and diagnoses her with Crohn's disease.

John Webb: In 1873, John Webb was plowing in his field when he discovered a chunk of lead. He later used his wealth to build his city, Webb City. He built Webb City a bank, a school, and a hotel, among other things.

Grant Ashcroft: One of the first men with whom John Webb shared his discovery of lead. Together with W.A. Daugherty, these men started the Center Creek Mining Company, a company that eventually shipped over \$13 million worth of ore all around the world.

Farmer #1, 2, 3, & 4: As a farmer farming in late 19th century southwest Missouri, discovering lead in their fields is quite possibly the most prosperous event of their entire lives.

Ethel: A woman living in southwest corner of Missouri in the late 19th century. She is elated to discover that her husband has discovered lead in their pasture.

Dan Campbell: A mining man who was traveling through Missouri on his way to California in 1849 to search for gold when he discovered lead along Turkey Creek.

Woman or Man: A woman or man in the community who sings about the community's woes.

Mary Nagle Street: Michael's sister and Mary's aunt, Mary Nagle Street is a high-strung, high energy woman with hardly any inhibitions. She has a special place in her heart for baby brother, and she has grown closer to him since the death of her mother, whom she loved dearly. She is extremely inquisitive, and as is the case with most Nagles, she often times does not realize how loud she is speaking.

Max and Gracie: The Nagles' dogs. To Sonya and Michael, they are their children.

Jackie: A 28 year old female from Baxter Springs, Kansas, Jackie has a severe case of asthma and several allergies. She spends way too much time in the hospital receiving medical care. She doesn't understand why her body is so ill so much of the time. All she knows is that she hates the hospital.

John: A 45 year old grade school teacher in Webb City, Missouri, John has been hospitalized with kidney failure. His father worked in the mines. Now John drives past them on his way to the hospital.

Margerie: An 80 year old woman who has been rushed to the ER after suffering a stroke, Margerie lost her husband Fred several years ago when the mine he was working in caved in.

Nurse: A kind woman in her late 40s who has been serving her community for many years now. She has attended to many individuals suffering great physical and emotional pain, and she truly cares for each and every single one of them.

Dr. Franklin: An immunologist in Joplin, Missouri. He is friends with Michael, and he does not believe that Mary is allergic to wheat flour, despite the fact that her hands break out in bleeding blisters every time she eat something containing gluten. He is always right, and the patient, who does not have the medical degree he has, is always wrong.

Dr. Jones: An amicable doctor in his 40s living in Lawrence, Kansas. When Mary's chelation therapy treatment goes awry, he has no idea what he should do, and merely becomes quite frightened.

Peter Samuel: A free individual, in a free country, and author of *Lead Astray*. He works for the Pacific Research Institute, a San Francisco-based non-profit research group advocating for personal responsibility and individual liberty in national and state issues.

Scott: A man in his late 30s working for Division 6 of the EPA, headquartered in Dallas, Texas.

Susan: A 35 year old female, Susan works for Division 6 of the Environmental Protection Agency, which is based out of Dallas, Texas. She is annoyed to find such high levels of lead in the soil in Picher, for this will result in more bureaucratic work for her.

Sharon: Sharon is elated to discover lead in her soil. She and her family have been suffering from various health problems for some time, and with a high reading of lead in her soil comes the hope of successfully suing a mining company and receiving some money to help defer some of the costs of her family's medical care. She is fairly confident that she'll win.

Bob: Bob lives in Picher, Oklahoma. He currently cannot afford a monthly telephone bill, let alone the new found stress of the elevated levels of lead in his soil. He is angry and upset.

Brad: Brad is a homeowner in Joplin, Missouri. He is deeply discouraged to find high levels of lead in his soil. He is not quite sure what it all means, but he know it can't be good news.

Randy: Because Randy's job at the Wal-Mart in Miami doesn't pay much, Randy is elated to discover that he and Sharon may have found a way to cover the rising costs of their health care—costs for which the whole family does not have health insurance.

Dick: At first Dick is surprised to find lead in his backyard in Picher, Oklahoma. But then Dick remembers, as someone who used to work in the mines himself, that the entire town is built upon a lead mine, so ultimately the high levels of lead do not surprise him.

Dr. Odrowski: An epidemiologist from Kansas, he has done much research on rates of various diseases in Cherokee County, Kansas. He is intrigued with Mary's project and eager to help her, although he is rather pessimistic that her project could really bring about any real positive changes for the entire community. He has been researching the public health disaster for 25 years and has seen little change.

Rebecca Jim: An amazing older Cherokee woman living in Miami, Oklahoma, Rebecca Jim is the woman who started LEAD Agency, an agency that now works with the local communities within the Tar Creek Superfund site. Before retiring, she worked at the Miami High School, where she organized the Cherokee Volunteer Society, a group of students have served to creatively educate and work with the entire community on the effects of lead toxicity.

Dr. Aaron Blair: An epidemiologist working on cancer research for the National Institute of Health in Washington, DC. He is originally from Leavenworth, Kansas.

Dr. Klaassen : A famous toxicologist from the University of Kansas, Dr. Klaassen is well-known for his ground breaking research in heavy metal toxicity and its effects on the human body.

Asarco: A mining company that Eagle-Picher labeled as a PRP, or Potentially Responsible Party, for participation in the soil remediation in Ottawa County. Asarco refused to participate.

Eagle-Picher: A company originally created in 1843, Eagle-Picher has enjoyed many years of success. They were the first to strike lead back in the Picher field, back in 1914, when Roy Blosser, who was on his way to Commerce, got stuck in the mud and discovered lead. In the 80s they declared bankruptcy and paid a couple million dollars. As a consequence, they can no longer be held responsible for the environmental damage they created. Up until the 1950s, they operated a lead smelter facility just a few blocks away from the house Mary moved to when she was only four months old.

Donn Walters: Donn works for EPA Community Relations in Region 6 for the Superfund Program.

Noel Bennett: EPA's Project Manager for the Tar Creek Superfund Site.

John Gault: A member of the Quapaw Tribe.

Larry Roberts: He is a State Representative in the state of Oklahoma, and he is sincerely concerned about the environmental disaster in Ottawa County and its ramifications for the people he serves.

George Mayer: A citizen of Miami, Oklahoma who is seriously concerned about the acid mine water that has been ruining his land for decades now.

Rita Frayser: A concerned citizen who does not understand why the EPA is concerned about lead in residential soils but not the lead in the chat piles.

Rayma Grimes: A citizen of Picher, Oklahoma, she sits on the Picher City Council.

Bill Honker: Branch Chief for the EPA's Region 6, he works in Dallas, Texas. He is also a very talented musician and has composed a beautiful song about Picher, Oklahoma, entitled, "Made to Last."

Kim Pace: A quick, bright, and witty woman, Kim Pace is the principal of Picher Elementary School. She was one of the first to bring attention to children's blood lead levels in Picher when she requested the County Health Department in 1997 to test their blood lead levels. Now she is one of the main activists fighting for social and environmental justice for all living in Picher.

Dr. Schwarz: An immunologist employed at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Although he confirms Mary's allergy to wheat gluten, he cannot conclusively diagnose her auto-immune disease.

Dr. Barker: As an asthma and allergy doctor in Miami, Oklahoma, Dr. Barker has witnessed first-hand the health effects on the entire community. He has worked diligently to bring government leaders and the EPA's attention to the needs of his community. While he questions the validity of community surveys that report high rates

of diseases, he is a firm believer that the ATSDR must return to research the elevated levels of diseases, and not just lead levels.

Tim: A member of the Quapaw Tribe, Tim's children have high blood lead levels and his farmland is spewing acidic mine water. It is impossible for him to grow crops.

Jack Burns: An old miner now in his late 80s, Jack has lived his whole life in Picher. He began working in the mines when he was 16 because his father died and his mother had no way of supporting he and his other siblings. Picher is his home, and to Jack, the idea that the government, or anyone else for that matter, could think of making him leave his home is simply outrageous.

Sherry: A woman in her late 30s trying to raise a family in Picher, Sherry is faced with several challenges. Her children have high blood lead levels due to the lead in their community, yet she cannot afford to buy a new house and move, since houses in Picher aren't worth anything on the real market. Thus she is trapped.

Scene 1

The Nagles' kitchen is spotlessly clean.

Mary: *(enters followed by Rebecca and sets her luggage down on the ground)* We're here!

Their lines overlap as they run in and out of the kitchen in a frantic frenzy. The only two people who move slowly are Michael and Rebecca.

Betsy: *(enters in a hurry, grabs a plastic bag, and then exits)* Hey. We're ready to go. *(screams offstage)* We're just waiting for Mom to put on her makeup!

Rebecca: *(clueless)* Go? Go where?

Sonya: *(calls from offstage)* Betsy—that is enough.

Michael: *(enters kitchen to scold Betsy for giving Sonya a hard time, when he suddenly notices Mary and Rebecca)* Betsy, your mother was cleaning the kitchen all afternoon— Oh! Mary and Rebecca are here! *(he goes to give each daughter a kiss on the cheek, Rebecca doesn't react to her father's kiss)*

Mary: *(speaking to Rebecca as she hugs her father)* I think we're going to Betsy's basketball game. I have to go to the bathroom. *(exits)*

Sonya: *(enters, looks around frantically, yells at Michael and then exits)* Michael, are you just standing here? Thanks for helping.

Michael: I'm ready to go dear. What would you like for me to do? *(calls after her)* Help you put on your makeup? *(turns to Rebecca)* How was your drive down?

Rebecca: *(hugs her dad in response)* Good. Where's Betsy's basketball game?

Michael: Uh, well, it's in—

Betsy: *(enters once again, grabs the scissors, and runs out)* Baxter Springs. The game is in Baxter.

Michael: Rebecca the game is in Baxter Springs.

Rebecca: I'm hungry.

Michael: Well sweetheart, you should eat some food.

Mary: *(returns from bathroom)* Are we going to stop somewhere on the way and get food?

Sonya: (*enters in a hurry and grabs her purse and then leaves*) We'll stop at a gas station to get gas. You can get food there.

Rebecca: Can we stop at a restaurant?

Michael: No sweetheart. We don't have time.

Mary: Well we didn't stop and get food on the way here—we were just rushing to get here in time to go to Betsy's game—can Rebecca and I just grab some food here to eat?

Betsy: (*runs in screaming*) Mom! Where are my shoes? (*she hurries frantically around the kitchen, searching for her shoes*)

Rebecca: When are we leaving?

Betsy: Now. We're already late.

Rebecca: (*begins to open drawer to grab a bowl*) Ok, well I am just going to eat some ice cream while we wait.

Michael: (*calls offstage*) Sonya, sweetheart, we are all ready to go. We're waiting for you in the kitchen.

Betsy: You can't.

Mary: We can't?

Rebecca: I can't eat?

Michael: Sonya has already cleaned the kitchen.

Rebecca: I can't eat food?

Michael: Not in the kitchen dear.

Mary: Can we eat if we go outside and stand on the back porch?

Betsy: Not with that bowl you can't. (*runs off looking for her shoes*)

Sonya: (*yells frantically from offstage*) Girls, don't use any dishes. I just ran the dishwasher. We're leaving town.

Mary: (*shocked*) How are we supposed to eat without utensils?

Rebecca: (*pissed off, she challenges the policy*) What if I use my finger? Can I scoop out some ice cream with my middle finger?

Michael: Mary, we'll stop at a gas station on the way to Baxter.

Rebecca: What is Mary going to eat at a gas station?

Michael: We can get her some potato chips.

Sonya: *(enters room in a hurry)* Has anyone seen my purse? *(she runs around the kitchen looking for her purse)*

Mary: *(matter of factly)* I can't eat potato chips. I'm allergic to potatoes.

Rebecca: I'll just lick the ice cream out with my tongue.

Sonya: Rebecca, no.

Michael: Well how about a Snickers?

Sonya: *(calls to Betsy offstage)* Betsy! We have got to go now! We're going to be late! Where's Betsy? *(runs offstage)*

Mary: I'm allergic to peanuts.

Betsy: *(enters running completely out of breath)* Where's Mom? Where are my shoes? *(runs offstage)*

Rebecca: Mary needs food from a restaurant, not a gas station.

Michael: *(calls offstage)* Sonya, Mary hasn't eaten and--

Sonya: *(enters)* Ok, fine. We can stop at a McDonalds and she can get some fries.

Mary: I'm allergic to potatoes.

Michael: Well we'll get you a chocolate milk shake.

Mary: I'm allergic to milk.

Sonya: Where's Betsy? *(calls offstage)* Betsy!

Rebecca: Why don't we stop at a grocery store—

Sonya: No Rebecca. *(she speaks to Rebecca as if Rebecca is of lesser intelligence)* We are late for Betsy's basketball game.

Betsy: (*calls back from offstage while Sonya speaks to Rebecca*) Mom, where the hell are you?

Sonya: We are currently operating under time constraints. (*calls offstage*) THE KITCHEN!

Michael: Well, Mary, I guess you'll just have to get something here before we leave.

Sonya: Oh sure Michael. Oh sure. Great. Thanks.

Michael: What?

Sonya: I already cleaned the kitchen today, and I'm not cleaning it again. Do *you* want to clean the kitchen?

Rebecca: Mary just drove for three hours. She hasn't had anything to eat.

Michael: Sonya, Mary wants to eat something.

Sonya: Yes, but if she gets out a fork she'll need a spoon. If she uses a spoon, she'll want a bowl. And after a bowl she'll want a cup! I don't have time to deal with this! (*she scurries around the kitchen looking for various things*)

Mary: (*in an attempt to squash the impending conflict*) Ok, never mind, I'm not hungry anymore.

Sonya: Alright, fine Michael. (*she too becomes distracted and forgets that she has lost Betsy. She opens cabinet and pulls out bag of peanuts*) Here Mary, you can have some peanuts. (*hands Mary the peanuts*)

Rebecca: She's allergic to nuts.

Michael: Ok, well what *can* she eat?

Mary: Oranges.

Sonya: Here's a banana. (*hands her a banana*)

Mary: I'm allergic to bananas.

Betsy: (*enters with purse*) Mom I found your purse. (*hands purse to Sonya*)

Michael: (*goes to cabinet and pulls out graham crackers, handing them to Mary*) Here Mary, you can have some graham crackers can't you?

Betsy: Mom! We need to go NOW! I am late.

Sonya: Alright Betsy, I realize this. We're trying to find something for Mary to eat.

Mary: No, I can't. I am allergic to wheat flour.

Rebecca: We're going to have to stop at a grocery store—

Betsy: (*yells at Rebecca*) I have a basketball game!

Mary: We could take two separate cars.

Sonya: No. We're going as a family.

Michael: Here Mary, here's a bagel.

Betsy: (*starts towards door*) I'm leaving. See you all later.

Rebecca: Dad, Mary is *still* allergic to wheat flour.

Michael: Betsy, wait for your family.

Mary: It's ok. I don't want any food.

Sonya: Mary, we have Oreos.

Rebecca: (*Rebecca is becoming very angry*) You can't *make* Mary eat wheat flour!

Betsy: (*extremely angry*) Bye. Thanks for caring about my basketball game. (*slams door behind her*)

Michael: (*completely clueless as to the wheat allergy and the rising conflict*) Ritz crackers?

Sonya: Michael, Mary already said she can't eat wheat flour sweetheart.

Mary: No. It's ok, I don't want to eat anymore.

Michael: Sonya, I'm sorry, I just think we should find something for Mary to eat.

Sonya: Michael, we need to leave now.

Michael: Ok, ok. Mary, we'll just buy you a snack from a gas station.

Rebecca: She has 60 different food allergies. She is not going to be able to find food at a gas station!

Mary: It's alright, I just won't eat anything. Let's go.

Michael: Well Mary you have to eat something.

Mary: No, I really don't.

Sonya: Michael, we are late. She should have thought about this before she drove down from Kansas.

Rebecca: This is ridiculous!

Sonya: Betsy's waiting in the car. *(moves to leave)*

Rebecca: I'm not leaving until Mary gets to eat.

Mary: I don't want to eat!

Michael: Well what *can* Mary eat?

Sonya: I don't know.

Michael: I don't either.

Sonya: God, I need a glass of wine. *(she grabs a loaf of bread and hands it to her)*
Mary, you can eat this in the car. Let's go.

Rebecca and Michael say their next two lines simultaneously.

Rebecca: Oh my god! Don't let Mary eat wheat flour!

Michael: I think that contains wheat flour.

Rebecca runs to grab the loaf of bread.

Rebecca: She's allergic to wheat flour!

Mary: *(She throws the loaf of bread at the head of a completely startled Sonya, and screams)* I don't eat wheat flour! *(she then runs out the door after Betsy)*

Blackout

Scene 2

Mary enters the stage and is completely alone. She addresses the audience.

Mary: Whew. Well, sometimes you just need to let off a little steam. So you met my family! What can I say—we're a bunch of Nagles. Nothing is accomplished around here without a well-spoken argument. But really, we're a loving family. Sometimes we just express our love by hitting someone in the head with a loaf of bread. But this is the world in which I have grown up. The world of Joplin, Missouri. Or at least for the first nine years of my life, before my parents divorced and my mom moved to Kansas. You probably don't know where Joplin is. You know where Missouri is, right? No, it's not next to Idaho. Yes, it is west of the Mississippi. Right next to Kansas, and just northeast of Oklahoma. And Joplin is in the southwest corner of the state. Joplin is actually about three miles from the Kansas border, and about 11 from the Oklahoma border. That's why we're called the Tri-State area. Ok, sorry, enough with the geography. I know most Americans only remember the huge chunk of land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains as the Louisiana Purchase. So you actually just met my dad and stepmom. You have to understand that Sonya, Betsy, and Dad were just stressed because we were late getting to Betsy's basketball game over in Baxter. That's actually an old mining town in Kansas. Joplin's an old mining town too. Well, actually, *all* the towns around here are old mining towns. My dad knows more about that kind of stuff. During his spare time he reads encyclopedias. Anyways, so as I was saying before, my family just doesn't deal well with all of the food allergies. My health is just a continuous problem for the family. It just stresses everyone out. My dad's a doctor himself, so of course he just thinks he's the expert on the subject. What exactly is my health problem? Well, isn't that just the million dollar question! No one really knows. I have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease three times, celiac sprue twice, IBS three times, and more recently I was diagnosed with about 60 different food allergies, all by a combination of about seven different doctors. Then I had three doctors tell me I *didn't* have Crohn's and two others have recently informed me that my "perceived food allergies are purely fictional." Everyone's an expert. No one agrees. After three years of seeing doctors in Joplin, Kansas City, Ecuador, and Washington, DC, the only thing I can say I truly know is that my body reacts to wheat, corn, soy, walnuts, potatoes, yogurt, milk, cheese, eggs—

Dr. Drisko: (*enters and Mary stops walking. Drisko begins reading from her chart held in her hand*) Strawberries, carrots, cauliflower, lima beans, salmon, almonds, blueberries, pears, apples, pepper, garlic, peanuts--

Mary: Does this mean I can't eat bananas with peanut butter?

Dr. Drisko: Yes. Bananas are also on the list.

Mary: Oh. I've been eating about 6 or 7 a day.

Dr. Drisko: (*shocked*) Good God, well that's a problem. You'll need to stop that immediately. Barley, squash, shrimp, pinto beans, wheat bran, cabbage mix, cantaloupe, clams, coconut, coffee—

Mary: Coffee?

Dr. Drisko: Cucumber, dill mix—

Mary: What the hell is dill mix?

Dr. Drisko: ginger, mustard, olives, onions, oregano--

Mary: Oregano? A person can react to oregano?

Dr. Drisko: Well apparently you do Mary. Black-eyed peas, chili pepper, rye, sunflower seeds, spinach, watermelon, and yeast.¹ For whatever reason, you have more reactions to different foods than any other patient I have ever seen.

Mary: I've been eating all of these foods. Is that why I am in so much pain every time I eat food?

Dr. Drisko: You are going to have to begin eating meat.

Mary: I'm sorry. I can't. I won't.

Dr. Drisko: Mary, you are allergic to beans, soy, and all nuts. Those are the only protein sources for vegetarians.

Mary: Well I'll just find some other source of protein.

Dr. Drisko: Yes, such as chicken, turkey, fish--

Mary: But my decision to not eat meat is a moral and ethical decision.

Dr. Drisko: I'm asking you to make a practical decision. If you don't eat any protein, you'll die. It's as simple as that. *(she sits down at her desk and begins going through the papers in Mary's chart)*

Mary: *(addresses audience again)* This is Dr. Drisko. Look closely because she is one of the most amazing women you will ever meet. She saved my life. Several times actually. In the fall of 2003, after I came back from Ecuador, I was pretty sick and--

Sarah: *(enters)* Mary, you had parasites.

Mary: Mom, I know. However, the key word here is "had," denoting the past tense. After I got rid of the parasites what I *had* was a lot of incompetent doctors who couldn't think outside of a tiny little box. None of the GI doctors, none of their Crohn's medications, their fancy jargon—none of it was fixing me.

Sarah: Thank God we found Dr. Drisko.

Mary: I mean, I would still be in bed, sick, at war with my own immune system, and wasting away on steroids--eating food I was allergic to, if it hadn't been for her.

Sarah: Yes, Mary, this is true. But face it, your body has never fully recovered from what happened in Ecuador.

Mary: Mom, it wasn't that bad. You are exaggerating.

Sarah: Exaggerating? Have you forgotten what happened? Do you remember the phone calls I used to get from you?

Mary lies down in bed, sick with parasites. She is so weak she can barely sit up.

Mom: *(she speaks on the phone)* Mom, let's give it one more day. I'm seeing the doctor tomorrow. *(lets out a cry of pain)* Yes, I know. I'm in a third world country. Thank you for reminding me. *(another cry of pain)* Mom, I have to get off the phone. I have to go to the bathroom, *now*.

Ecuadorian doctor: *(enters with chart in hands)* Mary, we just got the results back from your stool sample dated September 28, 2003. You have parasites, and you have probably had them for over a week now.

Mary: Yes I know. Yesterday I had 26 bowel movements.

Ecuadorian doctor: *(looking at chart)* Looks like you've lost 13 pounds in the last week.

Mary: Ha! Well I guess 61 bowel movements in three days can do that to a person!

Ecuadorian doctor: The parasites have incited an extreme Crohn's attack. We are going to need to hospitalize you here in Quito.

Sarah enters.

Sarah: Mary, please, just come home now. This is enough. You're sick.

Ecuadorian doctor: All Americans get parasites when they come here. I've just never seen a body react the way yours has.

Michael enters and stands on the opposite side of Mary from Sarah. He does not see her. He only sees Sarah. Mary is speaking on the phone to Sarah. Sarah is panicking.

Mary: *(she is speaking on the phone to her mother, disguising the pain she's experiencing to her mother, but her face gives her away!)* It's just parasites Mom. All of my friends have them too. I'll be fine.

Sarah: Mary, your body is different!

Michael: *(patronizing)* Sarah, Mary has Crohn's disease.

Sarah: I know Michael. And now she has parasites.

Mary: I'm not leaving Ecuador. This is my decision.

Michael: She needs to return to the United States immediately.

Sarah: But she won't! She says she's fine.

Michael: Mary can be very misleading.

Mary: *(screaming in pain)* I'm fine!

Ecuadorian doctor: You are very sick.

Sarah: You are so sick Mary!

Michael: Mary is very sick. *(exits)*

Ecuadorian doctor: Whether it is here or in the US, you need to be hospitalized within the next 24 hours. *(exits)*

Mary: Fine, hospitalize me. *(groans and collapses to the ground, grabbing her abdomen in pain)* But you'll have to hospitalize me in Ecuador. I'm not leaving. I'm not giving up.

Sarah: *(crying)* You're not giving up! You're dying!

Mary: *(angry and screaming)* Well what the hell am I supposed to do?

Sarah: Come home!

Mary: *(tries to raise herself but fails and then speaks softly)* I can't get out of bed.

Sarah: *(still crying)* Isn't anyone there? Where's Maria? Where's Pablo? He can take you to the airport!

Mary: I don't know. *(collapses in pain)*

Sarah: I'm calling your father. We're getting you out of that goddamn country right now. *(exits)*

Blackout.

Scene Two

Mary is sitting on the floor.

Mary: *(groans in pain)*

Stewardess: *(enters and knocks on bathroom door)* Miss! Miss! The plane is *landing*. You'll need to return to your seat immediately. You must be *sitting down* while the plane lands.

Mary: *(shouting)* For the 8th time in 5 hours, since I got on this plane, I'm shitting! So of course I am *sitting*!

Stewardess: Yes, ok, well, that makes sense. Ok, as soon as you can, please, return to your seat. *(exits)*

Mary crawls out of the bathroom and collapses and lies on the floor. She has all but passed out next to the baggage claim.

Average American male: *(enters walking quickly, but slows as he passes Mary to sexually harass her)* Hey baby. *(whistles)* Lookin' pretty cute. Whatcha hidin' in those pants there?

Mary: *(raises her head to address him)* Orange shit. I'm shitting orange liquid 26 times a day.

Average American male: *(shocked and horrified)* Oh. Uh uhh. *(runs offstage)*

Mary: *(yells after him)* Oh so what? That's not cute? You don't want to sexually harass me anymore? You don't want my orange shit?

Rebecca: *(enters)* Mom! Mom! I found her! Here she is! She's lying down next to the baggage claim!

Sarah: Where? (*enters*) Where? Oh god, Mary? Mary!

Mary: I was just taking a little nap. You know, getting some beauty sleep.

Sarah: Come on, let's get you to the hospital. Rebecca, help me pick her up. (*leans over to help Mary up*)

Rebecca: (*steps back in disgust*) Oh my god. You're so thin.

Mary: Can we listen to Michael Jackson in the car?

Rebecca: (*begins to cry and hugs her sister*) I've missed you so much!

Mary: I'll dance on top of the bar tables till four in the morning, just like I did in Ecuador.

Sarah: God, that's probably how you got parasites. Rebecca, this is not the time nor place. Please just help me get her to the car.

Sarah and Rebecca help Mary offstage.

Mary: Which hospital are we going to and what doctor will I see?

Sarah: KU Med.

Mary: What doctor?

Sarah: I don't know.

They exit.

Blackout.

Scene Three

Mary is lying in a hospital bed attached to an IV. Sarah is sitting next to her, completely exhausted.

Mary: Wooh! Those painkillers are fabulous! Yeah! I just want to get up and dance right now!

Sarah: Mary, you are still sick. And besides, you can't get out of bed with the IV attached to you.

Mary: I hate this dog leash. I resent being tied down.

Sarah: I know, but if no one tied you down your health would never recover.

Mary: Ohh. I love painkillers. And I just *love* this hospital. I just don't think I will ever need to visit it again. Twice is enough for me. (*turns to audience*) I was here just about 14 months ago, actually. Wow, that wasn't that long ago. (*turns back to her mom*) Mom, remember when we were here and I was diagnosed with Crohn's? Can you believe that was really just a year ago?

Sarah: I'd rather not think about that right now, thank you.

Dr. Connor: (*enters and begins dictating into tape recorder*) Dr. Connor, October 29, 2002.ⁱⁱ The patient is a 19 year old female here for evaluation. Colonoscopy performed and changes are consistent with Crohn's ileocolitis. (*speaks to Sarah*) Mrs. Nagle, Mary tolerated the colonoscopy quite well. She will probably be a little out of it for just a while longer, due to the anesthesia.

Now Mary is lying down in a hospital bed, recovering from the colonoscopy.

Mary: Oh my god! (*points*) Those flowers are beautiful!

Dr. Connor: Those flowers? Well yes, of course.

Sarah: That's the fifth time she's realized they're there.

Mary: What?

Dr. Connor: That's the anesthesia.

Mary: When will we start the colonoscopy?

Dr. Connor: We finished about fifteen minutes ago. And now we have the results. (*to Sarah*) Mary has Crohn's disease. I'll get a copy of the report for you. (*exits*)

Mary: Report? (*begins laughing*)

Sarah: Mary, you have Crohn's.

Mary: (*stops laughing*) Oh. (*she doesn't know what to say*)

Sarah: (*calls Michael on her phone*) Michael, Mary was diagnosed this morning with Crohn's disease.

Michael: *(enters talking on the phone. His voice may disguise it, but he is visibly frightened)* Fine, but Sarah, I see patients on the operating table all the time with Crohn's disease, and, well, I need to see more medical evidence before I can just say that *my* daughter has what I see on the operating table everyday.

Sarah: *(to Michael)* Dr. Connor did a colonoscopy.

Michael: *(to Sarah)* Colonoscopies can be misleading.

Dr. Connor: *(enters and hands Sarah the report)* Here is the report, complete with photos taken of the smaller intestine and colon, as well as the stomach. Like I said, the findings are most consistent with Crohn's disease.

Sarah: *(stares at the report in disbelief)* Crohn's disease.

Mary: *(stands up and gets out of bed)* Crohn's disease? What's that?

Dr. Connor: Crohn's disease is a condition in which your immune system attacks the lining of your gastrointestinal tract.

Mary: Why would it do that?

Michael: *(to Sarah)* Mary is just experiencing the stress of college life. She does not have Crohn's.

Mary: Why would my body want to attack itself?

Dr. Connor: I'm not here to explain Crohn's disease, Miss Nagle. I just diagnose it.

Sarah: *(to Dr. Connor)* Why my daughter?

Michael: *(to Sarah)* Who is this doctor?

Mary: So this is Crohn's. *(looks at her body)*

Dr. Connor: *(to Sarah)* The inflammation we found in your daughter's stomach, lower intestine, and colon explains her abdominal pain, diarrhea, dizziness, fainting, and anemia.

Sarah: Why my daughter?

Dr. Connor: Genetics.

Michael: My daughter *does not* have Crohn's. It's a genetic disease. And I can tell you she does not have it. *(exits)*

Dr. Connor: It's in her genes.

Sarah: Whose genes? My genes? (*on the verge of crying, she exits*)

Dr. Connor: About 10% of Crohn's patients have a sibling who also has Crohn's disease. Consequently, medical science has come to the conclusion that Crohn's is a genetically inherited disease.ⁱⁱⁱ (*exits*)

Mary: My siblings don't have Crohn's. No one in my family has an immune system that attacks their body.

Mary sits by herself for a moment. Rebecca enters.

Rebecca: Hey.

Mary: Hey. Is Sonya mad at me?

Rebecca: She'll be fine. I think she's had worse things thrown at her than a loaf of bread.

Mary: I guess so.

Rebecca: It's ok if you're upset.

Mary: I'm not upset.

Rebecca: Mary! You slammed Sonya in the head with a loaf of bread. I think you were upset!

Mary: (*laughs*) Ok, I guess I was a little upset.

Michael: (*enters and approaches Mary very timidly*) Mary, sweetie, would you like some potato salad? Sonya found some potato salad in the fridge.

Rebecca: Would she have to eat it with her finger?

Mary: Dad, I'm allergic to potatoes.

Rebecca: (*sarcastically*) Mary has food allergies.

Michael: (*to Mary*) Oh, well that's disappointing. Mary, I'm sorry, I guess we just don't have any food here—

Mary: Hey Rebecca, I want to go to the Praying Hands.

Rebecca: Right now?

Mary: We have our car here. We could just drive over to Webb City.

Michael: Oh. *(smiles)* The Praying Hands. We can take my truck.

Rebecca: I thought you were late for Betsy's basketball game.

Michael: It's not every day anymore that I get to go with my girls to the Praying Hands. I'll get my truck. *(exits)*

Rebecca: I knew he'd want to come with us.

Mary: That's ok. It'll be just like old times.

Rebecca: Yeah. I guess so. *(follows Michael)*

As Mary addresses the audience, John Webb enters the stage and begins plowing his field.

Mary: Ok, allow me to explain a little bit here. Dad has been taking Betsy, Rebecca, and I to the Praying Hands for years. They are a monument in Webb City, Missouri—another small, old mining town just a mile or two north of Joplin. They're just these two giant cement hands that are forever held in prayer, and there's an inscription on the base that reads, "hands in prayer, world in peace." So anyways, after my parents divorced, and Rebecca and I would only see Dad on the weekends, Dad would always take us three girls to the Praying Hands. I don't know, it became some sort of ritual. Somehow I've been coming to these giant cement hands since I was 6.

Rebecca and Michael enter and walk behind Mary. Suddenly John Webb hits something. He bends down to see what it is.

John Webb: Lord up above.

Mary: Wow, I swear those hands used to be a lot larger.

They all stop and look at the Praying Hands.

Michael: Well you girls used to be a lot smaller.

Rebecca starts to climb on the monument. John Webb realizes he has discovered lead.

John Webb: Lead! Good god lead! *(he sprints offstage)*

Michael: Rebecca, come on, use your head.

Rebecca: Hey Dad, remember when I actually climbed up to the very top of the hands and sat in the index finger?!

Michael: Yes dear. You almost fell off and broke your neck.

Rebecca: I'm as sturdy as a rock!

Michael: I'm afraid that statement is rather misleading.

John Webb and Grant Ashcroft enter. Michael, Mary, and Rebecca share an introspective moment.

John Webb: *(enters dancing with excitement and leads Grant Ashcroft to his spot)* 'Ere, follow me. Look! Lead! I done discovered lead!

Grant Ashcroft: *(examines the lead)* Looks to me ya sure as hell did Mr. Webb.

John C Webb: I was 'ere and I was plowin' and I turned up a big ole chunk of lead. She's gotta be more than 500 pounds!

Grant Ashcroft: Sweet Jesus Webb! I betcha your field 'ere is just rainin' lead!

John Webb: Like manna from the heavens!

Grant Ashcroft: *(they start to exit)* Alright, we got some work to do! We gotta start ourselves a minin' company! Make a pretty penny!

John Webb: *(begins chuckling in jubilation)* We'll start ourselves a city! Build us a school, and a church, and a bank—

Grant Ashcroft: Woah there cowboy! That's a whole hell of a lot of dreamin—and all you got yaself is a chunk of lead. *(they exit)*

John Webb: Yes sir, but she's a huge one!

Rebecca: Dad, how long have the Praying Hands been here?

Michael: *(excited about lecturing)* Well, Rebecca, the Praying Hands were actually once an old mine. They've just taken an old mine and constructed a monument. You see back in 1873, in this exact spot, a farmer by the name of John Webb was plowing his field when he discovered a chunk of lead in his field and—^{iv}

Rebecca: Oh my God Dad! I didn't ask for the encyclopedia book entry on the Praying Hands!

Michael: Well you asked about its history! What did you expect?

Rebecca: I don't know. Not a twenty minute lecture.

The farmers enter and begin plowing their fields.

Mary: Dad, I find it interesting.

Michael: Well thank you Mary. I'll just talk to you then.

Mary: I had no idea the Praying Hands used to be a mine!

Michael: During World War Two this was place was the Lead and Zinc Capitol of the world!

Mary: How'd you know that?

Michael: I read it on the historical plaque right over there (*points*).

Mary: (*walks over to historical plaque to read it*) So this used to be some farmer's field?

Michael: Well sure Mary, you know, most of the lead and zinc discovered here was actually discovered by ordinary, Joe-schmoe farmers. Just your typical American success story. They were out plowing in their fields, working, plowin' along, and bam! There was a piece of lead!^v

Farmer #1: Huge piece of lead! 'Bout this big! (*demonstrates with his hands*)

Farmer #2: I was just plowin' one day in my field, and there she was!

Farmer #3: Lead!

Farmer #2: In my hayfield!^{vi}

Farmer #1: Lead! The gold of the prairie!

Farmer #2: I ran home screamin' all the way!

Farmer #1: Ethel! Ethel! Git on out 'ere! We got lead!

Farmer #2: I'm gonna be rich! Rich! Rich! Rich! (*runs off screaming*) Lead! Lead! Lead!

Dan Campbell enters. He begins digging in the dirt with his fingers. He looks at the farmers and laughs.

Farmer #3: (*digs at the ground in disbelief*) I just don't believe these eyes.

Farmer #1: You won't believe your eyes Ethel!

Farmer #3: I done discovered lead!

Farmer #1: Ethel!

Dan Campbell: I was the first to ever discover lead.

Farmer #3: Praise the Lord above!

Dan Campbell: (*to audience*) Howdy. Name's Dan Campbell.

Farmer #1: Ethel!

Dan Campbell: I discovered lead alongside Turkey Creek back in April of '49.^{vii}

Farmer #1: Ethel, oh Ethel! Put on your Sunday best! We're gonna be rich! (*Ethel runs on stage, they embrace, and run off together*)

Dan Campbell: So all of yo'uns can just calm down now, you hear? I was here long before yo'uns knew to crawl on yer four paws.

Farmer #3: Filthy rich!

Dan Campbell: I'm a minin' man. I'll git my share from the ground and be on my way. I was headin' to Californy to dig me some gold. But instead I--

Farmer #4: (*runs on stage*) Leapin' lizards I found lead!

Dan Campbell: found lead! Lead! I done found lead!

Farmer #3: I reckon I'm gonna have the biggest lead mine in all of Joplin.

Dan Campbell: I reckon this country'll be in another war, sometime. Lead will be worth its weight in gold for them as have to fight.^{viii} (*runs offstage*) *Uncle! Uncle! I found lead! Lead!

***Farmer #4:** Largest lead mine in all of Oklahoma!

Farmer #3: Largest lead mine in all of Missouri! (*runs off stage*)

Farmer #4: Largest lead mine in all the world! (*runs offstage*)

Michael: Hundreds discovered lead. But only a handful actually successfully mined it and made a living. It was a very tricky business. But that's the way this great country works girls.

Mary: What do you mean?

Michael: By the beginning of the 20th Century, it was really only a few large companies like Eagle-Picher that made money off of the lead mining. Most of the farmers who discovered lead couldn't afford all of the equipment it took to mine it, mill it, process it, and sell it. Like I said, that's the beauty of America. Those that work real hard, and have a bit of good fortune, make it. Those who don't, don't make it.

Rebecca: Ok. Yes. Thank you Dad for the lecture. My original question has not been answered. How long have the Praying Hands been here?

Mary: (*reading plaque*) Well it says here the Praying Hands are a monument to all the men in Webb City who sacrificed their lives so that this great nation might continue to exist and prosper--

Michael: Since just after World War Two, Rebecca. After World War Two, most of the mines around here shut down. So Webb City went in and made that over there into a lake, and the chat pile became a World War Two monument on top of a hill.

Mary: (*slightly annoyed*) Right. I was getting to that part. This is a World War Two monument.

Rebecca: Ah, see, I knew there was a simple answer to my simple question.

Michael: (*chuckles to himself*) You girls sure are Nagles. (*he kisses each girl on the forehead*) It's getting dark, shall we go home?

Rebecca: I'm still hungry.

They begin walking to the car.

Michael: We'll get some ice cream on the way home. Mary do you want some ice cream?

Mary: I'm allergic to it.

Michael: Right. We'll get you a cookie.

Rebecca: Dad, she can't have wheat flour.

Michael: I knew that.

Mary: Let's just go. I need to go to the bathroom. (*she races offstage to the car*)

Michael: I sure do love you girls.

Michael and Rebecca exit.

Woman or Man: (*enters and sings to the music of "There's a Rumor in the Mill"*)^{ix}

The mines built the towns
Of Joplin and Webb City
A farmer bailed his hay
'til one day when lead
came his way

Mining companies swept in
Farmers had little say
Now farmers work in mines,
Fields where they used to bail hay.

Ohahhahhhaoh (etc)
Missouri

There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
Have we all been deceived?

There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
We had dare not breathe.

Scene Four

Thanksgiving at the Nagle household. Mary enters carrying a bag and addresses the audience. As she speaks, Sonya sets the Thanksgiving table behind her.

Mary: Hey. So we're back at my dad's house again, in Joplin Missouri. Rebecca and I just drove down here from our Mom's house, and it's Thanksgiving, so we're excited to have dinner with the family.

Sonya finishes setting the table and exits.

Rebecca: (*enters carrying her bag*) No we're not.

Mary: Well I am.

Rebecca: No you're not. What are you going to eat?

Mary: Well, I don't know.

Rebecca: That doesn't sound very exciting to me.

Mary: Someone might have made something for me to eat.

Rebecca: That you're not allergic to? I don't think they know how.

Mary: Ok, well there's really no need to make such a big deal out of it. Ok? Let's just go in and be nice and have a nice Thanksgiving.

Sonya: *(enters out of breath, glass of wine in hand, and rearranges the table and moves flowers, etc.)* Hello girls. Oh, no, your bags can't be in here. This is our dining room, not a personal luggage storing space. Can you both take your bags up to your rooms?

Mary: Sure. Do you need any help with anything?

Sonya: Rebecca, sweetie, you are going to need to change your clothes. Ok? You can't wear *that* for Thanksgiving dinner. Please put on something decent. Maybe even brush your hair a little?

Rebecca: Here Mary, I'll take your bag for you. *(she takes Mary's bag and exits)*

Mary: Thanks.

Sonya: Mary Kathryn, your Aunt Mary is here. She and your father drove out this morning to the Cherokee Cemetery in Southwest City, of course, since it's not like I really need any help preparing dinner! But they should be back any time. As soon as they're back we'll eat. *(She doesn't stand still for more than one second, as she scurries around the table)*

Mary: Oh. I didn't know they were going to see Grandma Frofie's grave.

Sonya: Yes, well they did. If you had been here earlier you could have gone with them. Your father is stopping on the way home to pick up some red wine vinaigrette for the salad.

Mary: Um, Sonya, I'm not sure that I can eat red wine vinaigrette.

Sonya: *(pauses to look at Mary)* You don't like it?

Michael: (*bursts in*) Honey I'm home with the balsamic vinaigrette. Oh there's a Mimikins here! (*he goes to hug his daughter*)

Mary: I am allergic to red wine vinaigrette.

Michael: Well no need to worry sweetie, I bought balsamic vinaigrette.

Mary Nagle Street: (*enters behind Michael and is ecstatic to see Mary*) Mary Kathryn! Oh! What happened to your hands? They look all blistered! Have they been bleeding?

Mary: Yes, well, when I eat food I am allergic to my hands bleed and blister.

Sonya: Michael I told you to buy red wine vinaigrette!

Mary Nagle Street: (*examining her hands*) When you eat food you're allergic to?

Michael: Well Mary just said she is allergic to *red wine* vinaigrette dear.

Sonya: Oh, just forget it! Forget it! (*she continues to move about the room, diligently rearranging things*)

Michael: Well, Sonya's upset. Mary, can you eat balsamic vinaigrette?

Mary: I'm allergic to it.

Michael: Really?

Mary Nagle Street: I just don't believe it!

Sonya: So *no*, you *can't* eat it.

Mary: No.

Michael: Oh. Well what are you going to have on your salad?

Mary: I don't know.

Mary Nagle Street: Mary Kathryn!

Sonya: Ok. Time to eat. (*calls*) Betsy! Rebecca! Everyone please take your seat at the table.

Michael: Is something wrong dear?

Sonya: No, everything's fine. Everything is just fine. I asked you to buy red wine vinaigrette, but I never actually expected you to come home with it.

Michael: Well dear, I'm sorry. I spent about five minutes in the salad dressing aisle reading all of the labels, scouring the labels—trying to find the one you most desired, until this old blind woman came out of nowhere and in cold blood just ran over my toe with her shopping cart.

Mary Nagle Street: (*cackling*) I hate it when I do that! It's so embarrassing!

Sonya: Michael probably stuck his toe out on purpose.

Michael: I did not. She ran over my toe in broad daylight! Everyone in salad dressing aisle stopped to look.

Rebecca enters.

Mary Nagle Street: Oh look! There's a Rebecca! (*goes to give her a hug*) Where's your sister Betsy?

Michael: Can we just eat now?

Sonya: Yes, can someone run into the kitchen and grab the rolls and bring them to the table. Then we'll be ready.

Michael: I can get the rolls. (*exits*)

Sonya: You all go ahead and sit down. (*calls offstage*) Betsy! Dinner!

Mary and Rebecca sit.

Michael: (*calls from offstage*) Sonya, where are the rolls?

Mary Nagle Street: In the salad dressing aisle! (*laughs*)

Sonya: Never mind Michael. I'll get them. (*exits to kitchen*)

Rebecca: Hey Mary, can you eat any of this?

Mary Nagle Street: Well Sonya this just looks so delicious! (*she sits*)

Mary: No.

Betsy enters and sits down.

Michael: (*from offstage*) Well dear, if you'd just tell me where they are—

Sonya: *(from offstage as she and Michael re-enter the kitchen, Sonya carrying the rolls)*
The kitchen, Michael. They were in the kitchen. *(she places the rolls on the table)*

Michael: Well evidently so. *(he sits at the table)*

Sonya: *(yells)* Betsy! DINNER!

The next four lines are said simultaneously.

Mary Nagle Street: She's right here Sonya.

Mary: Sonya, Betsy's here.

Betsy: *(waving)* Right here Mom.

Michael: Dear, our daughter Betsy is already sitting at the table.

Sonya: Ok, can we just say grace? *(she sits down)*

Michael: Yes. *(everyone holds hands and bows their heads)* Dear Lord, we give thanks to you our Lord in Heaven. Thanks for the good food before us and the loving family around us. Today as we give thanks we remember in Thanksgiving Lord your gift to us, Frofie. And I am especially thankful to have here with us my sister Mary, my wife Sonya, and my three girls, Betsy, Mary, and Rebecca. Amen.

Sonya: Amen. Who wants some wine?

Michael: I would like some please.

Sonya pours herself, Michael, and Mary Nagle Street wine, and she wastes no time drinking her wine.

Mary Nagle Street: Thank you Sonya. Mike, hand me your plate and I'll spoon you some mashed potatoes.

Mary: Dad, I didn't realize you and Aunt Mary were going to see Grandma Frofie's grave this morning.

The next two lines overlap.

Betsy: Mom, can you pass the rolls.

Rebecca: Mary, can you pass me the green beans?

Michael: *(he stands up and walks around serving his own plate. He then seats himself and begins eating)* I'm sorry sweetie. It was kind of a last minute decision.

Mary Nagle Street: I'm telling you, Southwest City is doing a great job of maintaining the Cherokee Cemetery there. It was just beautiful. So green. And Mom's grave . . . right there, just headstones down from Major Ridge and Stand Watie!

Betsy: Hey Mary, you can have one of these rolls.

Rebecca: No she can't. She can't eat wheat flour.

Sonya: Rebecca, let Mary speak for herself.

Mary: (*sincerely*) No thanks Betsy, I can't eat wheat flour.

Rebecca resorts to serving herself food and she begins eating.

Mary Nagle Street: Well Mary Kathryn, what here *can* you eat?

Mary: Turkey.

Mary Nagle Street: I thought you were a vegetarian?

Mary: Well, I really can't be anymore. For health reasons.

Sonya: Thank God. I just knew you were sick because you weren't eating meat.

Mary Nagle Street: Alright! Pass me your plate girl! We'll feed you some turkey! (*she enthusiastically serves Mary a full plate of turkey*)

Betsy: Can you eat some salad?

Mary: No, I'm allergic to balsamic vinaigrette.

Betsy: Oh, but the salad's actually made with red wine vinaigrette, right Mom?

Sonya: No. Your father bought the wrong salad dressing.

Michael: Ok, God. You make it sound like I did it with malicious intent.

Sonya: Did you?

Mary Nagle Street: Mary Kathryn, I didn't realize you had this many food allergies!

Rebecca: She has over 50.

Michael: Well that's debatable.

Mary Nagle Street: How exactly do you debate it?

Sonya: She actually has Crohn's disease.

Mary: I have some sort of auto-immune disease.

Michael: You have a chronic illness.

Betsy: Dad, can you pass me the rolls?

Mary Nagle Street: I thought you had Crohn's?

Mary: (*addressing Michael*) Last September when you flew me back to Joplin and you had your friend Dr. Makdisi at St. John's do the colonoscopy—

Rebecca: *He* said Mary *didn't* have Crohn's.

Betsy: Dad, the rolls.

Sonya: Yes, Rebecca, but five other doctors have diagnosed her with Crohn's. (*she gets up to pour herself some more wine*)

Rebecca: So.

Sonya: So what Rebecca?

Rebecca: So maybe they don't know what they're talking about.

Sonya: Rebecca, don't talk with your mouth full. Chew and swallow first.

Betsy: Hey, Dad, could you pass me the rolls?

Michael: Mary has Crohn's like inflammation found in her GI tract as evidenced by the colonoscopy. It might not be Crohn's exactly. Medical science is just not that simple.

Mary Nagle Street: Colonoscopies can be misleading!

Sonya: We'll accept what medical science shows Rebecca.

Rebecca: What if medical science doesn't *conclusively* show anything?

Sonya: Rebecca, sit up straight. We're at the dinner table.

Betsy: Dad! Rolls!

Michael: That's impossible. Medical science is the guiding force behind medical practice. Without medical science there'd be no medical practice.

Mary Nagle Street: And then where would we be?

Rebecca: Ok, so how does medical science explain the allergic reaction Mary had to the Asacol medication Dr. Makdisi prescribed to her last September?

Betsy: Rolls.

Mary Nagle Street: Michael, can you pass Betsy the rolls?

Sonya: Mary, was it really an *allergic* reaction?

Michael: I think you were just too stressed once you got back to Georgetown, you know, that really stressful environment.

Rebecca: She broke out in a rash! She had dizzy spells, diarrhea, she became nauseated-

Mary: Well—it was like my head was imploding—

Rebecca: She called me crying for three days straight.

Mary Nagle Street: Sounds stressful!

Betsy: (*she has resorted to speaking only to herself*) Rolls, anyone? Rolls?

Michael: Mary, I know this “alternative medicine” doctor, what's her face—

Mary: Dr. Drisko.

Michael: Dr. Drisko, whom you've been seeing in Kansas City says it was an allergic reaction, but I really don't trust—

Mary: Dad, I was shitting out the pills whole. They came out floating in the toilet.

Mary Nagle Street: Jesus!

Sonya: Mary!

Betsy: (*screaming*) Rolls!

Michael: Mary Kathryn, we are at the Thanksgiving dinner table! There's no need to be so descriptive.

Mary: Ok, but that was an *allergic* reaction. It was not a normal reaction to a medicine.

Rebecca: *(with food in her mouth)* Nothing that happens to your body is normal.

Sonya: Rebecca, your hair is touching your food.

Betsy: Helllooo!

Michael: Betsy, would you like something?

Betsy: Never mind. It's too late.

Michael: Too late?

Sonya: Ok, it was an allergic reaction. Great. Allergic Reaction. We all recognize this. Michael, can we please change the subject now?

Mary: Fine. But Crohn's patients don't have allergic reactions to medicine like that.

Betsy: Never mind.

Rebecca: Maybe you don't have Crohn's.

Mary Nagle Street: Ok! New subject! Well, so Jack and Suzie just had another baby.

Michael: What's wrong with Betsy?

Rebecca: Is Jack the cousin whose wedding was in Tennessee that one year?

Sonya: She wants you to pass her the rolls.

Michael: *(does not hear Sonya)* Yes Rebecca. Do you remember when we drove out to the wedding? That was when Sonya and I took you three girls and Grandma Frofie to Rome, Georgia. And we saw the old Cherokee Nation, and the very beginning of the Trail of Tears—and you girls and your grandmother got to see the trail her great-great-grandparents were forced to take back in 1838 because President Andrew Jackson—

Rebecca: Grandma Frofie came with us?

Mary: Yeah, don't you remember that was the trip when Grandma spat on Andrew Jackson's grave!

Rebecca: Oh!

Mary Nagle Street: Mom spat on Jackson's grave?

Sonya: Michael--

Michael: Yes, well, she *did* spit on Andrew Jackson's grave and we—

Mary: Way to go Grandma!

Mary Nagle Street: Well of course Mom did!

Sonya: Michael!

Rebecca: You go girl!

Mary Nagle Street: Well any one who could just come in and destroy an entire people's land, give them all sorts of diseases, kick them off their land and then forget about them deserves to be spat on!

Sonya: (*screams*) Michael!

Michael: (*mocking Sonya*) Sonya!

Sonya: Betsy has been waiting patiently for you to pass her the rolls.

Betsy: It's ok. Dad was too busy talking and ignoring me. I'm not hungry anymore.
(*she exits*)

Michael: Where's Betsy going?

Sonya: You completely ignored her Michael.

Mary Nagle Street: Well, Mary Kathryn, how are things at Georgetown?

Mary: Good. I'm in a play right now.

Michael: Oh. Neat. What character do you play?

Rebecca: A lesbian.

Sonya chokes on her food. Rebecca laughs. Sonya gets up to pour herself some more wine.

Mary: Her name is Linn.

Sonya: Would anyone like some more wine?

Michael: Yes dear.

Mary Nagle Street: I would, thank you Sonya.

Sonya pours the wine and then sits back in her seat.

Michael: Well I'm sure that must be a challenging role for you, because, well you know. It's not who you are. You know. You have to change yourself to become, you know, this *other* person.

Mary: Right.

Rebecca: Mary told me it's the easiest role she's ever played.

Mary Nagle Street: Well that's just because she's a good actress.

Sonya: Rebecca, put your napkin in your lap.

Michael: Mary, tell your Aunt Mary about your senior thesis.

Mary Nagle Street: Oh, Mary Kathryn! You're writing a thesis!

Mary: Well yes, in fact I am writing my senior thesis about the history of the Tri-State Mining Area.

Mary Nagle Street: How long will it be?

Mary: I don't know. I am going to start doing my research when I come home over Christmas break.

Michael: Mary Kathryn, let your father give you a witty piece of advice. A good thesis has the length of a woman's skirt. It needs to be long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to be interesting.

Sonya: Michael!

Mary Nagle Street: Mike!

Michael: What? Oh, is that sexist?

Rebecca: Yes.

Mary: I found it rather appalling.

Mary Nagle Street: So Mary Kathryn, tell me more about your thesis.

Mary: Well from 1875 to 1950 more than 500,000,000 tons of lead and zinc ore was mined in the Tri-State Area—^x

Michael: Just before World War Two, this area was the world's leading producer of lead and zinc. (*chuckles to himself*) I mean, we were it! We were the Lead and Zinc Capitol of the world!

Sonya: (*Sonya is rather tipsy by this point*) Is this *your* thesis?

Michael: Well no.

Sonya: I didn't think so.

Michael: (*talking to his sister*) Mary, I'm telling you, drive around this area for an hour, and all you'll see are old mining towns. Mining is the industry here.

Mary Nagle Street: Oh. Well you were just telling me this morning in the car that the biggest industry in Joplin is the medical care industry.

Michael: Right. (*irritated that he spoke incorrectly*) Yes, well you're absolutely right Mary. Today Joplin has one of the highest numbers of hospital beds per capita, and we have a lot of folks here that are employed in the business. It is probably Joplin's main source of income. What I meant to say with my statement is that about 50 years ago it was mining.

Mary: Right, and so as *I* was saying, since this is *my* thesis, all three counties, Ottawa, Cherokee, and Jasper—they are all Superfund sites now.^{xi} And of course the politics behind that are, well, enough to write a book.

Michael: Well I'll tell you Mary Kathryn, if you're going to write a book you oughta right one about Picher Oklahoma.

Sonya: What the hell do *you* know about Picher?

Michael: A lot. Picher is one of the most economically-depressed communities in the entire United States—

Sonya: It has the highest rate of unemployment in the entire state of Oklahoma.^{xii}

Michael: As I was saying, back in the hay day of mining Picher alone produced more than 115 million tons of ore.

Sonya: How do *you* know this?

Michael: And now, this ghost-town is so mined out, that it is just waiting to cave in!

Mary Nagle Street: Good God! Cave in! Where will it go?

Michael: Straight down! ‘Bout 150 feet or so. Picher is sitting on top of a huge mined out cavern, 225 feet by 225 feet, and in 1967, when Eagle-Picher closed their last mine, their engineers published a report stating that Picher would inevitably cave in.^{xiii}

Sonya: Oh hell Michael. You don’t know what you’re talking about.

Michael: Well I beg to differ, I know that Picher has the tallest chat piles in--

Sonya: I grew up playing on those chat piles. No one gave a damn about us and our chat piles until Tar Creek turned orange and all of the fish died. Then it became an “environmental crisis.” Oh, I’ll go and get the dessert. (*exits to kitchen*)

Rebecca: Hey Mary, isn’t this *your* thesis?

Mary Nagle Street: All of the fish died?

Mary: Yes, the fish--

Michael: The fish died because the Ph is 3.

Sonya: (*calling from offstage*) Tar Creek has a Ph of 3.

Mary Nagle Street: Why did it drop like that? Would you like some more wine Mike?

Sonya: And so now Tar Creek is a spewing orange mucky mess. (*enters carrying two pies*) Who wants pumpkin pie?

Michael: I would love some dear.

Rebecca: Where is Tar Creek?

Mary Nagle Street: Mmmm! Smells delicious!

Sonya: It runs through Miami. Remember when we used to go visit Papa, when he was still alive—

Michael: (*Michael turns to Mary Nagle Street to explain*) Papa was Sonya’s father, and Tar Creek ran right by his house.

Sonya: My house. (*she begins slicing the pie and passing pieces around. When she has finished, she sits down*)

Mary Nagle Street: Oh wow, Sonya I had no idea. This is all so fascinating. Mary Kathryn, let me cut you a piece of pumpkin pie. (*she stands up*)

Mary: I’m allergic to pumpkins.

Sonya: My sister and I used to swim in it every summer, until it turned orange.

Mary Nagle Street: Pumpkins?!

Rebecca: Oh, Tar Creek, is that the creek that runs under that bridge we used to always drive over?

Michael: Yes.

Mary Nagle Street: What kind of a person is allergic to pumpkins!

Sonya: Well that's Tar Creek. Always has been and always will be. And no one cared until Tar Creek began spewing orange water. Then the government couldn't ignore us anymore. So the EPA came in during the 80s and decided they would reroute the entire creek.^{xiv}

Mary Nagle Street: Reroute the creek? Did they actually succeed?

Sonya: No. The creek's still orange.

Mary: Well they tried plugging up some of the holes where the acid water from below was spewing up, but then--

Michael: The problem is that there are so many holes, so many places where companies mined, that if you plug up one hole, another will pop open—

Sonya: And out comes acidic water.^{xv}

Mary Nagle Street: So this is all in Oklahoma, right? (*goes back to her seat and eats her pie*)

Michael: Actually, yes. But the Oklahoma border is only ten miles southwest of our home here. You know the Tri-State Mining Area extends through Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

Sonya: Thank you Michael. I think that's the 3rd time you have said that during this conversation.

Michael: Well, ok dear, I just wanted to make sure everyone here at the table really understands that extensive mining occurred in Kansas and Missouri too, as well as Oklahoma.

Mary Nagle Street: You mentioned something about the EPA--

Sonya, Mary, and Michael: Environmental Protection Agency.

Michael: Yes, I know what you were going to say. And you're right. They actually did do some work here in our neighborhood back in oh, I think it was '96.^{xvi}

Mary Nagle Street: Yes, the EPA, oh pecan pie here! Mary let me cut you a piece of pecan pie!

Sonya: I prefer to call them the Eternally Presumptuous Agency.

Rebecca: She can't eat pecans.

Mary Nagle Street: Presumptuous?

Mary: I'm allergic to all nuts.

Michael: Now Sonya, don't be so harsh.

Sonya: Well they're just bumbling idiots. They think they know more about my yard than I do. I mean, they just show up one day and decide to "test" a sample of my soil, and then they tell me that the lead level in *my* soil is above 500 parts per millimeter. I mean they are just *all* nuts! They are just unbelievable.

Mary Nagle Street: I can't believe you are allergic to *all* nuts! That's unbelievable!

Michael: Well Sonya, practically all of the yards in our neighborhood were found to have toxic levels of lead in the soil. Practically all of north Joplin is built on top of an old series of lead mines. So of course the EPA is going to take some action. Once the EPA knows that one yard is contaminated, they have to test all of the yards. It is a liability issue for them.

Mary Nagle Street: Oh Mary Kathryn! How can one person have so many food allergies?

Michael: The EPA can't have children growing up in yards with high levels of lead. That would be a legal nightmare. Can you imagine the kind of liability they would be facing? Small children will eat chunks of soil.

Mary Nagle Street: Mary Kathryn what *can* you eat?

Michael: Eating lead as a small child can have serious health consequences.

Mary: Rice.

Sonya: Well I wasn't force feeding my children the leaden-soil in our yard. The EPA had no right to come in and tear up my lawn. I mean, the Rosapeps and the Scotts lost all of their trees when the EPA replaced their soil. And their trees have never come back.

Mary Nagle Street: How bizarre! No one else has food allergies in our family. I mean, *(laughs to herself)* Mike, you eat everything in sight!

Michael: Sonya, you know, actually, I'm sure our yard had high levels of lead in the soil because the old Eagle-Picher lead smelter is just three or four blocks from our house—just out of sight from here.^{xvii} *(points)*.

Mary: What?

Michael: You know that old dilapidated, rusted factory looking building just off of Lone Elm?

Sonya: Sure, between here and Maiden Lane.

Michael: It's an old lead smelter. In fact, it was and is still owned and operated by Eagle-Picher. They just don't smelt lead there anymore.

Mary: *That* building is an old lead smelter?

Michael: Sure is. Of course, it hasn't been in operation since the 50s.^{xviii} But that's where Eagle-Picher used to smelt a lot of the lead they mined here in the area. And of course that was a ridiculously dirty process. Smelting lead just shoots lead particles into the air that later deposit themselves in the surrounding soil.

Mary Nagle Street: Oh, so that is why your neighborhood had such high levels of lead in the soil?

Michael: Yes. I mean, the EPA didn't come in and replace all of the yards in Joplin. Just our neighborhood.

Mary Nagle Street: When did you and Sarah first move into that neighborhood?

Michael: Gosh, well, Mary was about nine months old, so that must have been back in 83.

Mary Nagle Street: Sonya, I just can't get over the fact that you used to play in the chat piles!

Sonya: The word piles is misleading. They were mountains!

Mary: Did you really play *on* the chat piles?

Sonya: *(she pours herself some more wine)* Sure we did. What else was there to do on the weekends?

Michael: You know Mary, the chat piles left standing today are only 20% of what was originally left behind—^{xix}

Betsy walks back in and grabs a couple of rolls.

Sonya: Back then, Red Clay was the highest around for miles.^{xx}

Rebecca: Red Clay?

Sonya: All of the chat piles had names, sweetie. Oh we used to take motorcycles up those things!

Michael: Motorcycles!

Sonya: Oh God yes! Oh it was a crazy place to be and I was getting into trouble!

Betsy: Tell Dad about Charlie. *(exits)*

Rebecca: Charlie?

Sonya: Betsy!

Michael: Charlie?

Mary Nagle Street: Charlie! Who's Charlie?

Sonya: *(delighted)* Well, Charlie had a van! And we would jump the holes! God, that was dangerous!

Michael: You drove a van over those chat piles?!

Sonya: No! Charlie did! I just rode along! *(bursts into giddy laughter)*

Mary Nagle Street: Oh you were crazy! Just crazy!

Michael: No, stupid. That was just plain stupid. People have died doing that kind of thing. You know, those chat piles are there because the ground below is completely mined out. Gone. Empty. Cave-ins happen all the time. If you had driven over the wrong spot you would have caved in—

Sonya: But we didn't! *(laughs again)*

Mary Nagle Street: Well thank God!

Sonya: So I also dated this other guy whose family—

Michael: You *dated* this van-driving dipshit Charlie?

Sonya: Yes, in fact I did Michael. Anyways, this other guy I dated, his dad owned Bingham Trucking Company, the trucking company that hauled off some of the chat.^{xxi} They made some money off of that too—

Mary: Haul it off? Haul it off where?

Sonya: Oh, anywhere, I don't know. They just hauled a lot of it off—

Michael: Actually, the majority of the chat that was hauled off was then sold to the state of Oklahoma to make roads, or to citizens for their own driveways—^{xxii}

Mary: You're kidding me! That chat is contaminated with lead!

Sonya: Was and always will be my dear.

Michael: (*stands up and leaves*) Excuse me, I think the hospital is paging me.

Mary Nagle Street: Yes, but a company will want to sell it because they can make some good money.

Sonya: So they sold a lot of it to the state of Oklahoma.

Rebecca: That's ridiculous!

Mary: The state of Oklahoma paved roads with leaden chat! What was the state thinking? No wonder so many people in Picher have high blood lead levels! Their roads are paved with it!

Mary Nagle Street: Well I am sure the state had good intentions--

Sonya: The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Mary: And the roads in Picher are paved with toxic lead.

Michael: Sorry, but I've got to hit the road. I just got paged—I've got a man who needs a new AV fistula put in his arm for dialysis. I should be back soon though.

Sonya: Ok, drive safely.

Mary Nagle Street: Oh Mike! We'll miss you! Hurry home!

Michael: Mary, would you like to come with me?

Mary: To the hospital?

Sonya: I don't think she needs to go the hospital Michael.

Rebecca: Mary doesn't really like hospitals.

Michael: I just thought since we never get to spend time together, maybe she'd like to come make rounds with me.

Mary: Yes. (*gets up to follow her father*) I'd love to Dad.

Michael: Ok. (*they exit*) Goodbye everyone, we'll be back soon.

Mary: Bye!

Mary Nagle Street: Dress warmly!

Sonya: Well I am going to take the doggies for a walk.

Mary Nagle Street: Sonya, you go ahead. Rebecca and I will clean up the table.

Sonya: Well thank you Mary. Don't let Rebecca touch any of the dishes. I'll be back soon. (*exits*) Maxxiee! Gracieee! Do you wanna go for a W-A-L-K? Where are my little babies?

Max and Grace: (*they bark from offstage*) Woof! Woof woof woof! Woof!

Sonya: (*squeals with delight from offstage*) Ahh ewww! There're my little babies! Did you miss me? Mommy missed you!

Mary Nagle Street: (*stands up to clear the table*) Alright well I'll just take some of these dishes. You can you grab the, well, oh why don't you take the pies, and those should go in the fridge. (*Rebecca does not respond*) Rebecca is something wrong?

Rebecca: I just think the whole family ignores how serious Mary's health is.

Mary Nagle Street: (*sighs*) Oh dear. You know, your father knows how serious it is.

Rebecca: So why doesn't he act like it?

Mary Nagle Street: Oh Rebecca. Sometimes your fathers' *actions* are just misleading.

Rebecca: How so?

You'll understand someday when you have children of your own.

Rebecca: What else is there to understand?

Mary Nagle Street: Your father is very just scared. And he's the baby of the family. Always has been and always will be. Oh Mike. He just shuts off when he's scared.

Rebecca: *He's* scared? He's a doctor!

Mary Nagle Street: Exactly. He's a doctor, and he spends his life using the medical science he knows and practices to save peoples' lives--

Rebecca: Ok! So what's *he* got to be scared of?

Mary Nagle Street: Rebecca, none of the medical science your father knows explains Mary Kathryn's illness. Every day he works to save lives, and now he's scared he can't save the life of his own daughter. (*she exits carrying the turkey*)

Blackout.

Scene Five

The Emergency Room at St. John's Hospital. Mary and Michael enter and walk down a long hallway. Michael is wearing his white doctor's jacket and carrying Mr. Smith's

medical chart. Bill, John, Margerie, and Jackie stand facing upstage with their backs to the audience.^{xxiii}

Mary: Are we headed for 4 East?

Michael: No. He's a patient of Jones'. I'm on call today. I'm seeing Mr. Smith in the ER.

Mary: Oh, so he's not actually a patient of yours?

Michael: No.

Bill: *(turns around as they pass by)* Doc! Name's Bill. *(shakes Michaels hand)* Good to meet ya.

Michael: Dr. Nagle. It's good to meet you Bill. Now how are you doing? I hear your AV fistula isn't working too well for you.

Billy: And who is this 'ere young lady?

Michael: Well Mr. Smith, this is my oldest daughter, Mary Kathryn. Mr. Smith how are you feeling?

Bill: Well she's a beauty!

Mary: How do you do? *(shakes Bill's hand)*

Michael: Ok, Bill, I'm going to go check in with the nurse's station. I'll be right back. Mary, just wait here a second. *(exits)*

Mary: Ok. How are you feeling?

Bill: Well I reckon I'm a little on the sick side. I got me some kidneys, and they ain't workin' too good no more.

Mary: Well you must be very strong.

Bill: Hell. Course I am. Ma'am, I used work them mines 'round 'ere. Hell, you don't survive them mines if you ain't strong.

Mary: You worked in the mines?!

Bill: For 67 years, yes I did. Why there was a time when these here hands were haulin' out 'bout 20 tons of lead a day.^{xxiv} But that was a long time ago.

Mary: Are you from here in Joplin?

Bill: Oh hell no. I'm from Picher. The real Picher. Before all this happened.

Mary: I see.

Bill: 'Course you weren't yet burn, so you don't know, but I tell ya, there was a day when you couldn't walk down the street in Picher without runnin' into people, so many people, people you knew, people you didn't, you just knew they was a workin' in them mines. We had ourselves 21 churches!^{xxv}

Mary: 21!

Bill: I know what ya thinkin'. Ya thinkin' Picher ain't got much. But there was a time when we had 6 theatres! And we . . . *Beat*. Well, we had ourselves a real city ma'am. We had 30,000 people!^{xxvi} Can you believe it? We was Paris in Oklahoma! (*chuckles loudly*) And now . . . I reckon we ain't got much left.

Mary: Have you always lived in Picher?

Bill: No ma'am. Moved there in 21. Came to make myself a livin' in them mines. And I reckon I survived it all. I raised a family! I got two great-great grandchildren!

Mary: So a lot of men didn't survive?

Bill: Oh no. Most the men I was workin' with, the men . . . they're all dead now. Good men though. Damn good men.

Mary: Oh.

Bill: Some got buried in the cave-ins, most of them died cause they got the black lung. All of us, we was breathin' all that air into our lungs.

Michael: (*enters*) Bill, come on now, we've got to do something about those kidneys. They're not working right now, and when that happens, you don't have anything working to remove the toxins and waste from your body. So it just builds up. And that's no good. (*he beckons Bill out into the hallway, and Mary follows*). Uh, wait here, I'll go get the nurse. (*runs off again*)

Bill: You know Miss, I used ta work in the mine right 'ere.^{xxvii}

Jackie: (*turns around to address audience as Dr. Nagle passes*) Dr. Nagle, please, something for the pain.

John: (*turns around to address audience*) In my stomach.

Margerie: (*turns around to address audience*) I don't know where it's coming from.

Bill: Right 'oer out there (*points out window*). That hill right there.

Jackie: It's always been here.

Mary: Where?

Bill: That hill, out this here winda, she was a mine.

John: My dad worked the mines.

Bill: The Kansas Exploration.^{xxviii}

Mary: This hospital was built next to an old mine?

Bill: Last mine to close in Joplin.

Margerie: My husband worked the mines.

John: In Webb City.

Margerie: Galena.

Jackie: My home is in Baxter.

Margerie: Until one day he didn't come home.

Bill: I once got trapped in this here mine.

Margerie: There was a cave-in.^{xxix}

Jackie: And now I live in this hospital.

John: I'm just waiting.

Jackie: Trapped.

Bill: For 72 hours straight.^{xxx}

Margerie: He never got out.

Bill: I was just waitin'.

John: For this pain to end.

Margerie: Waiting.

Jackie: I'm 28.

Bill: All the oxygen was leavin'

Jackie: And I can't breathe.

John: Time is running out.

Bill: But I got out. And I left 'er behind. Said I'd never go back.

Margerie: Fred will be coming back. Or I'll join him.

Bill: But now I'm back 'ere again . . . I think this time 'ere really is the end.

Michael: (*enters in a hurry followed by a Nurse*) Ok, listen we've got to hurry. Jones says Mrs. Wilson, the woman from Galena here in the ER^{xxx1}, has suffered a severe stroke and we've got to—

Nurse: (*approaches Margerie and takes her arm*) Mrs. Wilson, please come with us.

Michael: Mrs. Wilson, please don't be frightened. You've lost the ability to speak. You have suffered a severe stroke. Everything is going to be fine. (*They escort Margerie off*)

Jackie: (*steps forward and begins to sing.*^{xxxii} *While she sings, the Nurse and Dr. Nagle come back and silently escort off first John, and then Bill*)

A man tell his story
Of the days with the mining
Mines caved on in and now
We drink lead in water

Ahhaooooaahah
In Joplin

Now disease chokes our towns
From Miami to Kansas
Their children can't breathe
But keep on workin'
Pay the bills

Many died before today
But the lead ain't goin' away
Ain't no sigh of relief
Our water is still orange grey

Ooohhaoohhaooha
Miami

There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
Her husband's been buried

(before she finishes singing, Dr. Nagle and Nurse enter and escort her off)

There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
There's a rumor in the mine
I dare not breathe.

Mary is left standing alone.

Dr. Drisko: *(enters)* Mary, I got the results back from your heavy metal testing.

Mary: Oh.

Dr. Drisko: Your lead levels are elevated. Specifically within your red blood cells.^{xxxiii}

Mary: Oh.

Dr. Franklin: *(walks in very quickly)* Oh. Hello. How are you? Aren't you Dr. Nagle's daughter?

Dr. Drisko: They're elevated by two standard deviations. This is significant, not disastrous.

Mary: Yes.

Dr. Drisko: We just need to get that lead out of your body.

Dr. Franklin: Yes, that's right, I saw you in my office last September. How is that medicine I prescribed you?

Dr. Drisko: I think you need chelation therapy.

Mary: *(to Dr. Franklin)* I had an allergic reaction to it.

Dr. Franklin: Are you sure?

Dr. Drisko: We'll give you an IV full of a chelating agent. The agent will enter your bloodstream, attach itself to the lead, and pull it out of your body.

Mary: *(to Dr. Franklin)* I just found out that my lead levels are elevated. Maybe that's why—

Dr. Franklin: *(snorts and laughs)* Ha! Are you kidding me? *Your* disease is genetic. Around here kiddo, we all have elevated levels of lead.^{xxxiv} *(he exits)*

Mary: Oh

Dr. Drisko: Now, if you want to drive over to Lawrence, Kansas, there is a clinic there where most of my patients with heavy metal toxicity have gone. There's a doctor there by the name of--

Dr. Jones: *(enters and shakes Mary's hand)* How do you Mary? I'm Dr. Jones.^{xxxv}

Dr. Drisko: He'll know what to do. We'll test your lead levels again in a week. *(exits)*

Dr. Jones: Mary, why don't you have a seat. Now let's see which arm should I begin with?

Mary: You're starting an IV?

Dr. Jones: Exactly. Ah, this looks like a great vein. Ok, I'm just going to poke you. Did that hurt?

Mary: Oh, no.

Dr. Jones: Alright then, well I am just going to attach the IV here, and yes, yes, ok, we're flowing. See all of that serum flowing into your body?

Mary: Yes.

Dr. Jones: Well it's really just a mixture of different vitamins and minerals. But it will bring that lead right out of there. Hmm, lead. I can't even remember the last time I saw a patient with high levels of lead around here in Lawrence. Where do you think you got all of this lead?

Mary: *(smiles uncomfortably)* I don't know.

Dr. Jones: Well it sure is a good thing you are getting it out of there. The human body has absolutely no use for lead—not one tiny bit of it. So really *any* lead in the body is toxic.

Mary: How long does this take?

Dr. Jones: Oh, only about 25 minutes.

Mary: Oh. That's a long time.

Dr. Jones: Is everything alright?

Mary: Well my throat just started itching. Which is just really weird. And my lips too. But that only happens when I eat something I am allergic to.

Dr. Jones: (*slightly alarmed*) Oh, did you eat something before coming here?

Mary: No. I haven't had anything to eat for hours.

Dr. Jones: Well I hope you're not allergic to something in this room!

Mary: I really don't think so. But can I have something to drink? That sometimes will help with the itching. I just need to clear my throat.

Dr. Jones: Ok, I'll be right back. (*exits*)

Mary sneezes and doesn't stop.

Mary: Can you bring me some Kleenex, my nose is running! (*she sneezes*)

Dr. Jones: (*enters with a bottle of juice*) My goodness, are you alright?

Mary: (*her nose begins pouring out snot*) Oh my god, please, a box of Kleenex! Now!

Dr. Jones: You have snot running everywhere!

Mary: Yes, I realize this. (*she sneezes*) Ah! Oh my god! (*beginning to panic*) Can you please . . . a box of Kleenex! (*sneezes*) This IV, take it out . . . or I'll (*sneezes*) get it myself. (*sneezes*)

Dr. Jones: (*hands her a box of Kleenex*) Here. Do you feel alright?

Mary: (*begins blowing her nose profusely*) Alright? (*sneezes*) I don't know what I'm reacting to—do you have a cat in the office? (*sneezes*)

Dr. Jones: No. No animals.

Mary: (*sneezes*) What's in this IV you're giving me? (*begins coughing and is continuously coughing and sneezing—without ceasing—through the rest of the scene*)

Dr. Jones: I don't know, you know. Are you coughing now?

Mary: Yes. (*she is very scared*) Ok, I really don't feel very well. (*her body begins to shake*) You need to let me off of this IV right now. Oh no, no. No! Oh god.

Dr. Jones: I don't think I should do that!

Mary: Now! I'm not kidding. Now! Oh my god, my chest is really tight. Unhook this thing NOW!

Dr. Jones: Ok. Ok. (*unhooks the IV*) You're shaking. Are you ok?

Mary: (*tries to stand up but falls down*) NO! Oh my god, I'm dizzy. Oh god, I can't breathe! (*she is now wheezing, and her whole body is shaking, and she doesn't stop wheezing, shaking, and coughing through the rest of the scene*)

Dr. Jones: (*absolutely clueless as to what to do*) Well, I think you will be ok. Why don't you just calm down a little bit?

Mary: (*screams at him, as best she can*) I can't breathe! (*somehow she manages to stand and dizzily makes her way to the door, coughing, sneezing, and wheezing*) My inhaler! My car!

Dr. Jones: Mary! I think you should stay indoors here with me! Who knows what is happening to your body and if you need medical care—

Mary: (*screaming through snotty sneezes and wheezes*) Go to hell! (*exits*)

Dr. Jones stands for a moment in shock, then rushes to the phone on his desk.

Dr. Jones: Jeanne!

Dr. Drisko: (*enters, talking on her cell phone to Dr. Jones*) Hello?

Dr. Jones: Uh, Mary's run off, and I uh, I don't know where she went, but she's shaking, rather violently and—

Dr. Drisko: Wooh. Chris, slow down. She's shaking. Any other symptoms?

Sarah: (*enters shrilling to Mary on the phone*) You're wheezing Mary! I can hear it!

Dr. Jones: Yes. And coughing and her whole body was shaking.

Sarah: Oh god, where are you?

Dr. Drisko: She's probably going into anaphylactic shock. Where is she now?

Dr. Jones: She's gone!

Dr. Drisko: You let her leave?

Sarah: You ran out the door?

Dr. Jones: She ran out the door!

Dr. Drisko: Oh good God. Ok. I've got to go. I'll call you back.

They both hang up the phone.

Sarah: *(she is extremely anxious, on the verge of a panic attack and screaming on the phone to Mary)* Mary, where are you? Go to the ER. Mary you can't breathe! Oh God. Please, just to the goddamn ER! No, you can't drive your car! *(the phone call ends. She shrills)* Mary! Mary! Goddamnit this piece of fucking shit phone!

Dr. Drisko: *(talking on her phone)* Mary! Hello, I'm glad I got a hold of you. I just spoke with Dr. Jones. Mary, you might be going into anaphylactic shock. I'm not there, so I can't tell.

Dr. Jones: *(picks up his phone)* Hello?

Sarah: What the hell did you do to my daughter?

Dr. Drisko: Ok, sounds like you are.

Dr. Jones: I didn't do—

Sarah: She's wheezing, and coughing, and shaking, and she can't breathe! She might die! How do you feel about that?

Dr. Drisko: You need to calm down. I know you're scared.

Dr. Jones: *(scared)* I didn't know what to do! Mary ran out of here, screaming at me, and—

Dr. Drisko: But you're going to be alright. I promise. Just listen to me.

Sarah: Where is Mary now?

Dr. Drisko: Do you still have some Benedryl with you?

Dr. Drisko: Ok, I want you to take it, and take two puffs on your inhaler.

Dr. Jones: I don't know!

Dr. Drisko: In your car outside of Dr. Jones' office? Ok.

Dr. Jones: She ran out of my office!

Dr. Drisko: Ok Mary. Now give the inhaler just a few minutes to do its magic. Your body just didn't like that chelation treatment, but you'll be fine now. You already sound better to me.

Sarah: Well I hope you think about what you just did. (*hangs up the phone and holds her head in her hands terribly frightened*)

Dr. Jones hangs his head and walks off stage, completely defeated.

Dr. Drisko: That's fine Mary. You never have to see or talk to Dr. Jones again. You hung up on her? Oh, well, your poor Mother. Ok, Mary, do you feel better now? You sound better. Ok, I'm going to call your mom real quick, and then I'll call you back, ok? Ok. Call me back immediately if you don't continue to improve.

Sarah: (*pulls herself together to answer her cell phone*) Hello?

Dr. Drisko: Sarah?

Sarah: Jeanne! Mary got that chelation therapy in Lawrence and now—

Dr. Drisko: Yes, I know. I just talked to Mary.

Sarah: Oh! How is she? Where is she? She needs to go the ER!

Dr. Drisko: I think she's going to be fine. She took a Benedryl and her inhaler, and she sounded a lot better on the phone.

Sarah: (*breathes a sigh of relief*) She sounded better? She's ok? She couldn't breathe!

Dr. Drisko: She's breathing now. I know this was very scary for you both. It's very scary. We never know how Mary's body will react to things.

Sarah: What the hell just happened?

Dr. Drisko: Sarah, to be absolutely honest with you, I really don't know. I've never, ever, in my entire practice, had a patient have this type of an allergic reaction to chelation therapy. There's nothing allergenic in the serum. It's just vitamins and minerals.

Sarah: Well she said snot was just pouring out of her nose and her ears and her whole body was shaking—

Dr. Drisko: Yes, I know. I think perhaps the chelation therapy was too successful. It might have pulled out so much lead at once that all the lead was just pouring out and Mary's body couldn't handle it.

Sarah: I can't handle it. This is ridiculous.

Dr. Drisko: Oh my. We're going to have to find something more delicate for this child. Because you can't just leave lead sitting around. It's toxic. You have to clean it up. Where do you think she got all this lead?

Sarah: I don't know.

Blackout.

ACT TWO

Scene Six

Peter Samuel is sitting comfortably on stage and addresses the audience.

Peter Samuel: By some accounts lead was the first metal to be smelted by man, around the 7th millennium BC, possibly when early potters accidentally melted clays containing a lead ore. It was first used in small devices such as weights in fishing tackle and in spinning whorls—the drums that provide gearing and momentum to spinning machines. It was also used for glazing pottery and later to make standardized weights and coins. The discovery of lead represented an end to the Stone Age and the beginning of the metal “ages” when humans developed technology for tools and machinery. A civilization developed based on people performing different specialized tasks and trading between themselves for mutual advantage. Lead, therefore, was crucial in the development of civilization. In fact, most major advances in civilization have depended heavily on lead. Not only were cities dependent on lead, but so were books. Lead was an integral part of printing from the time of the invention for the first printing press by Johann Gutenberg in mid-15th century Germany, with lead used for casting type and in printing inks. Food technology also long relied on lead, particularly after 1810, when Pierre Durand patented the first metal food can. Its airtight quality allowed food to be stored and transported without spoilage. Today, one of the fastest growing uses of lead is shielding against X-rays, nuclear radiation, and radiation emitted by TV picture tubes and computer displays. Lead is also used in computer circuit boards and chips. *(Mary enters)* Fortunately, thanks to technological developments, lead in the human environment has declined greatly in recent years, and it may be lower now than it has been since prehistoric times. A proportion of lead in the environment is the result of natural forces—wind-blown dust and lead from volcanic eruptions.^{xxxvi}

Mary: Excuse me, who are you?

Peter Samuel: A free individual, in a free country. I work for the Pacific Research Institute, a San Francisco-based non-profit research group advocating for personal responsibility and individual liberty in national and state issues.^{xxxvii}

Mary: I see.

Peter Samuel: We are a free-market think tank providing practical solutions for the issues that impact the daily lives of all individuals.

Scott enters and begins inspecting the ground.

Mary: What are you doing here?

Peter Samuel: I’m writing a very important book about proclaimed lead contamination on Superfund sites here in the United States.^{xxxviii}

Mary: Me too!

Peter Samuel: How wonderful!

Scott: Lord up above!

Peter Samuel: Perhaps you'd like to read my book.

Mary: Yes. I have been reading a lot, you know, EPA documents, newspaper articles--

Peter Samuel: Well then you know what a scham the EPA is.

Scott: Lead! Good god lead! (*he sprints offstage*)

Mary: I think they have made a lot of mistakes.

Peter Samuel: They are the definition of a mistake.

Scott: (*enters and leads Susan to the same spot*) Here, follow me. Look! Lead! I found lead!

Susan: (*examines the soil*) Looks like you sure as hell did Scott.

Scott: I was just out here and I was digging around and I turned up this huge reading of lead! This is way above 500 parts per million!

Susan: Holy shit Scott! I bet the whole town of Picher is just drenched in lead!

Scott: Like lava from a volcano!

Susan: (*they start to exit*) Alright, we got some work to do! We have got to start another report—oh, this is going to cost the Superfund a pretty penny--

Scott: We're starting ourselves another round for this Superfund site. They already found lead in yards up in Joplin. But the yards here are Indian lands, so we have to involve the BIA, more lawyers, the mining companies--

Susan: Woah there cowboy! That's a whole hell of a lot of sweating—and all we have here is one yard with a high reading of lead in the soil. (*they exit*)

Scott: Yes Susan, but she's a huge one!

Mary: Can I read what you've written?

Peter Samuel: Allow me to read it for you. *(clears his throat)* My book is entitled *Lead Astray*, published by the Pacific Research Institute. This is the preface! *(reads from book)* Every Superfund site is unique, but there is one underlying question. Is all this clean-up necessary? A completely lead-free environment might be desirable, but time and resources are limited and preoccupation with the lead problem can prevent action on other, more serious problems. This book reports on soil-lead cleanups at about 20 Superfund sites around the country--^{xxxix}

Mary: Excuse me, but I definitely disagree with your book here.

Peter Samuel: Well that's a shame. This is a very important book documenting how several crazed politicians and bleeding heart liberals have taken the "lead issue" and blown it completely out of proportion to serve their own personal interests.

Mary: Personal interests?

Sharon: *(walks on stage, very concerned)* Huge reading of lead! How huge?^{xl}

Bob: I was drivin' home from work one day, and the EPA called me, on my cell phone, they says there's lead in my yard!

Brad: *(concerned)* Lead!

Bob: *(angry)* In my backyard!

Sharon: Lead! The lead that came out of them mines!

Bob: I drove home screamin' all the way!

Sharon: Randy! Randy! Git on out 'ere! We got lead!

Bob: I ain't rich! Can't 'ford this kinda thing. I'm rather poor! Poor! Dirty poor! *(runs off screaming)* Lead! Dirty lead! Damn dirty lead!

Sonya enters. She begins digging in the dirt with her fingers. She looks at the others and laughs.

Brad: *(digs at the ground in disbelief)* I just don't believe these eyes.

Sharon: You won't believe your eyes Randy!

Brad: The EPA done discovered lead!

Sharon: Randy!

Sonya: I was the first to discover the problem here in this area.

Brad: Well curse the devil below!

Sonya: *(to audience)* Hello. My name is Sonya Nagle.

Sharon: Randy!

Sonya: I discovered the problem when I was swimming in Tar Creek back in 79.

Sharon: *(pissed off)* Randy, oh Randy! Put on your Sunday best! We ain't gonna be poor no more! We got lead! We're gonna be rich! We gonna sue the asses off those minin' companies! *(Randy runs on stage, they embrace, and run off together)*

Sonya: So why don't you all just calm down. You hear me? I was here long before all you EPA outsiders infiltrated my yard, dug it up, and ripped it to shreds crawling around an all fours in *my* dirt!

Brad: Filthy lead!

Sonya: I'm a clean woman. I run a respectable home and I keep to my own business. I was just on my way to the dry cleaners one morning when you EPA people showed up, and instead you--

Dick: *(runs on stage)* Leapin' lizards they found lead?

Sonya: found lead? Lead! There is no dirty lead in *my* soil!

Brad: With my luck, my soil'll have the most lead in all of Joplin.

Sonya: I'll let you people know that I am not going to let you ravage my yard without a fight! *(runs offstage)* Michael! Michael! The EPA found lead! Lead!

Brad: Oh shit! Does my soil really have the most lead in all of Missouri?

Dick: In all of Oklahoma?

Brad: In all the world? *(walks offstage with his head hung low in despair)*

Dick: Guess that's not too surprising.' Us here in Picher, we used ta mine the most lead in the world. I mean, I just figure somebody's got to pay the price. *(walks offstage)*

Peter Samuel: So are you one of those liberals? Is lead cleanup your new cause of the day?

Mary: No, it's my life.

Dr. Odrowski: *(enters)* Mary. Excuse me. I'm sorry to interrupt, but I have an appointment with her, and I don't have much time.^{xli}

Peter Samuel: Well I'll be off. I've got to finish writing my book. Maybe we'll meet again. It was nice talking to you Mary. Good luck with your thesis. *(exits)*

Dr. Odrowski: Hi. *(shakes her hand)* Dr. Odrowski, the epidemiologist from the University of Kansas—I work with your mom. Now Mary, your mother tells me you're writing about public health in Cherokee County, Kansas.

Rebecca Jim: *(enters)* Mary, hello, it's Rebecca Jim from the LEAD Agency in Miami. I'm calling because Dr. Odrowski told me you are doing research on the Tar Creek Superfund Site.

Dr. Aaron Blair: *(enters and shakes Mary's hand)* Hello Mary! Dr. Aaron Blair, epidemiologist with the National Institute of Health. Dr. Davis told me you are investigating elevated cancer rates in Jasper County, Missouri?

Mary: Well I'm actually writing about the public health effects of the mining in all three counties, Cherokee, Jasper, and Ottawa. *She takes out her notebook to write down all that is said.*

Dr. Odrowski: Well, I can mail you my reports on the elevated rates of stroke and cancer in Cherokee County—

Rebecca Jim: I will mail you our report on the elevated rates of several diseases in Ottawa County—

Dr. Aaron Blair: Mary, here's a map of the three states. You'll notice that Jasper, Ottawa, and Cherokee counties are all red.

Rebecca Jim: Our community has a miscarriage rate that is twice the national average.^{xliii}

Dr. Odrowski: When I first began my research in Galena, the chat piles were 50 stories high.

Scott: *(reenters, followed by Susan)* Well, I mean really, children only spend 15 to 30 percent of their waking hours playing outside in soil.

Dr. Odrowski: In Cherokee County lung cancer is elevated by 54%.^{xliii}

Dr. Aaron Blair: The cancer rates all drop off significantly for all of the immediately surrounding counties.

Rebecca Jim: 58% of households in northeast Commerce have cancer.

Susan: Yes, but in 1996, 30% of children in the Tar Creek site had elevated blood lead levels.^{xliv}

Dr. Odrowski: Back in the 30s, Galena had a lead smelter that smelted 200 tons of concentrates daily.

Rebecca Jim: 75% of the households in Quapaw have diabetes.

Dr. Aaron Blair: Ha! Mary! Of course it's environmental!

Scott: Well a lot of yards had readings above 500 parts per million.

Rebecca Jim: 11% have kidney disease.

Dr. Odrowski: Back in the 40s, Cherokee County had the highest rate of tuberculosis in all of Kansas.

Dr. Klaassen : *(enters)* Hello Mary. I'm Dr. Klaassen , the toxicologist from the University of Kansas. Your stepfather tells me you are researching lead toxicology.^{xlv}

Susan: Well in this area alone there are still 75 millions tons of chat!

Dr. Aaron Blair: Today only 5 to 10% of the cases of cancer are hereditary.

Dr. Odrowski: Today the rate is still at least 6 or 7 times greater the rest of the state of Kansas.

Dr. Klaassen : We know lead effects the neurological development in a person.

Rebecca Jim: One out of five households in southeast Miami is home to someone with schizophrenia.

Scott: Well it's gonna cost the Superfund Program 25 million a yard.

Dr. Klaassen : Especially during the first 6 or 7 years of a child's life—when their neurological system is just developing.

Asarco: *(enters with collar up, drinking a martini)* The apparent source of EPA's concern, the chat piles, has been in place for many, many years.^{xlvi}

Susan: 25 million a yard! That's 25 million Superfund doesn't have! *(exits)*

Dr. Odrowski: And not to mention—the high number of cases of lung cancer that is undifferentiated or oat cell.

Mary: Oat cell?

Dr. Odrowski: That just refers to the type of cancer cell in the patient.

Mary: Why is oat cell significant?

Dr. Odrowski: Because you can't link it back to cigarette smoke. *(exits)*

Rebecca Jim: In 1996, 62% of children in Cardin had elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Asarco: Data from residential areas near some mining sites show little relationship between observed lead and soil lead concentrations.

Scott: I know! There's up top 1800 yards in Ottawa County alone that qualify! *(exits)*

Dr. Aaron Blair: Today about 30% of cancer is caused by a combination of genetics and carcinogens in the environment. 70% of cases are caused by environmental carcinogens alone.

Asarco: Now that's rather misleading.^{xlvii}

Dr. Klaassen : Approximately 90% of inhaled lead particles from ambient air are absorbed.

Asarco: There is, however, no evidence of health problems in the areas in which the chat is located.

Mary: Excuse me, who are you?

Asarco: Asarco, my company, has asked Kleinfelder, a consulting firm, to assemble documents supporting its position that the data do not justify a time-critical soil removal action.

Rebecca Jim: Asthma and allergy rates are both significantly elevated.

Mary: Allergies are simply an overactive immune system.

Dr. Aaron Blair: Immune system abnormalities can lead to cancer.

Dr. Klaassen : Lead is a known developmental immunotoxicant that has been shown to produce immune alterations in humans as well as other species.

Dr. Aaron Blair: Mary, it has been nice talking to you. I'm afraid that's all the time I have. *(starts to leave)*

Mary: So you really think that most cancer is caused by carcinogens in the environment, not by genetics?

Dr. Aaron Blair: Are you kidding me? Just look at the cancer rates of immigrants in this country! Immigrants that move here from other countries, later in life wind up sharing cancer rates with Americans, not with their family members in their country of origin. Of course it's environmental. The amount of evidence we now have is overwhelming.

Mary: Then why is the medical community still insisting that cancer is genetic?

Dr. Aaron Blair: They have too much to lose. (*exits*)

Eagle-Picher: (*enters*) As part of EaglePicher Technologies, LLC, Pharmaceutical Services is uniquely qualified to satisfy all your synthesis needs from discovery to market. Pharmaceutical Services, a contract manufacturer founded in 1985, specializes in the production of anti-cancer active ingredients and other highly potent compounds.^{xlviii}

Rebecca Jim: 60% of households in Picher have arthritis.

Mary: That's an autoimmune disease.

Rebecca Jim: Yes. We have lots of them. But I guess somehow our community manages to survive.

Eagle Picher: Eagle-Picher has survived the financial panics of the 1800s, the Great Depression, the Energy Crisis, and the legal, social, and governmental activism which have presented American industry with seemingly insurmountable problems.^{xlix}

Dr. Klaassen : Exposure to lead has been shown to have a deleterious effect on the immune system.

Rebecca Jim: Yes, well, I need to be leaving. Mary, do you think you can make the Town Hall Meeting tonight? It's at the Picher High School. The EPA will be presenting their plans of soil remediation to the community.

Mary: Yes definitely, I will be there! (*they hug*)

Rebecca: Your hands! Poor child! They're cracking and bleeding!

Mary: I know. I just accidentally ate something I was allergic to, and this is what happens.

Rebecca: Well, you're right at home with us at Tar Creek. A lot of folks have hands like yours around here. (*exits*)

Asarco: There is no evidence linking Asarco operations, or the operations of any predecessor to Asarco, in Ottawa County to lead-contaminated soil at the site.

Dr. Klaassen : A number of studies have documented that the heavy metals are not only toxic for the organisms but they may modulate immune responses.

Mary: Dr. Klaassen , are you saying that lead toxicity can cause immune system disorders?

Dr. Klaassen : Lead has been shown to exert toxic effects during early development.

Mary: What kind of effects?

Dr. Klaassen : I'm sorry Mary, we don't know. This is something I have just begun to research. *(exits)*

Mary resorts to reading through her notebook.

Asarco: For the reasons I have already stated, Asarco has declined to participate in the remedial action.

Eagle-Picher: We are the company that built Picher. We discovered lead in the Picher field in 1914! The rest is just history, history we made.¹

Asarco: You know the EPA's documents indicate that there are many more potentially responsible parties at this site. *(looks menacingly at Eagle-Picher)* Parties other than Asarco.

Eagle-Picher: The mining days are over, and Eagle-Picher has had to change many of our operations. And we have successfully.

Asarco: *(wining)* We at Asarco understand that Eagle-Picher has responsibility in this county and that EPA's claim against Eagle-Picher has been settled and approved by the Bankruptcy Court.

Eagle-Picher: *(turns to face Asarco and smiles)* Sure has! Anyways, as I was saying, back in 1987 our Hillsdale Tool Division built a \$12 million facility in Hamilton, IN and became the sole source of a transmission pump for the Ford Motor Company's new electronic truck transmission. We also opened a sales/engineering office in Nagoya, Japan to serve the Japanese automotive industry.

Asarco: Excuse me, but wasn't it during the 80s that the Bankruptcy Court approved your bankruptcy?^{li}

Eagle-Picher: Yes.

Asarco: And now you are opening up 12 million dollar facilities in Indiana and offices in Japan?

Eagle-Picher: It was our *Mining Division* that went bankrupt, not the entire company.

Asarco: Oh, you tricky bastard.

Eagle-Picher: Well, you can't hold an entire company liable for something one division did.

Asarco: Damn! I wish we had thought of that!. Now we're stuck working with the EPA.

Eagle-Picher laughs at Asarco.

Mary: Excuse me!

Asarco: Yes?

Mary: I am trying to work here.

Eagle-Picher: So are we.

Mary: Yes, well, I'm sorry—but I think you both are being quite disruptive. Would you mind leaving?

Asarco: *(looks at Eagle-Picher and begins laughing)* Well that shouldn't be a problem!

Eagle-Picher: Hell, we left a long time ago!

Asarco: *(as they exit together)* Yeah, like back in the 60s!

Eagle-Picher: Hey, you know, there's lots of lead now down in Argentina.

Donn Walters: *(enters and addresses audience)* Can we go ahead and come on in and find our seats, and can we get started shortly? I'm Donn Walters, EPA Community Relations in Region 6 for the Superfund Program. Okay. The purpose of this evening's meeting is to discuss and take comments on the proposed plan for the Tar Creek remedial site.^{lii}

Noel Bennett: Hello. Good evening everyone. My name is Noel Bennett. I am the Project Manager for the site, and I am going to let everyone in the community know what we are going to do. Of course, people that have lived in the area certainly realize that there are millions of tons of mining waste in this area. We looked at a number of remedies. That's what we're looking at. We're not looking at, you know, chat piles and other areas.

John Gault: (*enters and addresses Noel Bennett*) I have a question. I am John Gault with the Quapaw Tribe. I'm curious about farm homes. Are you going to clean that up as a residential area?

Noel Bennet: There are a lot of different sized yards. Some are larger. So it just varies and depends. And that's really the best answer I can give you. In some cases that may require—if there's—you know, not a fence, maybe we'd consider placing a fence to say this is the yard and this is the pasture. So we'll evaluate those on a case- by case basis.

Larry Roberts: (*enters and addresses Noel*) I'm State Representative Larry Roberts. First, you mentioned about the air quality test that you've done. And apparently you're satisfied that the air quality is pretty good in our immediate area in the mining area. Is that right?

Noel Bennett: In terms of, you know, like lead contaminants, yes; right.

Larry Roberts: How did the soil become contaminated to start with?

Noel Bennett: The mining in this area was obviously intensive. Just air deposition alone is not sufficient to contaminate the property.

Larry Roberts: Well, then in your opinion are the chat piles that remain here of any danger to the residents in the area?

Noel Bennett: Are there dangers to the chat piles? Well, I think that's something we need to evaluate further. Of course, you know, you wouldn't want children playing on those chat piles, and we wouldn't want, you know, much human activity on those chat piles. But that's an area we're going to look at farther.

Larry Roberts: I've asked this question before. I'm concerned about the water drainage that comes off of the chat piles. How much danger is there of lead contamination within the chat that's being washed into people's yards even after you've cleaned them up?

Noel Bennett: That's one of the things we want to address is, as we clean up each property, we want to look at the drainage situation. So that's a good question.

George Mayer: (*enters and addresses Noel*) I'm George Mayer. I'm from Miami. I own a little pasture right south of Commerce. There are three drill holes that Eagle Picher drilled there running tests back during the mining days. And I imagine I was probably the first one that saw mine water just coming up out of the ground. And I've got mine water that's been rolling out of there for 15, 20 years I guess.

Noel Bennett: Well, let, let me address that. There was a remedy constructed to attempt to address that. Of course, it didn't work as successfully as hoped by any means. And so it's a difficult problem. We think we're making good progress.

George Mayer: I understand that, but my concern is about the mine water.

Noel Bennett: Right.

George Mayer: And it's just ruined 40 acres for me.

Noel Bennett: I can understand that, I certainly can.

George Mayer: But no one has—actually.

Noel Bennett: Well, I understand your concerns there. That's—that's no fun. Yes, sir.

Rita Frayser: *(enters and addresses Noel)* Rita Frayser, Miami. I'd like to know why, if the chat piles are so full of heavy metals, they're still being allowed to be sold and transported out of here?

Noel Bennett: Information that we have is that the commercial uses that are going on now are basically safe uses.

Rayma Grimes: *(enters and addresses Noel)* Rayma Grimes, Picher City Council. I have a question. What is the average yard costing under Phase I?

Noel Bennett: It's running something around \$15,000 plus or minus.

Rebecca Jim: *(enters and addresses Noel)* Page 17, \$20,000. It's on page 17 of your report today.

Noel Bennett: 20,000 was the estimate we used in the proposed plan.

Larry Roberts: Do you have any idea what it's going to cost to complete the next phase?

Noel Bennett: Our estimate is approximately 26 million dollars.

Larry Roberts: And how's the Congress going to fund that?

Noel Bennett: Well, this is funded—you know, this is a Superfund project, so this would be funded out of Superfund. Of course, we will—we're in communication with certain companies that were involved in the area, so there may be some participation there.

Ms. Grimes: Are you going to do all Indian lands? Are you going to do all Indian lands?

Noel Bennett: We—we—we propose to do all residential properties, Indian and non-Indian.

Ms. Grimes: Did you ever think about just moving out of—moving us out of this area?

Noel Bennett: Well---

Ms. Grimes: Would it not be cheaper?

Noel Bennett: It wouldn't be cheaper. You now, the main thrust of the EPA is to restore areas, you know, so they're safe to live in, not just leave, you know, big gaping holes that are write-offs, you know, because we want to restore the area so this generation and future generations can live here safely.

Ms. Grimes: But the government has relocated towns before, correct?

Noel Bennett: This area is very feasible to clean up the residential yards.

Rita Frayser: When Tar Creek floods and the water sits on land for a period of time, how contaminated does that land become?

Noel Bennett: Well, if it's—you know, like if it's resident—if it were a residential area, we would go in and test that property.

Rita Frayser: Is it possible that they would have been has high as 500 parts per million?

Noel Bennett: I didn't bring that information with me tonight.

Rebecca Jim: Have you actually done some testing along Tar Creek?

Noel Bennett: Well, there's been a sediment testing. And John Mott is quite—

Rebecca Jim: I mean in yards along Tar Creek in Miami?

Rita Frayser: Soil testing.

Noel Bennett: We haven't, we haven't tested per se the yards along Tar Creek.

Rebecca Jim: Do you anticipate doing that?

Noel Bennett: That's something that we'll have to look at as far as you know, possible future work to see.

Bill Honker: I'm Bill Honker, Branch Chief. We've heard a lot of questions. We would love to have your opinion. If you have any particular suggestions in terms of improved residential property cleanup in the area, we would really like to hear them. These sorts of comments really do make a difference. They really do change—result in changes to what we finalize in terms of a, of a remedy from what we propose. It happens all the time. So we got any further comments or questions tonight?

Ms. Grimes: You are making our town look much better. That I am grateful for. Okay?
Let's go home. We've beat the horse to death.

Everyone begins to move around and greet one another with varying moods and body language. Rita Frayser enters and begins singing^{liii}. By the time she has finished singing, Mary is left on stage.

Rita Frayser:

there's a picture in the
paper of a home
now all caved in
a school next to a
lead chat pile 50 stories high

Grandma tells the story
of the days with the mining
Tar Creek's runnin' orange
and there's lead in our water

ahahahhahahooooohahaahhao
My Picher

the EPA's in town
to take the lead from our soil
the epa has come to town
they do their diggin'
left the chat piles

I think I will die before
this mess has all gone away
there's not a sigh of relief

the mining companies
have gone away

ohhoahohohaoah (etc)
My Picher

there's a rumor in the town
there's a rumor in the town
there's a rumor in the town

we're all going to cave in

there's a rumor in the town

there's a rumor in the town
there's a rumor in the town
But we can't leave.

Mary is alone on stage for a moment. Then Rebecca Jim enters.

Rebecca Jim: Well, you haven't left yet!

Mary: I wanted to talk to you again.

Rebecca Jim: Your hands are bleeding again.

Mary: Yes, I know. Why *hasn't* the government just moved everyone out of Picher?

Rebecca Jim: Well, Mary, it's actually all so very complicated. But then again it's really not. Most of the land people in Picher live on is actually Indian land.

Mary: Indian land?

Rebecca Jim: 70% of the contaminated land in and around Picher is actually land that legally belongs to Native Americans. Before lead was discovered, all this land belonged to the Cherokee, Miami, Peoria, Ottawa, Quapaw, and Eastern Shawnee, and well, it still does, legally.

Mary: So the mining companies didn't even own the land they mined?

Rebecca Jim: No. They "leased" it.

Mary: What do you mean they "leased" it?

Rebecca Jim: The Bureau of Indian Affairs convinced Congress to legally declare the Indians "incompetent" and then the BIA came in and leased all the land to the mining companies themselves. The mining companies mined the land, contaminated it, and then gave it back to the Indians.

Mary: How do you know all of this?

Rebecca Jim: Well my family's Cherokee and so—

Mary: Really? So is mine. Or at least, my grandmother was.

Rebecca Jim: Well, about 50% of us here in Miami have some Cherokee heritage. Is your grandmother on the rolls?

Mary: Yes. Actually, she's a direct descendent of Major and John Ridge.

Rebecca Jim: Oh, wow.

Mary: She's buried in the Cherokee Cemetery over in Southwest City. You would have loved my grandmother. She was an amazing woman.

Rebecca Jim: Well I am sure she'd be proud of the work you are doing here in this community. *(starts to exit)*

Mary: You know, she actually spat on Andrew Jackson's grave!

Rebecca Jim: *(stops and looks at Mary)* She did? Well now she really was a Cherokee! Andrew Jackson *(shakes her head in dismay)*. Any one who could just come in and destroy an entire people's land, give them all sorts of diseases, kick them off their land and then forget about them deserves to be spat on! *(exits)*

Mary: I couldn't agree with you more.

Sonya enters and stands on the opposite side of the stage.

Sonya: Mary? I know you are working really hard on your thesis, but you should come home for dinner tonight.

Mary: Oh, Sonya. Dinner. Well, if I have time. Is Dad home?

Sonya: No he's up at the hospital, seeing patients. I cooked dinner just for you tonight.

Mary: Oh, well, thank you, but I'm really not hungry.

Sonya: I made white rice, steamed some broccoli, and grilled some porkchops for you.

Mary: You did?

Sonya: Oh no, can you eat that? Are you allergic to those things?

Mary: *(utter disbelief)* No, I'm not. I can eat all of the things you cooked.

Sonya: Oh good! I was so afraid that you might not be able to eat it!

Mary: *(quite touched)* How did you know what to make me?

Sonya: Oh well, I've been writing down everything you say you're allergic to. You know, keeping track of it all.

Mary: You have been? Why?

Sonya: Why? What am I supposed to do? Let you starve?

Mary: I guess not.

Sonya: I can't do that Mary Kathryn. You're my stepdaughter.

Mary: Wow, well I'll definitely be home for dinner tonight. I promise.

Sonya: *(smiles, very pleased)* Ok, Mary. Drive safely, and don't wear yourself out too thin. You know your body has limits. *(exits)*

Mary sits, alone at the Praying Hands. After a few moments Michael enters.

Michael: *(enters, thrilled to find his daughter)* I thought I might find you here!

Mary: Oh, Dad. Hey.

Michael: Sonya told me you took off for the Praying Hands after dinner. Sorry I missed dinner. You know, things got really backed up at the hospital.

Mary: That's ok. Sonya cooked me an entire dinner that I could eat. But I think she's getting a migraine. How was she when you saw her?

Michael: Oh, I just talked to her on the phone. But she gets migraines all the time. I told her she should lie down for awhile.

Mary: Oh.

Michael: You seem kind of down.

Mary: No. I'm just thinking.

Michael: Well what are you thinking about?

Mary: Picher . . . imploding.

Michael: Yes, well . . . I know. You know, it just blows my mind when I think about what humans are capable of nowadays.

Mary: Yeah--

Michael: To think that we have the technology and the manpower to literally carve out the earth and reshape it. I mean, no other civilization in all of history has accomplished what the Americans have in the last century. It's as if American progress has no limits!

Mary: Well I think--

Michael: I mean, well, that's one of the reasons I always brought you girls to this spot. I'm humbled. Just think, the lead that was mined right from here, where we are standing here and now, *that* lead created forgave us the bullets that defeated evil and won World War Two for the Americans, and now we have become the most prosperous nation in the entire world.

Mary: Yes, well the lead certainly created a lot of wealth.

Michael: Well how is your research going? Did you find anyone in Picher with an interesting story?

Mary: Everyone in Picher has a story.

Michael: Well I'll you, they might have a story, but they sure as hell don't have health insurance.

Mary: Well no, I'm sure they don't.

Michael: Every time I'm on call they seem to just flock to the ER—and of course none of them seek medical attention on a regular basis, so by the time they get to me in the ER it's just a true emergency. Oh Mary, I tell you, it never ceases to amaze me how irresponsible people can be. It's as if Americans have completely forgotten the concept of *personal* responsibility.

Mary: Yeah. It's like, if you make a mess, you should clean it up.

Michael: Yes. Well I saw another old miner from Picher in the hospital today. I got his name and number. I told him about your project, and he said he wanted to talk to you.

Mary: Why was he in the hospital?

Michael: He has lung cancer.

Mary: God, he and thousands of others around here. There are just so many.

Michael: Well Mary, a lot of people make bad lifestyle choices. That's why I want to see you make good choices. With your health Mary, you can't afford to make those same bad choices. Oh, your hands! Your hands are cracking and bleeding.

Mary: Yes, they are.

Michael: Well you should put some lotion on them.

Mary: Dad, that doesn't help. My hands are cracking because I ate wheat gluten, not because they're dry.

Michael: Well maybe you shouldn't eat wheat any more Mary.

Mary: It was an accident! I didn't eat the wheat intentionally!

Michael: Well, Mary, gosh. You have a genetic, chronic illness. You'll be living with Crohn's disease the rest of your life. I wish you'd learn to manage it.

Mary: I don't think I have Crohn's disease.

Michael: Well, medical science has proven that sometimes Crohn's goes into remission. And now Mary, the colonoscopy from back in 2002 showed—

Mary: Colonoscopies can be misleading.

Michael: Ok, well lot's not fight anymore. We don't have enough time together to spend it fighting. Have you decided what you're doing for Christmas this year?

Mary: Yeah. Rebecca and I are going to go to Colorado with Mom to see Aunt Margaret's family.

Michael: *(disappointed)* Oh, well that will be nice.

Mary: I think it will be.

Michael: Well I've got to run back up to the hospital to make some more rounds. *(he kisses Mary on the forehead)* It was good to see you baby. It's pretty chilly out here. Are you going to stay out here much longer?

Mary: Yes. I have to go back out and do some more interviews.

Michael: Ok, well get back to the house early tonight. Remember Mary, your body has limits! You *are* human! I love you. *(exits)*

Mary: I love you too Dad.

Mary watches her father leave, and then sits and reflects for a moment. She then stands and addresses the audience.

Mary: Ok, I don't have much time, and there are more stories here that I could ever hope to possibly collect. *(takes out her tape recorder and presses play)* Ok. So this is my tape recorder. I will record the words you share with me, and I might just share them with even more people. So, friends and family alike, please introduce yourself to the tape recorder here before you speak. *(Mary walks around, taping anyone who speaks)*

Kim Pace: *(enters)* Kim Pace. I'm the principal at Picher Elementary School.^{liv}

Sarah: (*enters*) Sarah Thompson, PhD at the University of Kansas School of Nursing. I'm Mary's mother.

Noel Bennett: (*enters*) Hello. My name is Noel Bennett. I am the EPA Project Manager for the site here.

Dr. Schwarz: (*enters*) Hello. My name is Dr. Schwarz. I am the immunologist called in to manage Mary's health here.^{lv}

Sarah and Kim Pace: I knew something was wrong--

Kim Pace: When all my children just couldn't learn to read.

Sarah: Mary would call me at night, crying in pain.

Kim Pace: And after years of frustrations--

Sarah: And so many different doctors—

Kim Pace: I had my children's blood lead levels tested.

Sarah: We had Mary tested and—

Kim Pace: And in 1997 I got a call from the County Health Department--

Sarah: We found lead.

Kim Pace: Lead! Elevated levels in my students! It was like, oh, ok, I'm not really crazy!

Sarah: So we called in the experts.

Noel Bennett: And so it's a difficult problem.

Dr. Schwarz: Mary's health is a difficult problem.

Noel Bennett and Dr. Schwarz: We think we're making good progress.

Michael: (*enters*) Dr. Nagle. I'm Mary's father.

Dr. Barker: (*enters*) Dr. Barker. I'm an asthma and allergy doctor here in Miami Oklahoma.^{lvi}

Michael: Well my daughter's health does not paint a clear picture.

Dr. Barker: Well the health of my community does not paint a clear picture.

Noel Bennett: There was a remedy constructed to attempt to address that.

Dr. Schwarz: There were medications used to attempt to address that.

Noel Bennett and Dr. Schwarz: Of course, it didn't work as successfully as hoped by any means.

Dr. Drisko: (*enters*) Dr. Jeanne Drisko. I'm a doctor in integrative medicine.

Rebecca Jim: (*enters*) Rebecca Jim. Miami, Oklahoma. I believe in an integrated community.

Dr. Drisko and Rebecca Jim: And my thoughts are if we find toxic lead—

Dr. Drisko: In Mary—

Rebecca Jim: In Miami—

Dr. Drisko and Rebecca Jim: We've got to get it out of there.

Michael and Dr. Barker: Excuse me, but what *kind* of medical science are you using here?

Michael: (*to Dr. Drisko*) What exactly is this IGg allergy testing you've done?

Noel Bennett: Well, there's been a sediment testing.

Rebecca Jim: Have you actually done some testing along Tar Creek?

Dr. Barker: (*to Rebecca Jim*) What exactly is this community health survey you've done?

Michael, Rebecca Jim, and Dr. Barker: I question your results.

Kim Pace: The results were overwhelming.

Sarah: Mary is allergic to so many foods.

Kim Pace and Sarah: So now I keep a list--

Kim Pace: trying to correlate the lead levels of 28 children in kindergarten through third grade with their reading skills.

Sarah: trying to correlate the foods she eats and all of her symptoms.

Sonya: (*enters*) I now keep that list.

Michael: What list?

Sonya: My name is Sonya. I am Mary's stepmother.

Sherry: (*enters*) My name is Sherry. I am a mother.^{lvii}

Sarah: As a mother—

Sherry: I worry a lot. What if Picher—

Sarah: Mary's health—

Sherry: caves in.

Noel Bennett: Well, I understand your concerns there. That's—that's no fun.

Jack: (*enters smoking a pipe*) Name's Jack Burns.^{lviii}

Sherry and Jack: I've lived in Picher all my life.

Kim Pace: The children in Picher, they're my life.

Sherry: They have got to move us out of here.

Tim: (*enters*) They made us move here.^{lix}

Kim Pace: We have to get the lead out of here.

Noel Bennett: Are there dangers to the chat piles?

Dr. Schwarz: Is something wrong with Mary's immune system?

Michael, Dr. Schwarz, and Noel Bennett: Well, I think that's something we need to evaluate further.

Jack: Picher is my home.

Tim: And now they've contaminated our homes.

Dr. Drisko: Contaminated her bones.

Tim: And now we have nothing left.

Jack: Picher is all I have left.

Sarah: I have so many questions.

Rebecca Jim: There are so few answers.

Kim Pace: Our government is spending billions to rebuild Iraq. Why can't it spend \$200 million to rebuild Picher? (*exits in a huff*)

Dr. Schwarz and Noel Bennett: I didn't bring that information with me tonight.

Sonya and Sherry: Is there really lead in my—

Sonya: Soil?

Sherry and Kim Pace: Children?

Dr. Drisko: Mary's immune system?

Sarah and Sonya: When are you idiots going to get your facts straight? (*exits*)

Michael and Noel Bennett: That's one of the things we want to address.

Dr. Barker: Will the EPA ever achieve a level of competency?

Noel Bennett: That's a good question.

Dr. Barker: Mary, I have no faith in the EPA. Here, I am going to let you borrow this book. It's really shaped my perspective on the EPA. It's written by a man named Peter Samuel. (*hands her the book*)

Mary: Thanks.

Dr. Barker: It's called *Lead Astray*. (*exits*)

Sarah: What information *do* you have?

Noel Bennett: People that have lived in the area certainly realize that—

Rebecca Jim and Noel Bennett: There are millions of tons of mining waste in this area.

Tim: The lead mining that was done here—

Jack: Gave us

Rebecca Jim: Diseases.

The next two lines are said simultaneously.

Jack: lead bullets durin’

Michael: Is the reason we won—

The next two lines are said simultaneously.

Jack and Michael: The second world--

Dr. Drisko: Her immune system is at—

Jack, Dr. Drisko, and Michael: War.

Noel Bennett: And that’s really the best answer I can give you.

Rebecca Jim: That’s not good enough. *(exit)*

Dr. Schwarz and Noel Bennett: Good God!

Dr. Schwarz: This child’s damned immune system!

Noel Bennett: This damn Superfund Site!

Noel Bennett and Dr. Schwarz: I give up! *(they both exit)*

Dr. Drisko: We won’t give up. I’ll keep searching.

Sarah: Keep asking questions.

Dr. Drisko: Until I find the right answer. *(exits)*

Mary follows Dr. Drisko off stage.

Michael: There’s only one right answer. And our medical science explains it. *(exits)*

Sarah: But what do you do until you have an answer?

Tim: My people, the Quapaw, for years now, we’ve just been

Jack: waitin’.

Tim: The mining companies, they came in and destroyed my people’s land, gave us all these diseases, kicked us off our land, and now they’ve forgotten about us. *(exits)*

Sarah: That's despicable. (*exits*)

Sherry: Great. Sure. Just like it always is!

Jack: Everyone else left.

Sherry: left us folks here in Picher behind.

Jack: But I won't leave.

Sherry: I can't! You think someone's going to buy my house in Picher Oklahoma?
(*sits down in despair*)

Jack: This is where my family raised me.

Sherry: I can't raise a family here!

Jack: I ain't goin' to be leavin.'

Sherry: But we can't 'ford to leave.

Jack: I'll be here 'til the day I die.

Blackout.

Scene Seven

Eagle Picher and Mary enter.

Eagle-Picher: Hello ma'am. Welcome to Eagle-Picher. How may I help you today?

Mary: Yes, well, I actually just live three blocks over from here. I was wondering, would someone from Eagle-Picher be able to answer some of the questions I have about the historical involvement of this lead-smelter facility in the local neighborhood?

Eagle-Picher: Here at Eagle-Picher we are proud of our history. Many momentous and noteworthy developments have occurred on the world stage—wars, panics, depression, booms, scientific innovations, and the exploration of incredible new worlds—during

Eagle-Picher's first 150 years. It is the Company's intention to continue this long history of a successful American enterprise and participate in even greater advancements for the benefit of all for many decades to come.^{ix} I'm sorry, but no one here can answer your questions. But here you go, *(smiles brilliantly)* here is a pamphlet outlining Eagle-Picher's successful history as a leader in American progress. *(Exits)*

Mary looks at the pamphlet, drops it on the ground, spits on it, then walks off stage.

Sarah enters and paces, looking around nervously, then Rebecca comes running in out of breath.

Rebecca: She can't.

Sarah: She can't?

Rebecca: No. She's trying really hard, but she can't.

Sarah: Shit. Ok, shit, that's it, I'm calling Drisko. *(takes out her phone and calls Drisko)*

Rebecca: Is she going to be ok?

Sarah: She's going to be fine Rebecca. But she's really dizzy, she's probably going to need help walking.

Rebecca runs offstage. Sarah continues to pace.

Dr. Drisko: *(enters)* Hello?

Sarah: Jeanne?

Dr. Drisko: Sarah?

Sarah: We've got a problem.

Dr. Drisko: What's going on?

Sarah: Well, Mary hasn't been able to pee for 18 hours now.

Rebecca: *(comes running back on stage)* Mom! Oh my god! Mary's ankles!

Sarah: What about her ankles?

Drisko: Her ankles? Are they swollen?

Rebecca: They're swollen.

Sarah: Yes.

Dr. Drisko: How swollen?

Sarah: Rebecca how swollen?

Rebecca: They're huge!

Sarah: They're pretty swollen. And it's her head now too, and she's just really very weak and dizzy.

Dr. Drisko: Where are you?

Rebecca: She's in the bathroom crying.

Sarah: We're driving back from Colorado.

Dr. Drisko: Sarah, I think it's her kidneys.

Sarah: Her kidneys?

Rebecca: Her kidneys?

Dr. Drisko: Sounds like they aren't working right now. You need to take her to the ER immediately.

Sarah: Rebecca, go back in the bathroom and get Mary, NOW!

Rebecca, horribly frightened, runs off stage.

Dr. Drisko: Sarah, is Mary taking any new medications right now?

Sarah: Well, yes, actually, she just started an antibiotic because she got bronchitis while we were here in Colorado.

Dr. Drisko: What antibiotic?

Sarah: Avalot.

Dr. Drisko: Ok, she needs to stop that immediately. (*Rebecca reenters, supporting a dizzy Mary, who is in so much pain she doesn't speak*) I think she is having an allergic reaction to that antibiotic, and her kidneys are shutting down.

Sarah: What do I do?

Dr. Drisko: We've got to do something about those kidneys. They're not working right now, and when that happens, she doesn't have anything working to remove the toxins and waste from her body. So it just builds up. And that's no good. So get yourselves to the ER, and call me when you get there. *(exits)*

Rebecca: Mom! What did she say?

Sarah: *(crying)* We're going to the ER.

Rebecca: *(terrified)* The ER!

Sarah: *(still crying)* Rebecca, yes. Now help me get Mary to the car.

Rebecca exits. Mary is left standing. Sarah speaks to the audience.

Sarah: Ok. Fine. I just, I . . . I don't know how much longer I can do this. For three years now we have just been living from crisis to crisis. This has got to stop. *(exits)*

Bill Hooker enters and begins singing or reciting "Made to Last."^{lxi} As he sings, the Nurse enters. She takes Mary and helps her offstage carefully.

Bill Hooker:

This old town lies off the highway 'bout ten miles or so,
To people who are passing by, it don't have much to show
Empty streets, empty buildings, empty hopes and dreams
But ask around and this old town will tell you where it's been

This old town was once a city, sixty years ago
Tens of thousands called it home, in search of what's below
They worked in shifts and they drank their fifths and they
 Riskyed their necks each day
But those who founded this old town have mostly moved away.

(Chorus)

This old town is a mining town
It made a living underground
But glory days are in the past
And piles of waste and empty shafts
Are the only things that were made to last

This old town was sacred ground before the mining came
Fish swam up and down its streams and horses ran its plains
But now the hills are piles of barren rock and the streams run
 Orange and red
The sons and daughters of the mines are raised on iron and lead

A mining town knows all too well that the mining costs go on
And you never see the final bill till the mining company's gone
The things the miners left behind tell a tale we won't forget
A few may profit from the mines, but many pay the debt.

Blackout.

Bibliography

562 Environmental Health Surveys Show Communities Are Sick. The Leader. LEAD Agency, Inc.: Miami, Oklahoma. August 2004.

Baseline Human Health Risk Assessment, Tar Creek Superfund Site, Ottawa County, Oklahoma. Prepared for EPA Region 6 by Ecology and Environment Inc. Lancaster, New York. December 1995.

Barringer, Felicity. *Despite Cleanup at Mine, Dust and Fear Linger.* The New York Times: New York City. April 12, 2004.

Blair, Aaron, Ph. D. Epidemiologist National Institute of Health. Interview conducted by author. March 14, 2005.

Draper, WM. R. and Mabel. *Old Grubstake Days in Joplin: The Story of the Pioneers Who Discovered the Largest and Richest Lead and Zinc Mining Field in the World.* Out of circulation. Retrieved in The Joplin Public Library: Joplin, Missouri. 1940s.

Eagle-Picher. www.eaglepicher.com

Hamilton, Arnold. *Picher, Okla—Area Lives with Lead Contamination.* The Dallas Morning News: Dallas. December 2, 2003.

Hoppie, former miner from Picher, Oklahoma. Interview conducted by author. December 9, 2004.

Jackson, John. Former miner employed by Eagle-Picher and current resident of Picher, Oklahoma. Interviewed by author. March 8, 2005. *Name has been changed in order to protect the privacy of the individual.

Jim, Rebecca. Executive Director of LEAD Agency, Inc., Miami, Oklahoma. Interview conducted by author. March 9, 2005.

Kennedy, Wally. *Buyout Number in Picher Grows, Families Seek New Life Away from Tar Creek.* Joplin Globe: Joplin, Missouri. December 26, 2004.

Kennedy, Wally. *Survey Finds Sicker Residents.* Joplin Globe: Joplin, Missouri. June 6, 2004.

Klaassen CD. *Heavy Metals and Heavy-Metal Antagonists.* In: Hardman JG, Limbird LE, Gilman AG, editors. Goodman & Gilman's The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics 10th edition, McGraw Hill, Ch 67, 2001:1851-1876.

Klondike of Missouri, The. Author unknown. Non-circulating book in the Joplin, Missouri Public Library. 1898.

- Kurt, Kelly. *Orange creek, orange baths: Acid mine water still flows in Oklahoma*. The Associated Press. October 5, 1998.
- Kurt, Kelly. *Superfund crews prepare to leave Oklahoma town—though problems Remain*. The Associated Press. July 18, 2000.
- Moody, Ben. *April Fools Day In The Mining Field*. Tri-State Tribune: Miami, Oklahoma. March 31, 1988.
- Moody, Ben. *The Beginning of Picher, Part One*. Tri-State Tribune: Miami, Oklahoma. July 28, 1988.
- Moody, Ben. *Chat Piles All Over The Mining Field*. Tri-State Tribune: Miami, Oklahoma. August 18, 1988.
- Moody, Ben. *Halloween In The Old Mining Field*. Tri-State Tribune: Miami, Oklahoma. November 3, 1988.
- Moody, Ben. *Hockerville Smelter*. Tri-State Tribune: Miami, Oklahoma. July 14, 1988.
- Murg, Wilhelm. *Quapaw Tribe Hires Attorney to Sue Polluters of Ottawa County, Okla. Land*. Indian Country Today. September 3, 2003.
- Matter Of A Proposed Plan For The Tar Creek Superfund Site In Ottawa County, Oklahoma, In The*. Public Hearing with EPA Representatives: Bill Honker, Noel Bennett, Donn Walters. EPA Region 6. Picher High School, Picher Oklahoma. March 27, 1997.
- Nagle, Michael. M.D. and resident of Joplin, Missouri. Interview conducted by author December 15, 2004.
- Nagle, Sonya. Native to Miami, Oklahoma, and current resident of Joplin, Missouri. Interview conducted by author. March 8, 2005.
- Nellermoe, Leslie C. *Tar Creek Superfund Site, Ottawa County Oklahoma; Administrative Record for Removal Action*. Correspondance sent to James Costello, Asst. Regional Counsel, EPA Region 6, on behalf of ASACRO Inc. August 16, 1996. Retrieved: Miami Public Library: Miami, Oklahoma.
- Netta East Mine Overburden Investigation At The Picher Reunion Park Site*. Prepared for the EPA Region 6 by Tulsa District Corps of Engineers. July 1997.
- Neuberger, John S., Ph. D., Epidemiologist University of Kansas. Interview conducted by author. March 11, 2005.

- Neuberger, John S. and Franklin G Hollowell. *Lung Cancer Excess In An Abandoned Lead-Zinc Mining And Smelting Area*. Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company: Amsterdam. May 1982.
- Neuberger, John S., Franklin G. Hollowell, Jr. and Darrel L Elkund. *Pilot Case-Control Study of Lung Cancer in Cherokee County, Kansas*. Reprinted from Trace Substances in Environmental Health-XVII 1983. University of Missouri, Columbia.
- Neuberger, John S., Margaret Mulhall, Mary C. Pomatto, Joan Sheverbush, and Ruth S. Hassanein. *Health Problems In Galena, Kansas: A Heavy Metal Mining Superfund Site*. The Science of the Total Environment. Elsevier Science Publishers. 1990.
- One Hundred Fifty Years: 150 Years of Quality*. Eagle-Picher Industries, Inc. 1993. Retrieved from Picher Mining Field Reunion Committee, Inc: Picher Mining Museum, Picher Oklahoma.
- Osborn, Mark, M.D. Pediatrician in Miami, Oklahoma. Interviewed by author. March 10, 2005.
- Record of Decision: *Residential Areas Operable Unit 2 Tar Creek Superfund Site, Ottawa County, Oklahoma*. Prepared by: EPA Region 6. August 1997.
- Report on Investigation of Surface Subsidence and safety of Underground Employees in the Picher, Oklahoma, Field of the Tri-State District*. Prepared by: James Westfield and Ernest Blessing, US Bureau of Mines. 1967.
- Samuel, Peter. *Lead Astray, Inside an EPA Superfund Disaster*. Pacific Research Institute: San Francisco. 2002.
- Smith, John. Citizen of Picher, Oklahoma, and volunteer at Picher Mining Museum. Interview conducted by author December 16, 2004. *Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual interviewed.
- Tar Creek Anthology, The Legacy*. Written by Concerned Youth and Citizens of Miami, Oklahoma. Tahlequah Daily Press. 1999.
- Tar Creek Anthology 2, Our Toxic Place*. Miami High School Cherokee Volunteer Society, Miami, Oklahoma. Tahlequah Daily Press. 2002.
- Tar Creek Superfund Site, Ottawa County, Oklahoma*. Report to Congress. Prepared by: Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H. October 2004.
- Tri-State Mineral Museum. Joplin, Missouri. Visited several times by author during the months of December, 2004 and March 2005.

Notes

ⁱ Igg Allergen Testing was conducted by the Great Plains Laboratory in Lenexa, Kansas on December 15, 2003, as ordered by Dr. Jeanne Drisko.

ⁱⁱ This colonoscopy was performed at KU Medical Center in Kansas City Kansas, on October 29, 2002, by Dr. Connor. His dictation here has been copied from my own copy of my medical records.

ⁱⁱⁱ Information regarding genetics and Crohn's Disease can be found from many different sources. Some sources argue that 10% of Crohn's patients also have a sibling with Crohn's, while other sources argue that 20% of Crohn's patients have one other family member that shares Crohn's Disease. More information can be found on the National Center for Biotechnology Information website at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

^{iv} John Webb really did discover lead while plowing his field in what is today Webb City, MO. Grant Ashcroft was the first person with whom he shared his discovery. You can read more about John Webb, Grant Ashcroft, and the beginning of Webb City on the Webb City Area Chamber of Commerce's website at <http://www.usachamber.com/webbcity/heritage.asp>

^v The Tri-State Mineral Museum is home many archives documenting first discoveries of lead. The museum is located in Joplin, Missouri, and can be found online at <http://www.joplinmuseum.org/>

^{vi} Picher Mining Museum. Picher, Oklahoma. December 2004. Within the museum there are numerous primary sources and newspaper articles noting that the majority of what became the Picher Mining Field was in fact once a huge hayfield.

^{vii} The story of Dan Campbell is indeed a true story, and can be found in a book entitled *Old Grubstake Days in Joplin: The Story of the Pioneers Who Discovered the Largest and Richest Lead and Zinc Mining Field in the World*. However, the book is out of print and the sole copy is now in the Joplin Public Library in Joplin, Missouri. The books authors, WM. R. and Mabel Draper, wrote this book during the 1940s and the book covers the history of the mining in and around Joplin. I discovered the book on a trip to the library in December of 2004.

^{viii} Direct quote from Dan Campbell, as printed in *Old Grubstake Days in Joplin*.

^{ix} I have changed the lyrics here, but the song was originally written by Carolyn Fischer, and her song is entitled *There's a Rumor in the Mill*. Her song was originally written in response to the environmental health disaster in Donora Pennsylvania in 1948.

^x The total number of tons of ore extracted from the Tri-State Mining Area can be found at the Tri-State Mineral Museum, located in Joplin, Missouri and found online at <http://www.joplinmuseum.org/>

^{xi} You can read more about all three Superfund sites at <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/>

^{xii} John Smith, Citizen of Picher, Oklahoma, and volunteer at Picher Mining Museum. Interview conducted by author December 16, 2004. *Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual interviewed.

^{xiii} Dr. Mark Osborn, Pediatrician in Miami, Oklahoma. Interviewed by author March 10, 2005.

^{xiv} Dr. Mark Osborn. March 10, 2005.

^{xv} John Smith. December 16, 2004.

^{xvi} In 1996 the EPA decided to remove the soil of residential yards in my neighborhood because the soils were found to have high levels of lead. You can read more about this specific ROD at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/superrods/rodinfo.cfm?mRod=07012901996ROD086>. Or simply visit the EPA's website and search for 1996 ROD for Jasper County, Missouri.

^{xvii} Michael Nagle, M.D. and resident of Joplin, Missouri. Interview conducted by author December 15, 2004.

^{xviii} Dr. Michael Nagle. December 15, 2004.

^{xix} Dr. Mark Osborn. March 10, 2005.

^{xx} Sonya Nagle, native to Miami, Oklahoma and current resident of Joplin, Missouri. Interview conducted by author on March 8, 2005.

^{xxi} Sonya Nagle. March 8, 2005.

^{xxii} Dr. Mark Osborn. March 10, 2005.

^{xxiii} I did not actually interview these individuals at St. John's Hospital. Instead I interviewed them in various different locations throughout the months of December 2004 and March 2005. Their names have been changed to protect their privacy and the location of the interview has been changed for the purpose of including their stories in the play. Their words are authentic and shared by many more in the Tri-State Area.

^{xxiv} John Jackson, former miner employed by Eagle-Picher and current resident of Picher, Oklahoma. Interviewed by author on March 8, 2005. *Name has been changed in order to protect the privacy of the individual.

^{xxv} John Jackson. March 8, 2005.

^{xxvi} John Jackson. March 8, 2005.

^{xxvii} John Jackson. March 8, 2005.

^{xxviii} John Jackson. March 8, 2005.

^{xxix} Picher Mining Museum, Picher, Oklahoma. Many women lost their husbands in the numerous cave-ins. Although an official record was never kept, hundreds of death certificates and newspaper clippings are kept in the Picher Mining Museum that document the deaths of hundreds of miners in cave-ins.

^{xxx} This is actually the story of a different man, by the name of Joe Clary, who was in the cave-in at the White Oak Mine, as documented in *Old Grubstake Days in Joplin*. I have combined the story of a man I interviewed here with a documented story for the purpose of including as many stories and perspectives as I possibly can in one play.

^{xxxi} Dr. John S. Neuberger. Epidemiologist University of Kansas. Interview conducted by author. March 11, 2005. In the interview, Dr. Neuberger explained that the stroke mortality rate for women in Galena, Kansas is elevated by a factor of at least 6.

^{xxxii} This song here is also adapted from the original song *There's a Rumor in the Mill*, written and sung by Carolyn Fischer.

^{xxxiii} My blood lead levels were actually tested in the summer of 2004. The sequence of these two scenes is in no way meant to signify that Dr. Drisko appeared at St. John's in November of 2004 to tell me the results of the testing. Instead, I have included this scene here in order to conclude the first Act.

^{xxxiv} In September of 2004, at my father's demand, I saw two doctors in Joplin. One was Dr. Makdisi, a gastroenterologist. The other was an immunologist, Dr. Franklin. He really did laugh at me when I suggested that my disease might be somehow related to the elevated level of lead found in my body. *Dr. Franklin's name has been changed to protect his privacy.

^{xxxv} The chelation therapy took place in August of 2004. Dr. Jones' name has been changed to protect his privacy.

^{xxxvi} Peter Samuel. *Lead Astray: Inside an EPA Superfund Disaster*. Pacific Research Institute: San Francisco. 2002. pgs 14-15.

^{xxxvii} www.pacificresearch.org

^{xxxviii} I never actually met and spoke with Peter Samuel. This is simply how I imagine the conversation would go.

^{xxxix} Peter Samuel. *Lead Astray*. pg 12.

^{xl} Sharon, Brad, Bob, Randy, and Dick give voice to numerous different individuals whose stories I encountered in interviews and newspaper articles. Their names have been changed to protect the privacy of all individuals interviewed.

^{xli} All of the interviews with experts included in the play did actually take place, unless otherwise noted. Dr. Odrowski's name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

^{xlii} All of the statistics that Rebecca Jim gives come from the community health survey she conducted in conjunction with area nursing students. *562 Environmental Health Surveys Show Communities Are Sick. The Leader*. LEAD Agency, Inc.: Miami, Oklahoma. August 2004.

^{xliiii} Dr. John S. Neuberger. March 11, 2005.

^{xliv} Several different agencies tested children's blood lead levels, and most of these data sets can be found on the ATSDR's website at: www.atsdr.cdc.gov

^{xlv} Although my stepfather does work with Dr. Klaassen , I did not actually interview him for this project. Instead his quotes come from the chapters in his book that my stepfather provided for me. Klaassen CD. *Heavy Metals and Heavy-Metal Antagonists*. In: Hardman JG, Limbird LE, Gilman AG, editors. Goodman & Gilman's *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics* 10th edition, McGraw Hill, Ch 67, 2001:1851-1876.

^{xlvi} Asarco's lines here are quoted directly from a letter: Neller-moe, Leslie C. *Tar Creek Superfund Site, Ottawa County Oklahoma; Administrative Record for Removal Action*. Correspondance sent to James Costello, Asst. Regional Counsel, EPA Region 6, on behalf of ASACRO Inc. August 16, 1996. Retrieved: Miami Public Library: Miami, Oklahoma.

^{xlvii} This is not a direct quote from Asarco. Instead this statement is my own creative invention.

^{xlviii} This quote is taken directly from Eagle-Picher's website at:

www.eaglepicher.com/EaglePicherInternet/Technologies/PharmaceuticalServices/PharmaceuticalServices/Products_Services/

^{xliv} This quote is taken directly from their historical pamphlet they printed in 1993 to celebrate their 150 year anniversary. I was only able to find a copy in the Picher Mining Museum in Picher, Oklahoma.

ⁱ Eagle-Picher and Asarco Inc. never interacted in this manner, at least to not my knowledge. This is purely my creative invention. However, Asarco's lines are taken from their letter previously cited, and Eagle-Picher's from their historical pamphlet, previously cited.

ⁱⁱ The remainder of the exchange between Eagle-Picher and Asarco is purely my creative invention.

ⁱⁱⁱ The entire Town Hall Meeting scene is directly cut from the transcript of the Town Hall Meeting that occurred on March 27, 1997 in Picher High School, in Picher, Oklahoma. None of the words and none of the names have been changed.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Rita Frayser did not actually stand up and sing at the end of the Town Hall Meeting. This song is once again taken from Carolyn Frayser's *There's a Rumor in the Mill*. The music is the same; I rewrote the lyrics.

^{lv} I did not actually interview Kim Pace. Instead her lines are quotes from newspaper articles found in the Joplin Globe and other local media news reports.

^{lv} This immunologist's name has been changed to protect his privacy.

^{lvi} Dr. Barker, M.D. Interview conducted by author. March 10, 2005. Name of individual has been changed to protect his privacy.

^{lvii} Sherry is a character whose lines originate from many mothers' lines found in an array of local newspaper articles.

^{lviii} Jack Burns, former miner in Picher, Oklahoma. Interview conducted by author. December 13, 2005. Name of individual has been changed to protect privacy of the individual.

^{lix} The character of Tim is based on interviews with Quapaw individuals and quotes found in various local newspaper articles.

^{lx} Another direct quote from their historical pamphlet cited previously above.

^{lxi} This song is entitled *Made to Last* and is written and originally sung by Bill Hooker. A man or woman can either sing or recite this song. Of course, you must obtain permission first from Bill Hooker, who works in Dallas, Texas, with Region 6 of the EPA.