

(...HANK and BERNIE change into overalls, and prepare to paint.)

(BERNIE speaks as they change clothes.)

(HANK hums "Baby I'm Leaving".)

BERNIE

my parents divorced when i was five, and though i have never been able to get the story straight —

SADIE

i told you what happened.

HANK

you told him what you wanted him to hear.

SADIE

i told him all he needs/to know.

BERNIE

I LIVED MOST OF MY CHILDHOOD ... with mama. saw daddy on weekends and holidays, and. that was the deal. the shared custody agreement. mostly with her. a fact which seemed to make her smile.

JOJO

watch it.

BERNIE

that's where the morning calls came in. it was another way for us to communicate on a daily basis. daddy and me. he broke a lot of promises, but —

SADIE

that's an understatement.

BERNIE

but managed to keep one which *nobody*/can deny.

ANNE

that you would never grow up without a father.

HANK

if i've told you once i've told you a thousand times: don't load the brush up with paint to start the corner of a window. you got to start in the middle. or stop loading the brush up with so much paint.

BERNIE

sorry ... he was damned and determined to make a painter out of me. so long weekends, summer vacations, any chance we got, we scraped, sanded, spackled and painted our way through westwood, beverly hills, topanga canyon/hollywood.

HANK

nine-tenths of good painting is/ good preparation.

BERNIE

good preparation. so i've heard.

HANK

it may be redundant, but —

BERNIE

r-e-d-u-n-d-a-n-t/redundant.

HANK

redundant.

BERNIE

he rolled the walls, and i meticulously brushed the doors, cabinets, windows.

HANK

sash and trim man. that's you, baby boy.

BERNIE

i would have rather been following the contours of a model's shoulder blade or his sinewy calf with a charcoal pencil, but —

HANK

good job, son.

BERNIE

my talent as a draftsman apparently translated to painting houses, because without even trying i was pretty / good at it.

HANK

it's like music, you know.

BERNIE

what?

HANK

good painting. it's like music. it's like the bass coat is the melody, complementary colors provide the harmony, and when they're all working together. the light, the tone, the contrast, it's ...

(sings)

it's delightful, it's de-lovely.

SADIE

that's just great, *homer*. encourage the boy to spend his entire life chasing a lousy dream / like you did.

HANK

the boy's got talent, sadie.

SADIE

what he's *got* is to grow up and make a living.

HANK

doing something / that he loves.

SADIE

doing something that pays!

BERNIE

would you guys, just. *please!*

(Little pause, and ... BERNIE and HANK resume painting.)

HANK

(singing)

things ain't been going right
i toss and turn all night
keep my pillow wet with all my crying
oh yes, i'm leaving
i got to get away from here
i'm tired of being so lonely
always shedding tears ...

(little pause, then ...)
so. you interested in girls yet?

BERNIE

dad.

HANK

you will be.

BERNIE

right.

HANK

i give you a couple years/and —

BERNIE

i'm fifteen.

HANK

you may be a late bloomer, but i'm sure the peach won't fall too far from the tree.

BERNIE

right.

HANK

and when you start messing around with girls some of them ...
(referring to BERNIE'S acne)
will clear up.

BERNIE

that's an old wives tale.

HANK

and *tail* is what i'm talking about.

BERNIE

dad!

HANK

it's true.

BERNIE

acne has nothing to do with ... never mind.

(HANK hums "Integration".)

JOJO

so. what now, golden boy? this is where the great divide begins, right? where that sweet song becomes a little dissonant —

BERNIE

jay north.

HANK

what?

BERNIE

the child actor who played dennis the menace, and then starred in that movie we went to see on my twelfth birthday. *maya*. it was about the indian elephant who gave birth to the little white elephant and then gave her life to protect him because, well it was her child, but also because he was rare and sacred, and ... that indian kid was in it too. he and jay north were best friends, and. jay north.

HANK

what about him?

BERNIE

i. i think he's cute.

(Little pause.)

BERNIE

i always have.

HANK

(singing)

integration
this is what it means to —

BERNIE

dad!

HANK

what do you want me to say?

BERNIE

i don't know. something. say ... *something*.

(Pause, and then ... HANK shakes his head, and walks away.)

JOJO

what now? another tender memory? another *song*?

BERNIE

shut up.

JOJO

what now that the man you admired most in the world, the only man who ever really acknowledged and appreciated your talent just/walked away.

BERNIE

shut up, i said.

(... to be continued.)