

THE GARDEN STORY  
by Joe De Paul



Dad...Bill Rowatt  
Mom/employee#2...Joanna Noyes  
Joe/Rene...Danny Brochu  
Maggie/employee#3...Laura Teasdale  
Boss...Marcel Jeanin



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## MY FATHER

*"My Father" is painted on an easel down stage centre. A guitar is heard strumming. Joe enters, tears the page off the pad and paints a picture of North America.*

JOE: The richest soil in the world for growing fruits and vegetables can be found in southern Ontario. The golden horseshoe. *(He paints a horseshoe in North America.)* The produce from this area of the world was legendary. The asparagus was as green as money, cucumbers the size of your arm, the beets were like five pin bowling balls, the squash was big enough to have a picnic on. The humid climate produced tomatoes the size of a baby's head and they were so saturated with juices when you cut into them they looked like they were crying. Unfortunately, urbanization expanding from Toronto outward has turned these farms into shopping malls, video stores and suburb housing. My father grew up on one of those vegetable farms in Burlington, Ontario. He was getting up four hours before he started school to water the plants. He learned to add by planting seeds and learned to subtract by harvesting. That is until his father died and the farm was sold to the Ontario transit commission. The farm is now a GO Station parking lot and my father used to park there before he went to work in Toronto.

MOM: *(from darkness)* Joe? *(guitar stops)* . . . Joe? . . . wake up.

JOE: . . . *(to audience)* excuse me.

MOM: Dear? Get up and come outside.

JOE: It's not even seven am!

*Lights fade up on back yard of a suburb house. Mom has just finished setting the table. Maggie, the family dog, is sleeping on the ground. Joe strikes easel.*

MOM: I know dear but your father's going to work soon and I thought it would be nice to have breakfast together . . .

DAD: *(enters fiddling with his tie, Maggie wakes up and sits by Dad's chair)* Aileen can you fix this?! *(she does)* Is Joe up yet?

MOM: Joe! Get up, your father's going to be late. This is a very important day for your father, today he is the employee of the year and I thought it might be nice to have breakfast together. But if you think you're too tired to get up and join your father after he's spent thirty years getting up at seven every day then . . .

JOE: *(enters)* I'm up. I'm up. I'm up and ready. Congratulations Dad. Congratulations Mom.

MOM: Congratulations to you for making it out of your bed.

*Mom serves breakfast and sits down at a picnic table.*

JOE: . . . salad?

MOM: And toast.

JOE: For breakfast?

MOM: Your father doesn't need the cholesterol that comes with eggs and bacon.

DAD: But, once in a while won't kill me.

MOM: If you don't want it you don't have to eat it, but I think you'd be surprised. When your father lived on the farm he used to eat fresh vegetables all the time.

DAD: Sometimes I would go out to the field, pick a tomato and eat it on the way to school and that was my breakfast. *(Dad eats and feeds some to the dog.)*

MOM: Ray, you worked so hard on that land; I think they should give you your own parking space.

DAD: They'd never go for that.

MOM: *(to Joe)* It's a shame you were too young to remember the farm; you were just a baby then. I remember your Grandpa De Paul took you and he lay you down in a giant purple cabbage. You looked so sweet.

DAD: Are you awake?

JOE: Yup, giant purple cabbage.

MOM: We should have taken a pictures.

JOE: I think I would have liked living on the far.

DAD: It was a lot of work. You wouldn't have had time to do your paintings.

MOM: And you wouldn't be the millionaire you are today.

JOE: Painters don't make their millions until after they're dead.

DAD: You could make a bit of money if you didn't give them away.

JOE: But nowhere near a million dollars, so what's the point?

DAD: I don't know but I better get going; I want to get there early and make the coffee.

MOM: *(kisses Dad)* Congratulations dear and have a good day.

DAD: Have a good day. *(kisses Mom)* And Joe, try not to watch too many music videos. *(Dad pets Maggie.)*

JOE: The Learning Channel.

DAD: Right, I'm getting in the car. *(exits)*

JOE: I'm going to my room to work. *(kisses Mom and exits)*

MOM: Alright. *(Alone, she takes a bite of her salad.)* It's too early for salad.

*Black out.*

### **COFFEE SONG**

*Lights up on the sound of the coffee machine gurgling. Dad is standing next to it, watching it drip very slowly. He becomes impatient with the slow drip and tries to remove the pot from the machine but is afraid that he will miss the next draw. He can't wait any longer so he takes the pot and quickly spills some into a cup and unfortunately he doesn't get the pot back on the burner quick enough and the machine drips onto the burner making a sizzling noise. My father is fascinated by the noise and he lets it drip onto the burner a couple of times, it sizzles, he giggles and he replaces the pot. When he does there's an even greater sizzle which excites my father even more. He begins to play with the machine as if it were a sizzling percussion instrument . . .*

*During the above section the other employees enter and form a line behind Dad.*

RENE: Hey Ray, the coffee done yet? *(to #2 and #3)* Did you hear what they're doing in plastics?

Employee #3: Yea.

Employee #2: Oh, yea, harsh.

Employee #3: Very harsh.

DAD: *(stops playing with the coffee machine)* No, what`s happening?

Employee #2: Could I get a coffee, Ray?

Employee #3: Ray, the coffee? I need a coffee.

DAD: Something`s happening in plastics?

RENE: Ray? Coffee?

*Dad stares at the coffee, waiting for it.*

RENE: Well, I heard that the whole Sri Lankan thing has hurt them bad and they`re gonna be closing up and moving to the U.S.

DAD: What happened in Sri Lanka?

RENE: Ray? The coffee?

Employee #2: Well, that`s it for plastics then. Today, Ray?

Employee #3: Yea, but who`s next? Oxygen?!

DAD: What?

RENE: Ray?

Employee #2: What`s the deal?

Employee #3: What`s with the coffee?

RENE: Ray?

Employee #2: What`s the deal?

Employee #3: You making coffee?

RENE: Ray?

Employee #2: What the real deal?

Employee #3: Could we get a coffee?

DAD: It`s ready! *(Dad pours coffee for everyone. They taste it.)*

ALL: Mmmm.

Employee #2: Oh, yeah.

Employee #3: Yeah, that is good coffee.

RENE: Ray, you are the best.

Employee #2: (*remembering Dad's award*) Oh, yea!

Employee #3: Yeah, that's right.

RENE: Best employee.

Employee #2: Best this year.

Employee #3: Good for you, Ray.

RENE: Hey Ray, ya gonna go for the statue?

Employee #3: Yeah, hand-crafted soapstone; it's pretty nice.

Employee #2: Beats the knives that's for sure.

Employee #3: Yup, employee of the year.

RENE: I propose a toast . . . To Ray.

#2 and #3: To Ray! (*They drink.*)

RENE: To Oxygen!

#2 and #3: To Oxygen! (*They drink.*)

RENE: To statues!

#2 and #3: To statues! (*They drink.*)

RENE: To the best employee of the year! (*They drink.*)

Employee #2: To the best employee ever! (*They drink.*)

Employee #3: To Oxygen forever! (*They drain their cups.*)

*They all look into their empty cups.*

ALL: To coffee!

For he`s a coffee good fellow!  
For he`s a coffee good fellow!  
For he`s a coffee good felloooooow!  
With a handsome statue to boot!

*The employees cheer until Employee #2 has a heart attack at my Dad`s feet. They stare at him, stunned for a moment. The Boss enters with a soap stone carving; he is oblivious to the employee on the ground.*

BOSS: *(shaking Dad`s hand)* On behalf of the company Ray I would like to thank you for a fine and productive year. I hope you keep up the good work.

DAD: I`ll try my best.

BOSS: Alright everyone, the excitement`s over, back to work . . .

*Employee #2 starts to cough, shake and resurrect himself.*

BOSS: . . .and somebody get me a coffee.

*He exits. Lights fade to black, the coffee machine gurgles . . .*

### THE LEARNING CHANNEL

*Lights up on Joe in yard with a bowl of dog food.*

JOE: Maggie? *(looks around then puts bowl down and addresses audience)* I stood in the back yard and looked out across all of the neighbour`s fences; sectioning off little packages of lawn so everyone can have their own piece of nature. It`s not much but if you spend most of your day in the wall to wall concrete of Toronto it becomes sacred, something to rush home to. My Dad jogged up the driveway with the dog. *(They do.)* I couldn`t tell if he was exercising or just running away from work.

*The bowl is between Joe and Dad. Maggie does not eat, she waits for Dad and listens to the conversation. Dad is out of breath.*

JOE: Are you alright?

DAD: I`m just doing a little test.

JOE: A test?

DAD: For my heart.

JOE: What kind of test?

DAD: I run to see if I get a pain.

JOE: Do you?

DAD: No, not a real one.

JOE: You get a pain in your heart?

DAD: Just a little one.

JOE: What does your test prove? That today, while you were jogging you didn't quite have a heart attack? You should go to a doctor and have it tested properly.

DAD: Why would I do that? I don't want to know for sure. Why would I want to know for sure?

JOE: What if you're joggin and your test works and you actually have a hear attack?

DAD: If it hurts I stop running.

JOE: But what if it stops before you do?

DAD: If it hurt too much I would send Maggie to go get help.

JOE: That dog would run around in circles for half and hour, playing with your unconscious body before she would make her way home.

DAD: She would not! She`s a very smart dog; you think she doesn`t understand but she understands.

JOE: Yes, but does she know CPR?

DAD: She understands me better than anyone in the house. *(to Maggie)* Don`t ya? Yes you do. You understand me and I understand you.

JOE: How come she doesn`t eat her food?

DAD: Because she likes to eat when I like to eat.

*Dad sits down at picnic table and Mom enters and places the soapstone statue on the table.*

JOE: *(to the audience)* I watched the sun set on our yard and I have to admit he was right; I didn't quite understand him.

*The sun begins to set. Maggie and Dad begin eating. Joe walks to his easel and writes "The Learning Channel".*

DAD: . . . For he's a coffee good fellow! --and then boom, she went down.

MOM: That's four this year. Ya, there was Max, there was Jimmy and there was that guy from plastics. He had an angina attack, you know who I mean, the older guy.

DAD: Jack?

MOM: Yes, that's him! Jack.

DAD: . . . Jack was my age.

MOM: Well, I don't think we should ignore this; we should be very watchful of your heart. You used to smoke a pack a day. You're getting to that age you know. That's why I made a special dinner for you.

DAD: What is it?

MOM: Chops.

DAD: Chops?

MOM: Soy chops. They contain no red meat.

DAD: . . . why not?

MOM: Well, I was watching the Learning Channel and they were talking about how red meat is the worst thing for the body, it's difficult to digest and it's a major cause of heart attacks--

DAD: Who said this?

MOM: Some guy on the Learning Channel.

DAD: Heart attacks?

MOM: I believe it. He also said that the whole beef industry is ruining the environment; they're clear-cutting large areas of rain forest to make pastures for the cattle and there's more cattle on the earth than ever in history and the earth can't take it.

DAD: For heaven sakes, they're just cows.

MOM: Yes, but there`s too many of them and their . . . um . . .farts are so numerous that it`s causing a greenhouse effect from the sun! So the only thing we can do to save ourselves and the planet is to boycott red meat.

DAD: Well, here goes.

*Dad eats it suspiciously. He begins to choke. Maggie begins to howl.*

MOM: Oh my God! Is it your heart?

*Dad signals that he is choking. Mom uses the Heimlich manoeuvre. She saves him and he lays his head down into his dinner.*

MOM: I`ll get you some water. *(She exits.)*

*After a moment Dad gets up takes his plate and gives it to Maggie.*

DAD: It`s not meat. It`s shaped like meat but be careful, it`s not really meat . . . meat is bad. Can you believe that Maggie? Can you believe that meat could be so destructive?

*Maggie eats the chops.*

*Lights fade and the coffee machine gurgles.*

### **RENE`S COFFEE**

*My Dad stands at the coffee machine. Rene enters.*

RENE: Morning Ray.

DAD: Morning Rene.

RENE: Coffee ready yet?

DAD: Not quite yet.

*Rene sits at his desk and opens his brief case; he takes out some paper work and places it on his desk. He takes out a small trophy and places it on his desk. He takes out a framed picture of his family.*

RENE: Coffee ready--

DAD: --no, not yet. I`ll let you know.

RENE: . . . Did you hear what happened in plastics?

DAD: Ya, sort of; something about Sri Lanka?

RENE: Well, I don't like it. It gives me a nervous feeling.

DAD: Don't be nervous, people will always need oxygen.

RENE: I don't know Ray, times are tough, nobody's safe any more. It just twists my gut thinking about it. It feels like this whole place is covered in land mines, one wrong step and Pow! What about that coffee Ray?!

DAD: Coming right up, don't you worry. (*pours him a cup*)

*The Boss comes out of the office, along with Employee #2 and #3, who is holding a cardboard box. The Boss takes the coffee that Dad has prepared for Rene.*

BOSS: Thanks Ray.

DAD: But . . . (*Dad looks to Rene.*)

BOSS: But what Ray?

DAD: Oh, nothing . . . enjoy your coffee.

BOSS: O.K. team, folks listen up. Gang, gather around. No more chit-chat, no more chewing the fat, the cud, it's time to talk. Everyone remember that American who passed through here a couple of months ago? Well, he works for an executive cleaning company, and he just dropped off a report on my desk, it was very thorough and was translated into French, Spanish, and Japanese. The long and the short of it is we are not living in the fifties any more. Our mother company created an army of efficient employees to dominate the market in their field, and the good news is we have! We've got the Japanese sucking back our oxygen in little cafes for Christ's sake! So good work team, congratulations! But the truth is the team's too big. We have to stay competitive and downsizing is proven to increase profits about fifty percent of the time. I know, it's a cruel gamble but we are going to have to let some of you soldiers take some R and R . . .

*Employees #2 and #3 walk and act in unison. They stroll in a zig-zag looking for the one they want and when they get to Rene's desk they surround him. #2 shakes his hand and whispers in his ear and #3 packs Rene's things in the cardboard boss.*

BOSS: . . . I wish it didn't have to come to this but we've got some very powerful investors who are interested in backing companies who are dedicated to winning! Everyone's got to tighten their belt a notch further to make it happen and believe me it's important to the economy of Canada. It pains me to lose such fine employees but I'm sure you can make use of your talents elsewhere . . .

*They stand him up and continue their whispering and shaking. They quickly usher him past Dad at the coffee machine. Dad tries to pour him a cup of coffee but doesn't get it to him in time. They exit with Rene.*

BOSS: Delicious coffee Ray. *(exits)*

## LEARNING CHANNEL #2

*Dad stands alone with Rene's cup of coffee, and the lights shift into the backyard. Maggie enters, looks at Dad, circles him, notices the coffee in his hand and focuses on it. She wants the coffee.*

DAD: No . . . No . . . No . . . Maggie, no. This is not your coffee. This belongs to Rene. I enjoy making the coffee; I enjoy pouring people's coffee for them and they appreciate it. It's not much but I put my heart into it because the people at my work deserve it. Rene deserved it. What kind of human beings are they if they can't let Rene have a last cup of coffee? What's it to them if a person wants to have a cup of coffee and talk to his fellow employees before he has to go? We work hard for these people, some of us have had heart attacks for these people and now they're laying us off without so much as a cup of coffee? Someone should say something; I should say something. I am the employee of the year, after all.

*Mom pokes her head out the door.*

MOM: Ray!

DAD: --Jesus bloody Murphy! Don't do that . . . *(Maggie plays heart beat)*

MOM: I'm sorry, did I scare you? I didn't mean to upset you; I came to tell you the Learning Channel's on and they're talking about the human heart.

JOE: *(from inside)* It's starting!

MOM: It just started.

DAD: Can you tape it?

MOM: I don't know how to operate that thing.

JOE: *(from inside)* They`re inside the human body!

DAD: Can you get Joe to tape it?

MOM: Just come inside; it`s a show I think we should watch as a family.

JOE: *(from inside)* They`re inside the aorta!

DAD: Now?

MOM: Yes, now. It won`t kill you to learn something.

DAD: *(exiting)* It might.

*Maggie watches them exit. The heartbeat accelerates, crescendos and stops. Dad comes out.*

DAD: *(sits; pets Maggie)* They said that a man`s heart beats about 4.2 billion times in an average life span. I never knew that before, I never wanted to know that before, but now that I do I can feel it beating through my shirt. It`s getting faster, for no good reason . . . each time it beats it`s like I`m throwing out ten dollars, it`s like I`m just standing here and giving my heart beats for free . . . for no good reason! But sometimes I can`t help it, I get upset very easily, *(refers to the cup)* about my job, about my heart, about those kid`s who spray painted "house" on the side of our house. Why would they do that? We know it`s a house.

*Maggie sings howling song to him. Dad looks at Maggie and then at Rene`s coffee. He drinks the coffee. Joe comes out of the house watches Dad and Maggie from upstage, then speaks to the audience.*

JOE: When I was in highschool I was asked to draw caricatures of the teachers and hang them up in the lobby for parents night. Dad stood in front of every single one and laughed his guts out. He asked me if I had to use a special pen to make them look so funny. I said no. He asked me how I make their ears and noses look so perfect and I said I don`t know, I just draw things the way I see them. He looked at the pictures and said "well, it must be nice to know what you`re meant to do". *(Maggie stops playing)* Dad?

DAD: *(still in thought)* . . . yes.

JOE: It`s over.

DAD: What?

JOE: The Learning Channel. You can come back in now.

*Fade to black. Coffee machine gurgles.*

**SRI LANKA**

*Dad stands at the machine and pours himself a cup of coffee. The other employees are working. Boss sticks his head out of his office door.*

BOSS: How about a coffee, Ray?

DAD: A coffee?

BOSS: With cream please.

DAD: *(breathes deeply)* I've got a problem . . .

BOSS: No more cream? Black is fine.

DAD: *(keeps the coffee)* No, I was wondering if I could ask you a question.

BOSS: Depends what it's about.

DAD: It's about coffee.

BOSS: I'm kind of busy here, Ray?

DAD: Well, it's about your coffee. I'm not sure if I should give it to you.

BOSS: Why not?

DAD: Well, Rene, a very good employee, was rushed out of the office yesterday without a chance to even have a cup of coffee.

BOSS: And?

DAD: I just would like to know why.

BOSS: It's company policy to terminate an employee swiftly so it doesn't disturb the rhythm of our work day.

DAD: Yes, but don't you think you could just let him have one cup of coffee with his friends before he has to go?

BOSS: No, the situation is too volatile. Do I get a cup of coffee now or do you have more questions?

DAD: I would like to know about Sri Lanka.

BOSS: *(steps out of the office)* What do you know about Sri Lanka?

DAD: Nothing, just that something happened and now people in plastics are being laid off.

BOSS: Not just in plastics, Ray. Right here in Oxygen.

DAD: I thought if I knew about Sri Lanka this whole thing would make more sense.

BOSS: . . . You're right Ray. *(Dad offers the Boss the coffee.)* No, Ray you have that and you enjoy it. Sri Lanka was an embarrassment to us, Ray, and normally I would insist on it being forgotten, never to be mentioned again, but since you have your coffee and all why not give it to you straight?

The company received a grant from the world bank to build a plant in Sri Lanka and they turned an over-populated monkey temple into a plastic refinery. The company was criticized by environmental groups but Jesus Murphy, Ray, the monkeys were shitting and pissing all over it anyway! The plant provided jobs for thousands of Sri Lankans and the local village quickly turned into a crowded city with people wanting work. Since they were being paid pennies a day from the grant provided by the world bank, the company could afford to hire tens of thousands. It seemed like a win-win situation; the company had a new plant, the Sri Lankans had jobs . . . but the Monkeys were still out of a temple. The Canadian who was appointed to in charge of safety was bitten by one of the thousands of monkeys who were still trying to get into the plant and died a horrible deteriorating death! The company never found someone courageous enough to replace him and left the untrained Sri Lankans to churn out foamy chemicals on their own. The inevitable happened and the plant exploded killing thousands, blinding more and the burning lava of plastic hardened over most of the monkeys making the jungle look like Pompeii. The water supply became lethal and when the rainy season burned and blistered the rest of it the villagers believed that god had turned white from evil and was now trying to kill all that it created.

DAD: . . . oh, I see.

BOSS: The courts understood it was an accident and the company paid a fine and vowed to improve its safety measures. Anymore questions Ray?

DAD: No, that's it.

BOSS: For now. Ray, I'm surprised that our employee of the year finds his work questionable. I didn't know you felt that way.

*Boss signals for henchmen. They come start packing Dad's coffee machine in a cardboard box.*

DAD: But . . .

*They give him the handshake and whisper routine. They shove the cardboard box in his hands.*

BOSS: Don't worry Ray, I'll get my own coffee. *(Maggie sings La La.)*

*The Boss pours a cup of coffee and exits. Dad stands alone with his box. Light changes to backyard. Mom enters. The music pauses.*

MOM: *(sees Dad and the box)* Oh dear.

*Dad exits into the house, goes into the bathroom, turns on the light, locks the door and then shuts the light off.*

MOM: *(from the yard)* Ray? Are you alright? . . . *(Maggie plays.)*

*She waits for an answer and then exits into the house. A small light illuminates Joe at his easel painting. Maggie sits beneath the bathroom window strumming the guitar. A light fades up on Mom sitting outside the bathroom door.*

MOM: Ray, I know it feels hard for you, but we are still counting on you to be part of this family. You are not alone; we are very fortunate to have each other and Joe and many good friends to help us through this difficult stage. But we have to work it out together and you have to start by talking to us. Ray, are you alright? . . . Ray? . . . You are entitled to some time alone, Ray, but please say something to let us know you're alright or I'm going to call Bob Farell at the fire department and ask him to bust this door down! *(Maggie stops.)* Ray, if you don't answer I'm going to think your heart has stopped and you're lying unconscious on the wet bath mat!

*Dad slips a note under the door. Mom opens the envelope and reads it aloud.*

MOM: "Please don't call Bob Farell. I'm not in any danger. - love Dad." . . . thank you, Ray.

*Maggie plays. Mom exits. After a moment, Joe enters.*

JOE: Dad? *(Maggie stops.)* I know you need your time to get over this but I really have to go. I mean it's been two days and you haven't flushed once. If you were using it I would understand . . . We're using the Galano's washroom right now. I didn't know about Mr. Galano being laid off last year. It seems to be a problem around

here. He said his wine is almost ready and he'd like to have you over to taste it. *(Joe unrolls a painting of a baby in a purple cabbage.)*  
I was thinking about what you said at breakfast the other day and well, *(Joe slips it under the door.)* I won't take less than forty-five dollars . . .

*Dad turns the light on. After a moment he slips an envelope under the door. Joe reads the note:*

JOE: "I owe Joe forty-five dollars. - love Dad." I was kidding! . . . Thanks Dad. Oh, and Mom wants to know what you'd like for dinner . . . *(looks at door)* How about pizza?

*Maggie plays as Joe exits. Mom sits down outside the door going through the morning mail. Maggie stops playing as she opens the letter.*

MOM: *(reading)* . . . and with your generous my village could afford to buy goat. Thank you for sponsor me. Here is picture of me smiling. Ah, that's nice; you should see this picture of Manuel, he looks very happy.  
There's a letter from the bank. Joe's student loan payment must be due. We should write Manuel and say we're sorry we already have a foster child. *(reads.)*  
Oh! Ray the bank says congratulations for completing our payments. The house belongs to us! *(She slips the letter under the door.)*

*Dad opens the door, stares at Mom and then bursts out laughing.*

DAD: The house belongs to us?

MOM: Yes. The house belongs to us.

DAD: This house belongs to us?

MOM: Yes, that's right dear, the house belongs to us.

*Dad exits, returns and embraces Mom and then exits again.*

MOM: Where are you going?

DAD: I'm going to put some shorts on and then I'm going outside

*Joe suddenly runs past Mom and runs into the bathroom partially closing the door behind him. He pees. Mom exits. While Joe finishes he addresses the audience over his shoulder.*

**THE GARDEN**

JOE: Dad changed into a pair of shorts and began working on our garden.

*Dad enters with a wheelbarrow full of dirt. He measures the yard and begins to fill it with dirt. Maggie checks him out.*

JOE: He dug all day until he expanded the garden to be the full size of the back yard. At dinner he shovelled pasta fasule into his mouth and before he swallowed instructed us to dig up all the earth on our suburb property. He asked me to go to Mr. Galano`s house and borrow his shovel. Mr. Galano sent me back with a shovel and a bottle of wine; Mom hooked up the stereo so we could hear it outside.

*Maggie sings Italian opera. Mom enters and starts digging rows in the dirt.*

JOE: My Dad looked very happy.

DAD: *(over the music)* This is why you want to own your own land Joe, this is exactly why. You work hard for as long as it takes but when you finally have your own land . . . *(he pulls seeds out of his pockets)* Come here. *(gives Joe some seeds)* These are eggplants, put them over there about six inches apart. Aileen, these are cucumbers they need to be far away from the other plants. The tomatoes go here in the middle.

*The family plants the seeds. Joe places a painting of each vegetable marking its row.*

JOE: They were everywhere and they were growing; in front of the house there was red tomatoes, yellow peppers, eggplants and in the back there were carrots, beets, radishes pushing through the surface. The plants would bend under the weight of their fruit.

*The family places bushels of vegetables on stage. Dad takes on look at the plenty and is back home. He smiles softly and sprays the bushels with the plant mister. He picks up a tomato out of one of the bushels, holds it up to the sun like he is looking through an x-ray.*

DAD: This? This is thanks. I want you to take these to Mr. Galano and tell him these are thanks, thanks for the shovel, thanks for taking care of you kids when we were busy, just tell him thanks. *(Joe takes tomatoes to audience. Dad holds up a yellow pepper.)* This is Truth, I want you to take these to Mrs. Gavreau and tell her that all those lies she told showed us how simple the truth could be. *(Joe gives them out. He holds a cucumber.)* This, this is courage. This goes to Mr. And Mrs. Woods, tell them that raising sons that got in as much trouble as their`s did takes courage . . . *(a garlic. Mom gives them out.)* This is compassion . . . *(a carrot,*

*Maggie gives them out.) This is determination . . . (holds up an eggplant.) This is dignity . . .*

*Clouds cover the sun, Mom gives out the last of the vegetables and exits. Maggie finishes her song.*

JOE: Well, that`s all of it.

*Dad begins digging.*

DAD: Good. Can you start diggin over here?

JOE: Right here?

DAD: Ya, *(Dad measures and draws a line in the dirt)* about that size. Hurry up, I want to finish before it rains.

*Joe joins in the digging.*

JOE: How come you gave away the vegetables?

DAD: Things taste better when they`re gifts.

JOE: Yea, but why did you give away all of them? Our neighbours are wonderful but now we`ll never get to taste of vegetables.

DAD: Yes, you will. Our neighbours will turn those vegetables into salads and sauces, jams, preserves, they`ll make pies and all sorts of dishes. They`ll spread them out across a table in our yard and everyone will be there. I`m sure it will be a time to remember. *(looks at the hole around him)* That ought to do it. *(A clap of thunder.)* That will be fine, for now. Go bring your Mother out here.

JOE: What are you doing Dad?

DAD: Get going, before it rains!

*Joe exits. Dad lies down in the hole. It is his grave. Maggie walks over to the grave and sits next to it, Dad`s hand reaches up and pets Maggie. Mom and Joe enter.*

MOM: Where is he?

JOE: Dad?

DAD: I`m in here.

*Mom and Joe stand over the grave.*

JOE: What are you doing?

DAD: I want you to bury me.

MOM: What?

DAD: Please, the rain is coming.

JOE: But Dad?

MOM: What?

DAD: The shovels are next to the grave.

MOM: The grave?!

*Thunder.*

DAD: It's only practical.

MOM: How is it practical?

DAD: Please, trust me.

JOE: I felt a drop of rain.

DAD: It's starting to rain. Hurry up with the dirt.

MOM: I would trust you if you made any sense!

DAD: *(stands up)* But it makes complete sense. *(He winks.)* I have seeds in my pocket.

*Thunder claps. Dad embraces Mom and shakes Joe's hand, pets Maggie and lies down. Maggie takes the employee of the year trophy, drops it in his grave and starts to bury them like a bone. Mom laughs at this, grabs dirt in her hands, begins to cry; again the thunder crashes. With a scream she throws it into the grave. Blackout. The thunder passes.*

Maggie: (Howls) . . .

*The lights fade up; the yard is empty except for a small tomato plant growing from Dad's grave. Joe comes out of the house and waters the plant.*

*Lights fade to black as Maggie finishes song.*

The end.