FATHER & EURYDICE

Scene 9

Time shifts. Drops of water.
Eurydice and her father in the string room.

EURYDICE. Teach me another.

FATHER. Ostracize.

EURYDICE. What does it mean?

FATHER. To exclude. The Greeks decided who to banish. They wrote the name of the banished person on a white piece of pottery called ostrakon.

EURYDICE. Ostrakon.
Another.

FATHER. Peripatetic. From the Greek. It means to walk slowly, speaking of weighty matters, in bare feet.

EURYDICE. Peripatetic: a learned fruit, wandering through the snow.
Another.

FATHER. Defunct.

EURYDICE. Defunct.

FATHER. It means dead in a very abrupt way. Not the way I died, which was slowly. But all at once, in cowboy boots.

EURYDICE. Tell me a story of when you were little.

FATHER. Well, there was the time your uncle shot at me with a bee-bee gun and I was mad at him so I swallowed a nail.
Then there was the time I went to a dude ranch and I was riding a horse and I lassoed a car. The lady driving the car got out and spanked me. And your grandmother spanked me too.

EURYDICE. Remember the Christmas when she gave me a doll and I said, "If I see one more doll I'm going to throw up"?

FATHER. I think grammy was a little surprised when you said that.

EURYDICE. Tell me a story about your mother.

FATHER. The most vivid recollection I have of mother was seeing her at parties and in the house playing piano. When she was younger she was extremely animated. She could really play the piano. She could play everything by ear. They called her Flaming Sally.

EURYDICE. I never saw grammy play the piano.

FATHER. She was never the same after my father died. My father was a very gentle man.

EURYDICE. Tell me a story about your father.

FATHER. My father and I used to duck hunt. By the Mississippi River. He would call up old Frank the night before and ask, "Where are the ducks moving tonight?" Old Frank, he could really call the ducks.

It was hard for me to kill the poor little ducks, but you get caught up in the fervor of it. You'd get as many as ten ducks.

If you went over the limit – there were only so many ducks per person – father would throw the ducks to the side of the creek we were paddling on and make sure there was no game warden. If the warden was gone, he'd run back and get the extra ducks and throw them in the back of the car. My father was never a great conversationalist – but he loved to rhapsodize about hunting. He would always say, if I ever have to die, it's in a duck pond. And he did.

EURYDICE. There was something I always wanted to ask you. A story – or someone's name – I forget.

FATHER. Don't worry. You'll remember. There's plenty of time.