

The Carlisle Project
A musical song cycle
Music & Lyrics by Ronee Penoi (Laguna Pueblo/Cherokee)
Book & Lyrics by Annalisa Dias

Working Script

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Character Breakdown

MAN ON THE BANDSTAND - an ominous leader of the Carlisle Indian School who appears mostly through student newspapers

UNA - Eloise's ancestor, a Laguna Pueblo child and eventually elder

FATHER - Eloise's father

ELOISE - a young Indigenous woman in the present day

THOUGHT WOMAN - a Laguna Pueblo cosmological figure, creator of the universe

MARY - a student at Carlisle, Una's friend

TEACHER - a white teacher at Carlisle

UNKNOWN CHILD SPIRIT - a young child who attempted escaped from Carlisle, buried in the school cemetery

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT - an Indigenous spirit of the Susquehanna river

TRIBAL OFFICIAL - a gruff employee of Laguna Pueblo

PROMOTER - a carnival barker, gathering crowds at the World's Fair

FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER - 19th century historian famous for his "Frontier Thesis"

BUFFALO BILL - yes really

RICHARD HENRY PRATT - the founder of Carlisle Indian School

TOM - a Carlisle student whose relationship to the place changes over time

BEATRICE - Lakota, a former Carlisle student and nurse in the infirmary

PUEBLO ELDER - a culture keeper who Eloise meets when she returns to Laguna

JIM THORPE - "Bright Path" perhaps Carlisle's most famous alum and Olympic gold-medalist

PRETENDIAN MOB - a chorus-like mob of non-Natives who really want to be Native

INDIAN POLICE - a chorus-like mob of Natives who challenge any suspected 'pretendian'

VARIOUS ENSEMBLE

Actor Tracks

Actor 1 - ELOISE/UNA

Actor 2 - THOUGHT WOMAN, MARY, SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT, BUFFALO BILL, PRETENDIAN MOB, VARIOUS ENSEMBLE

Actor 3 - BEATRICE, TEACHER, UNKNOWN CHILD SPIRIT, PROMOTER, VARIOUS ENSEMBLE

Actor 4 - MAN ON THE BANDSTAND, RICHARD HENRY PRATT, ANNOUNCER, TRIBAL OFFICIAL, JIM THORPE, VARIOUS ENSEMBLE

Actor 5 - FATHER, FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER, PUEBLO ELDER, INDIAN POLICE, TOM, VARIOUS ENSEMBLE

Setting

A marshy tract of land by Conodoguinet Creek. A Long Way with Many Bends.

Time

Past, Present, Future

Song List

Before We Begin

Man on the Bandstand

Stories

So You Don't Have To

Don't Let Me Be Lonely

You Were There

Thread the Needle

Ghost River

What a Sight

Stoneboy

Bring Them Home

Before and After

Bright Path

Not NDN Enough

Buffalo Vision

Coming Home Again

Something Was Lost

Who Is Watching

A New Story

Before We Begin

(If there needs to be an institutional curtain speech, it goes after the show.)

A marshy tract of land by the Conodoguinet Creek. The sound of a babbling brook nearby. Insects and wild birds. Faintly, a Susquehannock song in the distance.

Then, a fog rolls in and the earth quiets for a moment.

The MUSICIANS enter and take their seats. The ENSEMBLE enters and sits in a formation that acknowledges the audience and completes a circle.

LOCAL ELDER enters. They give a prayer or welcome as appropriate to the local indigenous community.

A capella choral hymn begins without words, only vocalization. ENSEMBLE rises and walks around the audience, continuing the hymn. They invite the audience to join in.

ENSEMBLE

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED
WE'RE FINDING OUR WAY
WE ARE ALL CONNECTED
WE'RE FINDING OUR WAY

SONGS ARE GOOD MEDICINE
STORIES ARE MEDICINE
LAUGHTER IS MEDICINE
THE CIRCLE IS MEDICINE

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED
WE'RE FINDING OUR WAY

HEALING IS POSSIBLE
BREATHE IT IN
LET THE POISON OUT

HEALING IS POSSIBLE
BREATHE IT IN
LET THE POISON OUT

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED
WE'RE FINDING OUR WAY

The ENSEMBLE sits back in their formation and the world shifts around us.

Song: Man on the Bandstand

A bugle sounds the morning wake-up call. The whole stage goes stark white, as though in a lightbox. (The intention of the three “poison songs” as we’re calling them, is to draw out and expose the deep poison in the well that allowed a place like Carlisle Indian School to exist. Our future designers are going to have great fun with how to treat these three songs.)

It’s 1885. We’re in the middle of Carlisle at the Bandstand gazebo. We see archival photos of students gathering. The MAN ON THE BANDSTAND appears and directly addresses the audience. He’s wearing all white. Archival images of the “Indian Helper” newspaper. Headlines, newsprint.

MAN ON THE BANDSTAND

Thank you for reading the “*Indian Helper*”, the one, the only, weekly newspaper of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School printed by Indian boys, but *edited* by the one, the only – *me*. The man-on-the-bandstand. Who is *not* an Indian.

CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL WAS LAUNCHED IN EIGHTEEN
SEVENTY NINE
RICHARD HENRY PRATT, THE MAN WITH THE PLAN DIVINE
THE SCHOOL IS MORE AKIN TO THE PANOPTICON OF
BENTHAM
THAN A PUBLIC SCHOOL WITH STAR SPANGLED BANNER
AND ANTHEM
BUT THAT’S WHY I’M HERE
IT’S VERY CLEAR
I COMMENT AND ADVISE
CAUSE IN THIS CRAZE
OF LITTLE INDIAN BRAVES
SOMEONE HAS TO BE THE EYE

More archival newsprint spins into the space.

MAN ON THE BANDSTAND (cont’d)

Somebody asks, ‘Is the man-on-the-band-stand you speak of a real person?’ Hmm. Perhaps he is, perhaps he is not, we will leave you to guess that conundrum. Another inquiry reads, ‘Will you please explain why you are called the ‘Man-on-the band-stand’?’ Well, if the questioner were here at Carlisle, he would know why.

AT THE CENTER OF THE SCHOOL GROUND IS A
MEMORABLE SIGHT
A BEAUTIFUL BANDSTAND AT A PERFECT HEIGHT

FROM ATOP IT MY VIEW IS PANORAMIC AND COMPLETE
I SEE WHERE THE STUDENTS SLEEP AND WORK AND
WHERE THEY EAT
ALL SEEING AND HEARING
SELECTIVELY REVEALING
I'M ALWAYS IN THE KNOW
AND IT'S IN THIS WAY
I'LL TAME THE STRAY
CAUSE AT CARLISLE WE SAY

KILL THE INDIAN SAVE THE MAN
FOR THE WARRING AND WHOOPING OF PAGAN TRIBE
IT'S DISCIPLINED SCHOOLING THAT I PRESCRIBE
IT'S THE GREAT ASSIMILATION PLAN
EVERYMAN'S CREATED EQUAL
JUST IGNORE YOUR SAVAGE PREQUEL
SPOKANE? NO MATTER WHAT YOUR CLAN
YOU MUST STICK TO MY LIFE PLAN
FOR YOU.
FORGET YOUR STORIES
FOR FUTURE GLORIES
SAYS THE MAN ON THE BANDSTAND...

Oh look! How nicely the girls go through with their gymnastic drill!
They must not forget to stand as erect when out of class as they
do when exercising. (*switches focus*) As for the girls who
attempted to burn the girls' dormitory, they had a bad record
before they came and have been stubborn and ugly ever since
they arrived, no amount of kindness shown them having any
effect. For this I blame the depravity of their home lives.

I HAVE CARE AND CONCERN FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL
AND I WANT WHAT'S BEST FOR THEM IN THE WHOLE WIDE
WORLD
AND LUCKY FOR THEM I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THAT IS
IT'S NOT THE REZ
AND IT'S NOT BUFFALO BILL'S GAUDY SHOW BIZ
IT'S TO SPEAK AND TALK
TO THINK AND WALK
EXACTLY LIKE THE WHITE MAN
WE'RE ALL THE SAME
IF YOU GIVE UP YOUR NAME
SO THAT'S WHY IT'S MY AIM

TO KILL THE INDIAN, SAVE THE MAN.
FOR THE WARRING AND WHOOPING OF PAGAN TRIBE
IT' S DISCIPLINED SCHOOLING THAT I PRESCRIBE
IT'S THE GREAT ASSIMILATION PLAN
EVERY MAN'S CREATED EQUAL
JUST IGNORE YOUR SAVAGE PREQUEL
THIS MAN WANTS YOU TO WEAR THE PRATT BRAND
AND GO OUT THERE AND DO YOUR TEACHERS PROUD!
YOU'LL FORGET YOUR STORIES
IN MY LABORATORIES
SAYS THE MAN ON THE BAND STAND

Realizing he's losing his audience, the MAN ON THE BANDSTAND switches tactics.

SO HERE'S THE POINT I'M BRINGING TO REST
THAT IF THE INDIAN IS LEFT BY HIMSELF IN THE WEST
AS MUCH AS WE MIGHT TRY TO SHARE WITH 'EM
THE JOYS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION AND CUSTOM
THEY'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND
TILL WE TAKE THEIR CHILDREN OFF THAT LAND
AND PUT THEM IN FULL SATURATION
AND BRING THEM TO FULL MATURATION
OF ALL THAT'S AMERICAN AND PROGRESSIVE
AWAY FROM TRIBES AND INFLUENCES RETROGRESSIVE
SO THAT'S WHY I'M SAYING

KILL THE INDIAN SAVE THE MAN
I'm always watching whatever you do,
and I'll always be following following you
IT'S THE GREAT ASSIMILATION PLAN
Abandon your home,
empty your mind!
I'm going to change you to be what's desired!
CAUSE SINCE THIS GREAT EXPERIMENT BEGAN
I DEMAND SUCCESS OF MY LIFE PLAN
FOR YOU
CHILDREN

YOU'LL GIVE UP YOUR GLORIES
AND BELIEVE MY STORIES
SAYS THE MAN ON THE BAND STAND
SAYS THE MAN ON THE BAND STAND
THE MAN ON THE BAND STAND

AND THEN WE'LL HAVE GOTTEN
TO THE BOTTOM
OF OUR INDIAN PROBLEM!
OH YEAH...

The moment hangs in the air a bit. Let the poison out.

Then, the lightbox "poison song" stage look transforms.

Song: Stories

In this transition, we hear documentary oral history of descendants talking about their ancestors' experiences. We see archival photos of Carlisle's gates and grounds. We see photos of the girls dormitory.

At night, while everyone is supposed to be asleep, UNA, a 12-yr old Laguna Pueblo girl, is awake in her new sleeping quarters. The sound of footsteps creaking on floorboards outside. UNA shudders.

Then, a light shines under the doorway - someone's in the hallway watching.

The light passes.

UNA exhales and runs to hide under her desk. She holds onto a kachina doll from home.

(This song will be sung in Keres.)

UNA

IN ONE DAY, I SAW MYSELF CHANGE.

MY VOICE LEAVE.

MY HEART FALL.

IN ONE DAY THEY TOLD ME ALL WAS WRONG.

WHAT DO I KNOW?

THERE NEVER WAS A TIME WHEN THIS WAS NOT SO:

THE SKY CAN BE RED AND GREEN BY THE GREAT PLATEAU.

IT'S ALL INSIDE MY HEAD, IT'S KEPT INSIDE MY HEART.

EVERY ROCK AND CREATURE THAT'S EVER TOUCHED THE
GROUND

HAS THE SOUND OF A STORY.

THERE NEVER WAS A TIME WHEN THIS WAS NOT SO:

KOCHININAKO THE BRAVEST GIRL, IKTUMI CAUSES WOE.

IT'S ALL INSIDE MY HEAD, IT'S KEPT INSIDE MY HEART.

THOUGHT WOMAN IMAGINES ALL THAT'S PAST AND WHAT'S
IN STORE,

SO I WON'T NEED MORE THAN THE STORIES.

BUT IN THIS PLACE, UNFAMILIAR...

THERE'S NO STORIES, JUST ME.

THIS PLACE IS COLD.

EVERYTHING IS STRANGE AND NEW.

SOUNDS AND SMELLS SHARP AND BRUISING,

EYES AND FACES CRUEL AND CONFUSING

AND I'M SCARED OF WHAT I'M LOSING.

BUT - THERE NEVER WAS A TIME WHEN THIS WAS NOT SO:

THAT STORIES WILL REMIND YOU OF WHO YOU ARE.

"WE'RE TOGETHER ALWAYS. WE'RE TOGETHER ALWAYS."

THAT'S WHAT MOTHER SAID.
"THERE WAS NEVER A TIME WHEN THIS WAS NOT SO."

SO ON MY ROAD DOWN THESE WOODEN HALLWAYS,
I'LL TELL STORIES AND I'LL SURVIVE.
I'LL FIND MY COURAGE, KEEP MY HEART ALIVE.
I HAVE THE STORIES.
I HAVE THE STORIES!

MOTHER I KNOW, WHEREVER THIS ROAD MAY GO:
THERE NEVER WAS A TIME WITHOUT THE STORIES.

UNA tentatively comes out from under the desk and gets into bed. Lights shift.

Song: SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

1970. An iron "Carlisle Indian Industrial School" State Marker by the roadside near the entrance to the active US military base "the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks." Small white gravestones nearby. The sounds of traffic.

FATHER enters.

FATHER

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN I THOUGHT THAT
SCHOOL WOULD BE THE WAY
BUT I LEARNED QUICKLY THAT
OUR HISTORIES ARE NOT THE SAME

AND I TRIED TO TELL OUR STORY
BUT IT TOOK SO MUCH OF ME
TO STAND FIRM IN MY CONVICTION
THERE WAS NO GLORY

MY GRANDMOTHER WAS A STUDENT HERE
SHE NEVER WENT BACK HOME
AND NEVER SPOKE OF ALL THAT SHE ENDURED
IT TURNED HER HEART TO STONE

STILL I TRY TO TELL OUR STORY
BUT IT TAKE SO MUCH OF ME
TO STAND FIRM IN MY CONVICTION
THERE'S STILL NO GLORY

DAUGHTER
LET ME HOLD THIS FOR YOU
LET ME CARRY THE BRUISE
OH YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO
DAUGHTER
DAUGHTER

TODAY IT'S STILL UNCOMMON
TO DENOUNCE THIS PLACE
EVEN INDIANS ARE APPROVING
SINGING CARLISLE'S PRAISE

IN THEIR STORIES, EDUCATION'S
THEIR PATH TO SOCIETY
THEY IGNORE THE INFORMATION
I CAN CLEARLY SEE

DAUGHTER
I WILL DO THIS FOR YOU
I WILL SPEAK THE TRUTH
SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO
DAUGHTER
SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO
DAUGHTER
DAUGHTER

OH WHO IS WATCHING
WHEN THE WEAK OF MIND SPEAK
USING WORDS OF THE STRONG
AND ENGENDERING GRIEF?

OH WHOSE VOICE WILL SPEAK OUT
OF THE SORROW AND FEAR
GIVING WORDS FOR THE ONES
WHOSE SPIRITS BROKE HERE?

FATHER exits and time passes around the Carlisle State Marker.

Song: Don't Let Me Be Lonely

Present day. ELOISE finds herself alone in a pool of light, gazing up at the State Marker wondering what it means.

ELOISE

WHAT REALLY MATTERS?
WHEN LOOKING BACK?
WHEN LOOKING ON?

EACH GENERATION COULD TELL A CHAPTER
HERE IS WHAT "INDIAN" MEANS
WHAT IF THE STORYTELLER'S BRUISED AND BATTERED

I CRY TO THE ANCESTORS I DON'T KNOW
WHAT DO I OWE YOU
MY LIFE, SO DIFFERENT FROM THE ONES YOU KNEW
IS THERE A THREAD LINKING ME TO YOU
WHAT MAKES IT TRUE TO CLAIM
OH GOD, OH HOW DO I EVEN PRAY
DON'T LET ME BE LONELY
DON'T LET ME BE LONELY

I'M YOUR CHILD
A CHILD OF CARLISLE
I'M HERE BECAUSE YOU SURVIVED
NOW I'M LOST
MY FATHER PUTTING MY DREAMS FIRST
LIKE HIS FATHER BEFORE HIM
HIDING A PAINFUL PAST
NOW I'M LEFT WANTING
OUR FAMILY CHANGED WITH THE TIMES
SO WHO AM I?

I CRY TO THE ANCESTORS I DON'T KNOW
HOW DO I KNOW YOU
MY FATHER'S HEART KEPT A FIRE ALIVE
NOW THAT HE'S GONE
HOW CAN I FIND YOU?
WHAT MAKES IT TRUE TO CLAIM?

OH GOD, OH HOW DO I EVEN PRAY
DON'T LET ME BE LONELY
DON'T LET ME BE LONELY
GIVE ME YOUR TESTIMONY

SHOW ME THE CEREMONY...

CAN I TELL MY STORY?

The light expands around ELOISE and she exits. The world slowly expands.

Song: You Were There

Smoke rises as THOUGHT WOMAN appears.

THOUGHT WOMAN
THE EARTH IS RED AND HARD
WITH BURIED SECRETS LIKE MY SKIN AND BLOOD
BENEATH.
THEY WHISPER STORIES OF HOW THE WORLD BEGAN.
THEY WHISPER STORIES
OF HOW THE STARS BEGAN TO SHINE
HOW RIVERS FLOWED
HOW MOUNTAINS ROSE
YOU WERE THERE

The Sandia Mountains appear in the distance.

THOUGHT WOMAN (cont'd)
COYOTE HOWLS IN THE DESERT NIGHT.
DRY HEAT AND DUST, SWIRLING SAND.
THE THUNDER CRACKS ACROSS THE SKY
BRINGING RAIN, BRINGING LIFE.
YOU WERE THERE.
YOU WERE THERE.

AT THE DAWNING OF THE DAY
OUR GRANDMOTHERS SANG
OF RED EARTH TURNED TO MUD,
OF THE GREAT CATAclysm.
HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN?

We see archival photos of European settlers, mountains of buffalo skulls, war.

THOUGHT WOMAN (cont'd)
I WATCHED THE SUN AND MOON COLLIDE.
PLACED MY EAR TO THE GROUND.
LISTENED TO THE DREAMER'S DREAM.
BREATHING IN, BREATHING OUT.
I WAS THERE
I WAS THERE

THE EARTH IS RED AND HARD
WITH BURIED SECRETS LIKE MY SKIN AND BLOOD
BENEATH
I AM HERE

THINKING THE STORY INTO LIFE
BRAIDING THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE.
BREATHE IT IN, AND THE SMOKE WILL RISE.
I'LL TEACH YOU THE CEREMONY
TO REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE
YOU WERE THERE
YOU WERE THERE

Whispers in Keres & Tewa. The Sandias recede and the world shifts around us again.

Song: Thread the Needle

In the sewing room at Carlisle, 1890. UNA and MARY sit among a group of girls, sewing. A TEACHER watches over them as they work.

ENSEMBLE

THREAD THE NEEDLE
SEW THE FABRIC
OF SOCIETY
IT'S UP TO US TO
MEND THE SEAMS IN
THEIR ENTIRETY

MARY

SEWING PRETTY DRESSES
ALL DAY IN AND ALL DAY OUT
HOW I LOVE TO SEW
AND NOW I KNOW
WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT

TEACHER comes over and inspects Mary's work.

TEACHER

Very good, Mary!

MARY beams with delight. UNA rolls her eyes.

ENSEMBLE

THREAD THE NEEDLE
SEW THE FABRIC
OF COMMUNITY
IT'S UP TO US TO
STITCH THE SCRAPS OF
OPPORTUNITY

TEACHER inspects UNA's work. UNA tries to hide it.

TEACHER

Come now, Una. Let me see.
Ah. This needs some work.

TEACHER rips the seam in UNA's fabric and hands it back to her.

TEACHER (cont'd)

Do it over again.

Pay attention to the length of the stitches.

UNA

ALL DAY LONG WE'RE SEWING
MAKING SOMEONE ELSE'S CLOTHES
HOW I MISS MY HOME
I'M ALL ALONE
WHILE OTHERS SEEM TO GROW

ENSEMBLE

THREAD THE NEEDLE
SEW THE FABRIC
OF SOCIETY
IT'S UP TO US TO
MEND THE SEAMS IN
THEIR ENTIRETY

TEACHER begins to exit.

TEACHER

Keep working, girls. Mary, you're in charge for a moment.

TEACHER leaves. MARY keeps working.

UNA drops her work and stretches out her hands.

MARY

THREAD THE NEEDLE
Una..! What are you doing?

UNA

My hands are tired! (in Keres)

MARY

Speak English! What's wrong with you? Someone will hear!

UNA

I don't like how English sounds.

MARY

Then maybe you shouldn't speak at all.
Just pick up your sewing. Come on.

ENSEMBLE

THREAD THE NEEDLE

SEW THE FABRIC
OF COMMUNITY
IT'S UP TO US TO
STITCH THE SCRAPS OF
OPPORTUNITY

UNA

THIS PLACE IS COLD
EYES AND FACES CRUEL AND CONFUSING
AND I'M SCARED OF WHAT I'M LOSING.

MARY

WHAT ARE YOU LOSING?
LIFE'S FOR THE CHOOSING.
THE FUTURE IS OURS, IT'S OURS YOU SEE.
WE CAN DO ANYTHING...

UNA

WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING...

MARY

UNA, WE CAN DO EVERYTHING!
EDUCATION'S OUR WAY TO THE FUTURE
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE UP WHO YOU WERE
DON'T YOU SEE?

UNA

You don't?
No!

UNA

I FEEL I'M LOSING THE THREAD
THE THREAD I'M LOSING
I'M LOSING THE THREAD
IS IT JUST ME?

MARY gently helps UNA with her sewing.

MARY

Like this.
JUST STICK WITH IT GIVE IT TIME
THINK OF ALL WE'LL BE ABLE TO DO FOR OUR TRIBES
UNA, HAVE PRIDE, PUT YOUR DOUBTS AND FEARS ASIDE
CARLISLE'S OUR BEST HOPE TO UNIFY

MARY

THREAD THE NEEDLE

UNA

SEW THE FABRIC
OF SOCIETY

TEAR THE THREADS OF
OUR TRADITIONS
IRREVERSIBLY

MARY
IT'S UP TO US TO
STITCH THE SCRAPS OF
OPPORTUNITY

UNA
IT'S UP TO US TO
HOLD THE STRANDS OF
OUR ANCESTRY

TEACHER comes back in and inspects their work.

TEACHER

Very well done, girls!
That's much better, Una. You're getting it.

ENSEMBLE

THREAD THE NEEDLE
SEW THE FABRIC
OF COMMUNITY
IT'S UP TO US TO
MEND THE SEAMS IN
THEIR ENTIRETY

THREAD THE NEEDLE
SEW THE FABRIC

THREAD THE NEEDLE
THREAD THE NEEDLE

The world shifts around us once more.

Song: Ghost River

ELOISE, at Carlisle archives in the present day, looks through a box of records and photographs. Maybe the images are projected so the audience can see them. They become a river of archival images on the floor.

ELOISE

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH, YOUR FACE,
DEFIANT, BRAZEN, AND UNBRUISED,
WHAT DID THEY TELL YOU
ABOUT WHO YOU MUST BE?
AND WHAT DID YOU KEEP
FROM THEM? THOSE THINGS,
STILL SECRET FROM ME.

The archives become overwhelming for ELOISE so she goes for a walk by the Conodoguinet Creek. The sounds of birds and water.

ELOISE (cont'd)

LITTLE UNKNOWN CHILD, WHAT WAS YOUR NAME?
BEFORE THEY TRIED TO CLAIM
ALL THAT YOU WERE?
GRANDMOTHER, WHAT WAS YOUR NAME?
TELL ME ALL YOU OVERCAME...
I WISH I KNEW
HOW TO REACH YOU...

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT appears.

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT

GHOST RIVER GLOWS IN THE NIGHT
BELOW THE OLD WHITE HOUSES, BELOW THE SKY
GHOST RIVER GLOWS
BECKONING MEMORIES OF A TIME
WHEN ALL WAS QUIET
BEFORE THEIR CRIES
GHOST RIVER GLOWS

ELOISE comes upon a cave by the river where children from Carlisle used to play.

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT

ANCIENT BIRCH STRETCHES ROOTS DEEP INTO THE SOIL
DRAWING WATER

UNKNOWN CHILD SPIRIT appears. ELOISE can't see her, but maybe catches a glimpse of something moving.

UNKNOWN CHILD SPIRIT
HOW DID YOU KNOW TO LOOK FOR ME HERE
AMONG THE PINES AND FROZEN CREEKBED
WHERE MY BREATHING BONES BECAME ROCK?
WAS IT MY CRY TO THE APPALACHIAN MOONLIGHT?
GRANDDAUGHTER, HOW DID YOU KNOW TO LOOK FOR ME
HERE?

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT
GHOST RIVER FLOWS
HELPING US TO UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE
WHY WE'RE ON THIS ROAD
WALKING BACKWARDS IN WONDER
AT HOW WE CAME TO MOVE
ON THIS CRACKED AND ACHING EARTH
HEARTWORN CREATURES
GHOST RIVER KNOWS

The archival photo river flows in fractals all around ELOISE, UNKNOWN CHILD SPIRIT, and SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT.

UNKNOWN CHILD SPIRIT
HOW DID YOU KNOW TO LOOK FOR ME HERE
IN MOUNTAIN MISTS AND TATTERED CORNFIELDS
WHERE I ESCAPED INTO THE DARKNESS AND TENDED THE
FIRE?
WAS IT MY HEARTBEAT IN THE COLD NOVEMBER NIGHT?
GRANDDAUGHTER, HOW DID YOU KNOW TO LOOK FOR ME
HERE?

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER SPIRIT
GHOST RIVER KNOWS WHO YOU ARE
KNOWS WHY YOU'VE COME, WHY TEARS ARE FLOWING
FROM YOUR EYES
GHOST RIVER KNOWS

*The two SPIRITS disappear together, hand in hand. A wind blows.
ELOISE breathes in and goes back to the Carlisle archives.*

Song: What a Sight

We're now in 1893 at the Chicago World's Fair. Sounds of people bustling about. Sounds of old-timey camera bulbs flashing and exploding. The sound of a carousel. The entire ensemble is dressed in white. Everything is sickeningly white. A giant American flag unfurls.

A PROMOTER steps out of the crowd and directly addresses the audience.

PROMOTER

Right this way, folks. You picked a beautiful day to visit our fine city of Chicago. Welcome to the World's Columbian Exhibition celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's discovery of America. And today's the day you'll discover all the wonders of the world!

Right this way! Right this way!

ENSEMBLE

STEP RIGHT UP. COME ONE, COME ALL.
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
THERE'S THINGS TO SEE AND GAMES TO PLAY.
LOOK AT THIS, YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES.
STEP RIGHT UP. RIGHT THIS WAY!
YOU'LL BE DAZZLED, DELIGHTED, ASTONISHED, EXCITED!
STEP RIGHT UP. STEP RIGHT UP. STEP RIGHT UP!

PROMOTER

CELEBRATING COLUMBUS AND HIS GREAT JOURNEY,
CROSS THE SEA, SO THAT WE COULD BE HERE
AT THE SHORES OF LAKE MICHIGAN, HERE AT THE FAIR
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, NO EXPENSE HAS BEEN
SPARED!

Photos of the real life replicas of the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria.

ENSEMBLE 1

Oh look at that! Is that..?!

Photos of giant squid and other animals from around the world.

PROMOTER

GIANT CEPH'LOPODS, MAMMOTHS, AND MUMMIES, AND
MORE!
YOU CAN SEE THEM ALL HERE! THERE ARE WONDERS IN
STORE!

RIDE THE FERRIS WHEEL, SEE ELECTRICITY SPARK,
IN THIS NEW WORLD WE WILL CONQUER THE DARK!
WILL HOUDINI ESCAPE? SHOW'S TONIGHT! AT THE
WORLD'S FAIR, OH WHAT A SIGHT!

Sounds of electricity buzzing.

PROMOTER/ENSEMBLE

STEP RIGHT UP. COME ONE, COME ALL.
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
THERE'S THINGS TO SEE AND GAMES TO PLAY.
LOOK AT THIS, YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES.
STEP RIGHT UP. RIGHT THIS WAY!
YOU'LL BE DAZZLED, DELIGHTED, ASTONISHED, EXCITED!
STEP RIGHT UP. STEP RIGHT UP. STEP RIGHT UP!

ENSEMBLE 2

Oh gee! Frederick Jackson Turner's speaking today!

ENSEMBLE 1

That young hotshot historian?

ENSEMBLE 2

That's the one! Look!

The historian, FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER steps right up to an American Historical Society podium to give his now-famous "Frontier Thesis" speech. Applause in the crowd.

FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER

SINCE THE DAYS WHEN THE FOUNDERS DECLARED
DESTINY HAS BEEN MADE MANIFEST
LIKE A MIGHTY FLOOD RUSHING ACROSS TO THE WEST.
ON THIS LAND, TO EXPAND, TO PROGRESS!
A HISTORIAN KNOWS WHEN THE MOMENT HAS CHANGED
AND I'M TELLING YOU NOW THAT THE WORLD'S NOT THE
SAME.

ENSEMBLE 2

Well I say! What do you think he means by that?

FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER

FOR AMERICA MEANS AN EXPANDING FRONTIER
EVER GROWING AND KNOWING NO FEAR
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1893,

I PROCLAIM THE FRONTIER IS DEAD!

ENSEMBLE 1

The frontier is dead?!

ENSEMBLE 4

It can't be!

ENSEMBLE 2

What's America if there's no more land to steal and Indians to kill?

Bustling in the crowd. Maybe some panic. Turner's proclamation should feel destabilizing. It's the perfect opportunity for BUFFALO BILL to step out from the crowd. A revolver spins and trick gunshots!

BUFFALO BILL

Don't pay no mind to that dissembler! I've got the real thing right here. The frontier is alive and well! Don't you worry! The Wild West Show. This way!

STEP RIGHT UP, COME SEE MY SHOW.

COWBOYS AND INDIANS ON HORSEBACK Y'KNOW!

RIGHT THIS WAY, COME SEE THEM SHOOT

CHEYENNE AND SIOUX AND APACHES AND UTE

STEP RIGHT UP YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES

STEP RIGHT UP, RIGHT THIS WAY

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS LIKE NO BUSINESS I KNOW

STEP RIGHT UP STEP RIGHT UP STEP RIGHT UP!

Yee haw!

The ENSEMBLE bustles over toward the Wild West Show.

PROMOTER

And now a very special attraction! An exhibit all the way from Carlisle, Pennsylvania called "Into Civilization and Citizenship." You guessed it! It's 430 live students from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

The ENSEMBLE heads over toward the Carlisle exhibit. UNA sits sewing as part of it.

RICHARD HENRY PRATT

Right this way, folks! I hope you haven't fallen prey to that charlatan Buffalo Bill.

THIS EXHIBIT SETS FORTH THE PROGRESS OF THE RACE

AS THE STUDENTS YOU SEE, READING ALCOTT WITH GLEE.
SEE THE DRESSES THEY WEAR, AREN'T THEY NICE?
OUR LITTLE WOMEN ARE SO POLITE!

ENSEMBLE 5

Oh wow oh wow! I've never seen a real savage before!

RICHARD HENRY PRATT

CARLISLE PROVES THAT THE SAVAGE IN THEM CAN BE
TAMED
DO YOU SEE HOW MUCH WE CAN HELP THEM?
SEE THE GIRLS SEWING CLOTHES AND THE BOYS WITH
THEIR TOOLS!
THERE'S NO TRACE OF THEIR TRIBES, IT'S JUST WHAT I
PRESCRIBED.
EDUCATION'S THE PATH TO SOCIETY
AND THE FUTURE IS TRULY BRIGHT!

Like weird carnival zombies, everyone joins in for the last refrain.

PROMOTER/ENSEMBLE

STEP RIGHT UP. COME ONE, COME ALL.
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
THERE'S THINGS TO SEE AND GAMES TO PLAY.
LOOK AT THIS, YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES.
STEP RIGHT UP. RIGHT THIS WAY!
YOU'LL BE DAZZLED, DELIGHTED, ASTONISHED, EXCITED!
STEP RIGHT UP. STEP RIGHT UP. STEP RIGHT UP!

*A carnivalesque freeze. It hangs in the air a bit. Let the poison out.
Then, suddenly, everything transforms.*

Song: Stoneboy

In this transition, we hear documentary sound recording of a former student speaking about their experience in the infirmary with Native nurses.

It's 1910 at the Carlisle Indian School infirmary. If possible, a series of simple wooden beds. BEATRICE, a Lakota nurse who previously attended Carlisle herself, sings to UNA who lies in bed in the infirmary. BEATRICE tries to comfort them with a story.

BEATRICE
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EARTH, A WOMAN LIVED ALONE.
SHE PRAYED FOR YEARS FOR SOMEONE TO LOVE.
AFTER BURNING THE SWEET GRASS, MAKING MANY
PRAYERS,
THE THUNDER SPIRITS TOOK PITY ON HER.

Sound of thunder and nighttime in the forest. Shadows unfurl around the space. We start to see some of the images from BEATRICE's story illustrated in shadow.

BEATRICE (Cont'd)
THERE WAS A STONE
LYING IN HER LODGE.
ROUND AND BLACK AS A NEW MOON NIGHT.
AND SUDDENLY, WHERE THE STONE HAD BEEN
WAS A LITTLE BABE,
AND SHE LOVED HIM.
SHE LOVED HIM.

AND THE STONE BOY WAS A GOOD SON.
THE STONE BOY GAVE HER COMPANY.
SHE KNEW HER STONE BOY WAS A MYSTERY.
HE WAS WAKAN.
HE WAS LIKE YOU.

AND WHEN HE WAS GROWN HE WENT ON A JOURNEY
AND THERE HE MET A GRIZZLY BEAR
WHO LEAPT UPON THE BOY, HUNGRY FOR TENDER FLESH
AND JUST AS HE CLOSED HIS JAWS...

A grizzly bear howls.

THE BEAR HOWLED IN PAIN
AND LOOKED AROUND.
THERE WAS ONLY A STONE WHERE THE BOY HAD BEEN.
THE BEAR BROKE HIS TEETH

ON A BIG BLACK STONE.

THEN THE STONE BOY TOOK HIS BOW AND ARROW
AND THE STONE BOY KILLED THE BEAR!
AND THE STONE BOY JOURNEYED HOME AGAIN.
AND HE KNEW
AND HE KNEW
HE WAS WAKAN.

The shadows disappear and we're back in the infirmary.

SO WHEN THEY TRY TO HURT YOU, TURN TO STONE.
THOUGH THEY'VE TAKEN YOU FROM HOME, YOU'RE NOT
ALONE.
WHEN THEY TOLD YOU YOU ARE NOTHING.
WHEN THEY TRY TO MAKE YOU FORGET.
JUST REMEMBER THE STONE BOY
AND TELL YOURSELF:
I AM WAKAN!
I AM WAKAN!

SO UNTIL YOU CAN GO BACK TO WHERE YOU BELONG,
TO THOSE SOUNDS AND SMELLS, TO YOUR FATHER,
JUST BE STRONG.
DON'T SPEAK A WORD.
THEY MAY HAVE BROKEN YOUR BODY
BUT NOT YOUR SPIRIT.
WE ARE WAKAN.
WE ARE WAKAN.
AND THEY CAN'T HURT YOU.

WE'LL BE LIKE STONE.
QUIET AS A STONE.

Lights shift as we come back to the present day.

Song: Bring Them Home

We're back at Carlisle in the cemetery. White gravestones. The ENSEMBLE appears and begins a drum beat with their feet.

FATHER tends to the graves.

FATHER

COLD WHITE STONES
IN THE CORNER OF THE YARD
COULD THEY KNOW
WHEN THEY GAZED UP AT THE STARS
THAT THIS WOULD BE
THEIR PLACE TO SLEEP

COLD WHITE STONES
HARSH NOVEMBER WIND
LITTLE ONE
FOR ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS
WE'VE SANG TO YOU
WE REMEMBER

I KNELT TO THE GROUND
PRAYED A PRAYER, WHISPERING
RELATIVE, YOU'RE NOT ALONE
RELATIVE, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Fractal patterns emerge from each of the gravestones and entangle around the space.

BRING THEM HOME
I'LL KEEP SINGING THIS SONG
TILL THEY'RE ALL HOME
BACK WHERE THEY BELONG
BRING THEM HOME
BRING THEM HOME

LONG AGO
WAITING FOR THE NIGHT
VOICES LOW
WE'LL ESCAPE, YES WE WILL FIGHT
THIS WILL NOT BE
OUR PLACE TO SLEEP

RIVERS FLOW
CONTINENTS DIVIDE
COLD WINDS BLOW

CAN YOU HEAR THEIR VOICES CRY
THIS WILL NOT BE
OUR PLACE TO SLEEP

WE KNEEL TO THE GROUND
PRAY A PRAYER, WHISPER WITH ME
RELATIVE, WE'RE NOT ALONE
RELATIVE, WE'RE NOT ALONE

Photos of the ceremonies at the cemetery. Photos of people leaving gifts and medicine.

ENSEMBLE

BRING THEM HOME
I'LL KEEP SINGING THIS SONG
TILL THEY'RE ALL HOME
BACK WHERE THEY BELONG
BRING THEM HOME
BRING THEM HOME

COLD WHITE STONES
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE
LITTLE ONES
KNOW WHEN GAZING TO THE STARS
THIS WILL NOT BE
YOUR PLACE TO SLEEP

BRING THEM HOME
BRING THEM HOME

FATHER

COLD WHITE STONES

I WALKED THERE, LISTENING

The world shifts around us once more.

Song: Before and After

We see many of the actual before & after photo series by John N. Choate projected. Then we see a similar set of photos of TOM (the actor).

TOM, a Carlisle student, appears. Throughout this song, TOM changes his dress and appearance on stage to become more and more white.

TOM

April 1, 1891

Dear Father:

I wish that I could go home.

I'm afraid of Captain Pratt.

I do not get enough to eat.

Please tell Ely Pierce that I want to borrow some money.

It will be about thirteen dollars.

Dear Father

THEY WANT A PHOTOGRAPH

HERE KID, STAND JUST LIKE THAT,

"DON'T MOVE," SAID MR. CHOATE.

"WE'LL TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH."

Flashbulb sound.

BEFORE AND AFTER.

Flashbulb sound.

July 12, 1892

Dear Father:

I joined the baseball team.

Captain Pratt is proud of me.

I stick with it and it's going very well here.

Please tell Ely Pierce to visit when he can.

There's a big game in August.

Please come, dear father..!

DEAR FATHER

THEY TOOK OUR PHOTOGRAPH

WE STOOD THERE JUST LIKE THAT

THREE CHEERS FOR CARLISLE BOYS!

THEN THEY SOLD THE PHOTOGRAPH

BEFORE AND AFTER.

September 6, 1893

Dear Father:

You will not believe. I helped install electricity!
I didn't think it was possible, but Captain Pratt made it possible.
So much is possible. The future is bright, father!
I'm working at the farm, and soon I'll buy my photograph,
it costs 50 cents. I'll send it to you

DEAR FATHER
I WANT MY PHOTOGRAPH.
I'LL STAND HERE JUST LIKE THAT,
I'M PROUD OF WHO I AM.
LOOK AT MY PHOTOGRAPH.
BEFORE AND AFTER.

December 10, 1904
Dear Captain Pratt,
I was sad to learn the news that you'd retired.
What will old Carlisle be without you?
Thank you for all you did for me.
I'm grateful to be part of civilized society.
I hope to send my son from where we live in Chicago.

DEAR SCHOOL FATHER
I'VE ENCLOSED MY PHOTOGRAPH.
IT'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD HAVE.
CARLISLE MADE ME A MAN.
SO PLEASE TAKE THIS PHOTOGRAPH.
TO REMEMBER ME: BEFORE AND AFTER.

LOOK AT MY PHOTOGRAPH.

Flashbulb sound.

BEFORE AND AFTER.

Flashbulb sound.

Many flashbulbs, a train whistle, and then the soundscape becomes a football stadium crowd as TOM exits.

Song: Bright Path

Olympic gold medalist, JIM THORPE enters. It's the early 20th century at Carlisle. Maybe he's got a football in his hand. The sound of a football stadium crowd and radio game announcers.

JIM THORPE (BRIGHT PATH)
WHEN FIRST I ARRIVED ON THIS EARTH MAMA SAID
I'D HAVE A "BRIGHT PATH" BEFORE ME
I DON'T KNOW IF SHE WAS RIGHT
BUT I KNOW I HAD DREAMS

Video images of rolling hills and moving landscapes.

JIM THORPE (Cont'd)
I WANTED TO RUN AND RUN AND RUN
THROUGH THE GRASSES AND HILLS
HEART POUNDING, FEET SOARING
FREE TO BE
ME

WHEN I RAN BACK HOME TO THE FARM, PAPA SAID,
"GO GET AN EDUCATION. MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF,
JIM."
I DON'T KNOW IF HE WAS RIGHT
BUT I KNOW ALL I LONGED TO BE

I WANTED TO RUN AND RUN AND RUN
ACROSS THE WHOLE WORLD
HEART POUNDING, FEET SOARING
FREE TO BE
ME

THEN AT CARLISLE I JOINED THE TEAM
AND FOUND A NEW PATH FOR MY DREAM
THEY WERE ALL SO PROUD TO SEE ME RUN ONTO THE
FIELD

Sound of football crowd cheer. JIM puts on a Carlisle "C" sweater.

JIM THORPE (Cont'd)
HEART POUNDING, FEET SOARING
THEY CALLED ME
ALL AMERICAN

I RAN ACROSS THE WHOLE WORLD

I JOINED THE TEAM

Archival photos of JIM wearing a Team America shirt at the Olympics. Through the bridge, the archival images of Jim running and jumping start to speed up.

JIM THORPE (Cont'd)

AND THEN AND THEN
THE GOALPOSTS KEPT MOVING AND I NEVER KNEW HOW
TO WIN
KEEP RUNNING AND JUMPING AND THROWING AND KEEP
GOING JIM

JIM drops the football.

JIM THORPE (Cont'd)

WHEN THEY TELL THE STORY
OF WHAT I MEANT TO THIS PLACE
ROADS AND SHOPS, EVEN TOWNS, ALL ARE NAMED FOR
ME.
WHEN THEY WRITE THE STORY
OF WHO I WAS AND WHY I HAD TO LEAVE
WHAT WILL YOU MAKE OF MY LIFE AND LEGACY?

JIM takes off the Carlisle sweater and the photos disappear.

JIM THORPE (Cont'd)

THINK OF THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART
REMEMBER THE SPEED OF MY SMILE
LOOK BACK ON HOW QUICK I WAS TO MAKE EVERYONE
LAUGH.
AND DON'T FORGET, DON'T FORGET: *I NEVER GAVE IN.*

The video of landscapes moving returns.

JIM THORPE (Cont'd)

WHEN FIRST I ARRIVED ON THIS EARTH MAMA SAID
I'D HAVE A "BRIGHT PATH" BEFORE ME
I DON'T KNOW IF SHE WAS RIGHT
I WASN'T ALWAYS FREE
BUT I WAS ME

JIM throws the football off stage and exits. And then:

Song: Not NDN Enough

A sudden break in tone and shift in music. We're back in the "poison song" light box. A literal boxing ring. ELOISE wears boxing gloves, and looks around, confused.

An ANNOUNCER speaks through a god-mic.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, the moment you've all been waiting for.
The final bout in The Great Assimilation Plan!
In the blue corner, the most sinister villain imaginable, weighing in
at a pound of flesh, it's the Pretendian Mob!

PRETENDIAN MOB appears, ELOISE jumps. Applause sign.

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)

And in the red corner, the challenger! Fighting for their dignity,
weighing in under the considerable force of generational trauma,
that's right... it's the Indian Police!

INDIAN POLICE appears, ELOISE startles again. Applause sign.

PRETENDIAN MOB

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT? COULD IT BE?
I'VE GOT NATIVE ANCESTRY.
I JUST SPIT ON A STICK
AND THEY TOLD ME REALLY QUICK.
I'M POINT ZERO ZERO ZERO THREE PERCENT! YEAH!

ELOISE

Wait. That's not how this works!

INDIAN POLICE

I AM HERE. CAN'T YOU SEE?
TO DEFEND OUR SOVEREIGNTY
I WILL FIGHT FOR MY TRIBE
EXPOSE THIS VICIOUS KIND OF LIE
IT'S A POISON THAT MUST BE DRAWN OUT! YEAH!

Round 1 bell.

PRETENDIAN MOB

CHECK THE BOX, GET THAT GRANT
IT'S TOO LATE TO RECENT.
I'M COMMITTED TO THE STORY

THAT I'M IN THAT CATEGORY
I'M A NATIVE AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

PRETENDIAN hits the INDIAN POLICE and they're thrown off their feet. Crowd cheering sound effect.

PRETENDIAN MOB (Cont'd to ELOISE)
LET'S PRETEND YOU AND I
YOUR SPIRIT ANIMAL CAN FLY
STRETCH YOUR WINGS UP TO THE SKY
THIS LAND IS OUR LAND AND WE'LL NEVER GIVE IT BACK

ELOISE
I'm nothing like you! My dad was enrolled!

INDIAN POLICE gets back up and resets.

INDIAN POLICE
WHERE'S YOUR TRIBAL ID?
PROVE YOU'RE IN COMMUNITY
YOU'RE A FAKE, YOU'RE A FRAUD
YOU'RE NOT INDIAN AT ALL.
SO TAKE YOUR CHEAP ASS TURQUOISE AND GO HOME.

INDIAN POLICE hits the PRETENDIAN MOB and they fall to the ground. Their cheap ass turquoise goes flying off their neck. Score one for the INDIAN POLICE.

PRETENDIAN MOB
My great grandmother was a Cherokee princess!

Round end bell. From the god-mic:

ANNOUNCER
Round 1 goes to the Indian Police! But this fight's just getting started! Here we go, folks. Round 2 at the bell!

PRETENDIAN MOB resets. Both fighters bounce in their corners.

Round 2 bell.

PRETENDIAN MOB
LIGHT YOUR SAGE, BRAID YOUR HAIR
PUT YOUR WARPAINT ON FOR BATTLE
BANG YOUR DRUM AND SHAKE YOUR RATTLE

PROVE YOU'RE INDIAN ENOUGH BY WHAT YOU SAY

PRETENDIAN MOB takes another swing.

INDIAN POLICE
DID YOU HEAR WHAT WE SAID?
YOUR BLOOD QUANTUM ISN'T RED. YOU'RE
NOT OUR KIN. YOU'VE BEEN MISLED, SO
STOP PRETENDING THAT YOU'RE ONE OF US. WE KNOW.

PRETENDIAN MOB pulls out a giant book of "Family Lore" and brandishes it.

PRETENDIAN MOB
IT'S OUR RIGHT TO RECITE
FAMILY STORIES THAT WERE PASSED DOWN
MAKING LAND THEFT OF THE LAST GROUND
INTO CLAIMS THAT WE WERE NATIVE ANYWAY

*PRETENDIAN MOB connects their blow. INDIAN POLICE falls. Score one for the
PRETENDIAN MOB. Round end bell.*

INDIAN POLICE
YOU'RE NOT ENOUGH!

Oof. ELOISE has heard this before.

ANNOUNCER
Well, folks, this fight is neck and neck! Who will win? It all comes
down to this round! Who will finally prove their self-worth by
harming others the most? Let's watch and find out! The final
round. For all the marbles, at the bell...!

Round 3 bell!

INDIAN POLICE
KICK HER OUT, SAY GOODBYE
YOU'RE NOT ENROLLED? THEN YOU DON'T MATTER.
TAKE THAT BOOK AND THROW IT AT HER.

INDIAN POLICE throws the "Family Lore" book at the PRETENDIAN MOB.

INDIAN POLICE
YOU'RE NOT ENOUGH!

PRETENDIAN MOB
I'M ENOUGH! I'M COMPLETE!
I'M MY ANCESTORS WILD DREAM
I'M INDIGENOUS, I MATTER
I AM INNOCENT I....!

Then the INDIAN POLICE comes back hard.

INDIAN POLICE
KILL THEM DEAD THEY MUST DIE
THEY'RE THE CAUSE OF GENOCIDE!

Aghast, ELOISE tries to intervene.

ELOISE
Wait, stop! This is going too far.

The INDIAN POLICE turns on ELOISE.

INDIAN POLICE
If you're not with us you're against us!
RED ON THE OUTSIDE, WHITE ON THE INSIDE
YOU'RE JUST AN APPLE, YOU DON'T GRAPPLE
WITH HOW HARD LIFE IS FOR INDIANS TODAY!
YOU'RE A SHAM YOU'RE A CHEAT
A HARMFUL FORGERY

ELOISE
No I'm not! I swear! I'm just...

PRETENDIAN MOB
She's one of us!

PRETENDIAN MOB grabs ELOISE and pulls her toward them.

ELOISE
No! Get your hands off me! Let me go!

Music shifts to Man on the Bandstand. INDIAN POLICE come for the PRETENDIAN MOB and ELOISE, menacing.

INDIAN POLICE
KILL THE PRETENDIAN

PRETENDIAN MOB

SAVE THE MAN!

ELOISE

This isn't okay. Have we lost our minds?
How are we carrying out Carlisle's design?

Soft freeze. ANNOUNCER appears physically -- surprise! It's the Man on the Bandstand!

ANNOUNCER (PRATT)

IT'S THE GREAT ASSIMILATION PLAN
AND NOW WE HAVE GOTTEN
TO THE BOTTOM/
OF OUR

ELOISE

/No!

ELOISE punches the ANNOUNCER (PRATT). Harsh break in music. Everyone's in shock, including ELOISE. She looks down at her fist.

The moment should hang in the air a bit. Let the poison out.

Lights shift.

Song: Buffalo Vision

In this transition, we hear documentary recordings of Native people speaking about the impact of assimilation on their families today and about language reclamation efforts.

Then, THOUGHT WOMAN appears. She comforts ELOISE.

THOUGHT WOMAN
CLOSE THE EYES OF YOUR HEART
QUIET YOUR TROUBLED MIND

SEE THEM COMING OVER THE HORIZON
LIKE A DARK MIST COVERING THE PLAINS
BUFFALO THUNDERING, HOOVES BEATING
TRAVELING CALMLY EVEN THROUGH THE RAIN

Shadows of buffalo around the space.

THOUGHT WOMAN (Cont'd)
WIDE OPEN PRAIRIE, ROLLING GRASSLAND
SKIES BLANKET THE VAST PLATEAU
THE BUFFALO RAMBLE DOWN THE HILLSIDE
TO THE RUSHING RIVER WHERE THEY PAUSE

The archival image river from Ghost River reappears on the floor.

THOUGHT WOMAN (Cont'd)
STEP YOUR FOOT INTO THE WATER
TO CROSS THE RIVER
YOU HAVE TO GET IN, CHILD
PUT YOUR FOOT INTO THE WATER
FEEL THE CHILL TRAVEL UP YOUR SPINE
AND CROSS THE RIVER,
REJOIN THE HERD

THE BUFFALO WILL COME TO YOU
FEEL ITS WARM BREATH UPON YOUR SKIN
LOOK DEEP INTO ITS CARING EYES
LISTEN TO ITS BEATING HEART
FROM THE FOUR DIRECTIONS, HEAR THE SONG

Sound of buffalo hooves and breath. The buffalo become the river.

ELOISE
BUFFALO BREATHE

BUFFALO SPEAK
BUFFALO TEACH ME THE WAYS
BUFFALO SING
BUFFALO SEE
BUFFALO FEEL ME CALLING TO YOU
BUFFALO TELL ME WHAT WISDOM YOU KEEP FOR ME

*ELOISE steps a foot into the water. A transformation and more spirits including FATHER appear.
ELOISE doesn't see him*

THOUGHT WOMAN / FATHER / ENSEMBLE
STEP YOUR FOOT INTO THE WATER
TO CROSS THE RIVER
YOU HAVE TO GET IN, CHILD
PUT YOUR FOOT IN THE WATER
FEEL THE CHILL TRAVEL UP YOUR SPINE AND
CROSS THE RIVER, REJOIN THE HERD

The world shifts around us again.

Song: Coming Home Again

Back at her father's house, ELOISE picks up a Pueblo drum and plays a few awkward beats.

ELOISE
THERE IS A SONG IN THE SKY
IF ONLY I COULD RECOGNIZE
IF ONLY I COULD FIND THE BEAT
IS THIS ALL THAT'S LEFT FOR ME...?

ELOISE puts the drum down.

THOUGHT WOMAN appears. The beat from You Were There faintly comes in and ELOISE this time hears it in a different way.

THOUGHT WOMAN
THEY WHISPER STORIES OF HOW THE WORLD BEGAN.
THEY WHISPER STORIES

Then, an idea. A decision. ELOISE picks up her backpack and goes to the Laguna Pueblo Reservation for the first time. We see a reverse visual journey contrasting UNA's journey from Stories.

THOUGHT WOMAN (Cont'd)
HOW RIVERS FLOWED
AND MOUNTAINS ROSE

The Sandia Mountains rise in the distance. ELOISE reaches the tribal records office at the Laguna Pueblo Reservation. She knocks on the door. The music cuts out. Silence.

ELOISE knocks once more.

A TRIBAL OFFICIAL opens the door and stares at ELOISE. ELOISE doesn't know what to say. Awkward moment.

ELOISE
Uh... hi. Is this the records office?

TRIBAL OFFICIAL points with his lips to the sign above the door.

ELOISE
Right. Right. Um. Are you open?

TRIBAL OFFICIAL
Close at 3.

ELOISE looks at her watch or her phone. It's basically 3. Shit.

ELOISE

I was hoping to find some records of my great grandmother. She um... well I mean. She was born here and she was um...she went to.. I just know she was born here so I thought maybe there would be some kind of record. I don't have a lot of information. I know it's pretty late. I should have looked at the hours on the website. I didn't realize... I...

TRIBAL OFFICIAL

What was her name?

ELOISE

Una Hudson.

Silence. Nothing.

ELOISE (cont'd)

Or maybe it was Se-a-she. I think it was anglicized when she went to Carlisle.

TRIBAL OFFICIAL raises an eyebrow, but shakes his head.

TRIBAL OFFICIAL

No. I've never heard that name around here. You can come back on Monday if you want. Open at 10.

ELOISE

Oh. I see. Ok.

TRIBAL OFFICIAL closes the door. ELOISE is alone again.

ELOISE heads to Albuquerque. She walks outside. The mesas glint in the distance as the sun goes down in the west. THOUGHT WOMAN appears.

THOUGHT WOMAN

I KNEW YOU WOULD COME LOOKING,
CRAWLING UP VOLCANIC MESAS,
CRUMBLING BOULDERS,
YOU WOULD SEE PUMICED HOLES
WHERE AIR ONCE BUBBLED
UPWARD THROUGH THE ROCK.
BASALTIC BREATH.

I KNEW YOU WOULD COME SEARCHING,
YEARNING FOR CONNECTION

PUEBLO ELDER appears. He greets ELOISE. They sit at a coffee shop in Albuquerque.

ELOISE

Thank you for meeting me. I'm so honored. I'm glad to connect
with someone here.

THOUGHT WOMAN

TO THE PAST
TO ALL THAT WAS TAKEN

PUEBLO ELDER

It's good you've come. It's a hard journey to take, the one you're
on.

THOUGHT WOMAN

I AM HERE

ELOISE

The records office was closed. I didn't get to... They said they
didn't know my grandmother's name.

PUEBLO ELDER takes ELOISE's hands in his.

THOUGHT WOMAN

THINKING THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE

PUEBLO ELDER

So many children were lost. It is good that you've come. You are
welcome here. Welcome home. Welcome home.

THOUGHT WOMAN

BRAIDING THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE.

ELOISE and PUEBLO ELDER hug. The music shifts.

*ELOISE takes a ride up to the top of the Sandia Mountains. We see the openness of the
landscape all around us. The ENSEMBLE joins in as various other visitors to the mountain.*

ELOISE

AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN
I WATCH
A MAN I DON'T KNOW

OFFER CORN POLLEN
IN THE FOUR DIRECTIONS
WITH QUIET PRAYERS
WHILE GRANDCHILDREN RUN AROUND HIM
LAUGHING AND YELLING WITH DELIGHT

ENSEMBLE 4

"We're up so high!"

ELOISE
I FEEL THAT TOO.
WHAT IF I FALL?
GRANDFATHER,
HE CATCHES MY EYE
LAUGHS A KNOWING LAUGH
"WHEN THEY GROW UP
THEY WON'T REMEMBER
THEY'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE"

WE LAUGH TOGETHER.
I KNOW THE MEANING.
IT IS A GIFT,
GOOD MEDICINE
FOR THE JOURNEY.

FROM HIGH UP HERE, I PONDER
HOW EVEN THE ROCKS BENEATH MY FEET
WHISPER STORIES
OF THE TEN THOUSAND YEARS...
OF THE SUN

AND THE SAND,

OF OUR PEOPLES

THOUGHT WOMAN

YOU WON'T REMEMBER
YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE
BUT THAT'S OKAY,
IT'S PART OF YOUR STORY.

THOUGHT WOMAN
EVEN THE ROCKS
HAVE MANY STORIES TO TELL
OF THE TEN THOUSAND YEARS

AND THE SKY

OF YOU AND I
OF OUR PEOPLES

THE ENSEMBLE morphs into a Round Dance. Pow Wow singing starts.

ELOISE tentatively stays outside the circle.

After a moment, someone reaches their hand out to her. She joins in.

ENSEMBLE

COMING HOME AGAIN
THIS EARTH IS RED.

Lights shift and we go back in time.

Song: Something Was Lost

We're in 1940. UNA, now an adult, looks through a Carlisle yearbook (which in the present day is in the Carlisle archives).

UNA

MY INDIAN NATURE THE MOANING WIND
STIRRING MEMORIES LIKE LEAVES INTO THE SKY
THINKING OF SCHOOL DAYS I'M STILL IN SHADOW
SOMETHING WAS LOST

ASKED THAT MY EAGLE BECOME A CROW
ALL I LEARNED MADE ME A STRANGER
NOW WITH MY CLAN
THERE ARE THINGS THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND
SOMETHING WAS LOST

NOT FOR MARY, MY FRIEND.
SHE BELIEVED WE HAD TO CHANGE
SHE BELIEVED IN THEIR BRAND NEW WORLD

OH FOR HER
THERE WAS SOMETHING GAINED
HOW CAN ONE PLACE GIVE AND TAKE AWAY
WE WALKED THE SAME LONG HALLS, MARY GREW
AND I WAS DIMINISHED

THOUGHT WOMAN appears.

THOUGHT WOMAN

THOUGHT WOMAN IS SITTING IN HER ROOM
SITTING AS SHE HAS BEFORE
SHE'S SITTING THERE NOW
THOUGHT WOMAN
THOUGHT OF ALL HER SISTERS
TOGETHER THEY CREATED ALL IN THE
UNIVERSE

UNA (cont'd)

DIMINISHED

IT FLOURISHED

I THOUGHT ALONE
I THOUGHT, YES, TURN TO STONE
I HAD THE STORIES
TO BRING ME BACK HOME
BUT I SEE FOR HER

AND NOW
THOUGHT WOMAN IS THINKING
OF A NEW
STORY
AN OPENING

SHE HAD HER OWN

ACTOR 1 becomes ELOISE & UNA at the same time.

ELOISE/UNA
AND FOR US ALL
SOMETHING WAS LOST
BUT THAT'S NOT ALL

THERE'S ALWAYS MORE
THERE CAN ALWAYS BE MORE
POSSIBLY?

MY INDIAN NATURE
THE MOANING WIND
STIRRING MEMORIES
LIKE LEAVES INTO THE SKY...

I'LL WATCH THEM FLY

THOUGHT WOMAN (Cont'd)
BECAUSE
SOMETHING WAS LOST
BUT THAT'S NOT ALL
THE CEREMONY'S NOT OVER
THERE'S AN OPEN DOOR
A WOMAN LAUGHING
AT POSSIBILITY

THOUGHT WOMAN SEES

AN INDIAN WOMAN FLY

*They connect with one another. Something deep heals. Something reweaves.
New possibility opens up.*

Song: Who Is Watching

*ELOISE alone on a winter evening at Carlisle. Snowfall.
The State Marker returns into view.*

ELOISE

THIS PLACE, THIS GROUND
WHO CAN TELL THE STORY?
WHAT TRACE, WHAT SOUND
THERE ARE TEN THOUSAND STORIES.

IS THAT A THREAD
WOVEN IN THE SKY
BRAIDED IN THE STARS

I SEE IT AT NIGHT
FLICKERING SO FAR AWAY

DON'T LEAVE ME, I PRAY

WHEN I LOOK TO THE SKY
WHO IS WATCHING
IN THE STARS THROUGH THE NIGHT
WHO IS WATCHING

FATHER
ARE YOU WATCHING
FATHER
ARE YOU WATCHING
FATHER
ARE YOU WATCHING

FATHER appears.

FATHER

YOU'RE NOT ALONE.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN BY YOUR SIDE.
YOUR HEART IS STRONG
YOU'RE FINDING YOUR WAY

ELOISE

Daddy?

FATHER

Eloise!

They hug.

ELOISE

I've missed you so much!

FATHER

WHEN YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR HOME
I AM WATCHING
IF YOU NEED ME, YOU KNOW
I AM WATCHING

DAUGHTER

I'M ALWAYS WATCHING

ELOISE

I HAVE WALKED ACROSS TIME JUST TO FIND YOU
YOU WEREN'T THERE FOR ME
OH WHY DID YOU HIDE OUR HISTORY?

I WISH I'D KNOWN
I WISH YOU'D SHOWN
I WISH I ALWAYS KNEW THE STORIES

I WISH I'D KNOWN
I WISH YOU'D SHOWN
I WISH I ALWAYS KNEW THE STORIES

FATHER

DAUGHTER I TRIED
TO PROTECT YOU FROM THE PAIN
FROM ALL THE POISON IN OUR VEINS
I WANTED TO SHIELD YOU
AND I THOUGHT I COULD CONCEAL
THE GRIEF

ELOISE

YOU KEPT OUR FAMILY, OUR STORIES FROM ME
YOU SEVERED THE TIES
JUST LIKE THEY DESIGNED

That stings. FATHER is speechless. Silence.

FATHER

I'm so sorry, Eloise.

ELOISE nods. She knows.

ELOISE

DEAR FATHER
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO END THIS WAY
WE CAN MEND THE WOUNDS
HEAL THE BRUISE
TOGETHER WE CAN WEAVE
A NEW STORY INTO THE SKY
THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

FATHER

HOW DID YOU GET SO WISE?

ELOISE

I AM A DAUGHTER OF SURVIVORS
I AM INHERITOR OF GREAT STRENGTH
ON A JOURNEY OF CONNECTION

FATHER

I AM A MAN WHO LOVES HIS FAMILY
I AM A PROUD PUEBLO FATHER
I'VE CROSSED THE RIVER

ELOISE

I'M NOT PERFECT BUT I'M HEALING
I'LL RELEARN MY PEOPLE'S WAYS
I KNOW I'M NEVER ALONE IN THIS
I KNOW I'M PART OF A COMMUNITY
I KNOW MY FATHER IS PROUD OF ME
I KNOW WHEN I LOOK TO THE SKY

FATHER

I AM WATCHING

ELOISE

IN THE STARS THROUGH THE NIGHT

FATHER/ANCESTORS

I AM WATCHING

ELOISE/FATHER

WHEN I FEEL ALL ALONE

ANCESTORS

WE ARE WATCHING

ELOISE/FATHER

WHEN I'M SEARCHING FOR HOME

ANCESTORS

WE ARE WATCHING

A giant reveal. The stage should feel full of threads connecting everything to everything. The entire ENSEMBLE enters for the finale. If Eloise was alone in an empty space at the beginning, now she's surrounded by all the things she's learned, the people she's met, and the new meanings she's made along the way.

Song: A New Story

ELOISE

I SING TO MY ANCESTORS: I DON'T KNOW
ALL THAT I OWE YOU
I SEE THE THREAD LINKING ME TO YOU
AND EVEN THOUGH SOMETHING WAS LOST
I'LL REMEMBER AT ANY COST

THOUGHT WOMAN

THE EARTH IS RED AND HARD
WITH BURIED SECRETS LIKE OUR SKIN AND BLOOD
BENEATH.
THEY WHISPER STORIES OF HOW THE WORLD BEGAN.
THEY WHISPER STORIES OF FUTURES THAT MIGHT YET
UNFOLD
WHAT SEEDS MIGHT GROW
WHERE WE COULD GO
WE'LL BE THERE

ENSEMBLE

WE ARE WATCHING

ELOISE

I'M THE CHILD OF CARLISLE
THE CHILD OF ASSIMILATION
OF NEAR DECIMATION

FATHER
RELATIVE, YOU'RE NOT ALONE
RELATIVE, YOU'RE COMING HOME!

THOUGHT WOMAN
WE'RE STILL HERE.
WE'RE STILL HERE.
THE EARTH IS RED.

ELOISE
LET OUR VOICES BE CLEAR

TOM
WE REMEMBER

JIM THORPE
THINK OF THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART
REMEMBER THE SPEED OF MY SMILE

THOUGHT WOMAN
CROSS THE RIVER, REJOIN THE HERD

ELOISE
I SEE THE THREAD LINKING ME TO YOU

THOUGHT WOMAN
BREATH IT IN, AND THE SMOKE WILL RISE.

ELOISE
I HEAR YOUR TESTIMONY

THOUGHT WOMAN
I'LL TEACH YOU THE CEREMONY

ELOISE
I'LL KEEP THE CEREMONY

THOUGHT WOMAN
TO REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

ELOISE/UNA
AND I'LL TELL MY STORY

FATHER/TOM

I'LL TELL MY STORY

MARY

I'LL TELL MY STORY

JIM THORPE

I'LL TELL MY STORY

BEATRICE

I'LL TELL MY STORY

ALL

WE'LL TELL OUR STORIES

WE'LL TELL OUR STORIES

Lights rise across the audience. We're all woven into one space.

END OF CYCLE

*Pow wow song for bows. Low key, do we all do a round dance together?
Institutional curtain speech and thank yous go here!*