

SCENE THREE
MORNING SERVICE

Projection: MORNING SERVICE. Congregation continues song — underneath.

PREACHER.

Here am I again once more, Heavenly Father,
Ready to bow this hour of the morning
On my bruised and bending knee.
Thank you, My Father, for your guardin' angel,
That guarded me all night long
Until morning light appeared.
And before he went from his watch,
He touched my eyes this morning with a finger of love,
And my eyes became open
And behold a brand-new Sunday morning —

ALL.

WE'RE MARCHING TO ZION
BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL ZION
WE'RE MARCHING UPWARDS TO ZION
THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF GOD

WANDA. I'm having a bad hair day up under my hat. And I look around the church self-consciously and this little old lady catches my eye. She makes me think of the church I attended when I was a little girl.

She has on a little gray wig and a hat. That's how the old ladies looked when I was a girl. You know, they had a hat, and a wig, then their hair under all that. That's a lot of layers.

Like I say, my mind goes back to the Holy Trinity Pentecostal Church of God in Franklinton, North Carolina. (*We hear a woman's plaintive high-pitched prayer —*) My Aunt Bell was an evangelist there. (*As congregation transforms into members of Wanda's childhood church —*) There was preaching and sweating and shouting and speaking in tongues. There was always someone walking up to the altar to get saved, like some girl who later on might end up pregnant. They preached about a fear of God. If you don't do this and that, you're going to hell.

It was a small church that sat off a dirt road. Maybe had fifty members. In the summer, it was too hot inside the church to breathe. We fanned ourselves with programs or those hand fans with the piece of cardboard stapled to a stick. There was always a picture on

one side of the fan, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or John F. Kennedy, and advertising for a funeral home on the other side. (*The Fan Dance as the congregation begins to fan. Jeanette accentuates the movement. Fanning, flapping — desirous of ascension.*)

MAN. (*Leads.*)

O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

(*As Jeanette rises — accentuating her fanning into the Fan Dance — embodying the spirit of the women in Wanda's childhood church. Song continues under dialogue.*)

WANDA.

The women wore long white dresses,
down to the ankles, with sleeves down to
the wrists, and collars up the neck.
Back then, women had to hide their
bodies and cover their heads to show
respect for the house of God, so they
wore white tams. Every single one of them.

The little girls had to wear white
handkerchiefs on top of our heads. The
handkerchiefs had pretty lace along the
edges which just barely touched our
foreheads. They'd pin those scarves to
our heads with black bobby pins and
there'd be this black line of hairpins
running down the handkerchief.

No matter how hot it was, you didn't
take that handkerchief off your head.
You just didn't dare. You'd see those
white handkerchiefs flapping about like
flags when the girls were fanning. The
women never took their hats off, either.
Not even the little old ladies with gray wigs.

ALL.

O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

ALL DAY LONG, WAITING ON YOU
ALL DAY LONG, WAITING ON YOU
ALL DAY LONG, WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

ON MY KNEES, WAITING ON YOU
ON MY KNEES, WAITING ON YOU
ON MY KNEES, WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

GROAN A LITTLE GROAN, WAITING ON YOU
GROAN A LITTLE GROAN, WAITING ON YOU
GROAN A LITTLE GROAN, WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

CRY A LITTLE CRY, WAITING ON YOU
CRY A LITTLE CRY, WAITING ON YOU
CRY A LITTLE CRY, WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
O LORD, I'M WAITING ON YOU
CAN'T DO NOTHING 'TIL THE SPIRIT COMES

So, today I am in church thinking to myself, *Okay, here I am with my braids up under my*