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*Dramatic Publishing*





# *I Saved a Winter Just for You*

A Theatrical Presentation

The Work of Many Young Writers  
Adapted by  
TOM ERHARD



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(I SAVED A WINTER JUST FOR YOU)

ISBN 0-87129-380-3

*For Bruce, Larry and Dan . . .*  
*With Love*

*I SAVED A WINTER JUST FOR YOU*

A Full-Length Play  
for Three Men and Five Women

C H A R A C T E R S

BOY ONE . . . . . Poised, dominant, sometimes macho.

BOY TWO . . . Shy, nervous, ill-at-ease socially. The class scholar.

BOY THREE . . . . . The class clown. Underneath his facade is a  
gentle, sensitive young man.

GIRL ONE. . . . . Poised, popular, at times vain.

GIRL TWO . . . . . Introverted and shy, with little social grace but  
very sensitive.

GIRL THREE. . . . Filled with turmoil and anger. The world has  
hurt her.

GIRL FOUR . . . . . A total romantic who hides from reality.

GIRL FIVE . . . . . The class clown. Also warm and sensitive.

*TIME: The present.*

*PLACE: A stage.*

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## *I SAVED A WINTER JUST FOR YOU*

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We begin with music – live, if possible, and highly contemporary. The CAST comes through the audience, greeting people warmly and carrying armloads of assorted hand props to help with the pantomiming. Not all props need be carried on but enough to create a feel of spontaneous creativity. When they reach the stage, BOY THREE and GIRL FIVE dance with creative comedy to warm up the audience. BOY ONE and GIRL ONE join in but dance with elegance. BOY TWO, GIRL TWO and GIRL FOUR watch shyly from one side. GIRL THREE sits by herself, away from the others. The music stops.

BOY THREE (warmly to the audience). Hi! Glad you could make it.

GIRL FIVE (to BOY THREE). Glad *you* could make it! You got here *six minutes ago*!

BOY THREE. Well, you know . . . stars make an entrance. (The OTHERS hoot and jeer with appropriate ad libs.)

BOY ONE (warmly but seriously). The real stars of this show are a bunch of talented high school students.

GIRL ONE. That's right. Tonight's performance is based on the writings of young people, done in the last few years.

GIRL FIVE. For the Southwest High School Creative Writing Awards at New Mexico State University.

BOY THREE. Do they speak English down there?

GIRL FIVE. Shut up.

BOY THREE. They haven't won a football game since Billy the Kid invented the Shotgun Formation.

BOY ONE. Okay, let's get serious.

GIRL FOUR (at the far side of the stage, to GIRL THREE). Are you all right? (Slight pause.) You look . . . upset or something.

GIRL THREE (after a slight pause). Bill just broke up with me. On my way here, tonight.

GIRL FOUR. Gee, you've gone together all year. (Slight pause.) Are you okay?

GIRL THREE (getting tough with herself). Don't worry about me.

BOY THREE (to GIRL THREE and GIRL FOUR). Come on, you guys, pay attention. (To the audience.) So anyway, folks, what we're going to do is . . . What we're going to do is . . . (He is totally over-melodramatic.) . . . What we're going to do is . . .

GIRL FIVE (bumping BOY THREE out of the way with her hip). I knew you'd screw it up. (Warmly, to the audience.) Our show's going to run about an hour and a half. We won't take an intermission.

BOY THREE (with exaggerated gestures). But there are lots of places where you can wiggle or make airplanes out of your program or pick your nose.

GIRL ONE (stepping forward). Here's how the show is going to work. From these writings, we've picked the feelings that mean the most to *us* and then dramatized them.

BOY ONE (joining GIRL ONE). The stories and poems reflect how each of us feels about being seventeen.

GIRL ONE. So you'll all get to know *us* from the selections we've chosen.

BOY ONE. And we think that you'll share a lot of these feelings.

BOY THREE. Okay, guys, warm-up time!

GIRL FIVE. We're going to begin with a few poems that show what it's like to try to become a writer.

ALL (gathering at C and loudly singing the vowels several times, each rendition stretching them a bit more). A-e-i-o-u. Aaaa-eeee-iiii-oooo-uuuu. (As they begin the poetry, ALL enunciate each sound with extreme precision.)

GIRL ONE (very dramatically).

"A" is black.

BOY ONE (dramatically to GIRL ONE).

The center of your eye . . .

the pit of a cave . . .

the space between the stars.

GIRL FIVE (happily).

"E" is yellow!

BOY TWO (savoring the sounds).

Not quite the sun . . .

leaves in late fall,

the harvest moon.

GIRL THREE (angrily).

"I" is red!

BOY ONE (lost in thought).

Eyes after crying . . .

cheeks in the cold . . .

the clouds at sunset.

GIRL TWO (softly).

"O" is white.

GIRL FOUR (very gently).

The look of snow . . .

a baby's mouth . . .

a unicorn's mane.



BOY THREE (very warmly).

“U” is bright.

ALL (in unison).

The crackle of an old man’s eyes . . .  
the splashing blue of a storm . . .  
the sunlit surface of the ocean.

(ALL sit at different elevations and in varying positions, busily pantomiming writing, some happily and easily, some slowly with frustration.)

GIRL FOUR (at her seat, romantically).

Poetry is the ballet of the mind,  
Abstract turnings of the soul . . .  
A dance that’s positively inclined.  
Its celebration: love of life!  
Poetry is the ballet of the mind,  
Abstract turnings of my soul.

GIRL ONE (rising with calm confidence, walking about, pantomiming each image).

I like to hear the sound of my voice,  
The rhythm of my poems, the feel of my legs,  
Shaped smooth and strong.  
I like the golden hair  
On my arms in the summer,  
The dry drops on my skin  
And the steam after a shower,  
The bright gasp-spasm  
Of stepping from the bathroom  
To the cold of the house.  
I like to stare at my face in the mirror,  
Every pore of my face,  
Every thought in my head  
Dizzy and full, poem upon poem, whirling  
In elliptical orbits.

(She spins, her arms gracefully twirling, then sits.)

GIRL THREE (angrily crumpling and throwing her paper).

You lie on the floor  
molded into  
a blooming flower  
sprayed with *black bugs*.

My attack on the written world . . .

(A slight pause.)

a crumpled paper.

(She kicks at the paper.)

GIRL FOUR. Is that . . . because of . . . him . . . tonight?

GIRL THREE. What do *you* think? (She turns her back on GIRL FOUR, who makes a sympathetic move.)

GIRL FIVE (nervous about the previous interchange and changing the subject with bubbly enthusiasm and grandiose-but-appropriate finger gestures). "Words," with apologies to Eleanor Wylie's poem, "Pretty Words." I love silly words, words that laugh out loud . . .

BOY THREE (happily joining in). Words that seem to tickle whenever they are used.

GIRL FIVE. Long, bumpy words like hippopotamus.

BOY THREE. I love words, released, discharged and full of life . . .

GIRL FIVE. Like magnetic fields of gravity battling back and forth . . .

BOY THREE. Extended rays of sunlight rocketed down to earth.

GIRL FIVE (exchanging a high-five with BOY THREE). All *right!*

BOY TWO (after a pause, with a lack of security).

*I'm* looking for a word  
that I can hold on to  
with an *answer*  
spelled in every letter.

(GIRL TWO nods in strong agreement.)

BOY THREE.

“Writing:”

Each creaking of my chewed-up pen  
brings about a new thought,  
that dribbles out of my brain and  
plops onto my paper.

(He is disgusted with his writing.)

GIRL FOUR. (As an example of how the poetry in this play may  
be dramatized, CAST MEMBERS away from the action can  
make hoofbeat sounds while GIRL FOUR turns and looks.)  
Inside,

White mustangs gallop freely about the edges of a frozen  
field that lies deep within me.

They are shrouded in a fog,

Yet sometimes I fancy I can hear the clear whinnies of  
those phantoms,

Those poems that I have never touched.

And sometimes, when the dull beat of their hooves seems  
to be near,

I spin around,

Half hoping to capture — perhaps — a shadow.

Alas. When I reach for my pen,

All but the memory of those quivering, white steeds

Has vanished.

GIRL FIVE (bouncing up and down wildly, clowny and sing-song  
jingly).

“Blabber Mouth:”

Flap my jaws,

My voice caws,

Fling my tongue

At everyone.

Rattle trap,

No sound gap.

Lips of blubber  
Bounce like rubber.  
My teeth glisten.  
Listen.

GIRL THREE (to BOY THREE, with disgust). I bet *you* wrote that one!

BOY THREE. Not me. But that's what I call *great literature*.

BOY ONE. You would.

GIRL ONE. Listen to this one. Have you ever been afraid of how your teacher would react to your assignment?

GIRL THREE. Yes!

GIRL ONE.

Mrs. Warren asked us to write about how we felt about old age.

I thought about collecting on insurance, and Social Security,  
Buying three-wheeled bikes and menopause;  
High school reunions and flabby upper arms,  
And discounts at drugstores  
And sitting next to decrepit old men  
Smelling of Old Spice.

GIRL THREE (joining in).

But I looked at Mrs. Warren, my English teacher,  
And at the pen I held between shaking fingers,  
And *I* wrote about  
Crocheting shawls, hugging grandchildren, and baking  
cookies.

GIRL ONE (after a pause).

And she'll never know how scared we were  
About writing the "right thing!"

GIRL THREE and GIRL ONE. So we could get an "A." (ALL loudly agree.)

BOY TWO. That's exactly how it is, sometimes.

GIRL TWO (to BOY TWO).

Of all the things I have to say  
 The ones left unsaid  
 Were the most important.  
 Please read  
 Between  
 My lines  
 And hear what I'm *not* saying.  
 I have so much that you should hear.  
 I need the security of your approval  
 To say it.  
 You  
 Never cared enough to find out  
 Who was missing in myself.  
 Please listen to my silence  
 And  
 Give me back my words.

BOY TWO (after a pause, approaching GIRL TWO hesitantly).

Er . . .

GIRL TWO (suddenly very nervous). W-what?

BOY TWO (panicking, turning away, shrugging). Oh . . .  
 nothing.

GIRL FOUR. I'm tired of sad poems that don't work out right.

BOY THREE. Yeah! Give us a happy one!

GIRL TWO.

I'm tired of sad poems.  
 I think it's time  
 For a happy poem.

(ALL cheer.)

A poem with flowers, mountains, waterfalls . . .

GIRL FOUR (her refrain throughout is sappily romantic).

And love.

GIRL TWO. Horses, children, a starry summer's eve . . .

GIRL FOUR. And love.

GIRL TWO. Deserted islands, newlyweds, a circus . . .

GIRL FOUR. And love.

GIRL TWO. Bubblegum, little sisters, a puppy . . .

GIRL FOUR. And love.

GIRL TWO (after a definite pause).

But who can write of so much happiness

Without becoming . . . ever so sad?

(She and GIRL FOUR sigh together.)

GIRL FIVE. *This* one's not sad. It's called, would you believe,  
"A Poet's Strife with Indigestion and Other Gastric Complications."

BOY THREE. And you guys talk about *my* taste!

GIRL FIVE (acting this out quite broadly).

I rock back in my chair

And cower at a blank sheet of paper.

It snarls and sneers.

My Bic Fine Point whines

As I nibble at her cap.

A summer breeze coaxes my heavy lids shut.

My Bic Fine Point plummets to the carpet.

I sleep for a day, or maybe a decade.

I sleep in one ear and out the other.

I roll like a stone and gather no moss.

I sleep in a place where paper is tame

And reptilian thesaurus write renegade poems.

I awake and rock back in my chair.

(Her surprise increases.)

My paper has been tamed

By my Bic Fine Point.

(A pause.)

And here on my desk

*I find this poem!*

(She shrieks in amazement.)

**BOY THREE.**

*I borrowed a Bic  
from a poet today.  
Bitten into its cap  
Were one thousand thoughts.*

**BOY ONE (reclining).**

*I lie on the prickly grass in the shade,  
Writing poetry.  
A locust is buzzing on a nearby honeysuckle bush.  
The olive tree above me, with its heady pungency  
And shimmering leaves,  
Evokes memories of summer,  
Long-since withered.  
I reflect upon how quickly things change.  
(He rises and speaks with much emphasis.)  
And I realize . . .*

(To GIRL ONE.)

*We will never be exactly this way again.*

(He and GIRL ONE exchange a meaningful look for a beat.)

**GIRL ONE (joining BOY ONE downstage and speaking with great strength of purpose).**

*I am not afraid of black widow spiders,  
Or planets colliding with the earth,  
But of empty rooms and empty houses,  
And doors swinging on squeaky hinges that are  
Rusting from long disuse.  
I am not afraid of mythical monsters  
Or gold-eating, fire-breathing dragons . . .  
But of growing old . . . and being alone . . .  
And not being able to write a poem!*

GIRL FOUR. That's right!

GIRL TWO. Agreed.

GIRL THREE (as she, GIRL TWO, GIRL FOUR and GIRL FIVE cluster together). Write a letter in a second or two!

GIRL TWO. Write a word in a minute.

GIRL FIVE. Writing a sentence may take you an hour,

GIRL FOUR. But writing a poem is infinite. (ALL fervently agree.)

BOY TWO (fervently as GIRL ONE becomes the teacher and they interact throughout this poem).

Mrs. Orwig,

You tell me to take a part of myself and put it on paper,  
And hand it in.

(A pause.)

Who are you?

Sometimes you play music and tell me to dream and then  
Tell you what I see.

Who are you?

Mine is paper number thirty-five and you read it at ten-thirty  
at night

And you write "very nice" with a brown pen

And you give it back to me the next day.

You laugh and love and live during fourth period

And you say things no one has ever said to me.

Who are you?

(A pause.)

And why do I care so much?

(BOY TWO turns away embarrassed. GIRL ONE reaches out behind him, almost touching him, but not quite, with great empathy. There is a brief musical bridge.)

BOY ONE. Okay, gang. (The OTHERS gather.) Day after day, what's *the one* biggest tension that we all have? (A pause.)

Well?

GIRL ONE (staring hard at BOY ONE). Getting the right guy to understand my moods.