

RACHEL. Comet wouldn't hurt a no-see-um flying in his face.
POLLY. But it's natural, wantin' to be with a man.
RACHEL. Mother Ann Lee teaches us to keep our eyes on heaven.
Not on earthly wants.

POLLY. We eat and we sleep.

RACHEL. So we can do Mother Ann Lee's work.

JANE. Mother Ann lost four babies. Afore she stopped lying with
her husband. Four babies.

RACHEL. (*To Polly*) Fix your eyes on heaven. You won't think
about earthly wants.

POLLY. If it's natural, like eating and sleeping ...

RACHEL. Some people find a sweetheart and get married. We
give our hearts to God. (*Rachel grabs some of the laundry and exits.*)
JANE. (*Looking off*) That ole bull Comet sure don't like those
linens on the line. The worst is the petticoats. He sees them a-wavin'
at him and he goes crazy. Just like a man. Goin' crazy over the pet-
ticoats on the other side of the fence. (*Izzy comes running in.*)
IZZY. Mischief had kittens!

POLLY. Again? (*Jane keeps working.*)

IZZY. She had kittens! Three, four of 'em! In the laundry basket.
On the clean laundry! I don't think anyone'll mind, do you? She
just popped one out and licked it and then another came out and
another. One looks like Mischief and two look like Mr.
Chickenhouse. But the last little one, all motley colored, was just
lying there. Mischief didn't even lick that one. Just pushed it aside.
(*Izzy looks at Polly, who doesn't speak. Izzy turns to Jane.*)

JANE. Cats are smarter than people sometimes. (*As she gets up to
go.*) Know when to give up on a sickly child. (*Jane goes back to the
side benches. Rachel, Betsy and Izzy carry off the laundry baskets as
they exit to the side benches. Lights change.*)

Scene 10

*Polly sings as she moves the benches. She stacks one on top of
the other to make a table.*

POLLY. (*Singing.*)

MY CARNAL LIFE I WILL LAY DOWN
BECAUSE IT IS DEPRAVED.
I'M SURE ON ANY OTHER GROUND
I NEVER CAN BE SAVED.
(*Lights change.*)

Scene 11

*Polly finishes her song and begins to draw, standing at the
'table.' Betsy enters from one side and Peggy from the other.
All three women use dowels for brushes and mime drawing.*

BETSY. You have a beautiful script, Sister Polly. And look at that
apple. That is a lovely apple. (*Betsy and Peggy begin to work.*)

POLLY. I like making pictures. Drawing the fruit.

PEGGY. Some Sisters couldn't tell the jelly jars apart. Before you
started making pictures for them.

POLLY. Why not?

BETSY. Can't read. Some of the older Sisters are unable to read.
And some of the younger ones if they're new.

PEGGY. Your fruit pictures are welcome.

POLLY. I try to make them pretty.

PEGGY. Just make them plain and simple.

BETSY. A little color is nice.

PEGGY. Just to tell what the fruit is. Don't embellish.
 BETSY. Sister Polly is an artist.
 PEGGY. (*To Betsy.*) Sister Polly is of service here. Her labels are clear. (*To Polly.*) We'll have you helping Sister Betsy with the seed packets next.
 POLLY. Seed packets would be fun.
 PEGGY. It's not for fun.
 POLLY. Sister Betsy's seed packets are beautiful.
 BETSY. They are useful. Sell the seeds to the world's people.
 POLLY. They are beautiful. All the colors.
 BETSY. I try to keep them simple.
 POLLY. They look just like the vegetables. Not like my drawings.
 PEGGY. Your fruit drawings are unmistakable. Plain. Simple.
 POLLY. My trees.
 PEGGY. (*Curious.*) What trees?
 POLLY. Oh, if I were to draw a tree ... On a seed packet.
 PEGGY. (*Confused.*) There are no seed packets for trees.
 POLLY. If there were.
 PEGGY. There aren't. (*They work in silence.*) Are you drawing trees, Sister Polly?
 BETSY. I must commence working on some herb pictures. Sister Polly, I simply can't seem to get the rosemary right. All those spiny little leaves. Tricky little leaves. Would you sketch it out for me? (*Polly just stares at her.*)
 PEGGY. Are you drawing trees, Sister Polly?
 BETSY. It's the little details that escape me. I'm better at the vegetables.
 PEGGY. Sister Polly?
 POLLY. Yes, Sister Peggy?
 BETSY. I like a good round radish. Or a tomato. Even a carrot. Something with color. Don't care for drawing potatoes or turnips. And those little herbs are tricky. Trying to tell them apart. Always have to ask Sister Phebe which is which. All those little leaves.
 PEGGY. Perhaps Sister Polly can help you with the little leaves on the herbs. For the seed packets. Perhaps Sister Polly is accustomed to drawing leaves. Perhaps Sister Polly should direct her drawing talent toward useful service. (*Peggy exits. Betsy and Polly work in silence for a moment. Polly stops and looks at Betsy.*)

POLLY. I have a gift to draw.
 BETSY. You have a talent to draw.
 POLLY. I have a gift to draw.
 BETSY. What's your meaning, Sister Polly?
 POLLY. I have a gift to draw. It just comes out of me. The strangest drawings. Trees and birds.
 BETSY. Trees and birds aren't strange.
 POLLY. Trees and birds like I've never seen. I have a gift to draw trees and birds, but I only see them in my head. Well, you understand. You have a talent.
 BETSY. I have a talent to draw what I see so others can recognize it. Vegetables. Fruits.
 POLLY. But you see it in your head.
 BETSY. No. I have to look at what I'm drawing for anybody to be able to tell what it is. Can't just draw it without seeing it.
 POLLY. But you see it in your head. Right now. You could draw a carrot. Right now if you wanted to.
 BETSY. Might look like a long orange potato. No. I have to look at what I'm drawing. See it in front of me.
 POLLY. Not in your head.
 BETSY. On the table in front of me.
 POLLY. Oh.
 BETSY. Have to see it. (*A pause.*) Do you draw from your head, Sister Polly?
 POLLY. I have a gift to draw.
 BETSY. I would make certain it is not a false gift.
 POLLY. I have a gift to draw. (*Polly pulls something from her pocket.*) This is for you, Sister Betsy. (*Polly hands her a colored heart with drawing and writing on it. Betsy just looks at Polly for a moment without speaking. Lights change. Betsy and Polly move the benches as the other women enter.*)