

# ***On the Side of a Hill***

*by*

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Cast of Characters

REGAN :

50's

CHUCK :

20's

Place

Farm

Time

Night

2.

Setting: The play takes place outside and in front of a barn entrance. It's an old barn that's on its last legs.

At Rise: The play opens up with Regan heating up the coal in a small grill to make food. Chuck looks on. Both men drink from beer cans.

REGAN: Up there on that hill (*points*), that was where you were born.

CHUCK: On top a that hill?

REGAN: Sorta...you come out more on its side than on top; it was the damndest time tryin' to pick you up off that grass...raining so hard, kept sliding halfway down the hill fore I'd make my way back up again...(points again) that rock there gave us the leverage for your momma to give birth to ya...a helluva time...that day, what a day.

CHUCK: Why wasn't I born in a hospital?

REGAN: You woulda been, that was the plan, naturally, but not the way things wound up. (*laughs*) The damndest time that was.

CHUCK: Whyn't ya'll ever tell me about this?

REGAN: About what?

CHUCK: About being born on that rock up there on that hill?

REGAN: Damned if I know.

CHUCK: But that's an unusual story, ain't it?

REGAN: Apart from what?

CHUCK: Pop...you're telling me I was born on the side of a hill, ain't that uncommon?

REGAN: Not in this family. Apparently I was born on top of a barn and my brother was born on top of a cow. It's just all in the family, I guess.

CHUCK: Why were you born on top of a barn?

REGAN: Don't know, don't care to know. I'm here, that's all I need to know, ain't it? ...Pass me those tongs, will ya?

*CHUCK hands REGAN the cooking tongs.*

*REGAN turns over the coal.*

REGAN: That oughta do it. You having a dog?

CHUCK: That's all we have.

REGAN: Dogs it is.

CHUCK: Why nobody ever tell me where I was born?

REGAN: You still goin' on about that?

CHUCK: I just think that's crazy.

REGAN: Maybe so, but knowing about it doesn't make a difference to your life. I only mentioned it cause I had one of those what you call its, one a those flashback things...that's all.

CHUCK: We're outta beans, too.

REGAN: We are?

CHUCK: Yeah.

REGAN: Why we outta beans?

CHUCK: Cause we're outta beans.

REGAN: We shouldn't be outta beans, aren't you on bean patrol?

CHUCK: No.

REGAN: From now on you're on bean patrol. I gotta worry about everything. Haven't I got enough on my plate? I gotta worry about them beans, too? Dang it.

CHUCK: So, it's just dogs then.

REGAN: Well shit, I guess it is. Where's the bread?

CHUCK: (*looks at Regan*)

REGAN: You puttin' me on?

CHUCK: It had fungus on it, was getting' all moldy.

REGAN: Am supposed to eat these dogs with no buns?

CHUCK: We don't have a choice.

REGAN: Son, there's always a choice, it's only a matter of which choice you make. When did you know about the bread?

CHUCK: Before.

REGAN: Right. Which means you could have traveled to the store and got us some bread AND BEANS...yeah?

CHUCK: I didn't know about the beans.

REGAN: Let's pretend you were given a brain...you coulda went to the store, right?

CHUCK: I guess.

REGAN: Well, okay, at least you're honest.

CHUCK: Should I go now, I feel bad?

REGAN: Don't be a fool.

CHUCK: Not like we could afford much anyway.

REGAN: What you say?

CHUCK: I didn't go to the store cause I didn't think we had any money for it.

REGAN: Why wouldn't we have any money for food?

CHUCK: Pop, we can't live in delusion.

REGAN: Sure we can. The world we keep is in our control.

CHUCK: We're broke.

REGAN: Says who?

CHUCK: Pop, we're broke.

REGAN: I didn't work all my life to be coming up short on bread and some lousy beans. Now you march on over to that store there and get us what we need!

CHUCK: They won't extend us any more credit.

REGAN: Who won't?

CHUCK: Wilson.

REGAN: To hell with Wilson! Did you find Peggy?

CHUCK: I did...she was the one who was madder than Wilson.

REGAN: What d'you mean madder?

CHUCK: She was shoutin' at me, making a whole fuss, calling me a lazy bum and all.

REGAN: I'll be damned.

CHUCK: I didn't know what to say, I left as quickly as I could go, but I got them dogs...hid them under my shirt.

REGAN: They forget what it's like to go through tough times when the going is good.

CHUCK: When was the going ever good?

REGAN: Oh, I mean other folk...not to say that there haven't been good times, there's been decent times worth living for but you know where we are, how things shape up, the way things move in these parts; you gotta move with the current or you drown; it's hard to go out and carve your own path; maybe that's what I shoulda done all along; I wonder if we'd be worse off...I'm losing my damn appetite thinking about all this...have I failed you son? You're as honest as my overalls...tell me; cause; I'm all too aware of it, of all the chances that were dangled right in front of my face, the smell being too ripe to taste, just a single bite, that's all I ever needed and I'd be on my way...(laughs) on my way to where? NO, no...(clears throat) we have three dogs left, wanna split 'em?

CHUCK: I'll just have one.

REGAN: We'll split 'em.

CHUCK: I only want one.

REGAN: I SAID, WE'LL SPLIT 'EM! ...Goddammit...dammit to hell, dammit!

*REGAN stands up. He walks away, climbing the hill in the nearby distance.*

*CHUCK follows REGAN worried.*

CHUCK: Pop! We'll split 'em! We'll go halves.

*REGAN reaches the rock embedded in the side of the hill and kneels down before it. He caresses it gently.*

*CHUCK stands behind him.*

REGAN: I miss your mother so much it's about the only thing left keeping me alive...this pain...it's all I know...can't shake it off me cause I don't wanna lose her...but I already lost her, didn't I? I already lost your mother...

CHUCK: Dad...dad, it's okay...it's okay.

REGAN: So much I wish to tell you son, but it's so hard for me to get the words up; so much I want to tell you about your mother, about the life we once had...I don't know what else to do. I breathe but I don't exist.

CHUCK: ...You got me, dad...you know, you still got me...

*REGAN turns and stares at his son.*

REGAN: You ain't lazy! You hear?!

CHUCK: I hear.

REGAN: You don't EVER let anyone tell you who you are! *(standing)* You get up and you show them who you are. Maybe I haven't been the brightest example, but that don't mean you follow in my footsteps.

CHUCK: I know.

REGAN: What do you know?

CHUCK: I know that there are things I wish to do in my life, that I've been afraid to tell you. Things I want for my own life, for me but I don't want to leave you alone.

*REGAN takes off his cowboy hat and wipes his forehead.*

REGAN: I don't ever wanna be the reason for holding you back. If there's something you want in the world, you go and grab that son of a bitch by both shoulders.

CHUCK: I can't with you being broken all the time.

REGAN: ...Broken...

CHUCK: I didn't--

REGAN: No, no...broken...that sounds about right, but son, there are things out of your hands you can't fix.

CHUCK: Why not?

REGAN: Because I can't go back. This is who I am...

CHUCK: This is who you choose to be. Isn't that what you said? There's always a choice, it's only a matter of which choice you make?

REGAN: I'll be a son of a gun.

CHUCK: Isn't that what you said.

*REGAN puts his arm around CHUCK and the two men stroll back down the hills.*

*THEY get back to their original seating arrangement. REGAN divides the hot dogs.*

*THEY each take a bite of their meal.*

**END OF PLAY**