OUTPATIENT: Well, I need a carry-out, soup for a sick person. Will bean work?

JULIE: Why don't you try across the street? They usually got two kinds over there. But don't go yet. You'll drown. Wait till the rain quits.

OUTPATIENT: O.K.

JULIE: All set, honey? Or you want something else to stuff in your pack?

OUTPATIENT: Listen! Ten years from now you can all look for an album. An album with "Mavis" on the front of it. My picture. My name...Mavis. Are you listening to me? (SECRET AGENTS stop tape, look up, as do AUTO MECHANICS. LOIS WINDBREAKER keeps on drinking coffee, and OUTPATIENT points at her.) You listen to me! (LOIS looks up.) Ten years from now I'm going to be a big star and you'll have my album. Mavis...Mavis. ARE YOU LISTENING? ARE YOU LISTENING? (Licks lips. Tears streak her face.)

JULIE: (Crosses over to OUTPATIENT. Puts her arm around her.) Sure, honey, we're listening. We're listening. (Leads her over to stool, center stage, and sits her down.) Everybody's listening. There's nobody not listening. There's nothing to be afraid of. Not in my restaurant. Outside, people fight, fight, fight, all day long. Husband fight wife. Wife fight kid. People fighting the traffic, fighting the wind, fighting the rain. The whole world two boxers in ring. Ding. The gong goes off. Bang. Noses bloody. But not here. Not in my restaurant. Nobody here has to worry about fighting anything. No ding. No gong. You just relax, honey. Sit down. Go ahead, now, sing us a song.
SPIDER MAN: She was from around Lexington Street.

OUTPATIENT: Want to hear a poem?

SANDSCRIT: Go ahead.

LOIS: Ah, don't listen to that crap.

OUTPATIENT: (Begins to read.) *Cute little girl dressed in red,*  
*Makes her living in her______*

MOLDY BEARD: Score?

SPIDER MAN: Yeah, but at three o'clock in the morning, it's  
hard to get it up. (COUSIN WILLIE crosses behind counter  
and searches for a tooth pick.)

OUTPATIENT: *Now this is the law of the jungle,*  
*As old and true as the sky.....*

MOLDY BEARD: Yah, she had great tits.

SPIDER MAN: Tell me about them.

MOLDY BEARD: Well, they were big and round...

SPIDER MAN: Ah, go drink your coffee...You got grease on your  
neck.

Café Generique

Cast:

JULIE

THE OUTPATIENT

COUSIN WILLIE THE HUNCHBACK

THE COOK

MOLDY BEARD

SPIDER MAN

AUTO-MECHANICS

SANDSCRIT

SLIM

WEED EYES

SECRET-AGENTS

LOIS WINDBREAKER
The play takes place in a thirties' style cafe with an entrance DR and a restroom DL. There is a kitchen window where the COOK is visible UL. A counter with stools slants from UC to DL while a block of booths slants from UC to DR. A circular fan hangs from center stage and twirls above a wooden table with a couple of chairs. At the end of the counter, center stage, there's a cash register, and a coffee machine is visible behind the counter. When the play opens the COOK is in the window and the audience can smell onions frying. The COOK is dressed in a white uniform and hat.

The OUTPATIENT with a pencil and open notebook is near the door pacing. She is wearing an over-stretched white knit pantsuit that is not really white. She has dark blue eyes, quite small, they huddle behind ill-fitting glasses. Her fingers are short, startlingly pointed, her knuckles are lost in the puffiness of her hands—grips her spoon like a child would, with a sideways fist, eats with big bites and chews carefully. She has no visible neck, and when she isn't looking sideways at someone, her chins are stacked firmly on her chest.

Cousin Willie is seated on a stool at the counter. He is short, a hunchback, who moves slowly but reacts to everything that happens through his body language and facial expressions. He wears neutral-colored clothing but a red hunting cap on his head.

The AUTO-MECHANICS are seated at a table. There are two men. MOLDY BEARD is in his late twenties. He has long blond hair that curls when it reaches his shoulders. His hair has brown streaks in it. He has a light (moldy) beard on the lower part of his chin. He wears a blue plaid long sleeved shirt with the cuffs rolled up to his elbows. He is a little below medium height.

SPIDER MAN is above average adult height—very tall. He has black hair and a beard and moustach. His head of hair is medium length with a part down the middle. He wears a plaid, long sleeve shirt with the cuffs rolled up to his elbows. The shirt is different colors of light brown. He is more intelligent than his blond friend and he also talks faster.

JULIE is busy behind the counter. She is in her late fifties and has white hair, a sweater pulled down over a white uniform, nurse's shoes, and a Greek accent. She talks in short, staccato bursts, and her movements are purposeful, direct. She carries an order pad and her glasses fall down on the tip of her nose.

LOIS: Uh, huh.

SANDSCRIT: (to JULIE) You sure you don't have any of that stuff?

JULIE: How many times do I have to tell you? (Notices WEED EYES trying to get into SANDSCRIT's pack) Hey, not in my restaurant. No break and enter, I don't come over here and unbutton your coat, you don't untie his pack. (NEED EYES quickly sits down. SANDSCRIT, perplexed, straightens his pack, tying it up again, while SLIM snaps a picture of SANDSCRIT.)

COOK: Order.

OUTPATIENT: No, no! Don't take a picture! Don't take a picture of me! (Licking lips.)

SLIM: I didn't take a picture of anybody.

LOIS: Heck he didn't.

OUTPATIENT: I don't want a picture taken of me until it's on my album. I don't want my picture in public until I'm famous. I write songs and ten years from now, my picture will be on my album, and I don't want anybody recognizing me until then. So, don't take a picture.

SLIM: You write songs? The wife takes guitar lessons.

OUTPATIENT: No, no I never played the guitar. I did not! Look here in this notebook. I write songs. Look here, Want to hear one? Want to hear a poem? (Licks lips.)

MOLDY BEARD: Who was that chick I saw you with last night?
OUTPATIENT: Well, I need a carry-out, soup for a sick person. Will bean work?

JULIE: ...Why don't you try across the street? They usually got two kinds over there. But don't go yet. You'll drown. Wait till the rain quits.

OUTPATIENT: O.K. (She crosses and takes a seat in the booth behind SANDSCRIT. She takes out a notebook and pencil and begins writing. Meanwhile, the SECRET AGENTS are "checking out" SANDSCRIT, studying his attire, his pack. They record messages silently into their tape-recorder watches.)

JULIE: (Crosses to SANDSCRIT) All set, honey? Or you want something else to stuff in your pack?

SANDSCRIT: I'd like some tea. Actually, Indoneysian tea.

JULIE: We only got one flavor, smarty. You got enough in the pack. Where you going, camping?

SANDSCRIT: I'm an avid person. Just hiking around the country, looking for Sanskrit.

LOIS: Did you say you were searching for Sanskrit?

OUTPATIENT: (Looking at notebook, scribbling.) That's what he said. (She licks her lips furiously.)

SANDSCRIT: Yah, I left Billings twenty-three days ago. Just been loafing around...Heading toward Portsmouth, New Hampshire. (SLIM sneaks up, switches radio station to hard funky Motown sound.)

The radio plays "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds."

MOLDY BEARD: He's been going for eight weeks, from nine to five.

SPIDER MAN: But it's a ladder to go up.

MOLDY BEARD: And it's adamn hard climb sometimes. But they'll place you after that. That's what my old man thinks.

(SANDSCRIT enters by the main door, brushing the rain off his poncho. He is wearing a pair of blue, dirty jeans, and a "Budweiser" T-shirt. On his back is a green canvas backpack. He crosses to a booth, takes off his pack and sits down.)

SANDSCRIT: Whew, it's wet.

SPIDER MAN: Well, that's great. So, the six months is a training period?

MOLDY BEARD: I have to have a pre-requisite of another basic class. I have to go down the end of May, and Dad'll give me something. School doesn't start down there until the end of May.

SPIDER MAN: Like a little sort of warm-up?

MOLDY BEARD: Yah, see. I don't even know if I'm going to like it, but after eight weeks I should know.

(LOIS WINDBREAKER enters the main door. She has dark hair, probably not its natural color, washed yesterday, and just starting to get loose matts. She has dark glasses, the kind that eventually fade to a lighter color, but stay shaded; heavy eyelids, dull look. She smokes frequently, blows smoke through
her nose when she’s waiting for the other person in the conversation to finish what they are saying. She is chewing gum in a slow, bovine, habitual way; no enthusiasm, as if it had lost all of its flavor a long time ago, and she’s forgotten about it. She drinks coffee in one hand (left), and takes casual tokes on the loosely held cigarette in her right hand. She’s a hesitant sipper. She’s dressed in a light, bright blue windbreaker, faded knit pants, dark brick-red. She never takes off her jacket, keeps it pulled loosely over her front; she wears last season’s low-heeled vinyl shoes, scuffy. She crosses and takes a stool several places down from COUSIN WILLIE. JULIE crosses over to the AUTO-MECHANICS to take their orders.)

LOIS WINDBREAKER: Man, some weather.

JULIE: (Pad in hand) Talk to me. (To AUTO-MECHANICS)

MOLDY BEARD: I’ll have the roast beef.

SPIDER MAN: I’ll have a job.

(JULIE crosses to the kitchen window. Places order with COOK.)

MOLDY BEARD: But there’s big bucks in it. My Dad’s raking in the dough.

SPIDER MAN: And the city life...

(COUSIN WILLIE crosses to coffee pot and slowly pours himself a cup and crosses back to his stool while the following conversation takes place.)

LOIS WINDBREAKER: (to JULIE) Some people. They come in here and really stink up the place.

JULIE: Ah, they’ll keep it open. They always have.

MOLDY BEARD: What happened to your lady? The wild and crazy one?

SPIDER MAN: She’s O.K. She went to Cincinnati. Came home looking like a real Eastern lady. Long and tall and doesn’t have no tits.

LOIS: I don’t know. They’ll have to keep it open without State aid.

JULIE: They’ve been hiring a bunch of kids to run the place. Work for nothing. That’s how they plan to keep the place running.

LOIS: Yah, running it with a bunch of kids.

OUTPATIENT: (Musters herself. Looks straight at the table, then announces in a loud voice) I wish there wasn’t such a thing as Mental health. I hope Social Services kicks off.

JULIE: (To OUTPATIENT) Can I get you something else, honey?

OUTPATIENT: What kind of soup you got today?

JULIE: Bean.

OUTPATIENT: Is that all? (Licks lips furiously.)

JULIE: What more could you want?
MOLDY BEARD: Wow.

SPIDER MAN: At first, he was going to come with me. But I didn't know how we were going to get both of us in there with all my stuff. (LOIS WINDBREAKER crosses to restroom, tries the door, but has to wait for COUSIN WILLIE to come out.) But fortunately, something came up like a gram of cocaine or a lousy check. (COUSIN WILLIE crosses back to his seat, LOIS goes in restroom.)

MOLDY BEARD: When you going to be moving down there for good? and what're you going to take?

SPIDER MAN: I'm going to sell off everything except my rocking chair and a couple of end tables. Travel light. About one truck load. It should cost me about fifty bucks. John Chad has this big four wheeler eight cylinder. Said he'd take it down for me. I've gone down about four times already, cramming everything in that damn Fiat. What've you been doing?

MOLDY BEARD: Been waiting on the State of Michigan. Waiting on the damn Union. Waiting, waiting, waiting...

(LOIS WINDBREAKER comes out of restroom, crosses back to her stool, while talking to JULIE.)

LOIS: Did you see the headlines?

JULIE: No.

LOIS: Closing the State Hospital down. Can't even check in there now if you wanted to.

LOIS WINDBREAKER: Ah, yah, they do.

JULIE: No. If a customer stink, I send him home to take a bath. (JULIE crosses to radio to change the station to "Love Letters in the Sand." Hollers at LOIS.) You missed your idol a while ago.

LOIS: Who?

JULIE: What's his name?

LOIS: Red.

OUTPATIENT: Red. (Licks her lips.)

JULIE: See, we all know he's a friend, Lois. He got kinda no family, huh?

LOIS: I haven't seen them yet.

COOK: Order.

(OOUTPATIENT crosses to radio to change station, continues to pace there while Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" plays. LOIS WINDBREAKER glares at her. Meanwhile, two businessmen-secret agents enter at main door. SLIM and NEED EYES are dressed in trench coats and wear sunglasses. They are furtive.)
One inches up against the wall, the other checks the ceiling, before they make their way down the aisle to a booth. Before they sit down, one checks the booth, sweeps it out. They pretend they have special watches and gadgets for their surveillance work. JULIE crosses to them with pad to take their order.

JULIE: Talk to me. What you have, Slim?

SLIM: A deep, cool glass of white milk.

JULIE: We only got one flavor, smarty. (Turns to other agent.) And you? What's a matter? Got a clamp on your clomp?

WEED EYES: (Standing up, with a look of intensity) Make mine a duke of rib, with big yellow fries. Not too raw. (Looks around. Sits down.)

JULIE: Talk to me. (To SANDSCRIT.)

SANDSCRIT: I'll take the roast beef special. But do I have to have it on white bread?

JULIE: What else you want?

SANDSCRIT: I'll take anything. What ever you've got. Rye, pumpernickel, banana...I don't care. (JULIE writes on her pad and goes over to place order at kitchen window. SANDSCRIT keeps on talking to himself.) Just not white bread. It's like eating cotton.

LOIS WINDBREAKER: (Hollering across to SANDSCRIT as she crosses to change stations.) Well, Lauren Bacall lives on Wonder Bread.

SANDSCRIT: (Looks up, puzzled. Radio begins playing "Bird of Paradise.")

COOK: Order.

(LOIS WINDBREAKER crosses to restroom and goes in, while once again, the AUTO-MECHANICS' conversation is overheard.)

MOLDY BEARD: ...It was Mr. Peabody's way out machine. Emergency brake was stuck and I had to push it all the way down the frigging street.

SPIDER MAN: Yah, when I went downstate, my neighbor lent me his car--Fiat Spider.
One inches up against the wall, the other checks the ceiling, before they make their way down the aisle to a booth. Before they sit down, one checks the booth, sweeps it out. They pretend they have special watches and gadgets for their surveillance work. JULIE crosses to them with pad to take their order.

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WEED EYES: (Standing up, with a look of intensity) Make mine a duke of rib, with big yellow fries. Not too raw. (Looks around. Sits down.)

JULIE: (crosses in front of WEED EYES, cutting him off, moving to SANDSCRIT. LOIS crosses to fill up coffee, making her way around the OUTPATIENT and then turns to the stool.) Take the roast beef special. But do I have to have it on white bread?

JULIE: What else you want?

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OUTPATIENT: What kind of soup you got today?

JULIE: Bean.

OUTPATIENT: Is that all? (Licks lips furiously.)

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JULIE: ...Why don't you try across the street? They usually got two kinds over there. But don't go yet. You'll drown. Wait till the rain quits.

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JULIE: (Crosses to SANDSCRIT) All set, honey? Or you want something else to stuff in your pack?

SANDSCRIT: I'd like some tea. Actually, Indonesian tea.

JULIE: We only got one flavor, smarty. You got enough in the pack. Where you going, camping?

SANDSCRIT: I'm an avid person. Just hiking around the country, looking for Sanskrit.

LOIS: Did you say you were searching for Sanskrit?

OUTPATIENT: (Looking at notebook, scribbling.) That's what he said. (She licks her lips furiously.)

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(SANDSCRIT enters by the main door, brushing the rain off his poncho. He is wearing a pair of blue, dirty jeans, and a "Budweiser" T-shirt. On his back is a green canvas backpack. He crosses to a booth, takes off his pack and sits down.)

SANDSCRIT: Whew, it's wet.

SPIDER MAN: Well, that's great. So, the six months is a training period?

MOLDY BEARD: I have to have a pre-requisite of another basic class. I have to go down the end of May, and Dad'll give me something. School doesn't start down there until the end of May.

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The play takes place in a thirties' style cafe with an entrance DR and a restroom DL. There is a kitchen window where the COOK is visible UL. A counter with stools slants from UC to DL while a block of booths slants from UC to DR. A circular fan hangs from center stage and twirls above a wooden table with a couple of chairs. At the end of the counter, center stage, there's a cash register, and a coffee machine is visible behind the counter. When the play opens the COOK is in the window and the audience can smell onions frying. The COOK is dressed in a white uniform and hat.

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JULIE is busy behind the counter. She is in her late fifties and has white hair, a sweater pulled down over a white uniform, nurse's shoes, and a Greek accent. She talks in short, staccato bursts, and her movements are purposeful, direct. She carries an order pad and her glasses fall down on the tip of her nose.
SPIDER MAN: She was from around Lexington Street.

OUTPATIENT: Want to hear a poem?

SANDSCRIT: Go ahead.

LOIS: Ah, don't listen to that crap.

OUTPATIENT: (Begins to read.)

*Cute little girl dressed in red,*
*Makes her living in her*

MOLDY BEARD: Score?

SPIDER MAN: Yeah, but at three o'clock in the morning, it's hard to get it up. (Cousin Willie crosses behind counter and searches for a tooth pick.)

OUTPATIENT: *Now this is the law of the jungle,*
*As old and true as the sky.....*

MOLDY BEARD: Yah, she had great tits.

SPIDER MAN: Tell me about them.

MOLDY BEARD: Well, they were big and round...

SPIDER MAN: Ah, go drink your coffee...You got grease on your neck.

(Cousin Willie crosses back to his stool with tooth pick hanging out of his mouth.)

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Café Generique

Cast:

JULIE

THE OUTPATIENT

COUSIN WILLIE THE HUNCHBACK

THE COOK

MOLDY BEARD

SPIDER MAN

AUTO-MECHANICS

SANDSCRIT

SLIM

WEED EYES

SECRET-AGENTS

LOIS WINDBREAKER
OUTPATIENT: Listen, listen, no one's listening to me.

SANDSCRIT: Go ahead, I am.

LOIS: Yeh, he is.

MOLDY BEARD: Rhonda...

SPIDER MAN: Didn't know you liked ditches.

SLIM: Got it all?

WEED EYES: Every bit.

SLIM: Let's hear it.

OUTPATIENT: Good. Someone's listening. (Begins to read.)

Now, this is the law of the jungle, (getting the rhythm)
As old and as true as the sky.
And the wolf that breaks it shall die.

(WEED EYES rewinds tape on watch, begins to play recording)

OUTPATIENT: I wish there wasn't such a thing as Mental Health. I hope Social Services kicks off.

JULIE: Can I get you something else, honey?

OUTPATIENT: What kind of soup you got today?

JULIE: Bean.

MOLDY BEARD: Now, some old hag brought in a 64 Porche. Beauty.
SPIDER MAN: Car?

MOLDY BEARD: Both. (Gets up and switches station to "Convoy").

(The tape becomes audible again.)

OUTPATIENT: Well, I need a carry-out, soup for a sick person. Will bean work?

JULIE: Why don't you try across the street? They usually got two kinds over there. But don't go yet. You'll drown. Wait till the rain quits.

OUTPATIENT: O.K.

JULIE: All set, honey? Or you want something else to stuff in your pack?

OUTPATIENT: Listen! Ten years from now you can all look for an album. An album with "Mavis" on the front of it. My picture. My name...Mavis. Are you listening to me? (SECRET AGENTS stop tape, look up, as do AUTO MECHANICS. LOIS WINDBREAKER keeps on drinking coffee, and OUTPATIENT points at her.) You listen to me! (LOIS looks up.) Ten years from now I'm going to be a big star and you'll have my album. Mavis...Mavis. ARE YOU LISTENING? ARE YOU LISTENING? (Licks lips. Tears streak her face.)

JULIE: (Crosses over to OUTPATIENT. Puts her arm around her.) Sure, honey, we're listening. We're listening. (Leads her over to stool, center stage, and sits her down.) Everybody's listening. There's nobody not listening. There's nothing to be afraid of. Not in my restaurant. Outside, people fight, fight, fight all day long. Husband fight wife. Wife fight kid. People fighting the traffic, fighting the wind, fighting the rain. The whole world two boxers in ring. Ding. The gong goes off. Bang. Noses bloody. But not here. Not in my restaurant. Nobody here has to worry about fighting anything. No ding. No gong. You just relax, honey. Sit down. Go ahead, now, sing us a song.
LOIS: Yah, why not?

OUTPATIENT: (Clears her throat, while all turn to listen. She begins to sing.)
   I write the songs that make the whole world sing.
   I write the songs of love and special things.
   I write the songs that make the young girls cry.
   I write the songs, I write the song.

(COUSIN WILLIE shuffles over to fill up his coffee cup, pouring it slowly, shuffles back.)
   Music makes you dance,
   gives you spirit to take a chance.

(LOIS WINDBREAKER lights a cigarette, the SECRET AGENTS begin to fiddle with their watches.)
   And I wrote some rock 'n roll
   So you can move.
   ("So yo-ou kan mo-ova")

MOLDY BEARD: How was the car?

SPIDER MAN: Only needed the spark plugs re-timed. But I told her the damn differential was out, and the rods need to be relined. She says O.K. and left it at the shop. (LOIS begins clipping her nails.)

OUTPATIENT: Suicide is painless.
   It brings on many changes

JULIE: (Crosses to AUTO MECHANICS) You two boys want anything else, you get it yourself, understand? I'm getting ready to close.
MOLDY BEARD: O.K....You going to call her when you get through?

SPIDER MAN: Yeh, I got a date with her tonight.

OUTPATIENT: (Voice fading)

(SANDSCRIT stands, hoists pack on his back, crosses to cash register.)

JULIE: Well, ring it up. Go ahead. You're no different from nobody else. (SANDSCRIT presses buttons on cash register, drawer flies out suddenly.)

MOLDY BEARD: You're fast.

SPIDERMAN: I know. (SANDSCRIT makes his own change, exits out door.)

OUTPATIENT: You can take or leave it if you please.

COOK: Order

CURTAIN