

ODE TO AUBREY

by

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## CHARACTERS

AUBREY      10 years old, fifth grade, fascinated by space travel, finds humor in in bleak situations

BILLY        9 years old, fourth grade, Aubrey’s friend, sociable, kind, forgiving

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## TIME

1986 – or thereabouts

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## PLACE

An American City  
that is having unseasonably warm days—  
allowing the action of the play to take place largely outdoors at a neighborhood park.

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**SYNOPSIS:** In her attempt to align the stars and to find her mother, Aubrey, 10 years old, discovers a “true friend” and fellow traveler, and, possibly the mechanics of a perfect “Flight Plan.”

### CASTING NOTE:

“To understand things we must have been once in them and then have come out of them; so that first there must be captivity and then deliverance, illusion followed by disillusion, enthusiasm by disappointment.”

--Philosopher Henri-Frédéric Amiel

Writing this play about childhood and friendship, and using children characters to tell the story, I imagined older actors performing the roles. Prompted by Amiel’s philosophy, I assume those who have experienced childhood may be best prepared to share Aubrey and Billy’s world. Still, acting talent of any age is a gift, and I know it reveals itself in both young and old.

## ODE TO AUBREY

### *Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

AUBREY's space is filled with boxes, some with lids, some large, some small, some adorned with outer space stickers, and one neatly gift-wrapped box topped with a bow. SHE carefully arranges the boxes in a circle. SHE sets the gift-wrapped box aside. Once the area is organized, SHE stands in the center of the boxes, extends her arms, and slowly twirls a turn or two. SHE reaches into a box and locates a reed instrument, a punji or duck call. SHE blows into the instrument, first quietly, and then gradually increases the volume until the call is loud and brash. After an annoying period of time, SHE returns to quieter notes. Freeing one hand, SHE reaches into another box, finds the handle of a jump rope, and, while playing the instrument, retrieves the jump rope from the box as if it were a Cobra snake rising up in a trance. SHE continues the snake dance until the jump rope is extended. SHE drops the instrument into the box and prepares to jump rope.

AUBREY

*(calling out)*

I'm going to the park. See you later.

*(SHE steps away.)*

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**EPISODE #1**

**BLACK and BLUE (and PURPLE TOO!)**

*A small, neighborhood park. A pathway bypasses one particular park bench that serves as the focal point, the regular meeting place for AUBREY and BILLY.*

*(AUBREY jumps rope. SHE has all the moves and is quite confident in her rope jumping ability. BILLY, new to the neighborhood, is a novice at jumping rope.)*

AUBREY

*(Jumping rope and reciting.)*

“Tick tock, the game is locked,  
Nobody else can play.  
And if they do, we’ll take their shoe  
And we’ll beat them black and blue (and purple too!)”

*(SHE stops jumping.)*

“Times!”

BILLY

*(jumping)*

“Buttsies!”

AUBREY

I called “Times!” Billy.

BILLY

“Buttsies!”

AUBREY

You cannot call “Buttsies” when a person calls “Times!” And I called “Times!” Which means everything stops. Your rope, the Earth, even the Universe...stops! So “Times!”

BILLY

Okay, I’m stopping!

AUBREY

That’s better. Now stay frozen. I’m going to tie my shoes, Billy, and when I stand up straight, you had better be frozen!

*(Bending down to tie her shoes.)*

AUBREY (cont.)

I would have worn my Velcro shoes today but my dog, Spike, chewed ‘em up last night. I found them in the yard this morning, and I just laughed because they aren’t my favorite color. Okay, “Oxen free!”

*(resumes jumping and reciting)*

“Tick tock, the game is locked,  
nobody else can play.”  
And if they do...”

*(BILLY sits on the bench. AUBREY stops jumping—showing mild irritation.)*

What is the matter with you, Billy?! When I say “Oxen free,” it means you can move. So stand up and get ready to jump. You know I believe you are walking around in a turkey’s dream!

BILLY

I’m not.

AUBREY

Gobble, gobble. Is your grandma jumping rope with us today?

BILLY

No. She’s cookin’ dinner.

AUBREY

Fish?

BILLY

No. I don’t eat fish.

AUBREY

It’s Friday.

BILLY

Fish sticks, maybe, but no.

AUBREY

Your grandma lives with you?

BILLY

Yep.

AUBREY

What does your mom do?

BILLY

She’s my mom.

AUBREY  
She never leaves the house.

BILLY  
She works at home.

AUBREY  
I'm gonna work in the tallest building in the world.

BILLY  
I couldn't do that.

AUBREY  
But first, I'm going to fly a jet and then become an astronaut.

BILLY  
Not me.

AUBREY  
What does your mom do at home?

BILLY  
She leaves the house sometimes.

AUBREY  
I never see her. I see your grandma everywhere.

BILLY  
My mom is busy. I help her.

AUBREY  
How?

BILLY  
I help "shredding." I cut up papers.

AUBREY  
You mean, like, secret papers. Does your mom work for the FBI?

BILLY  
No.

AUBREY  
Is she a spy?

No. She works with numbers.

BILLY

You mean, like 007?

AUBREY

No, she helps people with their taxes.

BILLY

Why would she do that?

AUBREY

She likes it. She can work at home.

BILLY

I know. You told me.

AUBREY

Have you always lived here?

BILLY

Not always.

AUBREY

Where'd you live before?

BILLY

Ohio.

AUBREY

Where in Ohio?

BILLY

Columbus.

AUBREY

Like the Columbus that discovered America?

BILLY

No, he didn't, Billy. He discovered Native Americans and some beach property.

AUBREY

I thought he discovered America.

BILLY

AUBREY

Wrong.

BILLY

What time is it? I need a watch.

AUBREY

You don't. You just need your shadow. I'll show you. Stand here.

*(BILLY stands beside AUBREY.)*

Stand straight. Be very still. Now, see, you are a Sundial.

BILLY

A what?

AUBREY

A shadow clock.

*(SHE demonstrates.)*

That's north, that's south, that's east, and that's west. Your shadow is the hand of the clock. Since it is the afternoon, your shadow to the east is longer. And so, I'd say, it's about five o'clock.

BILLY

Oh...got to go!

AUBREY

Why?

BILLY

We're gettin' a new phone! Push Button! Touch and Dial!

*(BILLY runs off dragging his jump rope behind.)*

AUBREY

*(jumping rope and reciting)*

“In fourteen hundred ninety-two  
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.  
He had three ships. He left from Spain.  
He sailed through sunshine, wind, and rain.”

*(SHE stops. Looks up at the sky.)*

“He sailed by night. He sailed by day;  
He used the stars to find his way.”

*(SHE skips off.)*

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**ODE #2**

*Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

*AUBREY places the jump rope in the appropriate box. SHE opens another box. Takes out a pair of new shoes and puts them on.*

AUDREY

Perfect. These are perfect.

*(SHE locates her "Flight Plan" from one of the boxes labelled SPACE.)*

Neil Armstrong didn't leave his footprints on the Moon. He left his boot prints. And then his boots! Did you know that, Mom? It's true. Dad said, to make room for Moon rocks in the space ship, he had to get rid of stuff—like his boots. Isn't that crazy? How'd they know how much weight it would take to lighten the load—to lift the Eagle off of the Moon? Everything is planned, isn't it, Mom? So carefully planned. And that's why I have a list of everything we will need here in my notebook – "The Flight Plan."

*(AUBREY puts "The Flight Plan" back in its box. SHE tests her shoes.)*

Check. These shoes will work just fine. Just fine for the trip.

*(SHE then circles quickly and departs.)*

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**EPISODE #2****SPIKE**

*The park.*

*(AUBREY and BILLY sit on the park bench. AUBREY, wearing her new pair of Velcro shoes, rips the Velcro and reattaches the shoes repeatedly. BILLY is watching.)*

**AUBREY**

I like these shoes. Shoes without laces. Shoes with Velcro. I like the sound of Velcro. Listen.  
*(SHE unfastens and reattaches.)*

**BILLY**

That's a nice sound.

**AUBREY**

It is. Velcro is on everything.

**BILLY**

Yeah?

**AUBREY**

My sneakers, jacket, my Trapper Keeper.

**BILLY**

Mine, too.

**AUBREY**

Astronauts use Velcro to keep things from floating away in space. Did you know that?

**BILLY**

That's a good idea.

**AUBREY**

Dad said they even used Velcro in my uncle's heart operation?

**BILLY**

Did it work?

AUBREY

It's still ticking. Velcro is the best invention ever.

BILLY

Yeah. I mean, if it can keep shoes on your feet, and hold your uncle's heart together, and can keep things from flying off into space, I'd say it's the best invention ever.

AUBREY

I've got to keep these shoes away from Spike.

BILLY

Yep. Dogs sure do like to chew.

AUBREY

They can't help it.

BILLY

My cousin gives his dog meat bones from the butcher.

AUBREY

Real meat bones?

BILLY

Yep. Big and raw. My cousin says it's good for his dog's teeth.

AUBREY

How old is your cousin?

BILLY

Twelve.

AUBREY

Does he visit?

BILLY

Sure. Sometimes. When he can. Do you have cousins?

AUBREY

No.

BILLY

Hmm. Dogs just naturally want to rip and chew.

AUBREY

I should get Spike a bone from the butcher.

BILLY

It would make him strong and happy.

AUBREY

Then if he tried to eat my shoe, I could beat him on the head.

BILLY

Hmm. My cousin says, a bone is like a toothbrush for a dog.

AUBREY

This morning Spike was asleep on my bed. I Velcroed his hind legs together. When he woke up, he rolled off the bed. I just laughed and laughed. He only has three legs.

*(SHE grins. BILLY doesn't.)*

BILLY

Yeah. It's the best invention ever.

AUBREY

Zombie tag! You're infected!

*(BILLY pursues AUBREY without bending his elbows or knees.)*

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### ODE #3

#### *Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

*(SHE lifts the box gift-wrapped with a bow. SHE studies it carefully and then deliberately moves it away from the others.)*

*(SHE takes a model of a space shuttle from a box, turns the shuttle nose cone to her face, and attempts to look inside the shuttle windows.)*

#### AUBREY

Do you know what it feels like to be weightless? Drifting free? Tumbling in space? Not knowing what is up and what is down? Do you know, Mom? I know how astronauts eat, sleep, keep things from floating away. I know because Dad told me so. Each astronaut has a "Sleep Station." And in that Station, she has a night light, so she can read, and a few personal items, so she doesn't forget Earth, and a sleeping bag attached to the wall, kinda like a mud dauber's nest. So, when an astronaut goes to sleep, she doesn't fly away. She's all tucked in, safe, with just her arms floating in space. Like this.

*(AUBREY imagines she is floating away.)*

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**EPISODE #3**

**ARM-STRONG**

*The park.*

(AUBREY and BILLY sit on the bench. AUBREY cups her hands as if they were binoculars. BILLY imitates. THEY survey the sky in search of Halley's Comet.)

**BILLY**

Are you sure it's up there?

**AUBREY**

It's been spotted, and Dad said, it's a good day to look for it.

**BILLY**

I don't see anything. Maybe we need real binoculars or a telescope.

**AUBREY**

Well, sure, Billy, but you can also see it with just your eyes.

**BILLY**

And it has a tail?

**AUBREY**

Yep.

**BILLY**

Like a monkey's tail?

**AUBREY**

No, it's more like a flaming ice ball streaking across the sky.

**BILLY**

"Halley's Comet."

**AUBREY**

That's right. My Dad calls it a "Friendly Visitor" to our solar system and that it only shows up every 76 years.

(SHE hands BILLY a stick.)

Here, Billy, make a big circle.

**BILLY**

Why?

We need a launch pad.

AUBREY

(BILLY *draws a circle in the dirt.*)

BILLY

Where are we going?

AUBREY

To visit Halley's Comet.

(THEY *sit in the circle.*)

BILLY

How long will we be gone?

AUBREY

Don't know for sure.

BILLY

Should I tell my mom?

AUBREY

Why?

BILLY

She may worry about me.

AUBREY

She won't. She's on her new button phone.

BILLY

No. She'll worry.

AUBREY

She'll even forget your name after a while.

BILLY

Why do you say that?

AUBREY

My cousin lives in Wapakoneta, Ohio – Neil Armstrong's home town.

BILLY

Who?

AUBREY

Neil Armstrong! He was the first person to walk on the moon. He's a super big deal, Billy, and you don't even know his name.

BILLY

My mom will remember me.

AUBREY

I'm starting the engine. Put on your space helmet and buckle up.

BILLY

I don't want to go.

AUBREY

Sure you do, Billy. We will be weightless. It will be fun.

BILLY

I don't want to be weightless. I like it here on Earth.

AUBREY

It's crowded.

BILLY

I like all the people.

AUBREY

There's not enough space.

BILLY

My mom needs me.

AUBREY

No, she doesn't. And we will come back some day and she will be old and wrinkled and going bald like your grandma. And we will laugh because she lost her front teeth. Count down. "Ten."

BILLY

My mom will remember me.

AUBREY

I doubt it. "Nine."

BILLY

What will we eat?

AUBREY

Space food. "Eight."

BILLY

I don't like fish.

AUBREY

We won't eat fish. "Seven." Just look at that sky.

BILLY

It hurts my neck to look up.

AUBREY

It's bright, big, and mysterious. "Six."

BILLY

I don't want to go.

AUBREY

"Five." Don't you like mysteries, Billy?

BILLY

No.

AUBREY

"Four." Don't you like surprises?

BILLY

I don't need to see Halley's Comet...

AUBREY

It will be amazing.

BILLY

...or Alien Monsters!

AUBREY

What?!

BILLY

A kid at school talks all the time about alien monsters from outer space—and how they will find us here on Earth someday and rip us to pieces.

AUBREY

That just a movie, Billy. That's not real.

BILLY

It could be real. We don't know.

AUBREY

You're right, Billy, we don't know. And it could be real that Aliens are friendly visitors. And, maybe they can help us understand everything...what we should know...and what we should

AUBREY (cont.)

leave alone. And maybe they can help us fix everything that is wrong with us. You see, Billy, it might not be a monster movie at all. It might be the best thing ever.

BILLY

Do you really think so, Aubrey?

AUBREY

I said it, didn't I.

BILLY

Okay, let's go. But I sleep with a light on.

AUBREY

Don't worry. We will have a million stars to light the way. "Three."

BILLY

His name was Armstrong?

AUBREY

Yes. And, "Two!"

BILLY

That's a good name. Arm-strong.

*(HE lifts his arm to show is strength.)*

AUBREY

"One!"

BILLY

Wait! I just remembered. Mom needs my help! We're moving Grandma downstairs. I gotta go!

AUBREY

I'm blasting off! Billy!

BILLY

Gotta go!

*(HE races away.)*

AUBREY

Blasting off without you!! Okay! It's just a test flight. Not the real thing.

*(SHE stands, lifts her arms, stretches, and darts off.)*

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**ODE # 4**

*Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

*(AUBREY moves a box labelled SPACE to the middle of the circle. SHE retrieves the Flight Plan notebook.)*

AUBREY

We have our Flight Plan.

*(SHE holds up her notebook.)*

You are the commander—Mom—in charge. I'm the pilot—I'll make sure the rocket boosters are ready. And Dad will be the "system engineer." He's going to operate all the switches in the command center. I'll show you.

*(SHE arranges the space shuttle and three boosters.)*

Here's the orbiter with our "Sleep Stations." And here are the boosters, with the larger rocket in the middle and two smaller rockets on each side. Like this. We have all the fuel we need to escape Earth's gravity, Mom—to send us into orbit.

*(SHE "flies" around the room and departs.)*

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**EPISODE #4****SPITTING AT THE MOON**

*The park bench.*

*(AUBREY enters and stands behind the bench. SHE is followed by BILLY. AUBREY points to the sky.)*

AUBREY

Look, Billy, there's the Moon.

BILLY

Wow! I thought the Moon came out only at night. It's confused.

AUBREY

No, it's doing exactly what it is supposed to be doing.

BILLY

But in daylight?

AUBREY

It's because everything is moving, Billy, around the sun. And when the moon is in the right spot, the sun shines on it.

BILLY

Day or night.

AUBREY

Right. And here's the most amazing part. While all the planets and their moons circle the Sun, the Sun is racing through the Universe. It's all moving so fast, Billy, we are, moving, so, very, very fast!

BILLY

I don't feel a thing.

AUBREY

I know. It's amazing.

BILLY

I get dizzy on the Merry-Go-Round.

AUBREY

I don't.

AUBREY (cont.)

*(AUBREY, imagining that she is the Earth, spins and circles around the park bench.)*

I'm the Earth!

*(BILLY imitates AUBREY on a slightly different orbit.)*

BILLY

I'm the Moon!

*(THEY circle until BILLY gets dizzy and sits on the bench.)*

How do you know about everything?

*(AUBREY finishes her orbit and then sits beside BILLY.)*

AUBREY

I just do.

BILLY

There's a lot I don't understand.

AUBREY

Yeah, it's like you live in a cave—blind as a bat.

BILLY

I don't live in a cave, Aubrey. I live right over there.

*(HE points to a distance house down the street.)*

AUBREY

I know where you live. I live right across the street from you, silly, remember?

BILLY

I don't live in a cave.

AUBREY

I can see you dancing with your grandma in your living room.

BILLY

You see us—dancing?

AUBREY

Yeah, and it's really goofy.

BILLY

She puts *The Nutcracker* music on the record player and we dance. She's the girl Clara and I'm the evil Mouse King.

I don't want to know.

AUBREY

We play all the parts.

BILLY

(AUBREY *locates a stick the length of a cane and hands it to BILLY.*)

AUBREY

Here, Billy, use this stick...because you are blind. Tap the ground in front of you, right and left, so you don't bump into something or fall into a hole.

BILLY

Like this?

AUBREY

Yeah, that's right.

BILLY

I can still see.

AUBREY

Well close your eyes. And now walk and tap. Walk and tap.

BILLY

I'm doing it, Aubrey.

AUBREY

Good, you look like my Uncle Mac.

BILLY

The uncle with the Velcro heart?

AUBREY

That's the one.

BILLY

Was he blind?

AUBREY

No. But he was all humped over, just like you. My Aunt Sally was blind or nearly.

BILLY

She used a stick.

AUBREY

She had a dog.

BILLY

What kind?

AUBREY

A big one. He had one blue eye and one brown eye. His name was Lucky.

BILLY

I'm gonna get a dog.

AUBREY

I doubt it. One week, when mom was in the hospital, Aunt Sally and Uncle Mac came to visit. They stayed in the room upstairs. Lucky slept in the bed with Aunt Sally.

BILLY

And Uncle Mac?

AUBREY

He didn't sleep.

BILLY

Why?

AUBREY

Dad said it was because of the war. So, he just marched around the backyard talking to himself.

BILLY

Oh.

AUBREY

In the morning, Aunt Sally put on her robe and slippers and was coming down for breakfast. She tripped and rolled to the bottom. I laughed because I was going to take her breakfast-in-bed.

BILLY

I bet that hurt.

AUBREY

Naaa...She said, "That first step is a doozy."

BILLY

What happened to Lucky?

AUBREY

He came down, jumped over Aunt Sally, ate a few sausages, and then went back to sleep.

BILLY

And Uncle Mac?

AUBREY

When I looked out the window, he was still marching. Sometimes he'd stop, take aim at the moon, spit, and then he'd march some more.

BILLY

He seems sad and alone.

AUBREY

He wasn't, Billy. He wasn't sad and he wasn't alone. He was just my Uncle Mac. That's what he did. Some people do things that others don't. Like, I don't dance with my grandma, but that doesn't make me sad. Some people just see the world different and that's okay. So, don't talk bad about my Uncle Mac or feel sorry for my Aunt Sally.

BILLY

Okay.

AUBREY

Or her dog.

BILLY

I'm sorry your mom was in the hospital.

AUBREY

I didn't say that.

BILLY

You did.

AUBREY

I don't remember.

BILLY

Hmm. So, Lucky had one blue eye and one brown?

AUBREY

Yep. Struck by lightning. Just like that girl Clara in *the Nutcracker*.

BILLY

She wasn't struck by lightning.

AUBREY

And the lightning strike turned her into a dragon.

BILLY

No, Aubrey, that's not right.

AUBREY

And then the grandmother and the dragon danced until the grandmother got tired and so the dragon ate her.

(AUBREY *turns to leave*. BILLY *follows*.)

BILLY

No! No, Aubrey.

(AUBREY *looks down the street in the direction of BILLY'S house*.)

AUBREY

Do you know who lives in the house next to you?

BILLY

She just moved in.

AUBREY

I know.

BILLY

She has a cat.

AUBREY

I don't like cats.

BILLY

The cat has a little door. He goes in and out all by himself.

AUBREY

I've seen a cat bite the head off a chipmunk.

BILLY

That's mean.

AUBREY

And then lick the brains out of its skull. They are very picky eaters.

(BILLY *recreates the Sundial to tell the time*.)

BILLY

Hmmm. The moon is gone.

AUBREY

It's hiding. Behind the clouds.

BILLY

Do you think it is four 'o clock?

Yep. AUBREY

I gotta go. We're getting a Microwave. BILLY

An oven? AUBREY

Uh-huh. BILLY

Don't stand too close to it, Billy. AUBREY

Why? BILLY

You'll get zapped with invisible rays! AUBREY

Okay. I won't. BILLY  
(BILLY *is leaving.*)

And watch out for that cat. AUBREY

I will. BILLY

And that lady next door. AUBREY

(BILLY *exits.*)  
(AUBREY *skips away.*)

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**ODE #5**

*Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

*(AUBREY studies the box with the bow.  
SHE lifts and holds it suspiciously.)*

AUBREY

She gave this to me, Mom. I don't know why. It's not my birthday. And I don't care if it's wrapped so fine. So very neat, every fold, every crease, I don't care. I'm not going to open it.

*(SHE places the gift again outside her  
circle of boxes.)*

Whatever she put in there, I don't want to let it out. 'Cause, once it's opened, you can never put it back in the box. I know. I read a book about that at school. And, I've watched her. She might be mean. She might say one thing and do another. She might talk real sweet, but, in her heart, not mean it. I'll make a warning sign.

*(SHE locates a sketchpad and marker from  
a box. SHE creates a warning sign:  
"Danger of Death! Don't open!" SHE  
places her warning sign on the box. SHE  
returns the larger sketchpad and marker to  
the box and retrieves her Flight Plan  
notebook. SHE departs.)*

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**EPISODE #5*****THE PINKY SWEAR***

*The park.*

*(AUBREY sits on the park, writing in her Flight Plan. BILLY enters and takes a seat on the bench beside AUBREY.)*

BILLY

What are you writing?

AUBREY

Notes.

BILLY

Oh.

AUBREY

I'm making a "Flight Plan." All astronauts have a "Flight Plan."

BILLY

They do?

AUBREY

Sure.

BILLY

Why?

AUBREY

Because that's what astronauts do. They plan everything. How far, how fast, what to take, what to leave behind—like their boots—everything, Billy, from beginning to the end.

BILLY

That's a lot. Why don't you just make a movie?

AUBREY

This isn't imagination, Billy.

BILLY

You could write a book.

AUBREY

This is history. This is real. I'm not just telling a story.

BILLY

But you could. You make up things. You tell good stories.

AUBREY

I do. But my dad is the best storyteller ever.

BILLY

I didn't know my dad.

AUBREY

The best. You should hear him.

BILLY

Did you know your mom?

AUBREY

My dad can make me laugh and cry at the same time.

BILLY

Does he tickle you?

AUBREY

You mean like this.

*(SHE tickles BILLY relentlessly as he laughs until he cries.)*

BILLY

Stop! Aubrey, stop!

AUBREY

I'll stop if you promise me you will never laugh again!

BILLY

*(Laughing)*  
I can't do that!

AUBREY

Then I can't stop!

*(SHE tickles harder.)*

BILLY

Okay! Okay! I promise! I promise!

Pinky swear!

AUBREY

I pinky swear!

BILLY

*(THEY latch pinky fingers to seal the promise.)*

AUBREY

*(chanting)*  
 “Pinky Swear, Pinky Swear! Cross my Heart, hope to Die, cut off my Pinky if I Lie.” Say it!

BILLY

*(still laughing)*  
 “Pinky Swear, Pinky Swear! Cross my Heart, hope to Die, cut off my Pinky if I Lie.”

*(THEY unlatch their pinkies.)*

*(AUBREY gives BILLY a very serious warning.)*

AUBREY

There. It’s done. You can’t laugh any more, Billy. Not ever again. Because you pinky promised. And if you break the pinky promise, I will have to cut your pinky finger right off of your hand. So, you can’t laugh any more. You hear me? You can’t laugh at stories, clowns, farts, funny sounds or silly dances. You can’t grin or chuckle, snicker or snort. You can’t laugh at “Dad Jokes,” if you had a Dad. And when you die, you cannot die laughing.

BILLY

*(realizing the seriousness)*  
 You’d cut off my finger?

AUBREY

If you break the pinky promise, I will have to.

BILLY

I can’t laugh no more?

AUBREY

No more.

BILLY

I can only cry.

That's right. No laughing.

AUBREY

I'll be sad forever.

BILLY

Yes, Billy, forever.

AUBREY

Will it hurt?

BILLY

Maybe. A little. You'll get used to it.

AUBREY

*(BILLY emits a long, deep sigh. AUBREY watches BILLY closely, making sure he doesn't transgress. AUBREY gets up to leave keeping one eye on BILLY. BILLY sits alone, quiet. Silent and unhappy, HE stands and walks away.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**ODE #6***Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

(AUBREY labels a box SPACE GEAR.)

AUBREY

We lift off soon, Mom. I'm getting all the gear we need.

*(SHE takes items from a paper bag and puts them in an empty box as she identifies them.)*

Food and water, extra space suits, gloves, hot chocolate mix, Fruit Roll Ups, Pop Rocks. We have all the fuel we need. It will be the greatest flight ever from Earth to the Universe. And we will take pictures, thousands of pictures, of other planets and comets. We will connect all the dots. All the constellations. And the deeper we get into space, the smaller the Earth will become until it's just a dot, and we will laugh at how big we are and how small the Earth is. I'll tell Dad to get ready.

*(SHE leaves with the empty paper bag.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**EPISODE #6**

**“TO THE BRAVE”**

*The park.*

*(AUBREY and BILLY drop their backpacks and sit on the bench. THEY are unusually quiet. Cars go by. Birds fly by. THEIR eyes dart around. AUBREY breaks the silence.)*

AUBREY

What do you want to be, Billy, when you grow up? A race car driver?

BILLY

No.

AUBREY

A scuba diver?

BILLY

No, I don't eat fish.

AUBREY

You'd look at 'em, Billy, underwater, you don't eat 'em.

BILLY

I don't like sharks.

AUBREY

You want to be an explorer?

BILLY

I don't think so.

AUBREY

So, what are going to do all day, every day, just tear up paper for your mother?

BILLY

She's getting a shredding machine.

AUBREY

What's that?

BILLY

It cuts paper into strips. She showed me a picture of one in a magazine. It's going to make her job easy.

AUBREY

Maybe you should be a scientist or an inventor or an electrician.

BILLY

I'll think about it.

(AUBREY *shakes her head in despair.*)

AUBREY

I spy, I spy with my little eye—something that is blue.

BILLY

Is it something you wear?

AUBREY

No.

BILLY

Something you ride?

AUBREY

No.

BILLY

Is it the sky?

AUBREY

Yes. Your turn.

BILLY

I spy with my little eye something that is white.

BILLY

That car?

BILLY

No.

AUBREY

White? Hmm. The clouds.

BILLY

Yep.

AUBREY

I spy, I spy...

(SHE *takes a moment to look at BILLY.*)

...you at school today pushing a cart down the hall.

BILLY

A TV cart.

AUBREY

Yes.

BILLY

I was helping my teacher.

AUBREY

Why?

BILLY

Every day my teacher picks a kid to be her helper.

AUBREY

I know, Carmen gets picked all the time. She's the snootiest girl in all of the world.

BILLY

It's good to be a helper, Aubrey, and it feels good to be picked.

AUBREY

I don't care if I never.

BILLY

Today, Mrs. Williams chose me.

AUBREY

Never, ever.

BILLY

She said, "Billy, go to the room next to principal's office. There's a TV cart waiting for us." I could barely keep from running down the hall.

AUBREY

I saw you. Looked like you were in a hurry to get to the bathroom.

BILLY

It's exciting when a TV cart rolls into the classroom. Don't you think?

AUBREY

Maybe.

BILLY

It means something fun is about to happen and I was bringing fun to the class. I pushed the cart into the room, and Mrs. Williams said, “Take it to the front, Billy, and plug it in.” The kids were laughing, like it was a birthday party. Mrs. Williams turned on the TV and said something about “making history.” Then she said, “T minus 30, children.”

AUBREY

Billy.

BILLY

We all looked at the screen, happy to be watching. Then someone in control said, “Engine start.”

AUBREY

Stop.

BILLY

And it did, Aubrey, it roared...it roared so loud!

AUBREY

I heard it, Billy.

BILLY

The countdown... 4, 3, 2, 1, liftoff! And the rocket shook! We all were shaking!

AUBREY

I know. I saw.

BILLY

A voice from the TV said, “Clear the tower.” The rocket pushed—and smoke rolled...and the launchpad shook, and the rocket, with all of its power pushed away...from the ground...and it did, for a minute, it did, leave us behind...until...

*(AUBREY bows her head and covers her ears.)*

AUBREY

Don't say it, Billy. Billy, play I spy...

BILLY

...until...

AUBREY

...with my little eye...

BILLY

...it exploded!

*(A moment of uncertainty.)*

And...all the children...in all of the classes...in all of America...were watching.

*(AUBREY uncovers her ears.)*

AUBREY

Why do you say things when I tell you not to?

BILLY

It didn't seem real. I wanted you to know.

AUBREY

I told you, Billy, I saw it!

BILLY

It didn't seem real.

AUBREY

But it was. It is.

BILLY

My teacher said, she was sorry, very sorry, and the kids, didn't say a word.

*(a moment of silence)*

AUBREY

My teacher said it was a tragedy...

BILLY

What is that?

AUBREY

...and these astronauts are heroes.

BILLY

You mean like, Superman, or the Transformers.

AUBREY

Yeah. Did you go outside today?

BILLY

After lunch.

AUDREY

I was looking for you.

I was playing soccer.

BILLY

With other kids?

AUDREY

Who did you play with?

BILLY

Did you see that crazy boy running in circles?

AUDREY

Shawn.

BILLY

He ran up to me and yelled, "The sky is falling!"

AUDREY

He's in my class. Did you stay outside long?

BILLY

No. They told us to go back inside to hear the President speak.

AUDBRY

What did you think?

BILLY

He said, the future "belongs to the brave."

AUBREY

What does that mean?

BILLY

It means, Billy, we are not going to just sit around the house shredding paper. We're going to be something.

AUBREY

Okay. Maybe, I'll be an inventor.

BILLY

What would you invent?

AUBREY

I don't know.

BILLY

AUBREY

You have to invent something to be an inventor.

BILLY

I need some time to think.

AUBREY

Last one. I spy, I spy with my lovely **mind's** eye, something that is red, white, blue, and brown.

BILLY

That flag?

AUBREY

That's just red, white, and blue.

BILLY

A bird?

AUBREY

Nope.

BILLY

Hmm. I give up.

AUBREY

The Snickers wrapper.

BILLY

I don't see a Snickers wrapper.

AUDREY

It's in my pocket. Here.

BILLY

How am I supposed to see it, if it's in your pocket?

AUDREY

I said, I spy with my **mind's** eye. You have to use your mind's eye.

BILLY

I don't have a mind's eye.

AUDREY

Invent one.

Humph.

BILLY

*(AUDREY reaches into her pocket.)*

Here. Have a Snickers.

AUDREY

Thanks.

BILLY

One good thing today.

AUBREY

What?

BILLY

We didn't have any homework.

AUBREY

*(AUBREY and BILLY walk away.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**ODE #7*****AUBREY'S circle of boxes in a pool of light.***

*AUBREY takes the toy space shuttle and respectfully returns it the box labelled SPACE. SHE then disconnects the three rocket boosters from the launch pad and returns these pieces back in the box with the shuttle. SHE puts a lid on the box. SHE leaves the space.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**EPISODE #7**

**JOLLY FRIENDS**

*The park.*

*(AUBREY sits alone. SHE sings the children's song, **Hey, Hey Playmate.**)*

AUBREY

*(singing)*  
*Say, say, oh playmate,*  
*Come out and play with me.*  
*And bring your dollies three.*  
*Climb up my apple tree.*  
*Slide down my rain barrel,*  
*Into my cellar door,*  
*And we'll be jolly friends,*  
*Forever more.*

*(BILLY enters unobserved by AUDREY and stands behind her and the bench.)*

*(AUBREY continues with the second verse.)*

*(singing)*  
*So sorry, playmate,*  
*I cannot play with you.*  
*My dolly's got the flu,*  
*Boo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo.*  
*Ain't got no rain barrel,*  
*Ain't got no cellar door,*  
*But we'll be jolly friends,*  
*Forever more.*

BILLY

Hi Aubrey.

*(HE rounds the bench and sits beside AUBREY.)*

AUDREY

*(startled)*  
 Don't sneak up on me, Billy.

BILLY

I heard you sing.

AUBREY  
That's not nice, sneaking up on a person.

BILLY  
I know that song.

AUBREY  
Sneaking is creepy.

BILLY  
My grandma sings it.

AUBREY  
No, she doesn't.

BILLY  
She does.

AUBREY  
I doubt it.

BILLY  
Why do you always do that, Aubrey?

AUBREY  
What?

BILLY  
When I say "I do something," you always say, "I doubt it."

AUBREY  
It's just talk, Billy.

BILLY  
Talk?

AUBREY  
It's just what friends do.

BILLY  
We are friends.

AUBREY  
And a friend can say things to you that others can't.

BILLY

I didn't know that.

AUBREY

Sure. You can say things to me that you shouldn't. But...I...let you express yourself. Because...I'm not selfish.

BILLY

Sometimes, you say things to me that you shouldn't.

AUBREY

That's because we're friends, aren't we?

BILLY

You said so.

AUBREY

I did. But are we "true friends?"

BILLY

What does that mean?

AUBREY

Well, a "true friend" doesn't need to say nice things to you, Billy. Anybody can do that. Anybody can tell you nice things and be sweet. But a "true friend" knows she can say mean things and you will still be her friend.

BILLY

That doesn't sound right.

AUBREY

It is.

BILLY

I guess I didn't know that.

AUBREY

It's true, Billy, go ahead. Say something.

BILLY

I don't want too.

AUBREY

Say it.

BILLY  
No.

AUBREY  
Come on, Billy! Say it!

BILLY  
No, it's not right.

AUDREY  
Do it!

BILLY  
Okay! Your dad likes the lady next door. Sometimes he brings her things. And, I think she likes him.

*(AUBREY is jolted. A moment passes.)*

AUBREY  
Maybe we aren't "true friends" then. Maybe you shouldn't sit so close.

BILLY  
Why?

AUBREY  
Maybe you should move to the end of the bench.  
*(HE does.)*

*(THEY sit silently for a moment.)*

BILLY  
I didn't mean to sneak up on you...to scare you.

AUBREY  
You didn't. You just interrupted my thinking.

BILLY  
You were singing.

AUBREY  
And thinking.

BILLY  
I shouldn't have said that about your dad. Maybe we aren't "true friends."

AUBREY

I don't know. We have things alike. Your dad. My mom.

BILLY

Yeah, maybe we can be, "Jolly Friends?"

AUBREY

That's just a song, Billy.

BILLY

"Jolly Friends." "Forever more."

AUBREY

"Forever?" That's a very long time. So, we will just be friends for now, until you do something stupid, like sneak up on me again.

BILLY

You want some Pop Rocks?

AUBREY

Sure.

*(BILLY takes a package of Pop Rocks out of his pocket, slides closer to AUBREY, and sprinkles Pop Rocks into her hand. HE takes some as well. THEY share the explosiveness of the candy.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**ODE #8****Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.**

*(SHE reaches in the box and retrieves her  
jump rope by the handle.)*

AUBREY

We will talk later, Mom. Billy needs me.

*(SHE rushes out.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**EPISODE #8**

**“FIRST THE HEEL AND THEN THE TOE”**

*A sidewalk near the playground.*

*(AUBREY and BILLY, holding their jump ropes, wait at the intersection.)*

AUBREY

Are you sure this is the place?

BILLY

Yeah. Mom said they'd stop right here at the crosswalk.

AUBREY

Let's practice a "Double Dutch." Here we go,

*(Jumping)*

"I like coffee, I like tea.

I like Billy to jump with me!

One, two, three, four, five...."

*(SHE stops.)*

Billy, are you going to jump in? Double Dutch, Billy, jump with me! Get ready, now; you can't be sloppy and Double Dutch...you've got to be right on time.

*(Looking at BILLY.)*

What is it?

*(BILLY is staring at the approaching caravan of cars.)*

BILLY

She's coming. They all have headlights on, Aubrey, and the policeman is waving them through the stop sign.

AUBREY

Which car is she in? The first or second?

BILLY

First.

AUBREY

And your family is in the second.

Uh-huh.  
BILLY

Why aren't you in the car?  
AUBREY

I didn't want to go. Didn't want to see.  
BILLY

AUBREY  
*(Matter-of-factly)*  
Hmmm. You know, my grandpa was killed by a train.

I didn't know that.  
BILLY

I saw it happen.  
AUBREY

You did?  
BILLY

AUBREY  
Grandpa and I had been to the Hardware Store, and we were walking back to town when Grandpa saw a shiny half dollar on the train tracks in the distance...he ran off after it.

What happened?  
BILLY

AUBREY  
Well, Grandpa couldn't hear very well, and when he bent down to pick up the coin, this old train smacked Grandpa...like a bug on a windshield. I...just...laughed...because...I knew all along it was just a quarter. That's right, Billy.

*(SHE laughs. BILLY doesn't.)*  
It was just a quarter.

BILLY  
*(Noticing)*  
They've stopped, Aubrey. It's time. Time to jump to Grandma's rhyme. Are you ready?

AUBREY  
Ready. Here we go.  
*(Jumping rope)*

AUBREY (cont.)

“Down in the valley  
Where the green grass grows  
There sat Grandma  
Sweet as a rose  
She sang, she sang,  
She sang so sweet;  
Along came Grandpa  
And kissed her on the cheek.  
How many kisses did she get that week?

One, two, three, four....”

*(THEY stop skipping and watch the cars.)  
(AUBREY laughs. BILLY is silent.)*

You know, Billy, your Grandma was a pretty good rope jumper until she broke her hip. Then it was funny—the way she’d get all tangled up in the rope.

BILLY

Yeah. I miss my Grandma.

AUBREY

I know.

*(THEY stand beside one another. With her pinky finger, AUBREY tenderly latches onto BILLY’S pinky finger for a few seconds. BILLY looks at AUBREY and smiles.)*

You must get your talent for jumping rope from your Grandpa’s side of the family because you jump rope like a rooster in mud. Come on, Billy!

*(Skipping off and reciting.)*

“Charlie Chaplin went to France  
To teach the ladies how to dance;  
First the heel and then the toe,  
A skip and a hop and away you go!

*(Looking at the cars passing by, BILLY trails behind AUBREY.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**ODE #9***Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.*

(AUBREY returns her jump rope to the appropriate box.)

AUBREY

Dad said, "The lady across the street looks a lot like you, Mom. Your hair, your eyes, has your laugh." I said, "No, Dad, that lady is nothing like Mom. That lady has one brown eye and one blue eye. She was struck by lightning." He said, "That's not true, Aubrey." But it is, Mom, it is. She's got crazy hair. It's nothing like yours. He said, "Aubrey, we need something different in our life." I said, "No, Dad, listen to me. She's got a cat and he goes in and out of her house biting heads off sweet little chipmunks." Dad said, "That's ridiculous, Aubrey." I said, "No, Dad, it's true! That's what they do. They separate the head from the body, pick apart the brain, and leave the body to rot." Then he told me I had to sit and listen but all I could see was that woman with crazy hair and her cat. Then, he said, "Be nice to her." And he told me tonight she was coming over for dinner. And he said, "I want you to thank her for the gift she gave to you. Have you opened it?" "No." "Okay, I want you to open it, and when she comes over tonight, I want you to say, "Thank you." "I can't do that. I can't say, "Thank you." "You can, Aubrey, you will." "No, I'm too shy."

(SHE leaves.)

\*\*\*\*\*

**EPISODE #9****A ROTTEN TANGERINE**

*The park.*

*(AUBREY and BILLY appear carrying their backpacks, unusually heavy, and weighted down by the end-of-the-school books and desk clean-out. THEY drop their backpacks and sit on the bench. AUBREY opens her backpack, unlatches the Velcro on her Trapper Keeper, searches for her report card.)*

AUBREY

Did you pass?

BILLY

Yep. Did you?

AUBREY

Of course. I made all As except for one N.

BILLY

“N” – That means, “Needs Improvement.”

AUBREY

Nope. It stands for “Nevermind.” How ‘bout you?

BILLY

Mom said she would be happy if I was average.

AUBREY

Will she be happy?

BILLY

Yep.

AUBREY

We can come here every day now, Billy. The whole summer. All day. Nothing to stand in our way.

BILLY

Are you going to summer camp?

What? AUBREY

Like Girl Scouts? BILLY

Nope. Don't want to. AUBREY

What about dance? BILLY

You mean the way you and your grandma did? AUDREY

No, I mean a class with other girls and boys. BILLY

Don't want to. AUBREY

Or, soccer? You'd make a great goalie? BILLY

No, Billy, nothing that takes me away from the thing I love the most. AUBREY

What's that? BILLY

Fun! And my Freedom! No more school, Billy! AUDREY

*(SHE sings to the tune of **The Battle Hymn of the Republic.**)*

*Glory, glory hallelujah.  
Teacher hit me with a ruler.  
I bopped her on the bean with a rotten tangerine  
Now she ain't gonna teach no more!*

I'm gonna miss my teacher. BILLY

And, I'm gonna lay down here in grass and look at the sky. AUBREY  
*(SHE does.)*

AUBREY (cont.)

Look, jet trails. You know, Billy, a jet trail is not smoke. It's ice crystals from a mix of hot and cold air.

(BILLY sits on the bench.)

BILLY

It wasn't goofy, Aubrey.

AUBREY

What?

BILLY

Dancing with my Grandma. It was fun.

AUBREY

I said it looked goofy.

BILLY

It was fun.

AUBREY

Goofy.

(Silence.)

BILLY

I'm gonna play baseball.

AUBREY

Now?

BILLY

Tomorrow. I'm joining a team.

AUBREY

No, Billy, you don't want to do that.

(SHE rises up and sits beside BILLY.)

Baseball is a serious game.

BILLY

It will be fun. I'm gonna be a catcher.

AUBREY

No, Billy, you don't want to be a catcher.

(SHE flicks her hand near BILLY'S eyes.  
HE flinches.)

There, you see, you can't flinch and be a catcher, Billy.

BILLY

I'm going to wear a mask and protect Home Plate.

AUBREY

And, that's a problem. If you don't catch the ball, or if you can't tag a person out, the coach will be mad at you. And teammates will yell. And parents will get angry. You don't want that, Billy. Listen to me. We can play baseball here, in the park, just you and me.

BILLY

No, I need a team. You can't play baseball with just two people.

AUBREY

It's a serious game, Billy, it's the opposite of fun.

BILLY

And you've got to depend on the other people to make it all work. We're not a team, Aubrey. You and me are not a team. We need more than two people to be a team.

AUBREY

That's not true, Billy. You just need...

BILLY

What?

AUBREY

You just need...two people...who can play together...who like the same things.

BILLY

I need more than that.

AUBREY

Are you sure, Billy?

BILLY

Will you come watch me?

AUBREY

No. I don't have time for serious games.

BILLY

I'm going home.

AUBREY

Okay, Billy. Okay. Go home! And don't flinch!

(AUBREY *sits in silence.*)

\*\*\*\*\*

## ODE #10

*Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.**(AUBREY takes the lid off of a box.)*

AUBREY

Our Flight Plan has changed. We need to fix a few things, Mom. Then we can leave. And it will be amazing—all the things we will see—so many points of light, the stars, the galaxies—it will take our breath away. You need to talk to Dad, okay? You need to tell him, when it's time to go, we will have to leave some things behind...to lighten the load. Besides, there are only three Sleep Stations—there isn't room for another. I'm right, Mom, I'm right, aren't I?

*(SHE studies the gift-wrapped box.)*

I don't want to open her gift, but Dad said that I have too. And I don't want to say, "Thank you." but Dad says, "I will." So, I guess, Mom, I guess, I will. But, I will laugh and laugh because she is not my Mom.

*(SHE labels a box, MOM.)*

I'm going to keep our "Flight Plan" in this box. It will be safe here until we are okay'd to leave.

*(SHE places her "Flight Plan" into the box labelled "MOM.")**(SHE opens a box labelled "Space Rock" and removes a stone. SHE departs with the stone.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**EPISODE #10****GALACTIC DEBRIS**

*In front of the park bench.*

*(BILLY places his baseball glove on the bench. AUBREY searches the area and locates a place in the grass.)*

AUBREY

This is the spot, Billy.

BILLY

Right here?

AUBREY

Yeah, I was sitting right here, writing in my notebook, when I heard a big whirling sound from above. And then it hit! Boom!

BILLY

Wow!

AUBREY

You see how the grass is smashed here?

BILLY

Yeah.

AUBREY

That's where it landed. Just a few feet, Billy, from where I'm sitting.

BILLY

You're lucky it didn't hit you, Aubrey.

AUBREY

I know. It could've split my head in half like a watermelon.

BILLY

Did you pick it up?

AUBREY

No! Not at first.

BILLY

Was it on fire?

AUBREY  
No. It was just stuck in the ground.

BILLY  
Wow! From outer space.

AUBREY  
Yeah, some place, far, so far away.

BILLY  
How big was it?

AUBREY  
About the size of your head. It was heavy.

BILLY  
I bet.

AUBREY  
I rolled it on an old sheet and pulled it to the house.

BILLY  
Why didn't you come get me?

AUBREY  
Are you still playing baseball?

BILLY  
Yep. It's fun.

AUBREY  
Oh.

BILLY  
I would've helped.

AUBREY  
I know.

BILLY  
I'm strong.

AUBREY  
I know, "Arm-strong."

*(AUBREY lifts an arm to show how strong she is. BILLY imitates.)*

BILLY

What'd you do with it?

AUBREY

Took it home and showed it to my dad.

BILLY

Bet he was surprised.

AUBREY

He said, "I must be very lucky."

BILLY

I think you are, Aubrey.

AUBREY

Maybe I am. Later that day, dad and I were watching TV. This news guy came on and said there had been a meteor shower, and if you found a meteorite to call the number on the screen.

BILLY

Did you?

AUBREY

Yeah, and, in a little while, the space scientist came to the house.

BILLY

I bet he was surprised.

AUBREY

Un-huh. He put on some plastic gloves and took the rock into his hands. He studied it very carefully, and then he said, "I need to take this to the lab."

BILLY

He took your rock?

AUBREY

Yep.

BILLY

But it was your rock. It came to you, Aubrey.

AUBREY

I know, Billy, but it's important to space science.

BILLY

Will he give it back?

AUBREY

I don't know. But that night, after dinner, I'm sitting with the remote control in my hand. I click on my TV...and there he is...the same scientist...showing my rock to a reporter. He called it, "An amazing discovery!" "A kind of 'Rosetta Stone'"

BILLY

What's that?

AUBREY

I don't know but it must be beautiful because the scientist could not control himself. He was bug-eyed with excitement. And the more he talked, the more his eyes got bigger and bigger. And when it seemed like the TV could no longer hold all of his bug-eyed energy...it happened again! It's hard to believe, Billy, I know...but...it happened again! It came from above...that sound...that same whirling sound. But this time it ripped through the layers of my house...and crashed...with an all-mighty force! Kaboom! Right smack into the TV! Kaboom! Pieces of plastic and glass—exploding pictures of people talking, shouting at one another, children and parents, reporters and the president, rise and fall into a cloud of dust. And gone! The television...gone! NBC...CBS... gone! *The Days of Our Lives*...*All My Children*...*Family Ties* ...*Double Dare*, and talk and talk and talk...all gone!... gone!...and gone!! Except for this...here...

*(SHE removes a small "meteorite" from her pocket.)*

This chunk of rock...this meteorite...from a world so far...so far away came to me, Billy. It came at a fantastic speed. Survived incredible heat. It came to me...in my time...from some place...so far away. It belongs to me.

*(THEY study the rock.)*

And now...Billy...show me your hands...

*(BILLY cups his hands.)*

I'm giving it to you.

*(HE receives the gift, gratefully.)*

BILLY

This is the best gift ever.

AUBREY

I know it.

Are you sure?  
BILLY

What?  
AUBREY

You want me to have it?  
BILLY

I gave it to you, silly, now didn't I?  
AUBREY

You did.  
BILLY  
*(HE tucks the "meteorite" into his glove. HE rises and checks the time with his shadow clock.)*

I've got practice.  
AUBREY

When is your next game?  
BILLY

Saturday.  
AUDREY

In the morning?  
BILLY

No, two in the afternoon.  
AUBREY

Good. Because I sleep in on Saturday mornings.  
BILLY

You're coming to my game?  
AUBREY

We'll see, Billy, we will see.  
*(AUBREY, sitting on the bench, watches BILLY leave.)*

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**ODE #11*****Aubrey's circle of boxes in a pool of light.***

*AUBREY studies the gift-wrapped box. SHE carefully picks it up and moves it to the middle of the circle. SHE removes the bow and slowly unwraps the gift. SHE removes the box lid. First, SHE appears confused by what she sees and uncertain that SHE should touch it. With care, SHE removes a dome, a galaxy projector, from the box and places it on the floor. SHE locates a switch. SHE flips on the projector. The lamp lights up the room with constellations—millions of bright stars. AUBREY draws a deep breath, stands up, looks at the “sky” and is pleased.*

**End of Play**