

"EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES"

Screenplay by

Gus Van Sant

Based on a novel by

Tom Robbins

SHOOTING DRAFT

1993

INT. CAVE NIGHT

There is a huge ancient hourglass made of animal skins, and acorns plop through the waist of the hourglass one by one. It sits in a pool of water. In the water swim EYELESS CATFISH in geometric patterns. An underground stream feeds the pool of water and then flows into a huge underground crevasse that on occasion emits a LOW RUMBLE.

INDIANS with torches surround the hourglass, which now we can see is in a cave. And as soon as the acorns have finished passing through the hourglass, a crew of Indians turn it on its opposite end. One of the Indians appears to be JAPANESE.

ONE INDIAN stands at the wall of the cavern in front of a series of symbolic carvings and scratches, with stone in hand he makes a few hatchmarks, and keeps an eye on the CREVASSE.

THE CREVASSE RUMBLES once more, loosening a few chunks of rock from the cave.

The earth begins to shake.

THE CHART KEEPER

She is restless tonight.

ANOTHER INDIAN

She dreams of loving.

STILL ANOTHER

She has the blues.

View of the chartkeeper's drawings. One is of a crane with a very long neck. Another is a primitive drawing of a naked girl, who has long flowing hair. She also has, pointed out from her sides, thumbs that are three times normal human proportions. A MUSICAL CHORUS sounds at the sight of this drawing of a girl with the thumbs. The chartkeeper puts the finishing touches on the drawing.

And the song "Happy Birthday to You" strikes up on country and western guitar and polka-like accordion. title

BIG THUMBS

INT. RICHMOND VIRGINIA SUBURBAN HOME DAY

We see CANDLES burning on a cake. It is somebody's birthday. And there are six candles on the cake.

SISSY HANKSHAW is six years old.

Her DADDY and a visiting UNCLE, finishing their rendition of Happy Birthday, are staring down at Sissy and looking at her young THUMBS, WHICH ARE UNUSUALLY LARGE and twitch with a mind of their own.

She manages to blow out all six candles.

UNCLE

Well, you're lucky that you don't suck 'em.

DADDY

Sissy couldn't suck 'em, she'd need a mouth like a fish tank.

Sissy is negotiating a fork full of birthday cake, dropping it because of her thumbs.

UNCLE

(agrees)

The poor little tyke might have a hard time finding herself a hubby. But as far as getting along in the world, it's a real blessing that Sissy's a girl-child. Lord, I reckon this youngun would never make a mechanic.

DADDY

Nope, and not a brain surgeon,
neither.

UNCLE

Course she'd do pretty good as a
butcher. She could retire in two
years on the overcharges alone.

Laughing, the men walk to the kitchen to fill their glasses.
Sissy is left to feel sorry for herself in front of her cake.

UNCLE (O.S.)

One thing, that youngun would make
one hell of a hitchhiker...

This startles Sissy. A new word that tinkles in her head
with a supernatural echo. Sissy looks at her thumbs.

UNCLE (O.S.)

...if she was a boy, I mean.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE DAY

Dr. Dreyfus looks over Sissy's thumbs.

DR. DREYFUS

She is, if I may speak frankly,
somewhat of a medical oddity. Due to
impaired dexterity, her life
activities and career potentialities
will be reduced. It could be worse.
Bring her back to me if there ever
is pain. Meanwhile, she will have to
learn to live with them.

MRS. HANKSHAW

That she will. That she will. The
Lord made them things big for a
purpose. God don't never git tired
of testing our kind. It's a punishment
of some sort, for what I don't rightly
know.

(whimpering)

Oh Doc, if a young man ever shows up
here with, a young man with ugly
fingers, you know, something similar,
a similar case, Doc, would you
please...

DR. DREYFUS

Remember the words of the painter Paul Gauguin, dear lady. "The ugly may be beautiful, the pretty never." I don't suppose that means very much to you.

MRS. HANKSHAW

It's a judgement. She's gotta bear the punishment.

Sissy beams serenely like a Christ figure.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY DAY

Sissy looks up "thumb" in the dictionary. It says: the short, thick first or most preaxial digit of the human hand, differing from the other fingers by having two phalanges and greater freedom of movement.

Sissy mouthing the words: "Greater freedom of movement."

EXT. ROAD DAY

Sissy very timidly ventures a pass with her gigantic right thumb in the direction she is walking.

She is passed by..... BUT NO!

BRAKE LIGHTS! A Pontiac skids ever so slightly on the snowflakes. View of the Pontiac insignia on the hood of the car.

Sissy runs, actually sweating, to its side. She peers in.

OUTSIDE a palmist's trailer is a sign with a red silhouette of a hand.

Directly under the wrist where the watch band would be is written MADAME ZOE.

Madam Zoe in kimono and wig lets Sissy and her mother in the door.

MADAME ZOE

I am the enlightened Madame Zoe.

Inside. Madame Zoe begins stubbing a cigarette in one of those enlightened little ceramic ashtrays that are shaped

like bedpans and inscribed BUTTS. The trailer is cluttered, but not one knick-knack, chintz curtain or chenille-covered armchair seems to have come from the Beyond.

MADAME ZOE

There is nothing about your past, present or future that your hands do not know, and there is nothing about your hands that Madame Zoe does not know. There is no hocus-pocus involved. I am a scientist, not a magician. I, Madame Zoe, chiromancer, lifelong student of the moldings and markings of the human hand. I, Madame Zoe, to whom no facet of your character or destiny is not readily revealed. I am prepared to...

Then she notices the thumbs.

MADAME ZOE

Jesus fucking Christ!

Mrs. Hankshaw and the fortune-teller turn pale and uncertain, while Sissy recognizes with a faint smile that she is in command.

Sissy extends the thumbs as an ailing aborigine might extend his swollen parts to a medical missionary. Sissy's mama draws a neatly folded five-dollar bill from her change purse and extends it alongside her smiling daughter's extremities.

Madame Zoe returns to her senses, and takes Sissy by the elbow to sit at a For mica-topped table of undistinguished design.

Madam Zoe holds Sissy's hands while she appears to go into a trance.

She opens her eyes momentarily.

MADAME ZOE

You have a strong will. Will power and determination are indicated by the first phalanx. The second phalanx indicates reason and logic. You obviously have both in large supply. What's your name, dearie?

SISSY

Sissy.

MADAME ZOE

Hmmm. I'd say that you have an intelligent, kindly, somewhat artistic nature. However, Sissy, however, there is a heavy quality to the second phalanx- the phalanx of logic – that indicates a capacity for foolish or clownish behavior, a refusal to accept responsibility or to take things seriously and bent to be disrespectful of those who do. Your mama tells me that you're pretty well behaved and shy, but I'd watch out for signs of irrationality. All right?

She pulls her thumb to her breast.

MADAME ZOE

I guess the most important aspect of your thumbs is the, ahem, over all size. Uh, what was it, do you know, that caused...?

Mom speaks out from the couch she is sitting on

MRS HANKSHAW

Don't know; the doctors don't know...

SISSY

Just lucky I guess.

MADAME ZOE

Do you study history in school? Galileo, Descartes, Newton? Leibnitz had very large thumbs; Voltaire's were enormous, but, heh heh, just pickles compared with yours.

SISSY

What about Crazy Horse?

MADAME ZOE

Crazy Horse? You mean the Indian? Nobody that I've ever heard of ever troubled to study the paws of savages.

Well, I guess that about covers the three-fifty charge...

Madame Zoe lets go of Sissy's thumbs and wipes her hands on her kimono.

MRS. HANKSHAW
Husband.

Mrs. Hankshaw withdraws a bill from her rat-skin bag.

MADAME ZOE
Beg your pardon?

MRS. HANKSHAW
Husband. Will she find a husband?

MADAME ZOE
Oh, I see.

Madame Zoe takes Sissy's hand and gives it the old tall-dark-stranger squint.

MADAME ZOE
I see men in your life, honey. I also see women, lots of women.

She raises her eyes to meet Sissy's looking for an admission of the "tendency", but there is no signal.

Mrs. Hankshaw does not approve.

MADAME ZOE
A husband, no doubt about it, though he is years away. There are children, too. Five, maybe six, but the husband is not the father. They will inherit your characteristics.

Mrs. Hankshaw, aghast, has heard plenty, and she ushers her daughter out of the trailer as if she were leading her from a burning cocktail lounge.

TITLE ACROSS THE SCREEN:

COWGIRL INTERLUDE

(Delores del Ruby)

EXT. BADLANDS DAY

Views of vast vistas of arid grasslands, open and unmodulated, thirsty and exposed.

At the western edge of the DAKOTAS, the monotony of the landscape, now gradually tilting toward the Rockies, is interrupted by the Badlands – sculptured canyons so deep and chaotic they can break a devil's heart.

Between the grasslands and the eerie badlands ruins, there lies a narrow band of humpy hills, green and pastoral. The hills are carpeted with midlength prairie grass.

The Rubber Rose buildings are clustered at the badlands end at the base of a butte, higher, broader and longer than any in its vicinity, known as Siwash Ridge. a sign over the entry of the ranch reads:

Welcome to the Rubber Rose Ranch

(the largest all-girl ranch in the west)

Delores del Ruby arrives at the Rubber Rose Ranch, carrying a whip at her side and batting an educated lash at the surrounding sights.

DELORES

I've traveled through the Yucatan with a circus, popping false eyelashes off a trained monkey with a bullwhip. When I ate peyote one night and had a vision. Niwet, kame, the Mother Goddess, came to me on the back of a doe, hummingbirds sipping the tears she was shedding, crying 'Delores, you must lead my daughters against their natural enemy. You must come to the Rubber Rose Ranch and prepare for your mission, the details of which will be revealed to you in a third vision....' That night I whipped the shit out of my black lover and ran away. For a while I drove around, making a living selling peyote buttons to hippies, until I made my way here...

A snake crosses the road in front of her, and she takes her

whip and whirls it around her head. The snake that is crawling across the dusty road that leads to the ranch is carrying a card under its forked tongue.

Delores snaps her whip at the snake and picks the card out of his mouth and lets it fly in the air.

Delores catches it..... The card is the Queen of Spades.

EXT. ROAD DAY

Sissy is thirty years old now wearing a trademark colored jumpsuit. She is saying these words still: "Greater freedom of movement."

Sissy sticks out her thumb, even though there is no traffic.

A plane is flying overhead. Sissy hitches it; and the plane's flight path curves with in response to her gesture. A squirrel running by stops to look. The bus on the other side of the road skids to a stop and two cars coming her way stop as well.

INT. CAR DAY

The man driving looks over the back seat to the hitchiker behind him.

INT. BUS DAY

The bus driver does the same.

EXT. ROAD

From the look of her Sissy is a very seasoned hitchhiker, and she turns around relatively unimpressed with the fact that a car has stopped for her.

SISSY'S VIEW. The man driving is black-skinned, beret-topped and he has four smiling gold teeth and six shiny brass saxaphones in the back seat. He wears a gardenia in his lapel and tokes on a short joint.

SISSY
Going north?

MAN
You bet your raggedy white ass I am.

Sissy gets in.

He turns up the volume of his radio and rockets north.

INT. LINCOLN CONTINENTAL DAY

Sissy ventures into her pocket and pulls out a slice of cheese and offers it to him. He now gets a better look at her unusual thumbs. They are elegant, but large boned, and disproportionate. They are banana shaped boats that makes it a little awkward to hold onto the cheese.

MAN

(taking an alarming
interest in her thumbs)

Thanks.

SISSY

American Cheese. The king of road
food.

He eats the cheese, and worries about the thumbs. He tokes on the joint between his fingers.

MAN

Are you in show business?

SISSY

I was a successful model once.

MAN

For magazines?

SISSY

I was the Yoni Yum feminine-hygiene
Dew girl from 1965 to 1970, but got
laid off.

MAN

So now you're bummin' around?

SISSY

Yep.

MAN

Hitchhiking?

SISSY

I'm the best.

MAN

You're the best?

SISSY

When I was younger, I hitchhiked one hundred and twenty-seven hours without stopping, without food or sleep, crossed the continent twice in six days, cooled my thumbs in both oceans and caught rides after midnight on unlighted highways.

MAN

Whoeee!

SISSY

As I developed, however, I grew more concerned with subtleties and nuances of style. Time in terms of M.P.H. no longer interested me. I began to hitchhike in something akin to geological time: slow, ancient, vast. When I am really moving, stopping car after car after car, moving so freely, so clearly, so delicately that even the sex maniacs and the cops can only blink and let me pass, then I embody the rhythms of the universe. I am in a state of grace.

The man listening to her takes another toke on his joint.

EXT. ROAD DAY

A view down the road of the Lincoln Continental going swiftly in its direction.

CREDIT INTERLUDE featuring the song "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" as sung by (an undetermined country or pop star like k.d. lang or Bob Dylan) in an old television Kine-scope piece of film like you might see on early 1950's television sets.

Between Sissy watching this image on old motel televisions, there are also IMAGES of roads, cars, trucks, highways, thumbs, gas stations and deserts gliding by in a flow of natural hitchhiking beauty.

EXT. POST OFFICE DAY

Sissy gets out of a large eighteen wheel truck and walks into a United States Post Office.

INT. POST OFFICE DAY

Sissy at the window picking up some mail, and opening a lavender colored letter that reeks of perfume, she is surprised to read this:

Sissy, Precious Being, How are you, my extraordinary one? I worry so. Next time you are near Manhattan, do ring me up. There is a man to whom I simply must introduce you. Thrill!!
-The Countess

Sissy looks at the envelope and return address. Elaborately embossed is the Countess' logo...

INT. COUNTESS'S OFFICE DAY

The elaborately embossed envelope is now being sealed.. The Countess gives it a licking... Beside him is a young watercolorist named Julian.

THE COUNTESS

I will send this out to Sissy, she should get it in a week, and you will be able to meet her. When I send a letter to Sissy, duplicates must be sent to U.S. Post Office Boxes in LaConner, Taos, Pine Ridge, Cherokee and that other place, for her to pick up... Why she's probably out there right now in Hibbing, Minnesota, or Deluth, Montana... hitching her way across the country.

INT. TRUCKERS CAB NIGHT

Sissy is talking to a trucker as they pass down the road.

SISSY

Right off, I don't remember how old I was when I found out I was part Indian. My mamma's family, a lot of them, had lived out West, in the Dakotas, and one of them had married a squaw. Siwash tribe. My pleasure in Indianhood and my passion for car

travel might be incongruous if not mutually exclusive..... After all, the first car that ever stopped for me had been named in honor of the great chief of the Ottawa: Pontiac.....

In the distance, Sissy spies her destination. NEW YORK CITY.

SISSY
NEW YORK CITY. It's still a helluva town....

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING DAY

Sissy gets out of the truck and looks up at a large building.

INT. COUNTESS'S OFFICE DAY

THE COUNTESS
Sit down dear, do sit down.

Sissy Hankshaw takes a seat. The Countess lifts a dusty decanter.

THE COUNTESS
Take a load off those lovely tootsies.
Yes, sit right down. Would you fancy some sherry?

The decanter is empty, a stiff fly lies feet up on it's lip.

THE COUNTESS
Shit O goodness, I'm all out of sherry; how about some Red Ripple?

He reaches into a midget refrigerator beside his desk and pulls out some pop wine.

THE COUNTESS
You know what Red Ripple is don't you? It's Kool-Aid with a hard on.
Tee Hee.

Sissy manages a polite smile. She looks at a heavily finger printed glass.

THE COUNTESS
(he toasts)

To my own special Sissy. Cheers! And welcome. So my letter brought ya flying, eh? Where were you? Salt Lake City? La Conner? Well, I may have a little surprise for you. But first, tell me about yourself. It's been six months, hasn't it? In some circles that's half a year. How are you?

SISSY

Tired...

THE COUNTESS

That's the very first time in the eons that I've known you that I've ever heard you complain. And now you're tired, poor darling.

SISSY

A born freak can only go uphill.

THE COUNTESS

Freak, schmeek. Most of us are freaks in one way or another. Try being born a male Russian countess into a white middle class Baptist family in Mississippi and you'll see what I mean.

SISSY

I've always been proud of the way nature singled me out. It's the people who have been deformed by society I feel sorry for. I've been steady moving for eleven years and some months. Maybe I should rest up for a spell, I'm not as young as I used to be.

THE COUNTESS

Shit O goodness, you won't be thirty for another year, and you're more beautiful than ever.

SISSY

Does that mean you might have an assignment for me?

The Countess taps his monocle with his cigarette holder. He looks on his wall, and on a poster advertising a feminine hygiene product, Yoni Yum Dew Spray, stands Sissy Hankshaw, her thumbs neatly hidden, chopped off by the borders of the photograph.

THE COUNTESS

You were the Yoni Yum girl from,
let's see,

(peruses the ad layouts
on the wall)

from nineteen sixty-eight through
nineteen seventy. You've always
smelled so nice. Like a little sister.
The irony has just killed me. You,
the Dew Girl, one of the few girls
who doesn't need Dew. I loath the
stink of females! They are so sweet
the way God made them, then they
start fooling around with men and
soon they're stinking. Like rotten
mushrooms, like an excessively
chlorinated swimming pool, like a
tuna fish's retirement party. They
all stink. From the Queen of England
to Bonanza Jellybean, they stink.

SISSY

Bonanza Jellybean?

THE COUNTESS

What? Oh yes. Tee-hee. Jellybean.

The Countess's jaw muscles calm down, his dentures ease into
a samba...

THE COUNTESS

She's a young thing who works on my
ranch. Real name is Sally Jones or
something wooden like that. She's
cute as a hot fudge taco, and, of
course, it takes verve to change
one's name so charmingly. But she
stinks like a slut just the same.

SISSY

Your ranch?

THE COUNTESS

Oh my dear yes, I bought a little ranch out West, sort of a tribute to the women of America who have cooperated with me in eliminating their odor by using my vaginal products, Dew spray mist and Yoni Yum spray powder. A tax write-off, actually.

He looks out his window as a squirrel crosses Park Avenue.

THE COUNTESS

Sissy, Sissy, blushing bride, you can desist from wearing paths in those forgotten highways. The Countess has arranged a job for you. And what a job...

SISSY

A job for me?

THE COUNTESS

I am once more about to make advertising history. And only you, the original Yoni Yum/Dew Girl, could possibly assist me.

The Countess hands Sissy an article that she reads clenched in her fist.

SISSY

The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday female deodorant sprays may cause such harmful reactions as blisters, burns and rashes. Although the FDA judges that the reported reactions are not sufficient to justify removal of these products from the market, they are sufficient to warrant the proposed mandatory label warnings.

THE COUNTESS

Shit O dear, that's enough to make me asthmatic. The nerve of those twits. What do they know about female odor? Don't interrupt. Here's my concept. My ranch out West? It's a beauty ranch. Oh, it's got a few

head of cattle for atmosphere and tax purposes. But it's a beauty ranch, a place where unhappy women – divorcees and widows, mainly – can go to lose weight, remove wrinkles, change their hair styles and pretty themselves up for the next disappointment. My ranch is named the Rubber Rose, after the Rubber Rose douche bag, my own invention, and bless its little red bladder, the most popular douche bag in the world. So get this. It's on the migratory flight path of the whooping cranes. The last flock of wild whooping cranes left in existence. Well, these cranes stop off at my little pond – Siwash Lake, it's called – twice a year, autumn and spring, and spend a few days each time, resting up, eating, doing whatever whooping cranes do. I've never seen them, understand, but I hear they're magnificent. Very big specimens – I mean, huge mothers – and white as snow, to coin a phrase, except for black tips on their wings and tail feathers, and bright red heads. Now, whooping cranes, in case you didn't know it, are noted for their mating dance. It's just the wildest show in nature.

It's probably the reason why birdwatching used to be so popular with old maids and deacons. Picture these rare, beautiful, gigantic birds in full dance – leaping six feet off the mud, arching their backs, flapping their wings, strutting low to the ground. Dears, it's overwhelming. And picture the birds doing their sex dance on TV. Right there on the home screen, creation's most elaborate sex ritual – yet clean and pure enough to suit the Pope. With lovely Sissy Hankshaw in the foreground. In a white gown, red hood attached, and big feathery sleeves trimmed in black. In a very

subdued imitation of the female whooping crane, she dance/walks over to a large nest in which there sits a can of Yoni Yum. And a can of Dew. Off-camera, a string quartet is playing Debussy. A sensuous voice is reading a few poetic lines about courtship and love. Are you starting to get it? Doesn't it make the hair on your neck stand up and applaud? My very goodness gracious! Grandiose, lyrical, erotic and Girl Scout-oriented; you can't top it. I've hired a crew of experts from Walt Disney Studios, the best wildlife cinematographers around. You're my eternal favorite. Princess Grace herself couldn't be better, not even if she had your personality which she doesn't; Anyway, dear, I'm out of photography now and into water colors. Ah how circuitous conversation is! We're back at the beginning. The exact man I've wanted you to meet is my artist the watercolorist.

Sissy dares a sip of Red Ripple.

SISSY

If you don't want me to pose for him, why do you want me to meet him?

THE COUNTESS

Purely personal. I believe you might enjoy one another.

SISSY

But Countess...

THE COUNTESS

Now, now. Don't get exasperated. I realize that you've always avoided all but the most rudimentary involvements with men, and I might add, you've been wise. Heterosexual relationships seem to lead only to marriage. For men, marriage is a matter of efficient logistics: The male gets his food, bed, laundry,

TV, pussy, offspring and creature comforts all under one roof, where he doesn't have to dissipate his psychic energy thinking about them too much, then he is free to go out and fight the battles of life, which is what existence is all about. But for a woman marriage is surrender.

The Countess refills his glass. The squirrel starts across Park Avenue again but doesn't make it. The uniformed chauffeur gets out of a limousine and holds the crushed animal up where it can be seen by an elderly woman passenger.

THE COUNTESS

But here you are, still a virgin – you are virginal yet, aren't you?

SISSY

Why, yes, technically. Jack Kerouac and I came awfully close, but he was afraid of me, I think...

THE COUNTESS

Yes, well, what I'm getting at is that there comes a time when it is psychologically impossible for a woman to lose her virginity. She can't wait too long, you know. Now, there's no reason why you must lose yours. I mean, just ponder it a bit, that's all.

SISSY

(her brow spaghettied)

What makes you think this watercolorist and I would develop a romantic relationship?

THE COUNTESS

I can't be certain that you would. But what have you got to lose?

SISSY

Well, okay. I'll try it. I don't see the point in it, but I'll try it. Just for you. It's kind of silly, actually, me going out with an artist in New York City. However...

THE COUNTESS

Good, good, good... you'll enjoy it,
you'll see. Julian is a gentleman.

Suddenly the Countess swivels in his desk chair and leans forward. Lowering his wine glass, he focuses directly, intensely into Sissy's blue eyes. His smile widens.

THE COUNTESS

By the way, Sissy... he's a full
blooded Indian.

A title:

COWGIRL INTERLUDE

INT. RUBBER ROSE outhouse DAY

The Outhouse Radio is playing "The Starving Armenians Polka" and Bonanza Jellybean and Delores del Ruby are in the privy, caught in the rain.

JELLY

Well, I'm not scared of a little
rain.

DELORES

Me neither.

JELLY

Might as well brave it.

DELORES

Right. I don't know about you but
I'm sure not sweet enough to melt.

Delores flicks her whip at a sweat bee that has taken refuge in the privy and hits the photograph of Dale Evans upon which it has lit.

Jelly looks out the door of the outhouse across a cut green lawn to a bunkhouse where we can see a gathering of other cowgirls.

There is a fly buzz and a distant polka yip. Way off horse lips flutter.

Bonanza spies a picture of Sissy Hankshaw, an advertisement

for Yoni Yum Dew Spray mist, on the privy wall.

JELLY

(musing)

Someday..... if that Sissy Hankshaw ever shows up here, I'm gonna teach her how to hypnotize a chicken. Chickens are the easiest critters on Earth to hypnotize. If you can look a chicken in the eyes for tens seconds, it's yours forever.

INT. BUNKHOUSE DAY

A meeting is in progression in the bunkhouse that morning. Mary is addressing the group.

MARY

I want to complain that some of the cowgirls have been sleeping two to a bunk again, in violation of the agreement that "crimes against nature" are to be confined to the hayloft.

DEBBIE

I don't care who lay with whom or where or how, but the moaners, groaners and screamers ought to turn down their volume when others are trying to sleep or meditate.

Some of the younger cowgirls blush.

BIG RED

I want to complain about the food around here! It's rotten to the core.

A round of support from the other cowgirls in the form of cattle calls.

INT. OUTHOUSE DAY

Jelly and Delores are getting ready to run through the rain, when all of a sudden, Jelly spies a barefoot cowgirl – it's Debbie – run across the yard in her karate robe, jump on the Exercycle that is rusting in the weeds and begin pumping the pedals furiously in the yammering rain.

DELORES

My sacred crocodile! She's flipped.

But in a minute, others follow Debbie, everyone of them, in fact; the entire bunkhouse load of them, some thirty young cowgirls, squealing, giggling, They slide and roll on the wet grass, push each other into the mud that is forming by the corral fence, chase one another in and out of the thick folds of rain draperies, stamp their cute feet in puddles and do bellyflops into the overflowing horse trough.

The cowgirls frolic until, as suddenly as it has come, the rain goes away. Play ceases. They are panting like puppies as they lean against one another or pick clods of mud from one another's hair.

ELAINE

I move that the meeting be adjourned.

DEBBIE

At the end of the endless game, there is friendship.

HEATHER

What the heck did she mean by that!

JELLY

Just that in Heaven all business is conducted this way.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY NIGHT

In the lobby, the doors of an elevator open revealing Sissy inside wearing a buttoned up dress. Very formal looking for her.

There is Julian standing in the lobby. He turns and walks toward Sissy. He is wearing a rather formal looking plaid sport coat with blue cummerbund. He extends his hand to meet her, and (perhaps at the sight of Sissy's thumbs) Julian has an asthma attack, doubling over in front of her.

Sissy doesn't know whether to assist Julian or flee.

From the other side of the lobby, two WELL-GROOMED COUPLES, white, mid-thirties and upper middle class come to the rescue. The younger of the men, RUPERT, takes charge. He breaks an inhaler of dinephrine under Julian's nose.

RUPERT

We'd better take you home.

In the red of embarrassment, Julian looks more Indian than he had previously. Wheezing, he speaks:

JULIAN

I beg your pardon. I've been enthralled with your photographs for years. When the Countess hinted that you might like to meet me – he never explained why – I was ready to paint for him free of charge. And now I had to go and spoil it.

EXT. STREET NIGHT

Rupert is helping Julian to the street. Rupert is a salesman for a publishing house. His wife Carla, a homemaker, as they say. The other couple breaks down into Howard and Marie Barth, both copywriters for an ad agency.

Howard hails a cab and Carla and Marie flutter around Sissy.

MARIE

This is dreadful.

(lowering her voice
confidentially)

You know, asthma attacks are brought on by emotional stress. Poor Julian is so high strung. The excitement of meeting you – my dear, you look so stunning! – must have upset his chemical balance.

Carla nods. Everyone is piling into the taxi.

RUPERT

Come on, Sissy, don't be afraid of us.

SISSY

I've never ridden in a cab. The whole idea of paying for a ride makes my thumbs hurt.

Sissy is forced to suffer the indignity of riding in a vehicle she wasn't responsible for flagging with her own thumbs.

CARLA

It'll be all right, dear. It isn't
as serious as it sounds.

INT. CAB NIGHT

Carla starts to pat Sissy's hand, then decides to leave the thumbs to themselves.

The six of them are squeezed into the taxi. Sissy looks out the window of the taxi:

SISSY'S VIEW as the taxi stops at a light, she can see a newsstand headline on the front page of the New York Daily News:

THE CHINK SUMS IT UP, SAYS LIFE IS HARD IF YOU THINK IT'S HARD.

EXT. JULIAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

THE TAXI stops in front of Julian's building. It discharges its passengers.

INT. JULIAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

INSIDE Howard mixes Scotch and sodas, Rupert fills a syringe from a vial of aminophylline he has taken from its place behind a gelatin salad mold in the refrigerator. He gives Julian an injection.

RUPERT

There, that ought to beat them
bronchial buggers into submission.

He turns to Sissy.

RUPERT

I was a medic in the Army. I really
should have become a doctor.
Sometimes, though, I feel that pushing
books is a whole lot like pushing
medicine. Think of books as pills. I
have pills that cure ignorance and
pills that cure boredom. I have pills
to elevate moods and pills to open
people's eyes to the awful truth...

CARLA

Too bad you don't have a pill for

bullshit.

Carla smiles as if she were joking, but she'd said it tartly.
Rupert glares and takes a big bite of Scotch.

HOWARD

(changing the subject)

Where do you live, Miss Hankshaw?

SISSY

I'm staying with the Countess.

HOWARD

I know, but where do you reside when
you aren't visiting New York?

SISSY

I don't.

HOWARD

You don't?

SISSY

Well, no, I don't reside anywhere in
particular. I just keep moving.

Everyone looks a bit astonished including the recumbent
Julian.

HOWARD

A traveler, eh?

SISSY

You might say that, although I don't
think of it as traveling.

CARLA

How do you think of it?

SISSY

As moving.

CARLA

Oh.

MARIE

How... unusual...

HOWARD

Mmmmm...

Rupert bites into his Scotch again. Julian issues a watery wheeze. Then, silence.

CARLA

Rupert, before you get too engrossed in your research on Scotch as a cure for aging, don't you think you'd better phone Elaine's and cancel our dinner reservations?

Sissy leaves her chair and wanders about the apartment. Which is full of books and shelves.

RUPERT (O.S.)

What would we do without you, Carla? Without our little efficiency expert, Carla, everything would just go to hell. Carla is thinking about running for mayor next year, aren't you, Carla?

CARLA (O.S.)

Up yours, Herr Doktor Book Salesman. Will the demands of your medical practice allow you to call Elaine's or shall I?

MARIE (O.S.)

Oh let me do it.

Sissy is intrigued by an antique here and an object d'art there, but she knows she is in an alien environment.

INT. JULIAN'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Sissy enters a bedroom There is a covered birdcage. She sits upon the bed listening for a 'cheep' from the birds.

And gradually she reclines. Then turning her head to the side against the bedspread:

SISSY

No Indian blankets... no Indian blankets...

And she blacks out. And the sound drifts away in waves, so there is only the whistle of a distant wind through the mortar

of the apartment building...

...Until one by one, we see button necks freed. Soon Sissy can feel it.

Someone is undressing her. In a voice webby with sleep she lifts her head up, and sees Howard and Marie.

SISSY

Where are the others?

HOWARD

Oh, Rupert and Carla had a little hassle and went home.

MARIE

Julian fell asleep on the couch; we covered him up.

HOWARD

We thought that we should make you comfortable too.

Sissy thinks this is nice, but wonders, however, why they are both in their underwear.

SISSY

Yes, thanks...

Between the two of them, they have gotten Sissy out of her dress in no time. Sissy feels she should apologize for not having on a brassiere.

Marie slips out of her own brassiere and moves her bare bosom close to Sissy's.

MARIE

Mine are fuller but yours are more perfectly shaped.

HOWARD

Highly debatable. I'll wager they're the exact same size.

Howard cups his left hand about a Marie breast and his right about one of Sissy's. He weighs them in his palms, squeezes them the way an honest grocer squeezes excess water from a lettuce, and spreads his fingers to sample their circumference.

HOWARD

Hmm. Yours are larger, Marie, but Miss Hankshaw's – Sissy's – are more firm. You'd think they would have started to droop; I mean, from not wearing a bra.

MARIE

Howard! Watch your manners. You've made her blush. Here, Sissy, let me compare.

Marie seizes Sissy's free breast, quickly, like a monkey picking a fruit, rolling it about in her hungry little finger, rubbing it against her chin and cheeks...

...and...

...it was like her earlier days as a hitchhiker.... nostalgic..... tropical plums.

SISSY

(in ecstasy)

This place is finer than the place I live!

Like a disc jockey from Paradise, Howard flips Marie over and plays her B side. Every now and then she reaches for Sissy to include her, but the laws of physics insist on being obeyed.

Over and over Marie calls Sissy's name with half-closed eyes.

The Barths are really going at it, Marie yowling like a cat.

The POODLE in the kitchen begins to growl.

SISSY

So this is what it's like... so this is what it's really like.

INT. LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Sissy bounces out of the bed and patters through the living room and crawls under the cover with Julian. Julian stirs awake.

JULIAN

Oh, Sissy. I am sorry about all the
fuss.

Julian and Sissy embrace and go at it under the covers But
suddenly: Julian stops after a brief climax.

JULIAN
(with downcast eyes)
I apologize.

Sissy cradles Julian and comforts him.

JULIAN
It is the measure of Western
Civilization that it can encompass
in harmony, balance off, as it were,
such divergent masterworks as A
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM and THE
AMERICAN DREAM, as the dome of the
Sistine Chapel and the ceiling of
the Paris opera.

Sissy sits up, her eyes moping about the apartment, looking
but not seeing the macrame wallhangings, the volumes of Robert
Frost.

JULIAN
What's the matter?

After a while Sissy answers.

SISSY
I'm cold.

JULIAN
Here. I'll turn down the air
conditioner.

SISSY
It's not the air conditioner that's
making me cold. Nothing moves in
here. Not even your birds.

Sissy gets out of bed and begins to dress.

JULIAN
What are you doing?

SISSY

Getting dressed. I've got to go.

JULIAN

But I don't want you to leave. Please stay. We can go to dinner. I owe you a dinner. And tonight... we can... really make love.

SISSY

I have to go, Julian.

JULIAN

Why? Why do you have to go?

SISSY

(somewhat frantic)

My thumbs hurt. I've made a mistake. I've been negligent. I haven't exercised. I have to hitchhike a little bit every day, no matter what. It's like a musician practicing his scales. When I don't practice, my timing gets off, my thumbs get stiff and sore.

EXT. CITY DAWN

Sissy trembles while she kisses her thumbs.

SISSY

I will hitch with you, out where tall birds wade in a lake named for my Siwash kin. Out where Smokey the Bear lay down his shovel to romp with more playful beasts. Out where starlight has no enemies and the badland wind no friends. Out where the boogie stops and the woogie begins.

INT. TRUCK DAY

And Sissy is now traveling in a truck passing Fourteenth Street on her way to the Geo. Washington Bridge.

View of that Bridge as the truck crosses it to New Jersey.

View of the wilds of New Jersey as Sissy travels to the West.

INT. COUNTESS' OFFICE

The Countess is on the phone.

THE COUNTESS

So she left town. Well, that shouldn't surprise you. Leaving town is what Sissy is all about. But tell me, how did she strike you?

Julian is on the other end of the phone.

JULIAN

Extraordinary!

THE COUNTESS

She's obviously that. Jesus! Which would you rather have, a million dollars or one of Sissy's thumbs full of pennies?

JULIAN

Oh, you! I'm not talking about her hands. They're difficult to ignore, I confess, but I'm speaking of her whole being. Her whole being is extraordinary. The way she talks, for example. She's so articulate.

THE COUNTESS

It's high time you realized, honey babe, that a woman doesn't have to give the best years of her life to Radcliffe or Smith in order to speak the English language.

JULIAN

Countess. I'm really in a dither. She's turned my head.

THE COUNTESS

Ninety degrees to the left, I hope. How does she feel about you?

JULIAN

I think she's disappointed that I'm not more, ah, sort of atavistic. She's got some naive, sentimental notions about Indians. I'm sure she

liked me, though; but.... then she left town.

THE COUNTESS

She always leaves town, you dummy. That doesn't mean anything. What about in bed? How does she like it in bed?

Julian pauses for a very long moment.

JULIAN

How does she like what in bed?

THE COUNTESS

Like what?

The Countess' teeth chatter in his mouth.

THE COUNTESS

What do you think?

JULIAN

Well.... er...

THE COUNTESS

Shit O dear, Julian. Do you mean to tell me you didn't get it on?

JULIAN

Oh, we didn't get it all the way on.

THE COUNTESS

Whose fault was that?

JULIAN

I suppose it was mine. Yes, it definitely was my fault.

THE COUNTESS

What do they do to you boys in those Ivy league schools, anyway? Strap you down and pump the Nature out of you? They can even press the last drop of Nature out of a Mohawk buck. Why, send a shaman or cannibal to Yale for four years and all he'd be fit for would be a desk in the military-industrial complex and a

seat in the third row at a Neil Simon comedy. Jesus H.M.S. Christ! If Harvard or Princeton could get hold of the Chink for a couple of semesters they'd turn him into a candidate for the Bow Tie Wing of the Hall of Wimps. Oogie boogie.

JULIAN

If we Ivy Leaguers aren't earthy enough to suit you hillbillies, at least we don't go around indulging in racist terms such as 'Chink.' Next thing I know, you'll be calling me 'chief.'

THE COUNTESS

Chink's the guy's name, for Christ's sake.

JULIAN

What guy?

THE COUNTESS

Aw, he's some old fart holyman who lives in the hills out West. Gives my ranch the creeps and the willies, too. But though he be old and dirty, he's alive, I'll bet, clear down to his toes. They don't have his juice in a jar in New Haven. Well I suppose that I'll have to write Sissy out on the road.

EXT. ROAD DAY

Sissy makes little puffs of dust as she walks.

From the direction of the ranch a VW Microbus is approaching. It is painted with mandalas, lamaistic dorjes and symbols representing "the clear light of the void."

When the Microbus draws alongside Sissy it stops. Inside are two men and a woman. They are approximately twenty-four years old.

WOMAN

Are you a pilgrim?

SISSY

No, I'm more of an Indian The trio
doesn't smile.

DRIVER

She means are you going to see the
Chink?

SISSY

Oh, I may and I may not. But seeing
him is not my main objective out
here.

DRIVER

That's good. Because he won't see
you. We came all the way from
Minneapolis to see him and the crazy
bastard tried to stone us to death

OTHER MAN

Yeah, but I no longer believe that
guy's a master. He's just a dirty,
uptight old mountain man. Why, he
pulled out his pecker and shook it
at Barbara. I'd stay away from there
if I were you, lady.

Sissy walks on leaving the people in the bus arguing about
whether the Chink's rock-shower and pecker-wag actually had
been intended as spiritual messages.

EXT. ROAD DAY

WALKING down the long dirt road, Sissy stops to take a
breather and sits down on a log.

Sissy thinking and looking into the clouds.

Waves of grasses whisper her name: Ssssssssss, Ssssssssssss
Sissy.

Meadowlarks squander their songs on her as she begins to
squirm on the log.

A Lincoln Continental drives up suddenly. Sissy barely has
time to zip up.

The Cadillac stops in front of Sissy. A teenaged girl in a
Stetson is at the wheel. The rear door of the limousine opens

and a refined matronly voice calls from the void.

MISS ADRIAN

By any chance are you Sissy Hankshaw?

SISSY

Yes I am.

A chic middle-aged woman leans out of the car.

MISS ADRIAN

My goodness. Why didn't you telephone?
Someone would have driven into
Mottburg to pick you up. I'm Miss
Adrian. From the ranch. The Countess
wrote that I should expect you. Get
in, won't you? You must be exhausted.
Gloria, assist Miss Hankshaw with
her luggage.

Gloria nods at Sissy amicably but doesn't make a move to help her.

Sissy swings her sack into the roomy vehicle. Before she gets in she flashes her thumb to hitch a ride.

The instant that Sissy shuts the door the cowgirl chauffeur floors the Cadillac and it lurches away in a puff of dust.

INT. CADDY DAY

Sitting up after the bothersome lurch of the car.

MISS ADRIAN

Little twit.

(turns to Sissy)

You really ought to have phoned. We
were just in Mottburg escorting some
guests to the afternoon train.

(sighs)

More guests leaving ahead of schedule.
Three checked out today. They decided
to transfer to Elizabeth Arden's
Maine Chance spa in Phoenix, Arizona.
It costs two hundred and fifty dollars
a week less at the Rubber Rose, so
why are our guests leaving and going
to Elizabeth Arden's?

Miss Adrian pushes a button that sends a partition glass between her and the cowgirl driver. Gloria starts laughing silently on the other side of the glass.

MISS ADRIAN

I'll tell you why, it's that plague of cowgirls. They've gradually infiltrated every sector of our program. The one named Debbie considers herself an expert on exercising and diet. With Bonanza Jellybean's permission and against my explicit orders, she's been coercing the guests into trying something called kundalini yoga. Do you know what that is? It's trying to mentally force a serpent of fire to crawl up your spinal column. Miss Hankshaw, our guests can't comprehend kundalini yoga, let alone do it. Yesterday, she ordered a new cookbook by a Tibetan Negro, entitled Third Eye in the Kitchen: Himalayan Soul Food. God knows what that will be like. The little barbarians are destroying everything that I've built, mocking all that the company stands for. And there's a new one, one they call del Ruby. She has the good will of a scorpion. I've considered it prudent to avoid a confrontation that might further upset the guests. But now that the season is practically over – we operate April through September – and the Countess is finally coming...

EXT. RUBBER ROSE DAY

The limousine pulls up in the drive.

MISS ADRIAN'S VOICE

Our Ranch has all the latest in modern facilities...

INT. BEAUTY RANCH DAY

We see women having facials.

MISS ADRIAN'S VOICE

We have a facial wing, and next to that is the Hair Barn...

INT. HAIR BARN DAY

Sissy is being given a tour by Miss Adrian. A variety of hairdos are witnessed.

MISS ADRIAN

We have a team of fifteen hair experts from all over the world.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM DAY

MISS ADRIAN

And fanny flab flies off in this room at the rate of six hundred and seventy-five pounds a day... that's a lot of salted ham, Sissy....

INT. MAIN LODGE DAY

Sissy and Miss Adrian walk through the lodge lobby, guests and cowgirls are conducting a variety of activities:

A BIRD EXPERT projects slides of whooping cranes on the wall and is giving a lecture about the habits of the birds.

In the center of the room COWGIRL DEBBIE is leading a mixture of cowgirls and guests in a meditative chant as they reach high above their heads in a yoga exercise.

Miss Adrian stops in front of the registration desk and Sissy catches glimpses of the chaotic lobby.

MISS ADRIAN

Our special guest Miss Sissy Hankshaw is with us.

The receptionist hands Miss Adrian a key to Sissy's room.

A COWGIRL makes a face at Sissy as she walks by carrying a tray of herbal teas.

A representative of the film crew is being intimidated by a Cowgirl who is looking through his camera lenses and shaking them and listening to them like you would put a shell up to your ear to hear the ocean.

COWGIRL

Cool! We're going to make a movie!...

Another cowgirl, BIG RED, is lifting a piece of furniture and passes it to her accomplice.

BIG RED

Get rid of the furniture.... it's too masculine... Get rid of all the furniture and use it for kindling!!! Break away from these pig-like chauvinist masculine influences....

Miss Adrian looks on helplessly.... she grabs Sissy and leads her out of the lobby.

EXT. CORRAL DAY

Miss Adrian and Sissy walk out the back door of the Ranch and out near a corral, to the sound of gunfire.

MISS ADRIAN

O merciful Jesus! They're murdering the guests!

One of the FILM CREW MEMBERS is hanging out in the corral wearing a shiny jacket with DISNEY printed on the back.

Miss Adrian grabs him by the shoulders and shakes him.

MISS ADRIAN

Where are the guests?

MAN

Take it easy, lady. They went on a short ride with the cowgirls. Rode over the hill yonder. You're Miss Adrian, aren't you? We need to talk to you about the filming.

MISS ADRIAN

Not now, you fool, not now. Those crazed bitches have led innocent women out and are slaughtering them at this moment. We'll all be killed. Oh! Ohhh!

Another CAMERAMAN spits out a wad of chewing gum.

CAMERAMAN

There's a slaughter going on all right, but it's not the fat ladies that are getting it. Your hired hands are killing the cattle.

MISS ADRIAN

The cattle? They're killing the cows? All of them?

CAMERAMAN

(interrupted while putting a zoom lens on his camera)

That's what they said, Miss Adrian.

A devilish young cowgirl is sitting on a fence nearby. Miss Adrian addresses her.

MISS ADRIAN

How dare you slaughter the Countess's cattle! What is a ranch without cows?

COWGIRL

We're going to replace them with goats. Most of the cattle are diseased and in pain. We're just putting them out of their misery. According to Bon-an-za Jellybean, the Rubber Rose is in-di-cat-ive of the Countess's values. He has purchased a cheap weak strain of cow to begin with and with improper care....

MISS ADRIAN

Oh heavens! I don't want to hear what Bonanza Jellybean has been telling you girls.... Come on Sissy. I'll show you to your quarters.

AND THE SUN SETS OVER THE CANYON, THE HILLS AND SIWASH RIDGE NEARBY.

THE CHINK, with his back to us looks down on the ranch from the ridge and watches Miss Adrian lead Sissy into a small guest cottage on the ranch.

A DISTANT COYOTE HOWLS, AND A FEW SCATTERED GUNSHOTS ARE

HEARD.

INT. RANCH COTTAGE MORNING

Sissy stirs in a nicely appointed guest cottage. A maid knocks on the door and serves Sissy breakfast in bed.

MAID

Excuse me, Miss. Do you care for your breakfast now?

Sissy sits up and rubs her eyes.

SISSY

Yeah. I feel a bit hungry.

The Maid puts the tray down, and the cloth that covers the food is lifted away to reveal a shocking display of grease and calories.

A vase of prairie asters stands over a double-meat cheeseburger, a package of Hostess Twinkies, a cold can of Dr. Pepper and a Three Musketeers bar.

Sissy is delighted.

SISSY

Road food. How did you know?

MAID

Well it is a change of our usual grapefruit and melba toast, I'm sure.

Sissy notices a card. It reads:

Compliments of Bonanza Jellybean

SISSY

Bonanza Jellybean....

MAID

She will be up to see you directly.

Sissy devours her meal. Out her window she can see women on exercycles, women doing jumping jacks and women in beauty parlors.

A FIST pounds on Sissy's door.

IN SAILS Jelly, a cowgirl so cute she makes Sissy blush just to look at her. She wears a tan Stetson with an aster pinned to it, a green satin shirt embroidered with rearing stallions snorting orange fire from their nostrils.

Her breasts bounce like dinner rolls that have gotten loaded on helium and, between red tinged cheeks, where more baby fat is taking its time maturing, she has a little smile that can cause minerals and plastics to remember their ancient animate connections.

Jelly grasps Sissy's elbow and sits on the side of the bed.

JELLY

Welcome, podner. By God, it's great to have you here. It's an honor.

Sorry I took so long getting to you, but we've had a mess of hard work these past few days – and a heap of planning to do.

SISSY

Er, you seem to know who I am, and maybe even what I am. Thanks for the breakfast.

JELLY

Oh, I know about Sissy Hankshaw, all right. I've done a little hitchhiking myself. Ah shucks, that's like telling Annie Oakley you're a sharpshooter because you once knocked a tomato can off a stump with a fieldstone. I'd heard tales about you from people I'd meet in jail cells and truckstops. I heard about your, uh, your, ah, your wonderful thumbs, and I heard how you were Jack Kerouac's girl friend...

Sissy sets her tray on the bedside table.

SISSY

No, I'm afraid that part isn't true. Jack was in awe of me and tracked me down. We spent a night talking and hugging in a corn field, but he was hardly my lover. Besides, I always travel alone.

JELLY

Well, that doesn't matter; that part never interested me anyway. The beatniks were before my time, and I never got anything outta the hippies but bad dope, clichés and the clap. But the example of your life helped me in my struggle to be a cowgirl.

The guests are huffing and puffing in between the pauses in conversation, in the background through the window in Sissy's room.

SISSY

Tell me about it.

JELLY

About...

SISSY

About being a cowgirl. What's it all about? When you say the word you make it sound like it was painted in radium on the side of a pearl.

JELLY

Cowgirls exist as an image. A fairly common image. The idea of cowgirls especially for little girls prevails in our culture. Therefore, it seems to me, the existence of cowgirls should prevail. Otherwise, they're being fooled. In the Rodeo Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City there are just two cowgirls. Two. And both of 'em are trick-riders. Trick-riding is what cowgirls have almost always done in rodeos. Our society sure likes to see its unconventional women do tricks. That's what prostitutes call it, you know: 'tricking.'

Jelly lays her hand atop the oval mound Sissy's thumb makes under the covers.

SISSY

You're political, then?

JELLY

No, ma'am. No way. There's girls on the Rubber Rose who are political, but I don't share their views. I got no cowgirl ideology to expound. "Politics is for people who have a passion for changing life but lack a passion for living it."

There is a moment when the two girls feel something between each other.

JELLY

Did that last comment sound too profound to be coming outta my mouth? It's not original. It's something I picked up from the Chink.

SISSY

Really? The Chink, huh? I've gathered that you sometimes speak with him. What else have you learned from the Chink?

JELLY

Learned from the Chink? Oh my. Ha ha. That's hard to say. We mostly.... Uh, a lot of his talk is pretty goofy.

Jelly pauses.

JELLY

Oh yeah, now that I think of it, the Chink taught me something about cowgirls. Did you realize that cowgirls have been around for many centuries? Long before America. In ancient India the care of the cattle was always left up to young women they called gopis. Being alone with the cows all the time, the gopis got awfully horny, just like we do here. Every gopi was in love with Krishna, a good-looking young god who played the flute like it was going out of style. When the moon was full, this Krishna would play his flute by a river and call the gopis to him. Then he would multiply himself sixteen

thousand times – one for each gopi –
and make love to each one the way
she most desired. There they were,
sixteen thousand gopis balling Krishna
on the river bank, and the energy of
their merging was so great that it
created a huge oneness, a total union
of love, and it was God. Wow! Quite
a picture, huh?

Sissy's thumb twitches. Jelly swallows hard. They gaze into
each other's eyes.

A WHISTLE pierces the sunlight outside the window.

JELLY

That couldn't be Krishna, could it?
A bit shrill for a flute. Just our
rotten luck.

Jelly walks to the window and exchanges hand signals with
someone outside.

JELLY

Gotta run now. Delores says I'm
needed. Somebody's here. Maybe it's
the Countess.

Jelly spins her six-shooter in her kewpie fingers.

JELLY

Sissy, cowgirl history is about to
be made. I'm damn glad you're here
to witness it.

She holsters her gun and blows Sissy a kiss, then is gone
out the door.

Sissy hops out of bed and from the window she can see cowgirls
gathering in a circle. Someone or something is in the center
of the circle.

Sissy zips herself into a red jumpsuit and hurries outside.

EXT. CORRAL DAY

What was in the center of the circle was a goat. Debbie was
scratching the animal's ears. She was hugging it.

KYM

It's cute. Way cuter than a cow.

DEBBIE

Goats are always testing you. They're like Zen masters. They can tell instantly if you're faking your feelings. So they play games with you to keep you true. People should go to goats instead of psychiatrists.

GLORIA

It's so loving.

Gloria cuts in on Debbie and gives the beast a hug.

HEATHER

Look at those playfully wise eyes.

GLORIA

Ooo! It licked me!

JELLY

More and more people are discovering that cow's milk isn't fit for human consumption. Billy West says if we can produce enough goat's milk on the ranch to make it worth his while, he'll run it into Fargo regularly.

She pauses and looks around the group in the circle.

DELORES

I'm aware that Tad Lucas rode broncs until her ninth month, but I don't think pregnant cowgirls are going to be any asset on this ranch. I hope you itchy clits who are sneaking down to the lake every night are taking precautions. It's bad enough we've got cranes coming; we don't need storks. I feel that those film makers should be removed from the Rubber Rose as soon as possible. Men can cause nothing but trouble here. I also feel that our guest
(she nods at Sissy)
should be excused while we discuss this matter further.

Hurt, Sissy leaves the group.

EXT. RANCH DAY

Views of Sissy in her Whooping crane outfit dancing to Debussy in front of the Disney film crew. The documentary being directed by an effusive Frenchman.

View of the camera crew training their long telephoto lenses on Siwash Lake. They all seem to be wearing the same trademark satin baseball jackets with one logo or another on their backs.

Another view of the lake, from above, from the Chink's point of view and our first view of THE CHINK. The Chink spies Sissy and Jelly coming over a ridge.

We cannot hear them at first, but Sissy and Jelly are talking.

JELLY

.....Delores zonks out on peyote at least once a week, but so far her Third Vision hasn't happened. Niwet, kame, the Mother Goddess has not gotten back in touch with her. Meanwhile she and Debbie are rivaling each other like a couple of crosstown high schools. Tension. Cowgirl tension! What a drag.

SISSY

What is Debbie's position?

JELLY

Debbie says that if women are to take charge again, they must do it in the feminine way; they mustn't resort to aggressive and violent masculine methods. She says it is up to women to show themselves better than men, to love men, set good examples for them and guide them tenderly toward the New Age. She's a real dreamer, that Debbie-dear.

SISSY

You don't agree with Debbie, then?

JELLY

I wouldn't say that. I expect she's right, ultimately. But I'm with Delores when it comes to fighting for what's mine. I can't understand why Delores is so uptight about the Chink; he could probably teach her a thing or two. Ee! That grass tickles, doesn't it? God knows I love women, but nothing can take the place of a man that fits. Still this is cowgirl territory and I'll stand with Delores and fight any bastards who might deny it. I guess I've always been a scrapper. Look. This scar. Only twelve years old and I was felled by a silver bullet.

Jelly takes Sissy's hand, carefully avoiding the thumbs and helps her feel the depression in her belly. The depression is a dimple, like another navel.

AFTER A HUNGRY STILLNESS, like intermission at a wolf dance, rhythms are established. Jelly and Sissy are socked into one another now, and they arch and push and corkscrew and jackknife softly but with pronounced cadence.

Everything becomes scrambled. They rock each other in cradles of sweat and saliva, until we can see nothing.

Noisy breaths buck out of Sissy: "Jelly, Jelly" but she can't hear Sissy because she is screaming. Hysterical from the scalding hot softness of girl-love.

EXT. HILLTOP DAY

The Chink looks on from the hilltop above indifferently.

EXT. FIELD DAY

Sissy and Jelly are riding on the back of a horse.

A WHOOPING CRANE is spied by Sissy as she rides on the back of Jellybean's horse back to the ranch. Delores and Big Red hurry to meet them.

DELORES

He's here.

Sure enough across the yard, in the midst of the low-cal barbecue in progress, monocle reflecting sunlight, cigarette holder stabbing the air, stands the Countess.

DELORES

Look at him. Perverse as a pink pickle.

BIG RED

Sick as a vice squad.

DELORES

He's in a snit. He wants to see you right after the barbecue.

Jellybean chuckles sardonically and dismounts.

JELLY

Get the girls. He's gonna see me right now.

Sissy, confused, and loyalties torn in the face of an impending revolution, leaves the corral and

SLIPS INSIDE THROUGH THE KITCHEN.

DOWN THE HALL

ENTERING HER ROOM, SHE LOCKS HERSELF IN. As she locks the latch she hears Jelly's voice.

INT RANCH OFFICE DAY

Jelly has taken over the ranch loudspeaker system and is giving an ultimatum.

JELLY

Any of you ladies who would like to join us, you're welcome to stay on as a full working podner at the Rubber Rose. Rest of you get packed – and I mean now. You've got fifteen minutes to move your lard asses off this ranch.

INSIDE THE EXERCISE ROOM

Women are reacting to the demands.

INSIDE THE GREENHOUSE

Some women are taking up trowels and brooms as weapons.

INSIDE THE KITCHEN

The help is joining the revolt.

INSIDE THE HALLWAY

Other women are running for their lives.

INSIDE SISSY'S ROOM

She hears the screen door screech open and a chaos of footsteps in the hall. She goes to her window. And she can see, partially cut off by the corner of the building, Miss Adrian screaming.

MISS ADRIAN

You will all be rounded up and sent to prison if you take this any farther! This is not your ranch!!!!

EXT. THE FRONT YARD OF THE RUBBER ROSE

The Countess seems to be taking it slowly, and calmly smoking a French cigarette. He observes the fighting among them with amusement.

THE COUNTESS

You pathetic little cutesy-poops. Do you actually suppose this exhibition of childlike melodrama is advancing the cause of freedom?

JELLY

You owe us this here ranch, as a token payment for your disgusting exploitations

THE COUNTESS

(tranquilly)
Then take it.

JELLY

Go for it, girls!

The hands, who carry axes, picks, pitchforks and shovels,

retreat. The Countess, still grinning, reaches for an hors d'oeuvre and subjects his cigarette to a measured, self-assured puff.

MISS ADRIAN

(shaking her fist)

Go to your bunkhouse and remain there!

INT. ROOMS

The guests are hurriedly packing their things.

INT. SISSY'S ROOM

She looks on.

EXT. FRONT YARD

When the revolutionaries have retreated about thirty yards, they stop. With astonishing rapidity, they unbuckle unbutton and unzip and step out of their jeans and underpants. Then, nude from the waist down, thatched pubises thrust forward, up front and leading the way, they begin to advance.

The Countess's grin goes down his throat like bathwater down a drain.

GLORIA

Better reach for your spray cans!

JELLY

Not one of these pussies has been washed in a week!

Rather pale, his nose twitching, the Countess drops the caviar canap, he has been holding.

ON COME THE COWGIRLS, pelvises pumping, laying down what the trembling Countess believes to be a devastating barrage of musk.

Miss Adrian, lost in her own hysteria, charges. A barbeque fork she hurls draws blood from Heather's eyebrow.

Quick as a frog's tongue, Delores's whip cracks. It's lash curls around the ranch manager's ankles, pulling her feet from under her. She hits the sod in a jangle of jewelry and expulsion of breath.

A Molotov cocktail thrown by Big Red says hello to the sexual reconditioning building. Within seconds, the structure is blazing.

INT. MAIN HOUSE

THE BARE-ASSED COWGIRLS storm into the beauty parlor and exercise rooms.

SOUNDS OF breaking glass and wood splintering. The air is singing with cries of "Wahoo," "Yippee," "Let 'er buck" and "The vagina is a self-cleaning organ."

INT. KITCHEN

SISSY flees the house as she hunkers down out the back door.

EXT. CROQUET COURT

Sissy running across it. She passes the pool, and falls in. Climbing out, wet, scared, she runs to the base of Siwash Ridge and southward along the mountain's foot.

EVENTUALLY Sissy comes to a place where the juniper bushes are broken to reveal a crude path beginning a steep ascent. Sissy decides to climb up it.

She shoulders her way through low, slivery boughs.

Approximately halfway up the ridge she rests on a flat rock from which she can look down on the...

BURNING RUBBER ROSE smoking away, distant yahoos and carryings on can be heard. Horses whinney in the corral. A few gunshots are thrown into the soundtrack if things aren't lively enough.

MISS ADRIAN'S CADILLAC, ON FIRE, roars out of the drive.

Sissy looks up to the quiet mountain. Pauses. Then she looks back to the chaos below.

THE CINEMATOGRAPHERS' RENTED CONVERTIBLE AND THEIR EQUIPMENT VAN drive away.

Sissy sits and wonders. The sun is setting on the horizon, mixing well with the firelight that the Rubber Rose is giving off.

BUT SHE is aware of something watching her. Looking about

she sees nothing.

VIEW of an empty trail.

VIEW OF a quivering bush.

Sissy turns to the sound of the CHINK.

CHINK

Ha ha ho ho hee hee.

AND THERE HE IS. Standing only ten yards away.

The Chink's problem is that he looks like he rolled out of a Zen scroll, as if he says "presto" a lot, knows the meaning of lightning and the origin of dreams. He LOOKS as if he drinks dew and fucks snakes.

Sissy and the Chink scrutinize one another with mutual fascination.

CHINK

Ha ha ho ho and hee hee.

Sissy is just about to speak, but before she does THE CHINK whirls, and scampers up the mountainside.

SISSY

Wait!

Warily he stops and turns, poised to flee again.

Sissy smiles.

SHE RAISES her ripe right thumb. And jerking it and swooshing it, she hitchhikes the Chink and his mountain.

THERE HE STANDS where Sissy's thumbs have stopped him. The Chink wears the wary look of a wild animal. He's not going to stay stopped long. It is Sissy's move.

SISSY

Well, aren't you going to shake your whanger at me?

The Chink pauses for a moment, then he slaps his thighs and giggles hysterically. Ha has, ho hos and hee hees squirt out of his nose and through the gaps in his teeth.

CHINK
(laughter dies a
nervous chipmunk
death)

Follow me. I'll fix you supper.

THE TWO doggedly walk up the steep trail.

SISSY
I'm a friend of Bonanza Jellybean's.

CHINK
I know who you are.

SISSY
Oh? Well, there's been some trouble
on the ranch. I came up here to get
out of the way. It's so dark now I
doubt if I could find my way back
down. If you could help...

CHINK
(voice that wears no
pants)
Save your breath for the climb.

SISSY takes another look at the Rubber Rose, which is now quiet. We can hear faintly a distant popping of washcloths and girlish laughter.

THEY make their way into a depression at the top of the mountain down a ladder of sticks.

THE CHINK lights a large fire in the middle of the depression.

HE puts a kettle of stew over the fire, and begins to roast yams.

THE CHINK'S FACE as the fire dances off it.

A CAN OF CHUNG KING water chestnuts is opened.

CUT TO: Sissy and the Chink eating supper on a rough wooden bench.

AND AS THEY FINISH, the Chink goes into a cave and returns with a tiny peppermint-stripped plastic transistor radio. He switches it on and the silence is broken by "The Happy Hour Polka."

Still clutching the radio in one hand, the Chink hops into the wheel of firelight and begins to dance.

Sissy walks around the fire watching the old geezer heel and toe, skip and hop. He flings his bones; he flings his beard.

CHINK

Yip! Yip! Ha ha ho ho and hee hee.

Arms swimming, feet firecrackering, he dances and dances.

When the song ends, the Chink puts the radio down as the news comes on.

CHINK

Personally, I prefer Stevie Wonder,
but what the hell. Those cowgirls
are always bitching because the only
radio station in the area plays
nothing but polkas, but I say you
can dance to anything if you really
feel like dancing.

The Chink dances a little to the news, and then lifts Sissy by her shoulders and guides her onto his pock-marked dance floor.

SISSY

But I don't know how to polka.

CHINK

Neither do I... ha ha ho ho hee hee.

The radio strikes up the "Lawrence Welk is a Hero of the Republic Polka," and the Chink and Sissy dance arm in arm, their shadows reel against the curves of the depression in the mountain.

Night birds fly past with fluttering feathers. A bat flies out of the cave.

The Chink escorts Sissy to a dark side of the depression and sits her down upon a pile of soft stuff: dried wheatgrass, faded Indian blankets and old down pillows without cases.

SISSY

(thinking)

So this is how Jelly spends her visits

to the Chink.

A twanging noise sounds from the bowels of the nearby cave.

SISSY

What was that?

CHINK

Clockworks.

SISSY

Clockworks?

The Chink pauses to decide whether he should talk any further, then proceeds.

CHINK

The Clockworks is one reason that I am here on Siwash Ridge. I accepted the invitation to be initiated as a shaman by an aged Siwash chief who was the principle outside confederate of the Clock People.

SISSY

Siwash, huh?

CHINK

He was a degenerated warlock who could turn urine into beer, and the honor that he extended me gave me rights of occupancy in this sacred cave on this far-away Siwash Ridge. I came to the Dakota hills to construct a clockworks of my own.

Sissy cradles her head in her arms, but is startled by a louder noise from the clockworks. The Chink is startled too.

Bonk! sounds the cave, and then it chimes poing!

The Chink smiles at the noise coming from his clockworks.

CHINK

But unlike the clockworks of the Clock People, my ticks more accurately echo the ticks of the universe....

(he listens)

.....ha ha ho ho and hee hee.

SISSY
The Clock People?

INT. CAVE NIGHT

The Chink leads Sissy into the cave where we see his clockworks. It is made of garbage can lids and old saucepans and lard tins and car fenders all wired together with baling wire. A bat flies into it making a bong noise and the contraption moves a little.

CHINK

During the Second World War I busted out of Tule Lake detention camp; as a Japanese-American, I had been put there and watched over. I found refuge with the Clock People, who discovered me in a snow bank, near dead, I had been climbing across the Sierra Nevada mountains.

SISSY

Then if you are Japanese, then why are you called the Chink?

CHINK

The Clock People mistook me for Chinese. And the name stuck. In the same way that all Indian tribes came to be labeled "Indians" through the ignorance of an Italian sailor with a taste for oranges, it is only fitting that "Indians" misnamed me. The Clock People, however, are not a tribe, rather they are a gathering of Indians from various tribes. They have lived together since 1906.

INT. THE GREAT BURROW

A gathering of the Clock People. A woman is giving birth near the Giant timekeeping hourglass.

CHINK

The pivotal function of the Clock People is the keeping and observing of the clockworks. It is a real thing, and is kept at the center, at the

soul, of the Great Burrow. Insofar as it is possible, all Clock People deaths and births occur in the presence of the clockworks. Aside from birthing or dying, the reason for the daily visits to the clockworks is to check the time.

INT. SIWASH CAVE NIGHT

Sissy listens to the Chink as they walk around the Chink's clockworks.

CHINK

These people have no other ritual than this one. Likewise, they have but one legend or cultural myth: that of a continuum they call the Eternity of Joy. It is into the Eternity of Joy that they believe all men will pass once the clockworks is destroyed. The destruction must come from the outside, must come by natural means, must come at the will of this gesticulating planet whose more acute stirrings thoughtless people call "earthquakes."

The Chink holds Sissy's thumbs in his hands adoringly.

CHINK

The Earth is alive. She burns inside with the heat of cosmic longing. She longs to be with her husband again. She moans. She turns softly in her sleep. In the Eternity of Joy, pluralized, deurbanized man, at ease with his gentle technologies, will smile and sigh when the Earth begins to shake. I loved those loony redskins, but I couldn't be a party to their utopian dreaming. After a while it occurred to me that the Clock People waiting for the Eternity of Joy was virtually identical to the Christians waiting for the Second Coming. Or the Communists waiting for the worldwide revolution. Or the Debbies waiting for the flying

saucers. All the same. Just more suckers betting their share of the present on the future, banking every misery on a happy ending to history. Well, history is ending every second - happily for some of us, unhappily for others, happily one second, unhappily the next. History is always ending and always not ending... ha ha ho ho and hee hee.

Sissy interrupts the Chink for a second while he is worshipping her thumbs.

SISSY

What do you believe in then?

CHINK

Ha ha ho ho and hee hee.

Then he says nothing. And his silence makes Sissy weep. They sit down on a grass floor, illuminated by the fire outside the cave.

Then the Chink, without hesitation, grasps her thumbs. He squeezes them, caresses them, covers them with wet kisses, telling them how beautiful they are.

Sissy is bowled over, frightened, stunned, elated, moved almost to tears.

Sissy bends her head back and whispers.

SISSY

If this be adultery, make the most of it.

And as the Chink plunges into Sissy, she arches her spread bottom against the blankets and rears up to meet him halfway.

Their bodies glowing in the firelight, they cast shadows of ANCIENT BEINGS, anthropomorphs making love through the night under the moon.

INT. CAVE DAY

SUNBEAMS awaken Sissy. When she looks around she sees an inscription has been freshly scrawled on the right wall.

I BELIEVE IN EVERYTHING; NOTHING IS SACRED.

And on the left wall:

I BELIEVE IN NOTHING; EVERYTHING IS SACRED.

Sissy hears and then sees A HELICOPTER in the sky above the ranch. Sissy gets up and walks out of the cave.

EXT. TRAIL MORN

Sissy walks.

EXT. RUBBER ROSE

Sissy hitches a ride out of town.

EXT. FRONT DOORSTEPS MORNING

Countless NEWSPAPERS on countless porches, and the headline of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reads:

OUR WHOOPING CRANES ARE MISSING.

INT. THE COUNTESS' OFFICE DAY

The countess is in a snit.

THE COUNTESS

Sissy, don't play dumb with me! You're a good model but a shitty actress. The cowgirls are involved in this whooping crane disappearance. You know perfectly well they are. Last seen in Nebraska. Didn't make it to Canada. Siwash Lake is between Nebraska and Canada. The cowgirls have possession of Siwash Lake. And who else but Jellybean's wild cunts could possibly conceive of doing something so diabolical as to tamper with the last flock of some nearly extinct birds? How much do you know about it? Have they murdered those cranes the way they murdered my moo cows?

SISSY

I don't know anything about it.

THE COUNTESS

Sissy. You're trying to protect those scuzzy bitches. Well, let your conscience be your guide, as my mommy used to say, but it won't work. Those stinking sluts are going to suffer...

Sissy strikes the Countess with her right thumb – with astonishing force.

Immediately the thumb strikes again, this time shattering the Countess's monocle against his eye.

THE COUNTESS

(gasping)

Shit O dear.

HIS DENTURES fall onto the shag rug.

The left thumb strikes. Sissy is swinging her thumbs like ballbats socking flaming homers over the left-field fence.

The countess is out on his feet. His eyes are closed. His legs wobble. He does a pathetic dance, like a drunken old fool trying to boogie with a chorus girl.

He topples forward and meets Sissy's onrushing thumb of thunder which straightens him up, sends him over backward. Motionless, he lies on the floor, a crimson part in his thinning hair, a bright ooze at each nostril.

INT. HOSPITAL DAY

Seated on a spotless wooden bench is Sissy, staring at a clock. A surgeon emerges.

SURGEON

Well, he's not out of danger, but I think we can safely say he's going to make it. I'd be pretty surprised if he didn't. However, there is evidence of injury to the frontal lobe, and I have reason to fear that this injury may be permanent. The patient may never again function as a normal human being.

SISSY

Brain damage? You mean he's going to be a vegetable?

SURGEON

Vegetable? Vegetable? I wouldn't say that, no. We won't ascertain the extent of the injury for some days. But there is a genuine possibility of severe and lasting behavioral defects. I wouldn't classify it in the vegetable category, however.

EXT. STREET DAY

SISSY IS HITCHING OUT OF TOWN.

A conservative blue Econoline van out of the throngs of traffic draws itself to Sissy as if on a string.

SISSY HOPS IN.

INT. VAN DAY

The DRIVER stomps on the gas. With a sense of disgust at her own failure Sissy scrutinizes his sweaty brow, his smug hot leer, his starving eyes.

Her heart sinks when she sees his gun and his knife. He is also unzipping his pants.

DRIVER

I'm going to give it to you like you've never had it before. Oh, you didn't know it could be this good. You're gonna like it. You're gonna like it. You're gonna like it so good. You're gonna love it so much you're gonna cry. You're gonna cry. You're gonna cry and cry. Do you like to cry? Do you like it when it hurts a little bit? Whatever happens to you, it'll be worth it. The way I'm gonna give it to you, it'll be worth anything. Everything. Go ahead and cry if you want to. I like it when women cry. It means they appreciate me.

EXT. STREET DAY

The van pulls over down a dead end alley between warehouses.

INT. VAN DAY

Sissy looks into the back at a soiled mattress.

The driver is taking his dick out of his pants. But with a swift swoosh, Sissy's left thumb comes down hard on the penis top, making the driver howl.

His finger fumbles for the gun trigger, but before he gets to it, Sissy's thumb splats between his eyes. Twice. Three times. He loses control of the van.

EXT. VAN DAY

It lumbers into a street lamp. Sissy leaps from the vehicle and runs.

INT. WORKING MAN'S LUNCHEONETTE DAY

Sissy goes in and begins to cry at the counter as she looks at her thumbs.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE DAY

Into a sunset hitches Sissy.

EXT. ROAD NIGHT

SISSY hops into a semi.

AND ROAD SIGNS:

TRENTON N.J.

BALTIMORE MD

WASHINGTON D.C.

Then

RICHMOND, VA

EXT. DR. DREYFUS'S HOUSE DAY

An older Dr. Dreyfus answers the door. Without Sissy's asking he speaks.

DR. DREYFUS
I'm afraid I can't help you.

SISSY
But Doctor.

DREYFUS
Please, child, don't be dismayed. We all have problems these days. But as the painter Van Gogh said, 'Mysteries remain, sorrow or melancholy remains, but the everlasting negative is balanced by the positive work which thus is achieved, after all.' I don't suppose that means very much to you. I have retired. A victim of a malpractice suit.

SISSY
(embracing him)
Oh, Doctor! You've got to do it. You and nobody else should be allowed to take away my gift.

In her embrace, the Doctor is presented with her thumbs.

DR. DREYFUS
Ah, the thumb.

LATER sitting inside his study, Dreyfus muses.

DR. DREYFUS
The thumb the thumb the thumb the thumb the thumb the thumb. One of evolution's most ingenious inventions; a built-in tool sensitive to texture, contour and temperature: an alchemical lever; the secret key to technology; the link between the mind and art; a humanizing device. The marmoset and the lemur are thumbless; none of the New World monkeys has opposable thumbs; the spider monkey's thumbs are absent or reduced to a tiny tubercle; the thumbs of the potto are set at an angle of one hundred eighty degrees to the other digits.

Pause.

DR. DREYFUS

And so you are demanding at last the privileges of thumb that nature has perversely denied you?

SISSY

I just want to be normal, give me that old-fashioned normality. It was good enough for Crazy Horse and it's good enough for me.

DR. DREYFUS

Ah, yes. Very well, my dear. Here is what we can do.

VIEWS OF Sissy admitted to a hospital Blood analyzed in a laboratory.

Powerful lamps turn on in an operating room.

IV tubes are inserted in veins.

Sissy is wheeled into surgery.

An anesthesiologist sticks a needle into a curved and creamy ass.

An anesthesiologist sticks needles into a long, graceful neck.

A nurse scrubs an arm.

A body and table are draped with sheets to create a sterile field.

A tourniquet is placed on a slender right arm.

An elastic rubber bandage is applied so tightly it squeezes most of the blood out of an arm.

A tourniquet is inflated.

A surgeon outlines in iodine an incision around the base of a thumb.

Pale smooth skin is incised along a premarked line and dissected down to the bone.

Woman flesh is sewn shut with four-ought nylon suture.

A tourniquet is deflated, a bloody arm bathed.

A young woman is rolled into a recovery room.

A nurse and two surgeons, their attention directed by an intensifying pinkish glow, turn to stare into a metal pan, where a huge human thumb, disarticulated from the hand it has been severed from, is now flopping about like a trout, or rather, arching and thrusting itself in a calculated and endlessly repeated gesture, the gesture of the hitchhike.

EXT. SKY DAY

Two representatives of the Fish and Wildlife Service are flying over Siwash Lake in a U.S. Forestry Service Helicopter.

THEY CAN SEE the whooping cranes by the side of the lake. And as they are recording this, shots from a band of young women on horseback drive them away.

EXT. RUBBER ROSE RANCH DAY

the same two agents are driving in a truck approaching the Rubber Rose Ranch. Two bullet ricochets spin off the hood and roof of their truck and they stop to see a lone teenaged cowgirl with a rifle.

EXT. RUBBER ROSE GATES DAY

An entourage of Forest Service Rangers, a county sheriff, four deputy shiffs, a state game warden and Mottburg's town marshall and several of his deputies, the editor of the Mottburg Gazette and a couple of bird watchers or two are met by...

AT LEAST FIFTEEN ARMED FEMALES at the gate of the Ranch. Through a bullhorn, Jelly speaks out at the entourage of law enforcement officers.

JELLY

Yep, the whooping cranes are here
all right. They're in fine shape,
and as you musta saw from your fucking
whirly machine, unrestrained, free
to go as they please. But this is
private property and you aren't laying

a foot on it. None of you.

SHERIFF

We'll be back with a court order and
a fistful of search warrants.

JELLY

Just come back with a couple of people
who know what they're doing and we'll
let'em in for a nice close look at
the birds.

DELORES

And make sure at least one of them
is female, and you better do as we
say or there may be trouble.

AND OVER THE AIRWAVES an announcement is broadcast.

INT. WHITE HOUSE DAY

THE ASSISTANT INTERIOR UNDERSECRETARY IS SPEAKING INTO A
MICROPHONE FOR THE NEWS, and reading from a paper in his
hand.

UNDERSECRETARY

It will be my extreme pleasure to
report to the President...

INT. SCHOOL AURITORIUM

Students listening...

UNDERSECRETARY

...who has been gravely concerned
about the fate of our whooping
cranes....

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE DAY

Two construction workers high atop the city listening to a
small transistor radio and eating lunch.

UNDERSECRETARY

...and to the Interior Secretary and
to the American people that the entire
flock of cranes is, indeed, at...

EXT. MALL DAY

A crowd of people listening to a broadcast in front of a bandstand set up in front of the mall.

UNDERSECRETARY VOICE

...Siwash Lake and in apparently healthy condition.

The crowd cheers.

UNDERSECRETARY VOICE

...The cranes have built brooding nests around the whole circumference of the small lake, and have...

EXT. FIELD DAY

Cowgirls are watching a small television.

UNDERSECRETARY

...hatched chicks there. Counting the young birds, there are now approximately sixty cranes in the flock. While this is good news, it is also quite bewildering...

EXT. RUBBER ROSE RANCH DAY

A vehicle know as "the peyote wagon" pulls out of the Rubber Rose. Delores del Ruby is at the wheel. And over her truck radio we hear:

UNDERSECRETARY (V.O.)

...Whooping cranes are territorially minded and have never been known to nest as close as a mile to one another, yet here they are virtually side by side.

EXT. HILL DAY

A lone FBI man sees the peyote wagon leaving the ranch through his binoculars.

INT. CAR NIGHT

Sissy hears a broadcast over a moving car radio.

NEWS REPORTER

The Rubber Rose Ranch has issued a communique, that was sent to the federal judge and copies of a recording to the press, today.

We can hear the voice of Bonanza Jellybean:

JELLY

(over the radio)

THE WHOOPING CRANE HAS BEEN DRIVEN TO THE EDGE OF EXTINCTION BY AN AGGRESSIVE, BRUTAL PATERNALISTIC SYSTEM INTENT ON SUBDUING THE EARTH AND ESTABLISHING ITS DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS – IN THE NAME OF GOD THE FATHER, LAW, ORDER AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

Sissy recognizes the voice.

SISSY

That's Jellybean!

JELLY (V.O.)

FROM MEN, THE WHOOPING CRANE HAS RECEIVED NEITHER LOVE NOR RESPECT. MEN HAVE DRAINED THE CRANE'S MARSHES, STOLEN ITS EGGS, INVADED ITS PRIVACY, POLLUTED ITS FOOD, FOULED ITS AIR, BLOWN IT APART WITH BUCKSHOT.

INT. RANCH OFFICE

Jelly is on the telephone.

JELLY

OBVIOUSLY, A PATERNALISTIC SOCIETY DOES NOT DESERVE ANYTHING AS GRAND AND BEAUTIFUL AND WILD AND FREE AS THE WHOOPING CRANE. YOU MEN HAVE FAILED IN YOUR DUTY TO THE CRANE. NOW IT IS WOMEN'S TURN. THE CRANES ARE IN OUR CHARGE NOW. WE WILL PROTECT THEM AS LONG AS THEY STILL REQUIRE PROTECTION –

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM DAY

Sissy listens to the radio.

JELLY'S VOICE
WHILE WORKING TOWARD A DAY WHEN THE
CREATURES OF THE WORLD NO LONGER
HAVE TO SUFFER MAN'S EGOISM,
INSENSITIVITY AND GREED. WE REFUSE
YOUR ORDER. WE SAY TAKE YOUR ORDER
AND SHOVE IT. THIS FLOCK OF BIRDS IS
STAYING WITH US. GET LOST, MAC.

EXT. ROAD DAY

Sissy is hitchhiking with her new thumb. But cars pass one after another without stopping. Until Sissy finally tries her left thumb, which has been spared the knife.

With this thumb there are new maneuvers to try out. And as soon as she does, a car stops.

MOSAIC of hitchhiking brilliance with Sissy's use of her left thumb. A CLOCK IS TICKING past twelve then on to six and past eight.... she dances wildly around traffic, stopping the hardest of drivers, THE CLOCK TICKS AWAY and within thirty hours she is approaching Mottburg again.

EXT. RUBBER ROSE DAY

The Ranch is now surrounded by two hundred federal marshalls reinforced by a dozen FBI agents with loaded guns taking position outside the ranch.

Sissy gets out of her car and walks past the posse and through the gates.

Kym carries a radio which is playing "The Day-Old Apple Strudel Polka" across the corral. She carries the radio as if it is a suitcase full of skunk lice.

KYM
Man, this is the stupidest music
I've ever heard. This radio should
have stayed in the privy where it
belongs.

Kym ropes the radio to her saddle horn and prepares to give it a ride across the Dakota hills. She gets on her horse and rides by the Ranch bungalows and spies Sissy sitting in the outhouse.

SISSY

Howdy.

Kym gets off her horse and hugs Sissy.

KYM

You know what you're getting into if you come over to the lake...

SISSY

Yes, but I want to be there. I want to see Jellybean. I want to see the cranes.

THEY RIDE ACROSS THE HILLS. Then they stop at an outlook and Sissy sees the circular barricade in the field below.

KYM

We heard on the radio that the judge has set Delores's bail at fifty thousand dollars. Now she won't be here when we really need her.

EXT. CAMP DAY

A few cowgirls in the camp huddle around a radio:

RADIO NEWS REPORT

The American Civil Liberties Union has requested an extension for the Rubber Rose Ranch. The government is aware of the inflamed situation and are afraid that all the marshals and agents might be too willing to uncork the bottle of blood...

SISSY RIDES INTO CAMP on the back of Kym's horse the way that John Wayne would have ridden into the Alamo; Heather, Bonanza Jellybean, Debbie, Elaine and Linda dance up to meet her.

Before Sissy is completely on the ground, Jelly's tongue is in her mouth. She stumbles out of a stirrup into a wiggly embrace.

JELLY

Let's celebrate!

Debbie stokes up a big joint right now, as Jelly gets out

her six guns and fires them in the air. Heather twirls and jumps through her rope.

The "Unsung Hero Returns Polka" strikes up on the radio.

Elaine rears up on her horse.

EXT. HILLSIDE DAY

FROM AFAR, AN FBI AGENT views the little going on.

AGENT

Ain't that just like women.

But as the Agent is saying this, viewing them from the ridge, a large rock tumbles down the hill and grazes his head, knocking him out.

VIEW of the side of the ridge from where the rock came, but there is strangely nothing where we expect to see the Chink.

BELOW: The cowgirls.

JELLY

Looks like every time we get together things are in a mess.

SISSY

So be it. It looks serious this time, though. All these guns... are you actually prepared to kill and die for whooping cranes?

JELLY

Hell no, the cranes are wonderful, okay, but I'm not in this for whooping cranes. I'm in it for cowgirls. If we cowgirls give in to authority on this crane issue, then cowgirls become just another compromise. I want a finer fate than that – for me and for every other cowgirl. Better no cowgirls at all than cowgirls compromised.

SISSY

How did this business get started, anyhow? Why are the birds nesting here?

DEBBIE

You were aware that we were feeding them, weren't you? We fed them brown rice and they stayed over a couple of extra days. Then we decided to try something different. We mixed our brown rice with fishmeal – whoopers love seafood, and fishmeal is cheap. Then Delores suggested another ingredient, and we think that's what did the trick.

SISSY

You mean...

DEBBIE AND JELLY TOGETHER
PEYOTE!

SISSY

They're drugged.

JELLY

Aw, come off it, Sissy. What do you mean, 'drugged'? Every living thing is a chemical composition and anything that is added to it changes that composition. When you eat a cheeseburger or a Three Musketeers bar, it changes your body chemistry. The kind of food you eat, the kind of air you breathe, can change your mental state. Does that mean you're 'drugged'?

Sissy frames the flock with the hole in the center of her cheese sandwich.

SISSY

No, I guess not.

JELLY

'Drugged' is a stupid word.

SISSY

But the peyote is obviously affecting their brains. It's made them break a migratory pattern that goes back thousands of years.

DEBBIE

The way I see it, is that the peyote mellowed them out. Made them less uptight. They were afraid of bad weather and humans. That's why they migrated and kept to themselves. But the peyote has enlightened them. It's taught them there is nothing to fear but fear itself. Now they're digging life and letting the bad vibes slide on. Don't worry, be happy. Be here now.

SISSY

Fear in wild animals is completely different from paranoia in people. In the wilderness ecosystem, fear is natural and necessary. It's merely a mechanism for maintaining life. If the cranes hadn't had a capacity for fear, they would have disappeared long ago and you'd be having to get loaded with common old everyday meadowlarks and mallards.

JELLY

This here discussion is destined to become academic. Because we've got less than half a bag of peyote buttons left and Delores's run ended up in the Mottburg jail. So any day now we'll get a chance to see how the whoopers behave when they come down, to see if the peyote experience really changed them or not. But in the meantime, I want to say this about fear.....

Then Sissy and Jelly hear a news broadcast on the radio.

ANNOUNCER

Judge Greenfield, at the request of the ACLU, has granted a forty-eight-hour extension of the deadline by which the Rubber Rose cowgirls must comply with his order. Negotiations between the cowgirls and the government are expected to follow.

Another item in, the forewoman of the Rubber Rose Ranch, a Delores del Ruby is now free on bond after having been arrested in Mottburg with more than fifty pounds of peyote buttons. Her bail has been paid by the owner of the besieged ranch, Countess Products, Inc. Miss del Ruby's bail having come from the tycoon's personal advisor, a certain Dr. Robbins of New York City.

SISSY
Dr. Robbins?

EXT. PRAIRIE NIGHT

Sissy and Jelly lie under the same stars, under the same blankets. Under the same spell.

JELLY
Every time I tell you that I love you, you flinch. But that's your problem.

SISSY
If I flinch when you say you love me, it's both our problems. My confusion becomes your confusion. Students confuse teachers, patients confuse psychiatrists, lovers with confused hearts confuse lovers with clear hearts....

EXT. CAMPFIRE NIGHT

Delores and some of the other cowgirls are talking. A sharp wind is beginning to gust.

DELORES
It isn't for ourselves that we take this stand. It isn't for cowgirls. It's for all the daughters everywhere. This is an extremely important confrontation. This is womankind's chance to prove to her enemy that she's willing to fight and die. If we women don't show here and now that we aren't afraid to fight and

die, then our enemy will never take us seriously. Men will always know that, no matter how strong our words and determined our deeds, there's a point where we'll back down and give them their way.

Delores cracks her whip then parades around the campfire.

DELORES

I'm prepared to win! Victory for every female, living or dead, who's suffered the temporary defeats of masculine insensitivity to their inner lives!

A few of the cowgirls cheer.

DONNA

I'll fight the bastards.

Big Red opens a can of beans with a Bowie knife.

BIG RED

I'll fight 'em with bean gas, if necessary.

Delores snaps her whip again.

DELORES

The sun's going down. Let's those of us not standing watch get some sleep. In the morning we'll plan our fight. Tomorrow afternoon those of you who'd like can join me in the reeds, where the cranes and I will be sharing the last crumbs left in the peyote sack.

EXT. SIWASH LAKE DAY

Delores del Ruby appears from the reeds at Siwash Lake's edge, asleep yet awake. She has sunk so deep into the hole in her mind that gale and dust could not follow her.

AS SHE APPROACHES THE COWGIRL CAMP, THEY GATHER AROUND HER IN A TIGHT CIRCLE.

MANY ARE TRANSFIXED as they listen.

DELORES

It is woman's mission to destroy as well as to give birth. We will destroy the tyranny of the dull. But we can't destroy it with guns. Or whips. Violence is the dullard's Breakfast of Champions and the logical end product of his or her misplaced pride. Violence fertilizes that which we would starve. No, we will destroy the enemy in other ways. The Peyote Mother has promised a Fourth Vision. But it won't come to me alone. It will come to each of you, to every cowgirl in the land, when you have overcome that in your own self which is dull. The Fourth Vision will come to some men too. You will recognize them when you meet them, and be their steady sidekicks in equal and ecstatic escapades of poetic behavior and romance.

Delores holds up a card. The prairie moon illuminates its tattered edges. It is the jack of hearts.

The forewoman seems to be tiring. Fumes of weariness stream from her black hair. Her voice is leaning against the wall of her larynx when she says:

DELORES

First thing, you must end this business with the government and the cranes. It's been positive and fruitful, but it's gone far enough. Playfulness ceases to serve a serious purpose when it takes itself too seriously. Sorry I won't be with you at the conclusion. As you know, I've been sick and stupid for a long time. I have a lot to make up for, a lot to accomplish, and there's someone important that I've got to see. Now.

As graceful as a ballet for cobras, Delores turns and walks away into the night.

EXT. RANCH GATES DAY

THE FBI, other VIGILANTES and POLICEMEN wait in anticipation of an attack outside of the boundaries of the ranch.

EXT. THE COWGIRL COMPOUND DAY

Jelly is addressing the group of cowgirls.

JELLY

Well, what we got to do is one of us has got to go up that hill and tell them boys that America can have its whooping cranes back. Since I'm the boss here, and since I'm responsible for a lot of you choosing to be cowgirls in the first place, it's gonna be me that goes...

Small protests from the circle of cowgirls.

JELLY

No buts about it. It's getting lighter by the second. You podners keep your heads down. Ta ta.

The cutest cowgirl in the world stood up and stretched out.

COWGIRL

Jelly! Please!

But Jelly is already on her way.

BONANZA JELLYBEAN VAULTS over the carcass of a reducing machine and plants her Tony Lama boots in the stirrup of her saddle and straddles her horse and takes off.

EXT. COMPOUND DAY

The posse surrounding the ranch, can see Jelly coming over the hill on her horse at a full gallop.

EXT. HILL DAY

Jelly stops her horse, looks down at her waist, and sees her sixguns.

JELLY

Better get rid of these. Might give those greenhorn dudes a fright.

THROUGH the scope of an FBI rifle, Jelly is drawing her gun out of her holster.

AGENT

She's going to fire....

He squeezes the trigger, and Jelly is caught in the stomach with a bullet. She falls off her horse to the ground.

THE CHINK sees Bonanza Jellybean cut down from a vantage point on the hill, and makes a beeline for the government barricades, SHOUTING.

THE COWGIRLS scream and cry, and grab their weapons. A couple of them leap from the barricade and are immediately riddled.

EXT. HILL DAY

The six-gun slips from her fingers.

Twenty or thirty more sweaty triggers are squeezed on the hilltop firing at Bonanza Jellybean.

THE CHINK RUNNING AND SHOUTING.

EXT. COWGIRL CAMP DAY

A VOICE OVER THE BULLHORN directed at the cowgirls echoes:

VOICE

You've got two minutes to come out
with you hands over your heads!

RANDOM G-MEN are sniping at the cowgirls, making it impossible to surrender.

A stray bullet SENDS THE CHINK back down the hillside, beard, robe and sandals flying.

IN THE HUSH that follows, in the echoes of the explosive fire, the whooping crane flock rises in one grand assault of beating feathers - a lily white storm of life, a gush of albino Gabriels – swarm into the waiting sky, and circle the pond one time before flapping south toward Texas...

...they cast shadows over a dead Jellybean who is literally biting the dust.

Sissy lifts Jelly out of the dust and holds her. Sissy lifts

Jelly's satin shirt tail and pulls down the waistband of her skirt. Bright red blood is running out of her scar.

JELLY

Right in the scar where I fell on a wooden horse when I was twelve. Haw, I wasn't really shot with a silver bullet.

Confessing to Sissy.

JELLY

Or was I?

EXT. NEW YORK SKY

The cranes fly over the Statue of Liberty.

EXT. PARISIAN SKY

The Cranes fly over the Eiffel tower.

EXT. RUSSIAN SKY

The Cranes fly over Red Square.

INT. MORGUE DAY

An undertaker pounding five nails into a white coffin. ON THE TOP OF THE COFFIN are engraved two crossed GOLD SIXGUNS. There are eleven famous cowgirls enameled on the edges and in the middle it reads:

BONANZA JELLYBEAN

1944-1973

"Ha ha ho ho and hee hee"

Title card:

The brown paper bag.

A brown paper bag is sitting on the side of the road.

A VOICE

The brown paper bag is the only thing civilized man has produced that does not seem out of place in nature.

Crumpled into a wad of wrinkles,
like the fossilized brain of a dryad;
its kinship to tree (to knot and
nest) unobscured by the cruel crush
of industry; absorbing the elements
like any other organic entity;
blending with rock and vegetation as
if it were a burrowing owl's door
mat or a jack rabbit's underwear, a
No. 8 Kraft paper bag lay discarded
in the hills of Dakota and appeared
to live where it lay. Once long ago,
it had borne a package of buns and a
jar of mustard to a kitchenette
rendezvous with a fried hamburger.
More recently, the bag had
held..... love letters.

View of a bunkhouse trunk.

VOICE

As a hole in an oak hides a squirrel's
family jewels, the bag had hidden
love letters in the bottom of a
bunkhouse trunk.

Hands lift the contents of the trunk away, rope, spurs, and
blanket and find the hidden sack of letters.

VOICE

Then one day after work, the button-
nosed little cowgirl to whom the
letters were addressed gathered bag
and contents under her arm, slipped
out to the corral...

We see the Cowgirl saddling her horse late in the day.

VOICE

...past ranch hands pitching
horseshoes and ranch hands flying
Tibetan kites, saddled up and trotted
into the hills.

We see the Cowgirl riding along a ridge.

VOICE

A mile or so from the bunkhouse, she
dismounted and built a small fire;

she fed the fire letters.

And this we see also, the lonely Cowgirl feeding the letters to a fire in the dusky early night. We can see the cowgirl is Sissy Hankshaw.

VOICE

...one by one, the way her girl friend had once fed her french fries.

She is crying now and feeding the fire, close of words like "always" and "forever" burning up.

VOICE

As words such as sweetheart" and "honey britches" and "forever" and "always" burned away, the cowgirl squirted a few tears. Her eyes were so misty she forgot to burn the bag.

INT. BUNKHOUSE NIGHT

Sissy is sobbing.

Big Red offers a piece of homemade fudge and shows no surprise when Sissy refuses it.

Kym kisses the lips quickly of the despondent Cowgirl, and the bunkhouse lights go out.

Delores plunks a carefree song on an old Gibson, looks up at the moon.

DELORES

You know, podner, you can tune a guitar but you can't tuna fish.

She plunks a few notes.

DELORES

God, but it's good to be a cowgirl.

And the bunkhouse lights are turned off. There are some giggles from the cowgirls.

INT. MAIN BEDROOM RANCH DAY

THE CHINK wakes up and is being cared for by Sissy. He is in pain, but winking.

SISSY

Is everything getting worse?

CHINK

Yes, everything is getting worse.
But everything is also getting better.

SISSY

The Countess has come to our aid.
The Rubber Rose Ranch is officially
deeded to all the cowgirls. And I
have been asked to oversee the ranch.
For \$300 a week. And as it turns
out, the Countess is not going to be
the vegetable the doctors thought he
was... here's a picture!

Sissy shows a picture of the Countess recovering in a hospital
bed, posing next to Doctor Robbins.

CHINK

I want to go back to the Clock People.
I kind of miss those fool redskins
and wonder what they're up to. What's
happened to Jelly?

SISSY

She had a one way-ticket to Kansas
City.

CHINK

You mean she's dead?

The Chink mourns a bit.

SISSY

But that's an old story now..... I
can't believe that you would leave
the Butte.

CHINK

Easy come, easy go.

DELORES

Wow, you sure have a way with words.

The Chink looks over and sees that Delores is standing in
the doorway.

CHINK

I can't help it if I grew up in an antipoetic culture. Language will be different when I'm with the Clock People though. They're from an oral tradition. And I'm not talking about what you horny hop toads do in bed every night.

The Chink smiles.

Delores blushes.

SISSY

Well, if the Clock People give you any inside information on the end of the world, drop us a postcard.

CHINK

The world isn't going to end, you dummy; I hope you know that much.

(he grows
uncharacteristically
serious)

But it is going to change. It's going to change drastically, and probably in your lifetime. The Clock People see calamitous earthquakes as the agent of change, and they may be right, since there are a hundred thousand earthquakes a year and major ones are long overdue. But there are far worse catastrophes coming... unless the human race can bring itself to abandon the goals and values of civilization, in other words, unless it can break the consumption habit – and we are so conditioned to consuming as a way of life that for most of us life would have no meaning without the yearnings and rewards of progressive consumption. It isn't merely that our bad habits will cause global catastrophes, but that our operative political-economic philosophies have us in such a blind crab grip that they prevent us from preparing for the natural disasters

that are not our fault. So the apocalyptic shit is going to hit the fan, all right, but there'll be some of us it'll miss. Little pockets of humanity. Like the Clock People. Like you two honeys, if you decide to accept my offer of a lease on Siwash Cave. There's almost no worldwide calamity – famine, nuclear accident, plague, weather warfare or reduction of the ozone shield – that you couldn't survive in that cave.

He begins to caress Sissy's belly. His eyes are smiling. Sissy is surprised.

CHINK

Suppose that you bear five or six children with your characteristics. All in Siwash Cave. In a postcatastrophe world, your offspring would of necessity intermarry, forming in time a tribe. A tribe every member of which had giant thumbs. A tribe of Big Thumbs would relate to the environment in very special ways. It could not use weapons or produce sophisticated tools. It would have to rely on its wits and its senses. It would have to live with animals – and plants! – as virtual equals. It's extremely pleasant to me to think about a tribe of physical eccentrics living peacefully with animals and plants, learning their languages, perhaps, and paying them the respect they deserve.

SISSY

How am I going to be the progenitor of a tribe when I'm living on an isolated ridgetop with Delores?

CHINK

That's your problem.

The Chink coughs.

CHINK

Listen to the way I'm babbling. That bullet must have loosened one of my transistors. Don't pay any attention to me. You've got to work it out for yourself. The westbound choo-choo leaves Mottburg at one-forty. I want to be on it. Will you drive me to the station?

INT. TRUCK DAY

Sissy and Delores are driving the Chink out the front gate of the Rubber Rose.

CHINK

Schedules! Ironic how I have to follow timetables in order to get back to the clockworks.

He yells out the window of the moving vehicle.

CHINK

Don't ever bet against paradox, ladies...

EXT. THE RUBBER ROSE GATES

We hear the Chink yelling, and the Rubber Rose sign is being changed to one that reads El Rancho Jellybean.

CHINK

...if complexity doesn't beat you, then paradox will. Ha ha ho ho and hee hee.....

And the truck disappears into the prairie land.

A LONG DARK PAUSE, UNTIL finally we are inside the cave where the Chink's Clockworks are at work..... poing!

It is revealed that Sissy is with Delores snug in the old hermit's living quarters. She listens to the clinking of the Chink's Clockworks.

And feels her belly.

The swell of her belly has forced her to sleep on her back.

CLOSE VIEW of Sissy's belly, and a little foot kicks from inside. Or is it a foot?

VIEW INSIDE THE BELLY of Sissy's unborn baby. It is half-Japanese, one thirty-second Siwash and all thumbs.

The moving thumbs are hitchhiking you.....

THE END