

Miles Away

By

Benjamin Gonzales

Written for the Stage  
Management Simulation.

ACT I

Scene 1

*(EUGENE stands in the living room in front of the window, staring out. It's night and there is a lightning storm. There is a flash)*

EUGENE:

One... Two... Three... Four... Five... Six... Seven...  
Eight...

*(The lightning reports. SHANNAH enters from the bedroom. She stands and watches EUGENE. Another lightning flash.)*

EUGENE:

One... Two... Three... Four... Five... Six... Seven...

*(The lightning reports. SHANNAH turns on the lights.)*

SHANNAH:

Eugene?

*(EUGENE doesn't respond)*

SHANNAH:

Eugene...

EUGENE:

Turn off the lights.

*(SHANNAH waits a beat. She turns off the lights. There is a lightning flash.)*

One... Two...

SHANNAH:

Eugene...

EUGENE:

Three... Four... Five...

SHANNAH:

We should talk.

EUGENE:

Six...

*(The lightning reports. SHANNAH crosses to EUGENE)*

(CONTINUED)

SHANNAH:

Can we talk about it?

EUGENE:

It's six miles away.

SHANNAH:

The storm?

*(EUGENE just continues to watch out the window.)*  
Honey... look at me.

EUGENE:

One second is how long it takes for the sound to travel a mile.

SHANNAH:

I know.

EUGENE:

Could you imagine?

*(The lightning flashes again)*  
One... Two...

SHANNAH:

Imagine what?

EUGENE:

Three... Four... Five...

*(The lightning reports)*  
It could be 30 miles away, and we'd hear it 30 seconds later.

SHANNAH:

Is this about Jim?

EUGENE:

*(Eugene turns to her)*  
The lightning could flash way over there, and in seconds. BOOM. it's here.

SHANNAH:

What are you trying to tell me?

EUGENE:

I guess that thunder is prompt.

SHANNAH:

Come, sit. talk to me.

*(She leads EUGENE over to the couch)*  
Your dad... I'm sure he understands.

EUGENE:  
How could he?

*(The lightning flashes again)*  
How could he Shannah?

SHANNAH:  
I'm sure he would have thought...

EUGENE:  
He's dead.

*(The lightning reports)*  
six.

SHANNAH:  
It's moving away.

EUGENE:  
1355.

SHANNAH:  
What?

EUGENE:  
How many seconds it would have taken me to get there.

SHANNAH:  
If you were lightning?

EUGENE:  
If I was the thunder.

SHANNAH:  
Eugene...

EUGENE:  
If I really wanted to, I could have made it happen.  
Thunder is so loyal. Prompt.

*(The lightning flashes)*  
I stopped being that for him. When they moved to  
Florida I thought I could just get there whenever. 1355  
miles. I didn't make it, and now he's gone.

*(The lightning reports)*  
Eight. It's moving away.

SHANNAH:

Look at me Eugene. You weren't there. You couldn't be there. Jim WOULD have known that. Your mom knows that. You are not a bolt of lightning, and you're definitely not a sound wave. Don't live there. Live here, please. I'm going back to bed. We've got to wake up early. There's a plane to catch. Whatever you do... don't blame yourself for living your life.

*(SHANNAH kisses him on the head and exits to the bedroom. EUGENE watches her leave and then goes to the bedroom. EUGENE then stands and crosses back to the bedroom. There is a lightning flash. He turns and walks away. There is no report.)*

END OF PLAY