ACT TWO

Scene Eight

Gordon home. Jennie is writing in the ledger.

SCOTT

Good morning, Mama.

JENNIE

You’re up early. Are you headed out to the farm?

SCOTT

Yes, and Addie’s coming with me. We don’t have much time to get the old home place fixed up.

(pause)

I’m sorry about the house. Sorry we’ve got to move back into the soddie. I know it must be hard for you.

JENNIE

Some hard things are worth it.

ADDIE

(entering from within)

How are you today, Jennie?

JENNIE

Better than yesterday. I don’t quite feel like myself, but I’m a bit stronger.

ADDIE

I’m glad to hear it. Still, don’t work yourself too hard. Please tell Mallory I’ll do my share of the cleaning when we get back.

SCOTT

(addressing Addie, but for both to hear)

Dust pneumonia won’t slow Mama down. She’s as tough as prairie sod.

(to Jennie)

We’ll be back by lunchtime.
(SCOTT and ADDIE exit.)

JENNIE

IT’S BEEN SO LONG, BUT NOW IT’S TIME
TO PACK IT UP, TO SAY “GOODBYE.”
A LIGHT IS GOING OUT ON CHERRY LANE.

MALLORY
(from offstage, or from the doorway)
You shouldn’t be singing, Mama. You’ll strain your lungs.

JENNIE
SWEETHEART, PUT AWAY YOUR FEARS,
AND LET ME SING AWAY MY TEARS.
TOUGH AS PRAIRIE SOD, I KNOW HE IS, HE TRIED.
BUT FOR ALL HIS EFFORTS, TOUGH CAN’T STOP THE TIDE.

BUT TOUGH CAN RALLY
AND TOUGH CAN ABIDE.
TOUGH CAN HOPE AND
TOUGH CAN DECIDE
TO SMILE AT THE CHALLENGE
AND TAKE IT IN STRIDE,
TO STAND ON THE HOPE THAT
FAITH CAN PROVIDE.

PRAIRIE SOD PEOPLE HAVE PRAIRIE SOD DREAMS—
IN TIRED EYES LINGER STILL HOPEFUL GLEAMS.
PRAIRIE SOD PEOPLE GROW THEIR ROOTS DOWN DEEP,
AND THEY KEEP RISING UP WHEN OTHERS ARE ASLEEP.
PRAIRIE SOD PEOPLE ALWAYS HOLD THEIR GROUND,
STAND BY ONE ANOTHER, HELP THEIR NEIGHBORS ALL AROUND.
PRAIRIE SOD PEOPLE ARE STRONGER THAN THEY SEEM;
PRAIRIE SOD PEOPLE HAVE PRAIRIE SOD DREAMS.

BUILDING UP THE WALLS AGAIN,
STIRRING UP THE EMBERS WHEN
IT’S DARKER THAN IT’S EVER BEEN BEFORE.
MAKING THE DESOLATE A HOME AGAIN,
BUILT ON COURAGE AND REMEMBER WHEN.
MAKING RUBBLE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL ONCE MORE—
A LIGHT THAT’S SHINING BRIGHTER THAN BEFORE,

EVEN AS THIS ONE’S GOING OUT.
FOR NOW...

BUT TOUGH WILL RALLY
AND TOUGH WILL ABIDE.
TOUGH WILL HOPE AND
TOUGH WILL DECIDE
TO SMILE AT THE CHALLENGE
AND TAKE IT IN STRIDE,
TO STAND ON THE HOPE THAT
FAITH WILL PROVIDE.

CALL ME A DREAMER
‘CAUSE THE PLAINS ARE BARE—
JUST WAIT FOR THE RAINFALL
‘CAUSE THE ROOTS ARE STILL THERE!