

Sometimes A Rainbow

Tom Northam



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ArtAge Publications

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Sometimes A Rainbow

A Musical Comedy

By

Tom Northam

Story, Lyrics and Music by Tom Northam (ASCAP)
Music Arranged by Dale E. Wise, M.M.E.

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FOREWORD

The concept for this production was formulated during my days working in Washington, DC, for the US Administration on Aging. Washington, the nation’s capital, has no shortage of homeless people, and one has only to stand in a single spot for a short time to see them.

It is difficult for most of us to relate to the situation of the homeless...often generating feelings of disgust, sympathy, pity; or wonder...how does one arrive at this station in life? Are they mentally unstable? Is this the result of abuse? Or, are they just disgusting individuals who are hiding from something or don’t care anymore? The answer is, of course, all of the above and more; however, there are as many stories as there are individuals. It has been a challenge to garner humor from difficulty; to find hope in despair, or to create excitement and the thrill of discovery in an adventure on a new highway to life. A way that for too many, has been a rocky road to desolation. A delicate subject to be sure.

How does one take an unglamorous situation with pathetic subjects to create a musical comedy that an audience can enjoy? This dilemma is why it has taken me more than six years to write this story and put forth the lyrics and music. There has been no attempt to include all of the problems or conditions of the homeless who, for whatever reason, live on the streets. This story should be viewed as a small segment of time during the lives of a few homeless people and their encounter with life and each other.

PROLOGUE

Some people are fortunate; others are not. Some plan ahead; others do not. However, not all gold glitters, for there are people, regardless of their station in life, who can somehow find love, happiness and peace of mind. There is...**Sometimes A Rainbow.**

- Tom Northam

THE PROGRAM

It is recommended that the front page of this script be copied for the program cover.

It is requested that both the Foreword and the Prologue be included in the printed program. It is required that the following statement be included in the program:

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DEDICATION

SOMETIMES A RAINBOW is dedicated to an outstanding actress and my dear friend,

LOUISE FLETCHER...*My Cordy*

The Author



THE FIRST PERFORMANCE

Sometimes A Rainbow was first produced by the **Lakeside Senior Theatre** and opened on Friday, June 22, 2012 at The Lake of the Woods, Locust Grove, Virginia, with the following cast:

(In Order of Appearance)

NARRATOR [*No longer a role*] Bob McFarland
DANIKA Gladys Perkins
BEVERLY Jean Westholt
AGNES Roxanne Kessler
CORDY Louise Fletcher
TWITCH Bruce Morris
DUCHESS Donna Blackistone
QUEENIE Peg Manuel
MACK Lee Frame
DAVID MCKENZIE John Hollinger
ENSEMBLE: Cathy France, Roxanne Kessler, Peg Manuel, Bruce Morris, Alan Patnode, Vana Shields, Nancy Strain, Joan Trotter, and Jean Westholt.

Director. Tom Northam
Assistant Director Ann Herndon
Choreography Carolyn Graham and Donna Blackistone
Costuming Joan Trotter
Sound Jim Ryan, Dave Goodrich
Lighting Tom Northam
Set Construction Bruce Morris

It was performed again for the Association of Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) on August 3, 2012, in Washington, DC, followed by comments and critiques. The current version of *Sometimes A Rainbow* has incorporated those critiques.

The average run time per performance for the twelve scenes with no intermission: One hour and forty minutes. The Show can easily be performed in two acts.

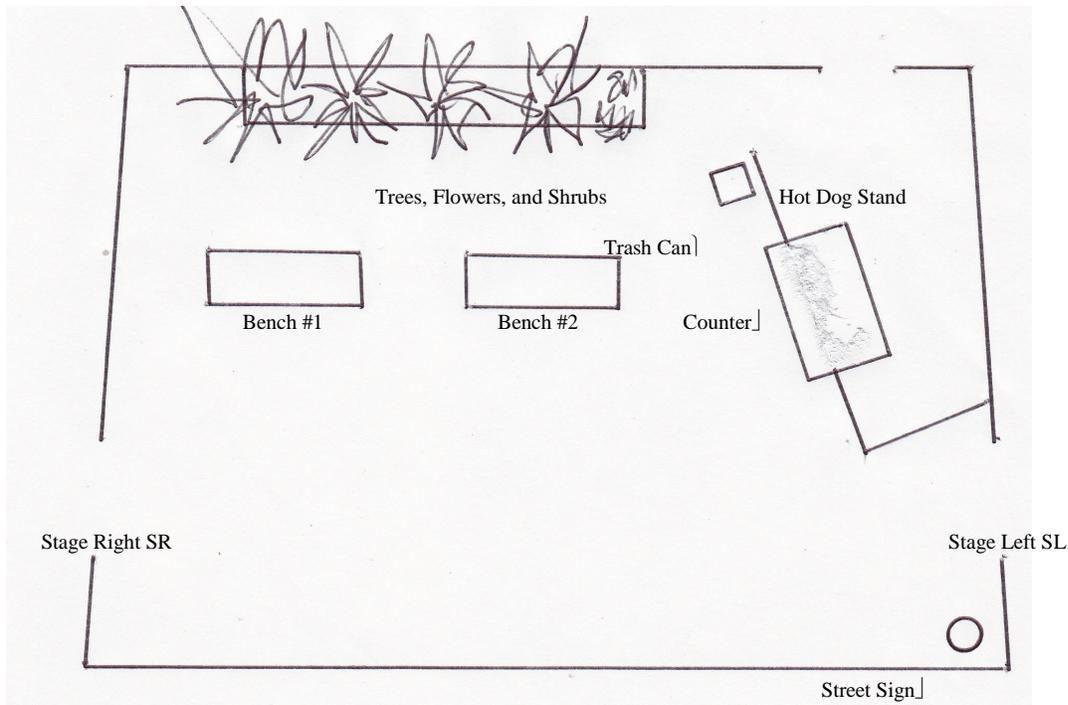


THE COSTUMES

The only unique costume is Duchess' "Rainbow Coat." It is created from 200-300 men's ties styled to look like a cape. Because of weight, the linings of the most ties were removed and fabric stitched together with overlays of whole ties.

THE SET

There is one (1) set throughout the show, which consists of a Concession Trailer...a Hot Dog Stand at Stage Left (SL) approximately four feet by eight feet (4'w x 8'l x 7' h) with a window and service counter. There is a large commercial trashcan adjacent to the "Stand." Up Center Stage (UCS) is one (1) park bench (#2) and to Up Stage Right (USR) an additional park bench (#1). Up stage are shrubs, trees and flower gardens. Down Stage Left (DSL) is a single street sign post with two (2) green with white lettered street signs identified: **15th ST NW** and **Constitution AVE NW**.



THE TIME AND PLACE

The time is the present during the period of early Spring to Late Autumn. The Place is a small park adjacent to the Ellipse at the corner of 15th Street and Constitution Avenue, in NW Washington, D.C. It centers around a concession trailer...a hot dog stand...across the street from the U.S. Department of Commerce over-looking the Smithsonian Mall. It is at the center of most of Washington's tourist activity.

THE CHARACTERS

CORDY SHELBURNE: Female, age 65+ (Sings). When first appearing, she is a very plain person reflected by her clothes. She is wearing a grey knee-length coat over a plain muted dress, modest hat, black hose and black granny shoes, and large purse. She is a widow living with her daughter and her abusive son-in-law. She has no social life, no friends, no hope, no dreams and is more-or-less waiting to die. She sees no way out of her current situation. As the show progresses, her clothing begins to reflect growth and becomes more lively and summery with prints, etc.

DUCHESS: Female, age 70+ (Sings). She is flamboyant, colorful, and very matter-of-fact outspoken. She has lived on the streets for years and knows her way around. She loves to laugh and often says "shocking" things, but is never crude nor vulgar. She is afraid of nothing and an encourager. Her outfit reflects this, as she is wearing a cape-type of coat made entirely of men's ties; hundreds of them. She is wearing a long sleeved blouse or sweater under the ties, a gathered skirt, a stocking cap and mismatched shoes, one being red.

MACK: Male, age 65+ (Sings). A bitter, loner and loser. He is rough, rude, crude, has a nasty temperament and creepy. He is a menacing character who is constantly whittling and carving on pieces of wood. One never questions that he might have carved a few people as well. He should have long stringy grey hair (wig), or color to match the actor's natural hair, perhaps with a handkerchief headband. He is filthy, unkempt and uses tied plastic bags as a belt. Near the conclusion of the show, he returns cleaned up, a hair cut and well dressed.

DANIKA: Female [or male (Danny)], age 35 to 55 (Sings). She is an immigrant from a brutal dictatorship, who at age eleven, saw her family slaughtered. She is the owner of the hot dog stand, and the sole support for her three small children and mother-in-law. She works seven days a week with long hours. Her only real contact with people, other than customers, is with street people.

QUEENIE: Female, age 65+ (Sings). Over dressed in tattered clothing of yesteryear. She was the former gossip columnist for *The Washington Post*. She was the society "Queen" who once held great celebrity. She lives in a run-down, one-room apartment. She has seen better days; however, is an eternal optimist. She wears combat boots, but carries soiled satin high heels, a reporter's pad, and a camera that doesn't work, so she says: "Click, click."

DAVID: Male, age 55+. Mack's younger brother who is well dressed, educated, and quite rich.

TWITCH: Male, age 45+. He is constantly jerking his head and shoulders, and walks with a forward leaning stride. He is mentally challenged and barely survives on the streets. His speech patterns are all monotone. He carries an old, tattered soft ball.

ENSEMBLE: All ages and mixes. Used as tourists, customers and street people throughout the production. They are in the opening number, *You Gotta See D.C.*, a major choreographed *Street People*, and chorus of *Building New Dreams*. Need a minimum of eight people who can sing and dance. The show has potential to accommodate a cast of any size. Some of the fun characters assumed by ensemble members are: **Beverly** and **Agnes** (Tourists), Tour Guide **Willie/Wilda** (Street person who claims to give guided tours), **Reverend Purdy** (Street evangelist), **Freddie/Frieda** the Vendor (Street seller of cheap knock-off watches), Foxy **Roxy** (A has been date escort), Mad **Mabel** (A former fine restaurant hostess, now a down and out alcoholic), **Doc John** (Shell shocked Korean War medic), Antique **Annie** (Sorts through trash to find "treasures" to sell), **Hilda** (German flower vendor), **The Protester** (Carries sign with "*I'm For It*" on one side and "*I'm Against It*" on the other), and **Singy-Poo** (A mentally challenged person who speaks his/her own language and wears a *McDonald's* paper sack with eye-holes over head).

There has been an attempt to make nearly all characters gender neutral.



THE PROPERTIES

Basic Set

- 2 Park benches (4'-5' in length)
- 1 Commercial trash can
- 1 Hotdog stand (4' x 8' x 7' high)
- 1 Street signpost
- 1 Green with white letters: 15th ST NW
- 1 Green with white letters: Constitution AVE NW
- Assorted potted trees, shrubs and flowers (Real, Plastic or Silk)

General Properties

- 2 **SAFEWAY** carts (On loan)(Or any grocery carts)
 - One empty (Cordy)
 - One (Mt. Peely) with framing to make it appear full, (Duchess) covered with blanket, with One brightly colored umbrella opened on top.
- Contains:** 1 Large KFC Cup with lid
- 1 1/2 Gallon Milk container filled with pennies (Nails?)
- 1 Plastic Fork
- 1 Small wire shopping cart filled with paper grocery bag and groceries. (Cordy)
- 1 Small real naval orange per performance (Cordy)
- 2-3 Street maps (Tourists)
- 1-2 Cameras (Tourists)
- 1-2 Shopping bags (Tourists)
- 1 Box, *Ziploc* sandwich bags for Mack's carvings. (Danika)
- 10-15 Carved wooden animals (Suggest small animals from Tractor Supply spray painted to look like wood.) (Mack)
- 1 Hunting knife in sheath (Mack)
- 1 Soft ball, badly worn (Twitch)
- 1 Old Camera (*e.g., Graphflex*) (Queenie)
- 1 Large American flag on pole (**YOU GOTTA SEE D.C.**)
- 1 *McDonald's* Paper Bag with eyeholes. (Singy-Poo)

Dressing for Hot Dog Stand

- 3 or 4 Simulated T-Shirts with DC-type advertising (*e.g., I Ø D.C.*)
 - Redskin pennants
 - Post cards
- 12 Assorted soda pop Cans (*e.g., Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Dr. Pepper, Mountain Dew*)
- 6 Foil wrapped hot dog buns
- 1 Red ketchup dispenser
- 1 Yellow mustard dispenser
- 1 Pickle relish dispenser
- 3 Large soft pretzels (Varnished)
- 1 Wire basket set (3) with assorted plastic bananas, apples, oranges
- 1 Tall napkin dispenser

- 1 Sign on a stick with “I’m For It” on one side and “I’m Against It” on the other. (Protester)

- 1 Sign: “The End Times Are Coming” (Reverend Purdy)

- 1 Folding beach chair. (Tour Guide Willie/Wilda)

- 1 Homemade sign: “Guided Tours” (Willie/Wilda)

- 1 Homemade sign: “I’m Hungry” (Mabel)

- 1 Well used Perrier bottle with partial label (Roxy)

- 1 Little red wagon “*Radio Flyer*” with containers and flowers (Hilda)



THE CODES AND SYMBOLS

Although not necessary for performance, special codes and symbols have been incorporated into the script to assist in the technical production for the sound track cues [+], body microphone (Mic) ∈ thru ©, and lighting [⊃ **Instructions**] cues, and are so designated within the script. This was done to save a lot of confusion and hours of experimentation. Actions are in [brackets], emotions and delivery are in (parentheses).

Whether sheet music or the CD Sound Track is used, the script will indicate with the Start Symbol [+] at that point the music [TK-] or sound effect should be started.. It will also indicate at the point when each body mic's should be turned ON ∈ or OFF ∖. The lighting symbol [⊃ (*Instructions*)] is also included.

THE SOUND

[+] Indicates when the individual Track of music should start. It is calibrated for timing within the given speech.

The only Sound Effect is [TK-12] Which is a distant Clock Tower Bell with 12 strikes.

THE BODY MIC'S

If Body Mic's are to be used. These symbols indicate the exact point in the script when a specific microphone should be turned on or off.

∈ thru © The black number within a clear circle means: turn that number ON.

∖ thru ↑ The white number within a black circle means: turn that number OFF.

Six (6) Body Mic assignments are as follows:

CORDY	∈ and ∖
DUCHESS	∉ and ∧
DANIKA	∠ and ∨
QUEENIE	∇ and ↔
MACK	® and ←
DAVID	© and ↑

Rule 1: *No actor, or anyone near the actor, should speak within 20 seconds before going or after coming off stage.*

THE LIGHTING

[⊃ **Instructions**] Indicates where special lighting effects are recommended or can be used.

It should also be noted that stage directions, (e.g., *SR-Stage Right, SL-Stage Left, CS-Center Stage, U-Up, D-Down Stage*) are provided for easy ingress [ENTER] and egress [EXIT] and

consistency within the script. The use of other direction is at the sole discretion of the Director.

THE MUSIC

[+] <u>CD Track</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Character</u>
[TK-01]	YOU GOTTA SEE D.C.	ENSEMBLE
[TK-02]	I'VE GOT IT!	DUCHESS
[TK-03]	STREET PEOPLE	DUCHESS AND ENSEMBLE
[TK-04]	SOMETIMES A RAINBOW	QUEENIE
[TK-05]	WHEN SOMEONE SEES	DANIKA
[TK-06]	THEY CALL ME "MACK THE KNIFE"	MACK
[TK-07]	ONCE WE HAD TOMORROW	CORDY
[TK-08]	SO THEY WILL BE FREE	DANIKA
[TK-09]	POINT OF VIEW	QUEENIE
[TK-10]	BIG LITTLE WORLD	MACK
[TK-11]	BUILDING NEW DREAMS	DUCHESS AND THE ENTIRE CAST
[TK-12]	CLOCK TOWER BELLS (Sound Effect in SCENE: 1 , page 7)	
[TK-13]	SOMETIMES A RAINBOW (Choral Arrangement to be used as short Overture) <i>(Sheet music is available for chorus or choir performance, SATB)</i>	

Sound Engineering by Paul Sturm of **SOUNDDECISIONS** Recording Studio, Gordonsville, VA



SCENE: 1

[ENTER DANIKA. From SL. She unlocks the window covering on the hot dog stand and raises it then goes to rear and enters]

[ENTER TOUR GUIDE WILLIE/WILMA. From SL. He's/she's carrying a small folding beach chair, opens it and sits DSR. He is wearing a black top hat and tennis shoes, and tattered clothes. His well-worn sign says "Guided Tours."]

[A tourist ENTERS from SL looks at the hot dog stand, then starts to walk SR. WILLIE remains seated]

WILLIE: *[To tourist]* Hey...do you want a tour?

TOURIST: No.

WILLIE: I'm good...*[pointing straight ahead to the audience]*...that tall, skinny thing is Washington's Monument.

TOURIST: *(Not interested)* Thank you.

WILLIE: *[Pointing to left]* And that big house with all the flags? That's the Capitol.

TOURIST: *[Trying to get away]* Thanks...I'm not interested.

WILLIE: *[Pointing right]* And way down by the river it's Honest Abe's temple.

TOURIST: I know...please...leave me alone. *[EXITS SR]*

WILLIE: *[Jumps up, folds chair, placing it under his arm, chasing after the tourist EXITS]* Hey! You owe me for a tour!

[Some of the ENSEMBLE are on stage; however, the majority are entering through the audience and approaching the stage as the streets become alive with tourists of varying ages from all walks of life. Each line is from a member of the ENSEMBLE as they approach the stage where it is unified.]

(Loud and boastfully) Howdy...I'm from Texas!

I'm from Rome

I call Alabama home.

SOMETIMES A RAINBOW

Louisiana,
Sweden,

Paris

Paris, France?

No...Indiana.

[Everyone should be on stage]

I've seen London; heard Big Ben toll. Been to the tower, where heads did roll.

I've skied the Alps in Switzerland, back-packed from Burma to Thailand.

I watched them build the Berlin Wall...was also there to watch it fall.

Went to Manhattan and Times Square, and somehow lost my wallet there.

Me, too, but I'd spent my money. I had one meal that wasn't good, and saw a show that wasn't funny.

We took a tour to London, Amsterdam, Madrid, Barcelona, Frankfurt and Rome. And after we had seen it all...the third day we came home. [+] **[TK-1]**

[The entire ensemble begins to move into position and sings]

YOU GOTTA SEE, D.C.

(From **Sometimes A Rainbow**)

Lyrics & Music © 2012 by Tom Northam (ASCAP)

Music Arranged by Dale E. Wise, MME

We've seen Las Vegas lights,
Had New York City nights, and seen Miss Liberty
We've felt Chicago's wind that chills the day
Seen San Francisco's Golden Bridge and bay
The L. A. City lights are so bright at night,
They cover the mountains to the sea.
But there's not a sight you'll ever see
Like where Old Glory waves, for the home of the brave.
In the land of the free
On the Capitol in D.C.

SOMETIMES A RAINBOW

[High spirited with choreography]

Chorus: **YOU GOTTA SEE, DC.** It's our nation's pride
 IT's DC. Where our founder's died.
 IN DC. Where our leaders decide;
 What our world will be.
 Each place that you look,
 You'll see something famous
 Heads-of-State come here to praise us or blame us,
 You won't believe it,
 No place can beat it.
YOU GOTTA SEE, DC, *[Chorus repeats for dance and repeats again for conclusion]*

Tag:

It's Washington...Washington...Washington...Washington...DC!

[As the song concludes, tourist begin to Exit SR and SL, leaving only a few at the concession stand with AGNES looking at T-shirts, others waiting for food, paying for food, looking at maps, eating and littering, etc.]

CORDY. *[During the following conversation by Beverly and Agnes, ENTERS slowly from SL. She is wearing a light-weight knee-length crocheted coat, grey plain dress, small round hat, black granny shoes, large purse and pulling a small wire market cart filled with groceries. She watches Beverly and Agnes with some interest as she goes to bench #2]*

BEVERLY: *(From ENSEMBLE, CS, where song ends, to her friend)* Hey! Agnes...over here. Let's go!

AGNES: *(Disgusted, negative)* What for? Nothing to see but old buildings and statues. When you said "the mall," I thought you meant...Macy's, Nordstrom's...not this old stuff. Shopping? Right...T-shirts."

BEVERLY: Quit belly-aching...not everyone gets to see "DC." And here we are...standing at Fifteenth and Constitution...the crossroads of the nation's capital. There's so much history here. I just can't see enough.

AGNES: I can...didn't want to come in the first place. Nothing here but crowds, foreigners and old buildings.

BEVERLY: Say, let's go see Albert Einstein, he's just down the street? *[Looking at map]*

SOMETIMES A RAINBOW

AGNES: Thought he was dead.

BEVERLY: It's a statue. They say you can sit on his lap.

AGNES: *(Sarcastically)* Oh...won't that be wonderful? Is he still selling bagels with his brother?

€

BEVERLY: I'll take a picture of you sitting on Albert's lap. Then, we can go see the Lincoln Memorial, you'll *really* love that. *[EXITS SR]*

CORDY: *(To self)* Don't count on it...she'd find something wrong with the second coming. *[As she sits, on bench #2, her dress hicks a little to reveal mid-calf hose with long cotton underwear neatly tucked within. She opens purse and extracts a handkerchief and blots and wipes her forehead, under eyes and cheek. Twists neck, rotates head, as if to work loose some arthritic pain. Works shoulders a little one at a time.]* Lincoln Memorial...haven't been there for years, and it's just down the street *[pointing to the right]*. Isn't that the way of it? Don't appreciate what's in our own backyard...used to have the best concerts there...right next to the water. Free too, *my* Albert said that was the best part. Every Friday night...US Navy Band. *[Spreads out a handkerchief on her lap. She then gets a naval orange from a bag in the shopping cart, wipes it on the tail of her dress and begins to peel it. She starts to chuckle as she separates a piece of orange.]* Sit in Albert Einstein's lap. Hi, Albert...want a piece of orange? *[Then playfully pulls away and eats it like a child.]* My Albert would've grabbed that so fast...loved oranges...tuna fish sandwiches and oranges...sittin' on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial...every Friday night. *(Takes a bite)* Or was that the Jefferson Memorial? Maybe it was the Navy Yard...can't remember...but we saw lots of sites...didn't we Albert? *(Laughs)* Bet we left orange peels at every tourist spot in D.C.

TWITCH: *[ENTERS SR. Male, Age 45+, Street person with twitch in neck and shoulder. He is dressed in odds and ends and carries an old soft ball. He sees Cordy and observes]*

CORDY: *[Takes last bite and rising, takes handkerchief and empties the orange peels into trash can]*

TWITCH: *[As Cordy goes to trash can, he rushes to where Cordy was sitting and sits patting the bench]* *(Monotone)* My spot.

CORDY: Beg your pardon.

TWITCH: *(All comments are monotone)* My spot.

CORDY: Excuse me, I was sitting there.

TWITCH: My spot.

CORDY: *(Realizing that he is mentally challenged)* Well, maybe it is, but I was sitting there...those are my things.

SOMETIMES A RAINBOW

TWITCH: Not my things.

CORDY: No...they're not. They are mine...I was sitting there.

€

TWITCH: Why you put your things in my spot?

DUCHESS: *[ENTERS SL. Pushing a grocery cart (Mt. Peely) loaded with stuff, covered with an umbrella perched on top. She is 70 to 85 years old, wearing an outfit made of hundreds of men's ties flowing like a cape. Her hair is wild topped with a knit cap. She is wearing one man's black and white tennis shoe and one man's red and white tennis shoe with baggy thick flesh colored stockings and a gathered skirt. Most everything has seen better days.]* Twitch...take a hike and quit making trouble for this lady.

TWITCH: My spot.

DUCHESS: It ain't now, so scram! Git! *(As if chasing and going to kick him)* Shoo!

CORDY: It doesn't matter...I was just leaving.

DUCHESS: Well, it does me. He's just a pain in the butt.

[TWITCH EXITS SR]

CORDY: I didn't mean to cause problems.

DUCHESS: *[Pushing Mt. Peely SR past bench #1.]* You didn't, he's harmless. You're new around here...what's your name, Honey?

CORDY: Cordy. Cordy Shelburne...and yours?

DUCHESS: Folks call me "Duchess." You live around here? *[Flopping on bench #1]*

CORDY: *[Sits again on bench #2]* Up on Fifteenth and H... near GSA... 'bout three or four blocks...live with my daughter and her...*(Disgust)* husband.

DUCHESS: So, you got family...that's nice...*(Pause)* I guess.

CORDY: *(With same lack of enthusiasm)* Not really. I wish I didn't have to. *(Changing the subject)* You have a...ah...an...interesting coat. Lots of pretty colors.

DUCHESS: *[Proudly jumping up and whirling around]* Yeah, ain't it though...call it my "Rainbow Coat." Made it myself. Nobody knows what to do with old ties, so I put them to good use...waste not, want not...besides, I love the bright colors, and it's one of a kind...that's for sure. *[Leaning on handle of Mt. Peely]* Say, what brings you this way?

SOMETIMES A RAINBOW

CORDY: I was at the little grocery mart down the street...getting things for dinner. Stopped for a rest...and you?

DUCHESS: Live here.

CORDY: You live here...where?

DUCHESS: *[Re-sitting on bench #1]* Anyplace I can find a spot of my own. Sometimes under a bush.

CORDY: *(Hesitantly)* You don't have a home? Say,...are you...ah...one of those...homeless people?

DUCHESS: Never considered myself...homeless, just don't live like other folks. It's easier that way and cheaper. Don't worry about rent or taxes, neither.

CORDY: *(Excited)* Oh...really...I...I've never actually talked to anyone without a home...I mean...I don't know how you live without a roof over your head...or a locked door. Oh, my, I'd be terrified.

DUCHESS: Aaah! You get used to it. After a couple of nights if you wake up and your neck ain't cut...and in D.C. that's sayin' somethin'...it's not so bad. Safest place in the world in the daytime, but at night...it's rough. Some neighborhoods so rough they oughta sell body-bags at Seven-Eleven.

CORDY: *(Seriously)* You really don't have a home?...I mean...no shelter...even from a storm?

DUCHESS: Oh, I find shelter if I need it *[Rising]*...but this here's my real home. *[Going to the grocery cart]*...I named it "Montpelier," in honor of President James Madison. You see...I can move easy enough...if I have to. Don't have to pay rent or give notice, and Ole Mount Peely there's got everything I need...and if it don't...don't need it.

CORDY: *[Rising and going to cart as if to peer in]* It...ah...it's very interesting. If you don't mind my...ah...curiosity, what's in there?

DUCHESS: Why, just about anything I'd ever need. **[+][TK-2]** *[Folds her hands as if in prayer, puts them to the side of her head and leans over onto the stuff on top]*

End of FreeView

Now read the whole show by ordering a perusal!