

ELI:

Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an *unfaltering* trust, approach thy grave
Like one that wraps the drapery of his cough
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

You die by how you live.

SOLLY: They never made Emancipation what they say it was. People say, "Jesus turn the water into wine what you look like telling him it was the wrong kind?" Hell, maybe it is the wrong kind! If you gonna do it . . . do it right! They wave the law on one end and hit you with a billy club with the other. I told myself I can't just sit around and collect dog shit while the people drowning. The people drowning in sorrow and grief. That's a mighty big ocean. They got the law tied to their toe. Every time they try and swim the law pull them under. It's dangerous out here. People walking around hunting each other. If you ain't careful you could lose your eye or your arm. I seen that. I seen a man grab hold to a fellow and cut off his arm. Cut it off at the shoulder. He had to work at it a while . . . but he cut it clean off. The man looked down saw his arm gone and started crying. After that he more dangerous with that one arm than the other man is with two. He got less to lose. There's a lot of one-arm men walking around.

ELI: That's what Caesar can't understand. He can't see the people ain't got nothing to lose.

SOLLY: The trouble with Caesar is he think the people dumb. He think I'm dumb. The last person that thought that is walking around with one eye and half an ear. My mother used to say if you wanna teach an old dog new tricks you gonna need twice as many bones. Well, I got a pocketful of bones.

I give you sugar for sugar
And salt for salt . . .

(Eli joins in:)

SOLLY AND ELI:

If you can't get along with me
It's your own damn fault.

ELI: They fought the Civil War over the law and still ain't got it right.

SOLLY: You know about the Civil War? That was white people fighting and killing each other like you ain't never seen. I don't even think you can imagine that. White folks fighting each other over the Union.

ELI: They ain't got over it yet. They still fighting it. They still mad with each other.

SOLLY: I didn't know what the Union was until I saw the soldiers. They had on uniforms say they was Union soldiers and asked us could we help.

ELI: We knew every swamp hole. We knew all the back ways. We knew how to connect them up.

SOLLY: They say they needed that. Say the colored man got a right to life. Say they was fighting against slavery. I asked them what took them so long. My daddy fought against slavery all his life. They say, "We have guns." I turned and looked and they had great big old cannons. That's when I knew a whole lot of people was going to die when I looked at them cannons. They was real serious about it. I knew all them guns wasn't on account of me. I figure they was fighting for themselves. And if that would help them that would help us.

ELI: They never said *they* was gonna help us. They said the war was gonna help us. After that it be every man for himself.

SOLLY: I told them you get what's in it for you and I'll get what's in it for me. You get yours and I'll get mine and we'll settle the difference later. We still settling it.

(Aunt Ester enters from her room.)