
Written by Sara Kumar

*(And Stagehand Hamlin waits,
while Stagehand Henry guides his horses to a nearby barn.)*

ANDY

This whole wide world will be werkin something turrible,
somethin turrible around ma neck,
and there upon the stage, they'll push out ole Andy Johnson
with bells on his feet and the Constitution in his arms
if nothing else just to see me dodge the bullets.

*(And he doesn't write on a papa standin upright but sittin and movin some.
He write in the air, he think, to get his mem'ry to work about the subject,
but he don't have good foresight about the subject.)*

People of Franklin, delay, delay, delay, and that's the way.
The work of slavery is a lost cause now.
We delayed the subject in the House and in the Senate, and now
it's come to the point where we delayed and now's time.
It's an itinerant institution and uses its legs to walk off.
I'm for a white man's government. I'm not for negro aristocracy!
I'm for a white man's FREE government, where you build up
from the ground like I did for Heaven's sake!
I need to know, no that's no it. I need to know. No.
They'll work better when they're free, won't they?

Don't you think so? That's the what we had to figure out.
They'd work better if they's free.
I think a Jeffersonian approach would be to say it like it is.
I'm for the government of the people, a small non-invasive government,
that doesn't infringe upon the rights of the people.
And let me say I'm for the government with or without slavery!
And a government without slavery is what we gonna have,
cause that's what we came to.
I say give me the government, and the negroes go!
I say I'd send them back to Africa before I let them in the government.
And delay and delay and delay.
I'll eventually have to free them. I'll wait another year.

(And Dolly come in and say somethin wise to see if he finished.)

DOLLY

I hep ya, Massa Johnson. I close dis door for ya.

(And she looks outside, and moves toward the light, and the candle burns down.

Andy remains at his desk podium.

Eliza sits on her chair bed. She reads a letter that she has written slowly.)

ELIZA

Dear Andrew, it is I, your loving wife
I don't trust the news I hear
The Confederate women whisper gossip

And the Church I can't go to has no more light

I put a cross in the tombstone

I know you wanted a Union flag

O tender, loving, husband end the war

Declare Tennessee its own and end it

Robert will not live to see you crowned

Pardon my simpleness; you have a way with words

I am hurting

I need to tell you about Charles

I named him after the son of John Adams

So he wouldn't need to live up to your

I'll say demands

I need to tell you I've read about presidents

And he wasn't a tall man, and neither are you

But he stopped war

And I'll write him a letter now, and I'll say Dear John Adams,

My son Charles is dead.

My grief runs up and down.

And my ache is tired, because it isn't mine.

Men die for their country, and I can't.

I'm saying you worked, because it was easy then,

but I would be lying.

And I think my husband works, because he wants to climb Jacob's Ladder.
There are no angels in Greeneville.

Please know that I can't live long with consumption.
And you know I can't imagine much either now,
because I'm just so tired of war.

Pray for us, President Adams. France was far away.
There's no ocean to bury the dead here in this place,
that doesn't know what it is.
North or South, so they rip it apart.

Tell my husband, we need grace, because I named Andrew,
but I changed his name to Frankie, because I'm so afraid.
He's so small. And his brother couldn't see his face, but I could.
Because he told me the news.
And I sit here, and I bleed.
And I can't die and fight, like my son.
I'm slow to talk

(Eliza moves to the desk and sits down with her head down, on a cushion.

She raises her head and puts the letter in the desk drawer.

Lights down on the home in Greeneville.

Stagehand Hamlin hears a train, and he exits stageleft.

*Mr. Frederick Douglass walks out of the Oval Office door
and sees Charles and Thaddeus waiting outside da door.
He looks down again, but den waits for a moment.
He presses his bow tie around his neck a little looser,
and walks back to Mr. Thaddeus Stevens,
whom he recognizes from da papa.)*

End of Act 1, Scene 2.