

PERUSAL SCRIPT

POLLY

A One Woman Musical

Based on the life of Polly Matilda Merrill Colton, 1816-1891

Book, Music & Lyrics by
Steven Kapp Perry
Orchestrations by
Greg Hansen



Newport, Maine

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POLLY!

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Final Script (June 11, 1992)

ORDER #2103

POLLY

A One-Woman Musical

Act I-Main Musical Numbers

Overture

Remarkable

Milking a Cow

The Ladies in the Carriages/Women's Work #1

Movers and Shakers

Can't Kiss Polly

From Out of the Blue

Women's Work #2

According to Your Light

We Built a House/The Spirit of God

Rocking Chair Lullaby /Women's Work #3

Thirty Days

Thirty Days (reprise)

The Little Things

Women's Work #4/Will He Miss Polly?

The Other Lives

Act II-Main Musical Numbers

Salt Lake City!

The Way of Things

At the Campfire/Women's Work #5

Make a Space for Joy

Lead Kindly Light/Ashley

POLLY! A one woman musical by Steven Kapp Perry. 1f. 90 minutes. Pioneer costumes. Simple setting can be real or projected. In a musical tour-de-force, *POLLY* will relate the life of Polly Mathilda Merrill Colton from her teenage years in Shelby, Mich., through her marriage, conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and life in Nauvoo, Ill., to Utah with the Mormon Trek. *POLLY* is the remarkable story of woman, as she endures the timeless human struggle to reconcile faith with the experiences of our lives, fighting through the day to day and ordinary to the larger vision. It's humorous, it's touching, and best of all...it's true! "*POLLY is a soaring triumph.*" - *Deseret News* **ORDER #2103**

Steven Kapp Perry, Joanne's husband, and Polly's great-great-great-grandson, is a songwriter and playwright from Provo, Utah. He served an LDS mission in Belgium before attending BYU and performing in over 25 countries with the Young Ambassadors. A gifted composer with more than 14 albums of original music to his credit, Steven wrote music and lyrics for "The Trail of Dreams, a pioneer musical co-written with James Arrington and Marvin Payne, as well as a two-person musical, "Wedlocked," with Marvin Payne. He was commissioned by R. Don Oscarson to co-create the Music, Lyrics and Script, with Marvin Payne, for a new version of the Prodigal Son (uh, Daughter) "Take The Mountain Down!" Steve's musical adventures include everything from singing the National Anthem at Wrigley Field for the Cubs to leading the music in LDS General Conference and singing Mozart from atop the altar in Notre Dame in Paris. As part of Peace Mountain MediaWorks, he helped create "The Scripture Scouts," "Alexander's Amazing Adventures," and "The Allabouts" with his co-writers Marvin Payne and Roger & Melanie Hoffman. He has written projects for National Geographic, Prime Recordings, Deseret Book, and other companies. He is also a volunteer for Reach the Children, a non-profit organization providing education, nutrition, and vocational training (learn more at www.reachthechildren.org). Steve loves music, cream cheese on bagels, his wife Johanne, and whichever of their four children slept through the night.

**POLLY is dedicated to
great-great-great grandmother Polly
and to Johanne,
each a pioneer in her own right.
-SKP**

POLLY

ACT I

The time: August, 1891.

The setting: Polly's home in Ashley, Utah (present-day Vernal).

Onstage, dimly lit, are a small table and chair, an old fashioned rocking chair, two parlor chairs (nothing too fancy), and an old chest containing whatever props may be needed. There is a wooden milking bucket, milking stool, and perhaps an ancient rag rug.

MUSICAL #1 — OVERTURE (*sets the mood-late 19th century America.*)

(LIGHTS fade during OVERTURE.)

(Then, LIGHTS rise, near the end of the music, revealing POLLY in her rocking chair. She wears a bonnet, a shawl about her shoulders, old wire rimmed glasses, and appropriate hair, make-up, jewelry (cameo, simple wedding ring, etc.) to evoke the period. She is 76 years old. POLLY is sorting through old letters from the chest. She notices the audience and addresses them.)

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #2 — REMARKABLE

POLLY: It's mighty thoughtful of you folks to visit-most young folks would just as soon leave old folks be. They get weary of the same stories time and time again. Can't think why... I reckon they get better with every tellin'!

I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME
FOR SPEAKING MY MIND —
I'M JUST AN OLD WOMAN
WITH FAR TOO MUCH TIME TO THINK.
HOW STRANGE I MUST SEEM TO BE.

I'M NOT SO PECULIAR,
AND YET I'M REMARKABLE.
WHAT'S SO REMARKABLE
ABOUT POLLY,
POLLY MATILDA?

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Polly Matilda Merrill Colton.

(Nods to audience.)

JUST "POLLY" ALONE
WILL DO PERFECTLY WELL.
IF YOU WANT A REMARKABLE
STORY TO TELL—

TALK TO ELIZA;
THAT'S WHERE YOU SHOULD GO.
OR TO POLLY,
POLLY MATILDA!

WE CAN'T ALL BE ELIZA R. SNOW...
SMITH...
YOUNG...

Whoever she has gotten herself attached to lately!

OR ELSE THERE'S THAT WOMAN,
MISS MARY GRAVES.

One of the ill-fated Donner Party, I'm afraid!

SHE WAS REMARKABLE TOO;
HAVING EATEN A BRIDLE,
A BELT, AND A SHOE AND, OF COURSE,
HER FELLOW TRAVELERS!

SHE WAS UNCOMMON,
SHE WAS OF NOTE,
SHE WAS REMARKABLE!

(Under her breath, smiling.)

SHE WAS A CANNIBAL!

FOR WHAT SHE'D DONE
TO STAY ALIVE
SHE WAS SHUNNED,
BUT SHE SURVIVED!
THAT'S WHAT'S REMARKABLE!

SUCH NOTORIETY
NEVER WAS MINE.

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EXCESSIVE PIETY
MY ONLY CRIME.
STILL, I HAVE LIVED THROUGH
REMARKABLE TIMES...

THEY WERE REMARKABLE!
(Quietly, wistful.)
I WAS REMARKABLE...

IF I'D KNOWN THEN
WHAT I KNOW NOW
WOULD ANYTHING BE CHANGED?
IF I COULD CHOOSE AGAIN,
SOMEHOW,
WOULD I STILL CHOOSE THE SAME?

MUSIC shifts to *MOVERS & SHAKERS* #1

(POLLY removes her bonnet, shawl and glasses as she sings. The years fall away one-by-one, until she is young again.)

I WAS A GIRL
FROM A SMALL TOWN,
IT WAS CALLED SHELBY, MICHIGAN...
(Smiles wistfully)
SHELBY, MICHIGAN.
BUT I WON'T BE THERE AGAIN...

MUSIC out.

(POLLY is a girl of 14.)

When I was 14, my dearest friend was Charlotte Wilson. She was really "Karlotta Villson," but it got changed when they moved to America. Charlotte and I sat together at the schoolhouse, right behind... Billy Hollow. We used to write notes on our lapboards and make-believe they were from him.

I admired Billy for his curly hair and because he was handsome. Charlotte admired his father's sawmill on the river, which Billy stood to inherit.

(With thick, sing-songy Scandinavian accent)

"Ja. You can easily marry rich man as poor." That's what Mrs. Wilson always told Charlotte. She reckoned marriage was the cure for most everything.

Then once, the schoolmaster snatched up my lapboard and read it aloud: "Mrs. Polly Hollow." Suddenly I felt hot and weak as Billy Hollow himself turned to look upon me with a most

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peculiar expression.

"Polly," says he, "Polly Merrill, ...like to walk you home." Well.

(Pause)

It should have been exciting, but all I remember is the hurt look on Charlotte's face. He accompanied me home most every day after that. And he could talk! I heard more about sawmills, wood, and lumber, than I ever cared to know.

MUSICAL # 3 — MOVERS AND SHAKERS #2 (Underscore)

Sometimes, when a body gets what they desire, they discover it wasn't worth what they had to give up to get it. I learned that from Charlotte.

'Course other times, something you don't desire can turn out to be a blessing. I learned that from Constance. She wasn't a thing like Charlotte.

MUSIC Out

(POLLY moves into a scene with Mama.)

But Mama, do I have to? You know Constance and I are not on speaking terms. She's so... stubborn.

(pause)

Yes ma'am.

Constance.

(Shakes her head, sizing up the cow.)

Only Mama would name a cow Constance.

MUSICAL #4 — MILKING A COW

Well,

(shrugs to herself)

how difficult can it be?

(POLLY pantomimes the actions of the song.)

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS

ABOUT MILKING A COW?

ANY FOOL COULD SEE HOW!

SHE'S A FRIENDLY COW,

CONTENTED AND SWEET,

WHY SHOULD SHE CARE IF

I PULL ON HER TEAT?

Ouch!

(Shakes her hand.)

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BUT REMEMBER TO
OBSERVE THE FEET!

(POLLY fetches the bucket.)

ALL YOU NEED TO MILK
A COW IS A PAIL,
SIMPLY FILL IT UP,
WELL, HOW COULD YOU FAIL?

Ouch!

(Closes one eye.)

ONLY DON'T FORGET
TO WATCH THE TAIL!

(Works at it for a bit.)

WHY IS NO MILK
COMING OUT OF THE COW?
IT SHOULD BE HERE BY NOW.

(With sudden insight)

Oh!

SHE'S A HUNGRY COW
I'LL GIVE HER SOME HAY,
AND IN NO TIME WE'LL BE
MILKING AWAY!

(Triumphant)

SO THE HAY GOES IN
AND THE MILK COMES OUT!
AND THAT'S WHAT COWS
ARE ALL ABOUT!

(Horried, noticing her feet.)

Auugh!

BUT!
MUCH MORE THAN MILK
CAN COME OUT OF A COW,
I CAN SEE IT ALL NOW!

SO YOU DODGE ALL THE SPLASHES
AND AVOID ALL THE SPLATTERS,
BUT YOU GET THE MILK;
THAT'S THE ONE THING THAT MATTERS!

WHEN YOU HEAR THAT PLOP

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THEN IT'S TIME TO STOP
AND YOU GRAB A MOP
OR A SHOVEL AND YOU MUCK IT...
NO! YOU'RE STEPPING IN THE BUCKET!

(POLLY pushes with all her might against the cow.)

Get your filthy hoof out of my pail!

(POLLY falls when the cow moves...her hands land smack in the middle of the mess.)

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS
ABOUT KILLING A COW?
I COULD DO IT RIGHT NOW!

'CAUSE MY HANDS ARE RAW,
MY FINGERS ARE CHAPPED,
AND THERE'S STILL NO MILK!
I THINK I'M TRAPPED.

AND IT'S NO LONGER CLEAR TO SEE
IF I HAVE THE COW,
OR THE COW HAS ME!

SONG ends

This is terrible!

(looks down at her dress)

I'm a mess.

Don't take this personal, Constance, but this is the filthiest, smelliest, worst job a girl ever had...
twice a day... forever.

MUSICAL #5 — THE LADIES IN THE CARRIAGES

(Gets a thought)

Charlotte wouldn't stand for this. She'd get married, that's what she'd do. She'd marry some rich man and ride through Shelby in a carriage.

(Imagines.)

THE LADIES IN THE CARRIAGES
THAT PASS ME NOW AND THEN,
ALL BENEFIT FROM MARRIAGES
TO SUCH IMPORTANT MEN.
THE LADIES IN THE CARRIAGES;

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I'D LIKE TO BE LIKE THEM.

I'D LOVE TO LIVE THAT OTHER LIFE,
INSTEAD I'LL LIVE THIS "UDDER" LIFE,
'TIL WHO KNOWS WHEN.

SONG ends

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #5b — COW PRAYER

(Closing her eyes)

Dear God,

(forcefully)

I humbly ask thee...

(calming herself)

I humbly ask thee to... bless this here cow...

MUSIC Out.

...to dry up! Amen.

(POLLY takes the pail over to where two chairs are next to each other. She sits and mimes snapping beans into the bucket. Mama is in the other chair.)

Mama, does God always get whatever he wants?

Well, Reverend Lackey says you can have whatever you want, if you learn to want what God wants.

(dejected)

I must not want what God wants. Mama, that cow is vexation to my soul. There she is first thing in the morning and last at , night; got to be milked and fed and-ugh- cleaned up after and then I've hardly got finished and it's time to start all over. I never get done.

(slight pause)

Mama, you just can't understand, all you got to take care of is children.

(pause)

What's so funny?

MUSICAL # 6a — MOTIF, #1

(pause)

"Just live one day at a time?"

MUSIC shifts to MOTIF, #2

(Considering it.)

One day at a time!

(Wrinkles her nose.)

But Mama, every day 'tis the same! I wish I knew right now what God wants for me,

(to herself)

then maybe I could skip to the important parts.

(back to Mama)

I reckon that someday... If God doesn't mind... I'm gonna do something... different.

Oh, I don't know, just different. Whatta you say to that, Mama?

MUSICAL #6b — MOTIF, #3

"Live according to your light?"

MUSICAL #6c — MOTIF, #4

(Rolling her eyes.)

Yes ma'am.

MUSICAL #6d — MOTIF, #5, clipped.

(Immediately, losing patience)

But Mama, don't you see? We spent an hour pickin' and fixin' these beans and in just five minutes they'll all be ate up. Gone, and nothin' to show for it. Same with milking, same with scrubbing, same with everything that's...

(realizing)

women's work.

Mama... does God not like women? Then why doesn't he give us anything important to do?

(pause)

Oh, I know, but I mean really important-something folks would remember. Mama, don't you ever want to do something that won't be used up the same day it's done?

MUSICAL #6f—MOTIF, #6

(Repeating with Mama)

"Just live one day at a time, " yes ma'am.

(POLLY leaves the scene and marches downstage to address the audience.)

MUSICAL #7 — WOMEN'S WORK, #1

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(Exasperated)

Mama and Papa always seemed so... satisfied. That's on account of them being so religious. Well, I do read the bible, and I pray... just in case,'course it never had much effect as far as I can see. Hmmph. "One day at a time."

WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE,
AND MUCH TO WOMEN'S SORROW.
EVEN IF YOU DO IT WELL,
YOU START AGAIN, TOMORROW.

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #7a — MOTIF, #7

"Live according to your light."

(The light dawns)

...makes sense. If a body feels to do something... something important, then they oughtta, 'cause they won't be happy no other way. Folks who make things happen, Papa calls 'em...

(pause)

"movers and shakers". Oh, I get gooseflesh just thinkin' about it! And folks from smaller places than this have done important things. Ladies too. 'Course, they had to go somewhere else

MUSICAL #8 - MOVERS AND SHAKERS, #2

to do it. And some of what they did is important even after they died! Oh, that must be the proudest feeling of all.

ONLY A GIRL
FROM A SMALL TOWN,

SOMEWHERE IN SHELBY, MICHIGAN.

ONLY A GIRL
DOING HER CHORES,
LOOKING OUT WHERE THE FENCES END.

ONLY A GIRL
HOPING THERE'S MORE;
MORE THAN THIS HOUSE

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MORE THAN THIS COW,
MORE THAN JUST SHELBY, MICHIGAN.

(She decides)

I'LL LEAVE THIS PLACE
I DON'T KNOW WHEN,
BUT SOMEDAY I MUST GO.
AND THERE WILL BE
ANOTHER PLACE
AND I WILL MAKE IT HOME!

GONNA BE ONE OF THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS!
GONNA BE ONE, GONNA BE ONE!
OUT IN THE WORLD WITH THE HISTORY MAKERS!
GONNA BE ONE, GONNA BE ONE!
WHERE WILL I GO?
WHAT WILL I DO?
WONDER IF DREAMS LIKE THIS
COME TRUE?

MUSIC continues as underscoring.

(POLLY drops to her knees and clasps her hands in prayer.)

Dear God, I reckon Charlotte's right. Maybe the only way outta this present condition is to find a man and get married. Lord, I am nigh on 15 years of age, so please send one as soon as possible as I am anxious to be quit of this cow and get on with my... *(savoring the words)* purpose in life. Amen.

MUSIC Out.

(Sharp intake of breath. Then to herself)

What if this is my purpose in life!

(Cry of despair. Quickly bows head and claps hands together again.)

MUSICAL #8a - MOVERS & SHAKERS

Dear God, ... I don't believe you would let me feel this way unless there was really something to it. Isn't there anyone who doesn't care if a girl has manure on her dress? Please. Love, Polly. I mean... Amen.

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING
WAITS FOR ME,

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BUT WHAT? I WISH I KNEW.
AND SOMEWHERE IN THIS GREAT WIDE WORLD
IS SOMETHING I CAN DO!

GONNA BE ONE OF THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS!
OUT IN THE WORLD WITH THE HISTORY MAKERS!
GONNA BE ONE, GONNA BE ONE!
WHERE WILL I GO? WHAT WILL I DO?
WONDER IF DREAMS LIKE THIS COME TRUE?

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #8b — MILKING A COW (Underscore)

At 16 I was desperate! They say the Lord helps those as help themselves, so I did. I helped myself to any social event I was sensible of and made sure I danced with every man or boy present who was single, under forty, and had more than ten teeth.

MUSIC Out

Well, a girl ought to have some standards!
Perhaps I was too friendly; for one boy pulled me onto his lap right in public, and tried to kiss me. I no sooner kicked his shins than another one pinched me from behind. Well, I turned and slapped him with all I had.

(pause)

It was Billy.

(pause)

And he stood there laughing with the others. I felt so ashamed I would have cried if I hadn't been so angry.

Charlotte walked me home. She said Billy was sweet on me and that I should forgive him, if not the others, but I decided then and there that I was through with Billy Hollow. I told Charlotte she might have 'em all, if it pleased her.

I wanted a man of uncommon character; for that is what I was determined to be... an uncommon character. And if such a one was not to be found, I should remain as I was, cow and all.

MUSICAL #9a — OUT OF THE BLUE (with underscore)

(POLLY crosses the stage to sit in one of the chairs.)

Then one evening, the brick-maker's new apprentice took notice of me at a barn raising. He was tall-straight brown hair. I sat with the girls, ignoring the boys... well, mostly. When he inquired after my name, the Shelby fellers fairly hooted with laughter!

MUSICAL #9b — CAN'T KISS POLLY!

(POLLY sings as if she were one of the boys. No fake voice, but the manner.)

YOU CAN'T KISS POLLY!
THOSE WHO TRIED, SIR,
NEARLY DIED, SIR!

IF YOU GET POLLY
ON YOUR LAP, SIR,
IT'S A TRAP, SIR,
IN A SNAP, SIR,
YOU'LL BE SLAPPED, SIR!

YOU DON'T WANT A GIRL LIKE HER.
ALL FULL OF IDEAS
AND FULL OF IMAGINATION.
She's always thinkin' about things.

(Spits)

What would a feller do with such a girl?

YOU CAN'T KISS POLLY!
SOME WOULD LIKE HER
FOR THEIR WIFE, SIR,
BUT THEY ALSO
LOVE THEIR LIFE, SIR.

WOULDN'T GO, SIR,
ANY CLOSER,
I SHOULD KNOW, SIR!

(Rubs face.)

YOU CAN'T KISS POLLY!

SONG ends.

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #9c — KISS (Underscore)

Well, this rascal marched right up behind my back, whirled me about and planted the most
FERVENT kiss upon my... person, that I ever shall hope to experience.

(POLLY goes limp remembering, then snaps back.)

MUSIC OUT

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL # 9d — CHORD

I slapped him square on the jaw.

(Aside)

This is becoming a habit!

(Smiles a bit)

"Miss Polly," says he, " I told the fellers I would, and I shall do it many other times in the future."

(Expression of surprise to the audience.)

And there we stood. He asked if I would consent to dance! In my shock, I accepted.

MUSICAL #10 — OUT OF THE BLUE

(POLLY puts out her hand and begins dancing with PHILANDER.)

(Spoken)

Your name, sir?

Philander.

(To audience, spoken in rhythm)

Philander?

I ask in all candor;

Should a girl take a chance

On a dance

With a man named Philander?

(Back to him.)

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

SORRY, I MISSED IT.

YOU THINK MY FACE LOOKS FAMILIAR?

IT OUGHT TOO, YOU KISSED IT!

Really, Mr... Colton, Philander, didn't your parents teach you any manners?

(Pause)

Oh, I'm sorry. Both of them?

(Awkward pause)

So... you're a brick-maker. You make bricks. How...

(struggles for the word)

solid. We primarily use *lumber* around these parts.

(pause)

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Well, I suppose they do last longer... Me? Oh, I'm going to be a mover and...

(stops dancing)

no one ever asked me that before. Oh...

(Curtseying as he leaves)

...and thank you... I think.

(POLLY moves off the dance floor, and sings to herself.)

ALL OF MY RAGE

SO SOON FORGOTTEN.

HIS MANNER, HIS LOOK

AND HIS NAME;

ALL SO...UNCOMMON.

Uncommon?

(POLLY whirls her head to look after him.)

FROM OUT OF THE BLUE

MAYBE A DREAM WILL COME TRUE.

AND STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

I THINK I'M DREAMING OF YOU.

JUST WHEN YOU NEVER SUSPECT IT,

THAT'S WHEN YOU LEARN TO EXPECT IT.

AND WHO KNOWS WHEN LIGHTNING WILL STRIKE

FROM OUT OF A CLEAR BLUE SKY!

(POLLY steps to where he is, taps him on the shoulder to cut in.)

PARDON ME, SIR,

IF IT'S NO BOTHER;

WOULD YOU DANCE WITH ME

AND WITH NO OTHER?

(PHILANDER and POLLY dance briefly, turning and gazing into each other's eyes.

POLLY twirls out to talk to Mama.)

Oh, Mama, I've never been so happy, or so nervous. My hands won't stop shaking. Why must we decide the most important things without even knowing how they'll turn out?

HOW CAN YOU KNOW?

HOW CAN YOU CHOOSE?

WITH SO MUCH TO GAIN

AND SO MUCH TO LOSE?

MUSIC shifts to WHAT MAMA FELT

IS THIS WHAT YOU FELT

WHEN IT WAS YOU

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LEAVING YOUR PARENTS' HOME?

Mama,

WERE YOU CONFUSED?

WAS IT EXCITING

OR WERE YOU SCARED?

THANKING YOUR LUCKY STARS,

WHISPERING A PRAYER?

(POLLY turns to let Mama do up her back buttons. The shawl becomes the wedding veil.)

Oh, Mama, don't cry. I'm happy, truly... I hope.

(The dance becomes a stylized "march down the aisle.")

COURTED IN JUNE,

WED IN JULY.

STARTING OUT NEW,

STARTING OUR LIVES!

FROM OUT OF THE BLUE

SOMETIMES A DREAM WILL COME TRUE.

NO WARNING AT ALL

SUDDENLY FALLING FOR YOU.

LOVE CAN APPEAR IN A MINUTE—

ONE LOOK AT YOU AND I'M IN IT.

AND WHO KNOWS WHEN LIGHTNING WILL STRIKE,

FROM OUT OF A CLEAR BLUE SKY!

SONG ends.

(POLLY removes the shawl as she speaks.)

Polly Matilda Merrill Colton. Just think of it; me, marryin' a brick-maker; a man who builds, a man who makes, a man...

(smiles)

who has no livestock.

(POLLY opens the chest, unwrapping & holding up the silver candlestick.)

This was a wedding present from Mama. Silver. The prettiest she could find. There were *two* of them... They came all the way from Syracuse, New York, in a little box packed with straw. You can imagine how I loved them.

Papa gave us a present, too...

(picks up the bucket)

...Constance.

(Pause)

You can imagine how I loved that.

MUSICAL #11a - COW/CARRIAGE (Underscore)

(POLLY takes a deep breath and sits to milk as she speaks.)

Well, it was nothing at'all like Charlotte and Billy's Wedding. Now that was a regular event.

(chuckles)

Even the bride and groom did not look half so pleased as

(with sing-songy accent)

"Mrs. Vilson!" I dipped Charlotte a dozen yellow candles for a gift. But they seemed mighty plain when I thought of the fine house she was moving into, with a white picket fence and a carriage and all, so I wrapped them up in the box of straw with one of my silver candlesticks. I knew Mama would understand.

(pause)

Charlotte never even mentioned it.

(POLLY rises. Thoughtful pause. Then, looking at the cow...)

Marriage was different from mjr expectations. It didn't solve my problems a-t'all... but it did provide me someone to share them with. Which was right nice all by itself.

MUSICAL #11b - MILKING A COW/WE BUILT A HOUSE (Underscore)

We had children, too. Two children in two years. I shall never complain about caring for a cow again!

Charles Edwin was first—Ed, we called him. Just Ed. I was so worried about that boy's ears. Oh, he could hear just fine; I just imagine how he'd ever grow into them!

Harriet Emily was next. Oh, little Emily. She was small and dark-haired, like me. I was pleased about that. I used to curl up her hair in rag strips every night. She was sweet as sugar, and I was glad of having another female around the house.

MUSIC shifts to #12 — WOMEN'S WORK, REPRISE #2

(POLLY sits to snap beans.)

It was still work, but it had a different feel than doing chores at Mama and Papa'. Even the milking.

WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE,

A LIFE-LONG OCCUPATION.

BUT WORKING FOR THE ONES YOU LOVE

CAN HAVE ITS COMPENSATION.

MUSIC out

Now mind you, it was no downright pleasure! There were still times when I'd sit to milk and in spite of husband, children and all the rest, I'd still feel like that same little farm girl with her cow, not one bit closer to doing anything important than first day she thought of it.

MUSICAL #13 - MOVERS AND SHAKERS, REPRISE #3.

When you look back, you can usually tell when your life changed. Sometimes the very moment. And if you went back and changed even one small detail, you might end up changing the course of a lifetime!

(POLLY arranges chairs for the church meeting as she sings.)

THERE WAS A MAN
PREACHING GOD'S WORD,
PREACHING IN SHELBY, MICHIGAN.

THINGS THAT HE TAUGHT
NO ONE HAD HEARD,
SAYING GOD SPEAKS TO MAN AGAIN.
AND I WAS... INTERESTED.

I FOUND IT STRANGE;
HE SPOKE SO PLAIN,
AND I COULD NOT IGNORE
THAT WHEN HE SPOKE
I FELT AS THOUGH
I'D KNOWN IT ALL BEFORE.

(POLLY pulls a chair close to hers.)

PHILANDER CAME
AND HEARD THE SAME,
THEN MUCH TO MY SURPRISE
HE RAISED HIS HAND
AND ASKED THE MAN
WHEN HE COULD BE BAPTIZED!

MUSIC continues as underscore

Philander Colton! Put your hand down!

MUSIC — Out.

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

(To Mr. Pratt, the preacher.)

What? Oh no sir!

(POLLY points frantically to Philander with both hands.)

It was him! Excuse us, sir.

(POLLY pulls PHILANDER off to the side.)

Philander, have you lost your mind?! Why we've never even met this Joseph Smith to know if he's a Prophet. How can you be converted after one sermon?

That's it? A feeling? I declare!

(POLLY takes a deep breath. She is trying to be reasonable, but works herself up anyway.)

We have not read their *Book of Mormon*, and what's all this about Apostles, Saints, and gathering to build Zion? There hasn't been any church like that since Bible times!

MUSICAL #13a - BELL TONE

(Pause, then deadpan to herself)

Now there's a thought.

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL # 13b — YES, BUT

(To herself)

YES, IT SOUNDS FINE,
YES, IT SOUNDS NICE,
PART OF ME SAYS DON'T THINK TWICE.

Or should I?

YES, IT FEELS GOOD,
YES, IT FEELS RIGHT,
BUT PEOPLE DON'T CHANGE
OVER NIGHT.

Or do we?

BUT WITH NOTHING TO GO ON
BUT HOW I FEEL
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S REAL.

IS IT CHANGING
THAT I'M AFRAID OF? OR AM I SCARED
TO FIND OUT WHAT I'M MADE OF?

AND WOULD THE FUTURE I MAY FIND

BE WORTH THE LIFE I'D LEAVE BEHIND?

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #13c — ACCORDING TO YOUR LIGHT

Philander, are you fixin' to join up with these folks?

(Pointing.)

I asked you first.

Well, I have a... feeling too.

But it's

MORE THAN A QUESTION OF "DO YOU BELIEVE IT?"
OUR LIFE IS IN SHELBY,
HOW CAN WE JUST LEAVE IT?

JUST LIKE THAT, ARE WE GOING TO GO?
LEAVE MAMA AND PAPA,
OUR WORK? AND OUR HOME?
HOW TO DECIDE?
IF ALL THAT'S IMPORTANT
IS DOING THE RIGHT THING,
THEN WHY IS THE RIGHT THING
THE ONE THING THAT'S FRIGHT'NING?

WE'RE STILL YOUNG
AND A LIFETIME'S TOO LONG
FOR LIVING WITH CHOICES,
THAT MIGHT TURN OUT WRONG,

HOW TO DECIDE
WHICH WAY IS RIGHT?
MAMA SAID,
"LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR LIGHT."

BUT IF I CHOOSE
WHAT'S TRULY IN MY HEART,
THEN IT WILL CHANGE ME FOREVER
AND TEAR MY WORLD APART.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

I CAN'T BE AFRAID!
IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU FEEL
THERE IS ONLY ONE CHOICE TO BE MADE.

TIME TO BE BRAVE,
MAMA WAS RIGHT
I HAVE TO LIVE
ACCORDING TO MY LIGHT!

***SEGUE TO:
MUSICAL #13d — MOVERS AND SHAKERS, REPRIS#4***

STANDING WAIST DEEP
IN THE WATER,
STANDING IN COLD LAKE MICHIGAN.

COMING AT LAST
TO THE FATHER.
LEAVING MY PAST
IN THE WATER,
PRAYING THAT I'LL BE BORN AGAIN.
AHHHHHHH.
WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT

ALL OF THIS CHANGE
COMING LIKE THAT
FROM A MAN NAMED
PARLEY P. PRATT?

I'LL MISS THIS PLACE,
I KNOW I WILL,
BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO GO.
AND THERE WILL BE
ANOTHER PLACE,
I HOPE IT FEELS LIKE HOME!

GONNA BE ONE OF THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS,
GONNA BE ONE, GONNA BE ONE!
OUT IN THE WORLD WITH THE HISTORY MAKERS,

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

GONNA BE ONE, GONNA BE ONE!
WHERE WILL I GO,
WHAT WILL I DO,
THERE IS THIS PLACE
THEY CALL NAUVOO?

GONNA BE ONE!

SONG ends.

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #13e - WE BUILT A HOUSE (Underscore)

(POLLY opens the chest, puts on apron, gets out plates, etc. POLLY hums as she wipes the dishes for the table.)

There is something refreshing and invigorating about making a change and moving ahead. Oh, it's cleansing to the soul. And there was never anything to equal the first sight of the Mississippi river. All that water, moving in the same direction like it knew where it was headed. A river like that, you can't stop it, change its course, no sir. It's going where it's going. You just get on and make the best of the ride. Some things are *like* that.

MUSIC Out.

When we left Shelby, Mama gave me her letter writing box, so I would "not forget her," she said. I told her she had not seen the last of us. Illinois was not *that far* from Shelby.

Charlotte said farewell too. Billy... William, did not even step down from the carriage. Said Philander was a *damn fool* for leaving a secure position.

(POLLY regains her composure, sits to polish the silver candlestick, then puts a candle in it.)

Nauvoo was a name brother Joseph picked. It meant "a beautiful place." By this I knew he was at least a visionary man, for it looked like a beautiful swamp to me.

That is where Eleanor Roseltha was born; our third, my Rose. Emily was mighty glad for a sister. I was glad for Rose to be born in such a place... a place with. future!

MUSICAL #14 — WE BUILT A HOUSE.

I felt it and so did Philander. Before we were even half settled the men built a kiln and Philander Colton showed 'em how to fire the first red brick in Nauvoo!
WE BUILT A HOUSE,
WE BUILT ON STONE
FOR OUR FOUNDATION.
AND ROW BY ROW

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

WE MADE IT GROW;
OUR CREATION!

WITH RUGGED WALLS
AND OVER ALL
A SPAN OF SHINGLES.
WE MADE A PLAN
AND WITH OUR HANDS
WE BUILT A HOUSE.

MY PRIDE AND JOY,
THE SIMPLE HOUSE
WE BUILT TOGETHER.
AND THROUGH AND THROUGH,
IN EVERY ROOM,
IT FELT LIKE HOME.

WITH MORTAR AND TROWEL AND PLASTER,
WITH GLANCES AND WHISPERS AND SIGHS,
WITH WORK AND WITH LAUGHTER,
AND BARRING DISASTER,
WE BUILT TO OUTLAST OUR SHORT LIVES!

MOST ANY MAN
CAN TAKE A PLAN
AND BUILD A HOUSE,
BUT ONLY HEARTS
CAN EVEN START
TO MAKE A HOME!

MUSIC fades under the following dialog

Philander thrived and grew strong from his days in the brickyard. He was called to be a member of the Seventy, just like the New Testament! And I cooked and sewed with the sisters' Relief Society to help those who were building the temple.

MUSICAL #15 — THE SPIRIT OF GOD (Underscore)

It was to be a special House of the Lord where heaven's blessings could attend in abundance. And we never missed a Sunday to sit in the Grove and hear brother Joseph pour out the

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

intelligence and grace of the restored gospel of Christ, hour on end. Oh, I nearly burst every minute just thinkin' about it! Here I was, little Polly Matilda, helping to build something so big and important and lasting that it took whole city of people to make it happen!

SEGUE TO:

MUSICAL #15a — WE BUILT A HOUSE, #2 / THE SPIRIT OF GOD

WE BUILT OUR LIVES
UPON THE LORD
FOR OUR FOUNDATION.

WE BUILT A HOUSE
TO HONOR GOD
AND TO PRAISE HIM.

WITHIN OUR HEARTS
WE FELT IT GROW,
A HEAVENLY BLESSING—

WE GAVE OUR HEARTS
TO BE THE SPIRIT'S
EARTHLY HOME.

MOST ANY MAN
CAN TAKE A PLAN
AND BUILD A HOUSE.

BUT ONLY GOD
CAN TAKE OUR HEARTS
AND MAKE A HOME.

SONG ends.

We had two sons during this time. Lamoni Andrew came in April of '42. I thought Andrew an especially handsome little man and quite sturdy. Number five came in the cold of January, and was not well. Sister Sessions, who attended me, was not pleased with his appearance.

"Do not become too attached," she whispered, "this one is not for staying."

(Pause)

It was a cruel thing to say.

MUSICAL # 16 — Broken chords

All night I held him warm by my side. But he would not eat, or could not, and his breathing rattled. I think I loved him all the more for his helplessness. Since he would take no nourishment, I gave him what strength I could..! named him George Philander, after his father, the strongest man I knew.

MUSICAL # 16a — ROCKING CHAIR LULLABY

(POLLY begins by humming at first, holding the shawl to represent the baby.)

IF I WERE A BLANKET
I'D WRAP UP AROUND YOU
AND SOFTLY SURROUND YOU
DELICIOUS AND WARM.

AND THERE YOU WOULD SLEEP
WHILE I'D KEEP OUT THE COLD
I WOULD SNUGGLE AND HOLD YOU
IN DEEP FLANNEL ARMS.

IF I WERE A BLANKET
THEN THAT'S WHAT I'D DO
TO SHOW HOW I LOVE YOU.

IF I WERE A ROCKING CHAIR
STURDY AND STRONG
I WOULD ROCK YOU AS LONG
AS YOU WANTED TO STAY.

IN MY WOODEN ARMS
YOU WOULD YAWN AND YOU'D NAP,
YOU'D BE SAFE IN MY LAP
AT THE END OF THE DAY.

IF I WERE A ROCKING CHAIR
THAT'S WHAT I'D DO
TO SHOW HOW I LOVE YOU.

MUSIC continues as underscore

Sometimes love is not enough. By first light his every breath was so uncertain that I lay

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

with my ear to his tiny mouth, praying and tensing, as if I could breathe for him.

MUSIC Out

At last it was quiet. His tiny lips began to show blue and I could withhold my tears no longer.

(pause)

MUSICAL #16b — BROKEN CHORDS / ROCKING CHAIR LULLABY, #2

The ground was frozen and Philander could not bury him as deep as he wished, but promised to cover the spot with stones come spring.

IF I WERE A SONG
OR A SWEET LULLABY
YOU COULD CLOSE YOUR SMALL EYES
WHILE I'D SING YOU TO SLEEP.

JUST LAZILY LISTENING
AND DROWSILY DRIFTING
THEN FLOATING AND LIFTING
AWAY IN A DREAM...

MUSIC ends

(POLLY lets the empty shawl slip from her hands as she raises them.)

Death was such a frequent visitor in Nauvoo that I had almost become accustomed to it. Until it touched my house. It was difficult to be sociable with neighbors who comforted me as I had comforted them; with reminders of my four healthy children and others to come. I did not want others then, I wanted only my George Philander.

MUSICAL #17 — WOMEN'S WORK, #3

I wondered that the Lord could ever need my baby more than I did.

WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE,
THERE'S HARDLY TIME FOR SORROW.
WITH LIVES TO LIVE AND MOUTHS TO FEED;
I'LL CRY MY TEARS TOMORROW.

MUSIC ends.

One evening Philander borrowed a carriage and took me riding. He did not know how to comfort me, but he did give me strength.

MUSICAL #17a - BROKEN CHORDS

We rode about in silence for some time, until we heard the clanging and shouting from the brickyard. I did not like being there at night, it frightened me to see the shadows in the hot wavery light of the kilns.

MUSIC ends.

"Polly," Philander said, "Polly, the stacks nearest us are the good brick. They will last. Those in the heap on the far end will not."

"Mr. Colton," I said, "I understand your words, but I do not comprehend their meaning...why have you brought me to this place?"

MUSICAL #18 — THIRTY DAYS

"You cannot make bricks quickly, or easily, Polly-not good ones. A good brick takes longer; if you take it out before it's fired clean through, it will crumble.

Folks are like that too, Polly."

THIRTY DAYS TO MAKE A BRICK,
BAKE IT HARD ENOUGH TO STICK TOGETHER
THIRTY DAYS.

THIRTY DAYS IS LONG ENOUGH,
LESS AND THEY'RE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO STAY
THIRTY DAYS.

SHAPE THEM SQUARE,
SPREAD THEM FLAT,
STACK THEM HIGH
AND BURN THEM BLACK!

WILL THEY STAND,
WILL THEY FALL,
WILL THEY HOLD
OR WILL THEY CRACK?
THIRTY DAYS.

We hadn't been with the Saints in Ohio and Missouri when they were driven out, so it never entered my head that anyone would want to stop us from building our Zion. But some folks just can't abide living in the same county with anyone who thinks different.

THIRTY DAYS.

Brother Joseph was killed by a mob of cowards with painted faces. "Thus ends Mormonism!" was the cry. But we were not the church of Joseph Smith. After Moses came a Joshua, and after

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

Joseph... Brother Brigham. The road to Zion now lay to the West.

(POLLY packs the place setting from the table during the following, slamming the trunk lid on the word crack.)

MAKE YOUR CHOICE,
MAKE YOUR CHOICE,
MAKE YOUR CHOICE
AND DON'T LOOK BACK!

WILL YOU STAND,
WILL YOU FALL,
WILL YOU HOLD
OR WILL YOU CRACK?

THIRTY DAYS.

(POLLY leans and stacks the chairs and table against and on the chest in a ramshackle way.)

We planned to leave in April, but when the Mississippi itself froze over in February, we saw the hand of God and we crossed over on the ice, ready or not.

THIRTY DAYS THE OVEN BUMS
HARD AS ROCK THE KILN WILL TURN THE CLAY
THIRTY DAYS.

BAKE THEM 'TIL THEY'LL NEVER CRACK
'TIL THEY'LL NEVER CRUMBLE BACK TO CLAY

THIRTY DAYS.

THIRTY DAYS.

SONG ends.

MUSICAL #19 — THIRTY DAYS / WE BUILT A HOUSE (with underscore)

My last look at Nauvoo was from across the river... the temple on the hill seemed to float above our homes below. Oh, I wish I could show you our beautiful city, but it's gone. The picture in my mind often haunts me though. Why can't people let people be? Why did the Lord let our beautiful Zion and all the work of our hands for seven years be taken from us? I was so proud of the house that Philander and I built. It nearly broke my heart to lose it.

MOST ANY MAN
CAN TAKE A PLAN
AND BUILD A HOUSE,
BUT ONLY HEARTS...

MUSIC shifts to MOVERS AND SHAKERS, #5

I MISS THAT PLACE,
I ALWAYS WILL,
NO MATTER WHERE I GO.
AND EVEN AFTER
ALL THESE YEARS,

I THINK OF IT AS HOME...

MUSIC continues as underscore

I decided then and there that I would never set my hopes on earthly things again. The work of our hands goes to moth and dust, but the work of our hearts; all my loves, I still had gathered around me... all but one.

MUSIC shifts to ROCKING CHAIR LULLABY, #3

IF I WERE A SHROUD
OR A SMALL BOX OF PINE
I WOULD COVER AND KEEP YOU
FOREVER AS MINE.

AND I'D BE YOUR RESTING PLACE
ALL THE YEARS THROUGH
TO SHOW HOW I LOVED YOU...

...THIRTY DAYS.

SONG ends.

They say, "When it rains, it pours." Sure enough, it's true. We slogged our way across the entire state of Iowa in spring mud, only to be met by officer of the U.S. Army. He wanted a battalion of men to march south and "defend their country" in the Mexican War.

(Somewhat amused)

Well, we were a little busy at the time, what with running from the mob and all. Brother Brigham promised him 500 men for an entire year.

(pause)

Philander was in Company B. I don't understand...

(POLLY moves into a scene with PHILANDER, during which she repositions the

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

furniture pieces in their original places.)

Five-hundred perfectly good men marching off to war, and if you all die, Philander, the bigger heroes you'll be for it. And a fine adventure for me, being father and mother to four children. The "Mormon Battalion," off to fight, and trailing a wagonload of laundresses behind. Ha! Brave men indeed, who will drag twenty women to war rather than wash their own underwear.

(playfully sarcastic)

Such men will be *sorely* missed.

MUSICAL #20 — THE LITTLE THINGS

AND MORE THAN MISSING YOU,
I'LL MISS EACH LITTLE SAVING GRACE;
THE LITTLE THINGS YOU DO FOR ME
I NEVER COULD REPLACE!

FOR WHO WILL MAKE SURE
THAT MY BIRTHDAY'S FORGOTTEN?
WHO'LL WEAR THE SAME STOCKINGS
ALL WEEK 'TIL THEY'RE ROTTEN?

WHO'LL CUDDLE AND COO
WITH HIS FINE HEALTHY BABIES —
AT LEAST 'TIL THEY CRY,
THEN YOU'D THINK THEY HAD RABIES!

AND WHO'LL WATCH ME WORK
WHILE HE WHITTLES IN BLISS?
YES, THESE ARE THE LITTLE THINGS
I'LL MISS.

WHO'LL SWEAT LIKE AN OX
IN THE SUN 'TIL HE'S SLOSHING,
THEN CLIMB INTO BED
WITHOUT ONE THOUGHT OF WASHING?

WHO CAN'T FALL ASLEEP
IF I'M SO MUCH AS HUMMING,
BUT SNORES WITH THE FORCE
OF THE LORD'S SECOND COMING!

OH WHO COULD UNRAVEL
A RIDDLE LIKE THIS,
WHY THESE ARE THE LITTLE THINGS
I'LL MISS?

AND WHO WILL LOOK AFTER THOSE
TEDIOUS JOBS,
LIKE USING THE PAPER
AND LEAVING THE COBS?

BUT WHO ELSE WOULD SIT
WHILE I TELL HIM AN EARFUL
AND NOT BE PUT OFF
IF I'M SUDDENLY TEARFUL?
WHO ELSE, BY JUST WINKING
CAN MAKE ME FEEL YOUTHFUL,
AND ASK WHAT I'M THINKING
AND LET ME BE TRUTHFUL.

WHO'S WILLING TO MEET
IN THE MIDDLE AND KISS?
YES, THESE ARE THE THINGS,
EACH LITTLE ATTENTION,
YES, THESE ARE THE THINGS,
THE ONES I DARE MENTION!
YES, THESE ARE THE LITTLE THINGS
I'LL MISS!

SONG ends.

(POLLY holds her cheek as if remembering a goodbye kiss.)

MUSICAL #21 — WOMEN'S WORK REPRISE #4.

Fare thee well, Philander Colton. I *will* miss you.

(To herself as she waves)

Come back alive.

WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE
NO MATTER HOW I HURRY,

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

EVEN WHEN I RUSH AND RUN,
There's always time to worry
(*POLLY sits in her rocker.*)

MUSIC shifts to WILL HE MISS POLLY?

WILL HE MISS POLLY
THROUGH THE AUTUMN,
THROUGH THE WINTER,
COME THE SPRING
WILL HE REMEMBER?

BUT WHO WILL MISS A GIRL LIKE ME,
NO TIME FOR IDEAS,
TOO TIRED FOR IMAGINATION...

MUSIC ends.

Emily? Emily, I thought you went to see the men off.
No, you come sit by me. Being alone is the last thing I desire at the moment.
Oh, sweetheart, don't worry yourself, we'll get through. We'll just...
(*searching for comforting words*)
"live one day at a time."

MUSICAL #21a — MOTIF #8

Well, I don't know what it means either. It's just something Mama used to tell me. Emily, I have
been meaning to talk with you. There is a... tradition

MUSICAL 21b — MILKING A COW (Underscore)

in our family that my Mama passed on to me and... seeing as how you're the oldest daughter and
getting *so* grown-up, I think it's time I passed it along to you. Oh, you'll need a bucket.

MUSICAL #21c — COW PLUNKS

(*Motions for silence*)
Young lady, I did not ask if you wanted to. I need your help. Here, *I'll* show you how.
(*pause*)
Very well then, be my guest.
(*pause*)

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

Oh, of course, how difficult can it be?
(Chuckles as she waves Emily offstage.)

MUSIC shifts into **OTHER LIVES**

(POLLY's demeanor changes as she reflects upon her current situation vs. how it could have been.)

THE OTHER LIVES
I MIGHT HAVE LIVED
ARE DIFFERENT AS CAN BE,
WITH PICKET FENCES
CLEAN AND WHITE
BENEATH THE SHADE OF TREES.

THE OTHER LIVES
I MIGHT HAVE LIVED
ARE DIFFERENT AS CAN BE.

THE OTHER WIVES
I MIGHT HAVE BEEN
HAVE HUSBANDS SAFE AT HOME.
WHO SHARE A FIRE,
THE WORK, THE LIFE,
INSTEAD OF NIGHTS ALONE.
THE OTHER WIVES
I MIGHT HAVE BEEN
HAVE HUSBANDS SAFE AT HOME.

WITH EVERY FORK IN THE ROAD
YOU CHOOSE ONE FUTURE AND LOSE ANOTHER,
BUT NOW AND THEN YOU CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...

WOULD ANY OF
THOSE OTHER LIVES
HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THIS?
I THINK ABOUT
ANOTHER LIFE
WHEN ALL THIS "WIFE
AND MOTHER" LIFE
IS CLOSING IN.

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- **POLLY!** by Steven Kapp Perry

AND WILL THE FUTURE I MAY FIND
BE WORTH THE LIFE I LEFT BEHIND?

***LIGHTS** Out*

- **Intermission** -

ACT II

CONTAINS 12 MORE PAGES

REVIEWS:

"Written by songwriter Steven Kapp Perry, POLLY is a musical tour de force that has brought audiences to their feet night after night since a standing-room only premiere at BYU. Filled with memorable music..." — PROVO DAILY HERALD

"POLLY is a soaring triumph." — Deseret News