

PAP ROSE 3

he whoops and hollers but then collapses beneath her. Pain from his back shoots through him and he passes out.) Hey, you asleep? Baby...? Son of a bitch. (*The waitress half-sings, out of boredom.*)

WHATCHA GOT COOKIN'? HOWS ABOUT
COOKIN' SOMETHIN' UP

I sat there 'til dawn. He was passed out good. Woke up a coupla times, jes' t' throw up. He was breathin' so soft. Still had his boots on like he was sayin', I can't help it. (*She gets up and gathers her things.*) North. Okay. Which way's north. Y' know, I'll go into a liquor store sometimes an' see him. Not him, I mean, but one of those whiskey bottles shaped like his little statue? White hat, white suit, white boots. An' I wanna tug on somebody's sleeve an' say, "Hey! I know that guy!" But then ... I don't. (*As the waitress returns to her diner, Hoss passes her on his way out. He comes to where Hank is getting painfully, soberly to his feet. Hank sees him. They both stare off into the distance.*)

HOSS. I can't take it anymore, buddy. You're killin' us. Come off the road, Hank. You can make a good livin' writin' songs and recordin'. You stay out on the road like this, it's gonna kill ya.

HANK. Ol' Hank ain't through yet. We'll get back to Nashville.

HOSS. You're nothin' but gristle, man. I don't see no end to it.

HANK. Don't let go of me, Hoss. (*Hank musters a broad smile.*) It's gonna be all right.

HOSS. I got to, buddy. I got to. (*Hoss slowly walks away.*)

PAP. New Year's Day, 1953. I got the call about three in the mornin'. Hank was being driven to a one-night stand in Canton, Ohio. Hoss had agreed to play with him that night. So had Jimmy and Leon. It looked good. (*Hank with his guitar, sits on a step.*) Somewhere out on the highway in Tennessee or maybe West Virginia, Hank went to sleep in the back seat of his baby-blue Cadillac convertible and never woke up. His blood was laced with whiskey, beer, chloral hydrate, morphine, and the doctor wrote it up as heart failure ... at the age of twenty-nine. (*Hank has begun playing, as Tee-Tot slowly crosses and sits next to him.*)

HANK.

I'M A ROLLING STONE, ALL ALONE AND LOST
FOR A LIFE OF SIN, I HAVE PAID THE COST
WHEN I PASS BY, ALL THE PEOPLE SAY
JUST ANOTHER GUY, ON THE LOST HIGHWAY

HOSS. By the time the police got to the car, it had been picked clean. His guitar was stolen, his white Stetson. 'Bout all they left was a few empty beer bottles on the floorboards. Later that day, his body got shipped home to Alabama. (*Mama has entered, dressed all in black.*)

Start

Stop