

**SCRIPT for I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW I FEEL**  
**by Su Friedrich**

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**STYLE NOTES:**

The font styles in this script relate to the various modes of address in the film, as follows:

**Scene 1: This font is used to describe each scene or when something visual needs to be described within a scene.**

This font is for text that appears on screen,  
either over an image  
or on a black background

This font is for natural speech and/or dialog—i.e. it's when a person is speaking on camera, or in a voiceover, but a voiceover that was recorded live during filming, not written later.

This font is a voiceover being “performed”, i.e. one that was written after filming and is spoken off-screen.

*This font is for lyrics to a song being heard*

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**Scene 1: THE BIG DAY**

**The mother (Lore) and a daughter (Su) are speaking. Su is off camera.**

**Lore:** The confusion of all...

**Su:** I know.

**Lore:** Oh, it's....I don't even know when...I mean, I'm supposed to leave with Maria today....

**Su:** Yeah.

**Lore:** Isn't that it?

**Su:** Were you gonna do your nails?

**Lore:** What?

**Su:** Were you gonna do your nails?

**Lore:** No, I just took my, my....

**Su:** Your eye drops, yeah.

**Lore:** ...I took my bath and...washed my hair...

**The screen goes black and as we hear Lore in voiceover say the same words as appear in the title....**

I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW I FEEL

by Su Friedrich

**Lore:** It's just....it's just....I just can't believe what's happening

**Su:** Right.

**Lore:** And...and it's just killing me!

**Su:** Yeah.

**Lore:** I mean literally!

**Su:** Well...

**Lore:** I hope I survive it!

**Su:** You're going to survive it!

**Lore:** No, I mean, you know, mentally!

**As she keeps shaking her head...**

**Su:** You're going to survive it mentally... You're going to survive it mentally!...You are!

**CUT TO: The other daughter (Maria) with Lore in the hallway of the apartment, first pointing to a picture of Maria's two daughters. Then they prepare to leave the apartment.**

**Maria:** ...And this is who you're going to see at the airport. And this is who you might be seeing for dinner tonight....Tonight!...Okay?

It was The Big Day.  
Moving her from Chicago  
(after 52 years)  
to New York.

**Lore:** Okay. Alright. Bye plants, bye everything....

**Maria:** Bye everything....

**Lore:** Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye...

**Maria:** You'll see a lot of it again. Here's your poyce [purse].

**Lore:** Where's Pete?

**Maria:** He's waiting for you. Here's your poyce. Ya gotta get the New Yawk accent, okay?  
(laughs)

**Lore:** Susie...

**Su:** I'm coming with you.

**Maria:** She's coming with you!

Yes, I'm coming with you,  
but I'll be hiding behind  
my camera.

**The music comes up ("It's a Wonderful World" performed by Joey Ramone) as they leave the apartment and go down to the lobby, where Lore says goodbye to the postal worker and a resident and then goes outside to the waiting taxi.**

*I see trees of green, red roses, too,  
I see them bloom, for me and you  
And I say to myself  
What a wonderful world.*

*I see skies of blue, and clouds of white,  
Bright sunny days, dark sacred nights  
And I say to myself.....*

**The music fades down as we see the son (Pete) outside with Lore and Maria.**

**Lore:** I'm really very sorry that I didn't see my neighbors and could say goodbye to them.

**Pete:** Yeah...

**Lore:** That's very sad.

**Pete:** Well, I have their phone number, Mom, so we'll do a phone call with them, okay?

**Lore:** You have their phone number?

**Pete:** I do. We'll set up a phone call and you'll call her and talk....

**Lore:** Yeah, yeah, okay....

**Maria:** Okay?

**Lore:** Yeah, thank you very much.

**Maria:** You look so, so lovely...

**Music comes up again as we return to the apartment, now empty, with Pete walking through it.**

*And I say to myself  
What a wonderful world.*

**Scene 2: PICTURES AT THE PARK, AND THEN SOME HISTORY**

**Lore is on camera, in the park, taking pictures of Su, who is off camera (except when we see her in the photographs.)**

**Lore:** Wait a minute. I see the reflection of myself in that!

**Su:** I know—they're terrible that way. You just have to try to see it. They're terrible.

Three months before  
the move, I visited her.

**Lore continues holding the camera and shaking her head about it.**

**Lore:** I don't know, Susie.

**Su:** Well, just do your best.

**Lore:** I wouldn't know how to do it!

**Su:** Just point it in the general direction and take a picture, it'll probably be fine.

**Lore:** Okay, I pressed it.

**Su:** Okay, do it a few more times. That way you'll get lucky and one of them will work out.

**Lore:** I can see you sitting there...Shall I press once more?

**Superimposed on one of the photographs that she takes of Su, we read...**

I'm panicking.

Can you tell?

She didn't know what day of the week  
it was.

She asked me six times where we were going  
for dinner.

She kept claiming that the doorman

had robbed her.

**They're now sitting on a bench (off camera) facing the lake; people pass by as they talk.**

**Lore:** What is that?

**Su:** I'm just...I'm just holding it up. Now we can see whether it worked out. And here's the picture that that woman took of us.

**Lore:** Of the what?

**Su:** The picture that the woman took of us. You know? Remember the woman who took the picture of us?

**Lore:** Yeah, I know, but I can't see it. It's too dark for my...it's not...

**Su:** Uh huh...

**Lore:** A little...I can see a little bit of it, but not, not...not much. So I will have to see it when you have it developed, you know?

**Su:** Yeah.

**The color picture taken that day slowly changes into b&w and then cross fades into an older b&w picture of them.**

This picture was taken  
in 1983  
in the same park.

My mother was 63.  
Now I'm 61.

**FADE TO: Classical music ("The Well-Tempered Klavier" by Bach) starts playing as we see images from old home movies: first of scenes in Germany from the end of the war and then some images of her with her new husband at a farm in New Hampshire.**

Back then,  
I was making a film about  
her life in Germany  
during the war.

She met my (American) father  
in Germany  
during its aftermath.

In 1950, she came to America

as a GI bride.

**Scene 3: GMO CORN and INHERITED TRAITS**

**A freeze frame of Lore as a young woman waving to the camera leads into a series of images of a cornfield in high summer. We hear Su speaking in voiceover while filming.**

**Su:** So it's a beautiful morning, out on Long Island visiting friends, and I see this cornfield and...well first I think about going to the farmer's market in Manhattan and I'm looking at the corn and thinking, "It's so perfect! I wonder if it's GMO corn?" Which...Fuck!....It's so depressing! But then I think about how my mother, no matter what, finds the really horrifying thing. It doesn't matter what you're doing, she'll say, "Well, you know, a lot of people drown here!...Well, you could break your leg! You could..." whatever!

**The camera moves inside a row of cornstalks as the voiceover continues.**

And, uh, the more I'm around her with all this stuff, the more it's fucking up in my face all the time about taking on the kinds of things that she did...Cuz guess what? I'm her daughter. Oy yoy yoy!

**The camera spins around and starts heading in the other direction down the rows of corn. We hear the sound of bombs being dropped as the following title cards appear. At the end of the scene, the camera emerges from the corn row out onto the country road.**

She was bombed.  
She was starved.  
She left her home country.  
Then her husband left her with  
three small children.

Hell yeah,  
a cornfield can be a  
dangerous place.

**Su (in a loud whisper as she walks within the rows of corn):**

You know, the thing is, there are all kinds of reasons for her to be the way she is, but that means she's actually somebody I don't enjoy being around!  
And the idea of her being here, being so nearby, having to see her all the time—totally freaks me out—I really don't want that!  
And...*she* doesn't want to move! There's no *way* she wants to leave Chicago!  
But what she doesn't realize is that she has left us with *no* choice!

**Scene 4: THE DOORMAN WHO CARRIES SOUP ON HIS HEAD**

**A phone machine beeps. We see a hand advance through various messages. At each beep, we hear Lore's voice and then see another title card.**

**Lore:** Hi Susie...

The management was complaining.

**Lore:** Hi Susie...

She wouldn't stop with the doorman story.

**Lore:** Hi Susie...

Here's the note I sent her.

**We see an image of a letter, done in big magic marker in various colors:**

Dear Mom  
Please DO NOT  
talk to the doorman -  
Matthew - about robbing  
you EVER ---  
We don't want you  
in trouble with the  
building management.  
Love  
Su Pete Maria

**CUT TO: The answering machine as the following message plays.**

**Lore:** Su, this is Mom. I don't think I have ever, ever, felt so insulted when I got your letter telling me about what I am supposedly be doing in this building, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah! If you just only had called me and asked me what I do really in this building and what others do to me--*that* would have been the thing to do! I tell you, I'm mad as hell!

**CUT TO: Lore is sitting on the couch in her new apartment, Su is off camera.**

Long after the move,  
she's still telling  
the doorman story.

Maybe you'd like to hear it?

**Lore:** Well, the one thing which still angers me beyond belief is that this woman in our building called Peter, and *lied* to Peter, and I did not know that she lied to Peter until later...Because I never, ever, ever said, to her or anybody, that the doorman came into my apartment and stole things. What I knew...what I said was that one of the doormen had two things that were in my apartment. Because I saw it....Okay?

**Su:** Uh huh.

**Lore:** ...on his head, namely, the handle of that lovely red photo...that purse, in which I had the photo album which Asa had put together for me on my 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday. That was in that little purse. And that little purse was on his head, and on his head was a bowl of hot soup. Okay? He used that as a...as

a...as a...on his bald...he used it as a...as a safety reason, you know, because the soup was hot and he wanted to carry the soup on his head. That is why I knew that he was in my apartment: because he had that little purse, and all the pictures that Asa took for my...for my...for my birthday party. And he claimed, “No, no, no, I don’t have it...No” and I said, “I saw it.” Okay?  
And then she, the so-called new director of the...of the board called Peter and said that I am lying—that I am saying, “Doormen steal out of my apartment.” That’s the way she put it to him. I mean, you know, the whole thing! I could have gotten her into court, and sued her out of her pants for what she has done to me. And that’s what I would have liked to do. And that’s the true story about my coming here!

But before  
she came here....

**Scene 5: THE MILKY LIGHT versus SHINING SOME LIGHT**

**We see a window with the blinds drawn.**

I was  
often there....

And  
some things  
never change.

**Su:** Growing up, it was always like this with the milky light. So she was always really good at keeping the windows closed in the summer, and the shades down, so that it would stay cool, and it actually does stay cool, but then you just feel sort of claustrophobic, with this, like, sheer curtain and the blinds and the milky light...Which I guess is why....I don’t know...I like the sunshine.

**CUT TO:** Lore sitting at the dining room table, image cropped so you only see her hands and torso. This shot is intercut both with images looking out the same window from before (but now with the curtains open and the blind pulled up) as a long freight train passes by, and also many images of the family we’re talking about at their farm in the summer, and at the swimming pool.

**Lore:** It’s a strange family....

We were talking about  
my father’s family.

**That title fades into this one:**

We were talking about  
her ex-husband’s family.

**Lore:** Well...



**Su:** Well, I mean, I think it was partly a strange family because of Amelia dying...You know, I think they never got over that.

**Lore:** What was that?

**Su:** (louder) I think they were a strange family because of Amelia dying.

**Lore:** Amelia....?

**Su:** Yeah! Their daughter—who drowned.

**Lore:** I forgot all about that!

*Oops!*

**Lore:** Oh...Amelia was...

**Su:** She was the eldest girl. So, she was like ten. And she drowned. And so....

**Lore:** That's right! In the swimming pool up in Concord. Yeah, that was horrible, yeah, yeah. Now, I remember. Yeah.

**Su:** And I don't think they ever got over that.

**Lore:** No, you're right. And that's why the swimming pool was never filled again... Oh...God...But it was Amelia, of course, who made the mistake, because she was running like mad and it was a very hot day and jumping into that ice cold pool, you know?

I sat staring into that pool.

Did she really just blame  
a 10 year old girl  
for her accidental death?

**Close up of Lore's hand as she sits at the table, twirling a glass of water.**

**Lore:** Oh God... Fascinating family, no question about it.

**Su:** Do you want to have some ice cream?

**Lore:** What?

**Su:** Do you wanna have some ice cream?

**Lore:** Uh, do we have ice cream?...I didn't know that we have ice cream!

**Su:** We do. We just bought some at the gas station.

**Lore:** Oh at the gas station... (Laughter) I forgot all about it. (Laughter) Okay, let's stop talking family, okay? I'll be right back.

**As Su walks into the kitchen, we start to hear the sounds of a circus.**

And while I get out the ice cream,  
I wonder how many people I've blamed  
for causing their misfortunes.

I scream.

You scream.

**Scene 6: WHERE TO MOVE HER, AND HOW TO AFFORD IT?**

**Shot of a circus ring with a lot of performers leaping up and down and revving up the crowd while suspenseful music plays.**

**Circus Announcer:** New York: Are you ready?!

**Crowd (screaming):** Yes!

**No!**

If only moving her  
was this easy.

**Circus Announcer:** Team Green, Team Blue... Everyone here... Countdown with me, in five... four... three... two... one... GO!

**A woman is shot from a canon. She flies across a vast stretch of the tent, lands on a large inflated mattress, then leaps up and takes a bow. The crowd screams and cheers.**

**CUT TO:** Lore in a room of her old apartment, holding up a small framed artwork. Pete is standing across from her talking and we also see Maria sitting on the couch. They're discussing what to pack (but the scene is without dialogue, we only hear the instrumental lead-in to "Early in the Morning" by Peter, Paul and Mary song while reading the following titles.)

I sang this to myself a lot  
during the summer.

She was heartbroken  
about leaving her home.

And so were we.

**CUT TO:** Various scenes of Su, Pete and Maria touring independent living facilities. The song plays, and we also hear Su singing along

to it in a slightly ridiculous way. The prices of different apartments flash on the screen.

*Well early in the morning, about the break of day,  
I ask the Lord, "Help me find my way!"  
Help me find my way to the promised land...*

\$4,800 a month

\$5,730 a month

\$3,855 a month

A sales agent is sitting on the couch in one of the apartments.

Su: So this is the open one bedroom?

Sales Agent: Yes

Su: Okay.

*This lonely body needs a helping hand  
I ask the Lord to help me, please, find my way.*

\$4,000 a month

Su is spinning around in a large closet in one of the apartments and then walks into the bathroom to talk with Maria. Yellow and red text flashes on and off on screen.

July special offer!

30% off!

\$6,000 a month

\$4,620 a month

*When the new day's a dawning, I bow my head in prayer.  
I pray to Lord, "Won't you lead me there?"  
Won't you guide me safely to the Golden Stair?  
Won't you let....(fades out)*

So we took "The Deal"  
It's SIX times her former rent.

Then there was a 10% annual increase.

These places are unregulated.

At that rate,  
her money will only last  
four and a half years

Su is standing at the edge of an indoor swimming pool, pointing at the water.

(My promo video)

Su: Look at this pool, Mom... Incredible!

CUT TO: Pete, Maria and Lore are seen again in the room of her apartment.

Six times the rent,  
and a sixth of the space.

*Well early in the morning, about the break of day,  
I ask the Lord, "Help me find my way!"  
Help me find my way to the promised land.....*

SCENE 7: A HOLIDAY, BUT THERE'S NO HOLIDAY FROM THE WORK

Su sits down at a table and opens a laptop.

Su: Okay, so what I'm going to do is find the, uh, folder full of pictures of her apartment.

Pete: Su, I've got that stuff on my screen if you want it.

Su: Well, I've got it too! What's the difference?

Pete: Let me show you I did a drawing of the floorplan...

Su: Okay...

Pete: I started putting it in scale.

Hold on, Pete...

As the music comes in and interrupts their conversation, we CUT TO shots of a tunnel entrance, then see a car going into and emerging from it as the texts come up.

*A thrill that I have never known  
Oh yeah, yeah  
You smiled, you smiled  
Oh and then the spell was cast  
And here we are in heaven  
For you are mine...  
At last*

Excuse me.

I have to go.

To the beach.

With Cathy.

**Throughout the following scene, we see various images of life at the beach in summer: flying kites, doing jigsaw puzzles, riding on a Ferris wheel, walking on the beach, etc. The natural sounds of these scenes are intermittently interrupted by the voiceover conversations.**

**Maria:** ...in the bedroom next to her chair where she has no lamp.

**Su:** Yes, but I think if she has a... Let's go to her bedroom... So she has a thing, where the lamp can be on it, but if she wanted another lamp on the other side, it could be one of the ones that has a little surface. I mean what I'm not understanding is, I don't know where her desk is going to go.

**Pete:** Well she's not going to have so much of a need for a desk anymore because we'll be handling a lot of, like, all the paperwork and stuff.

**Su:** Could we see the floor plan?

**Pete:** Yeah.

**Maria:** Okay, wait...so this is how she enters the room?

**CUT TO old home movie images of Maria, Su and Pete as children playing at a small lake in the countryside.**

Summer 1965.

My sister, my brother, and I  
have different strengths.  
Different weaknesses.  
And different relationships to our mother.

We're all struggling with this  
in our own way.

But at least we're doing it  
together.

**CUT back to the contemporary beach images as at the beginning of the scene.**

**Su:** Let me just show you what I have... and I'm gonna go back... I have this view and that view and now I'm going to go back to the other one.

**Cathy (yelling from a distance):** Hey Su!

**Maria:** Okay, do we remove curtains and get them dry-cleaned?

**Cathy (yelling from a distance):** Come on!

**Maria:** Curtains are expensive...

**Su:** Okay, just... Let's write things, so just write down...

**Maria:** ...Because the curtains are filthy.

**Cathy (yelling from a distance):** Su!

**CUT BACK TO:** We see the hands at work on a jigsaw puzzle and then a man walking away.

**BOB:** Alright, I've done my part.

**Cathy:** That's it? Excellent, Bob.

**More beach and carnival images, and then cut to an old home movie shot as young Pete, Su and Maria pile into the back of a car. This cuts to a final shot of Su and Cathy's car goes back into the tunnel at the end of their beach trip.**

**Maria:** I just know that she likes to sleep on this and she likes to sit on this.

**Su:** I know...

**Pete:** That's how it fits... according to my crazy mathematics.

**Maria:** And what if she does one couch on one side of the room and another couch on the other side?

**Su:** It'll be too narrow...

**Pete:** Just FYI...

**CUT TO** Lore lying asleep on the couch in her new apartment.

**Su (whispering):** I don't think she needs two couches in that tiny room. I think that would make it very claustrophobic. Even with the couch and the table, you're almost at the other wall so if you have some sort of...

**Pete:** Some chairs...

**Maria:** Okay, it's just, it's her home and she has a very old-fashioned use of that space. One is her napping couch and one is her reading couch.

**Su:** That's because she's lived in a huge, fabulous place.

**Su closes the laptop as the last title appears on it.**

This is unbearable.

**SCENE 8: SAYING GOODBYE TO FIFTY ONE YEARS**

**A group of Lore's oldest friends are having a goodbye party for her; Pete and Maria are also present.**

**Pete:** ...you know, they're not teachers and they're not parents.

**Woman in white:** You know, the last time he was here he was doing archery.

**Pete:** He's really still doing archery...

**Woman in white:** Oh he is...

**Woman in blue:** Strong arms! He showed me...

**Pete:** Oh did he...

**Woman in blue:** You too, I think.

My god, she'll never see them  
again.

**Pete:** He showed off his guns...

(general laughter)

**Pete:** Let's toast to the story.

**Woman in blue:** We toast the story.

**Maria:** We're toasting the story. We're toasting the many stories. We're toasting the stories that are, and are coming.

**Lore (off screen, over black):** Well, I will miss you all.

**Woman in blue:** Well, we'll miss you, that's why we have you here, to let you know...

Another party was with Mary Jane  
her friend for 51 years.

**CUT TO a party at a restaurant. We see Mary Jane and her daughter, then the camera pans to Lore.**

**Maria (off camera):** It's actually wonderful that Mumi will see the piano leaving.

**Lore:** Yes, I would like to say goodbye to it.

**Maria:** She wants to give it a little pat.

**Lore (laughing):** I want to give it a little pat.

**CUT TO Lore's apartment as the piano mover carries away the piano bench, then CUT TO old b&w footage of Lore sitting at a piano practicing.**

Mary Jane  
had also been  
her piano teacher  
for many years.

**CUT from b&w back to the party to see Mary Jane and Lore, then cut to Lore's apartment as movers wrap up the piano and roll it out. While this scene unfolds, we hear a piano playing a simple song.**

She was giving the piano  
to Mary Jane's granddaughter.

**Piano mover:** Alright, Miss, see you later.

**SCENE 9: THE ROAD TO THE NEW BY WAY OF THE OLD**

**Pete and Su drive along on the highway through an intense, continuous downpour.**

And then my brother and I drove a truck  
with all the rest of her stuff  
from Chicago to New York.

**Pete:** Looks like it's thicker up there, although I can also see that truck all the way up there, so....it's a little thinner,,Oh no, it's starting to disappear again, it's gonna get thick again.

**CUT TO a shot of a highway exit sign for Oberlin College. It's still raining.**

**Pete:** Oh, they're all insane...

We stopped for lunch  
at my Alma Mater.

**We see Oberlin's main street and then the interior of a restaurant.**

**Su (singing):** And it's breaking my heart in two... **(speaking)** So we've come to this Pan-Asian place and they're playing Cat Stevens...the Muzak version...



"Wild World"  
was released  
in September 1970.

I was 16.

**Su:** I used to listen to him all the time. Ooh, baby, it's a wild world, la la la la...

**Pete enters and sits down in the booth, then CUT TO a corps de ballet dancing the Nutcracker, but to the Cat Stevens song, while the titles appear over the dancers.**

*And it's hard to get by just upon a smile  
Ooh, baby, baby, it's a wild world  
And I'll always remember you like a child, girl*

My mother  
often took me  
to the ballet  
when I was a teenager,

and a fledgling hippie.

One time,  
I insisted on  
going barefoot.

Now I understand why  
she was so angry about that.

#### **SCENE 10: AN UNEXPECTED VISIT**

**We see an answering machine, and then a long drive to the facility where Lore lives, accompanied by the song playing on the radio.**

It's still a wild world.

**Lore (her voice on the answering machine):** Hi? Su? Hello? Susie? Hello?...Hello?

**The machine beeps and we hear "End of messages" as the song fades in while a car arrives at the facility and the titles appear.**

*...And the dreams that you dreamed of  
They really do come true*

*Someday I'll wish upon a star*

*Wake up where the clouds are far behind me  
Where trouble melts like lemon drops  
High above the chimney tops  
That's where you'll find me*

*Oh, somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly...*

We'd moved her to  
an independent living facility  
an hour's drive north  
of the city.

Independent?

**CUT TO Su arriving at Lore's apartment and going inside.**

**Su:** Hi Mom.

**Lore:** Oh, Susie, hi!

**Su:** Hi!

**Lore:** Did you tell me that you were coming today?

**Su:** Uh, yeah! I did.

**Lore:** Oh my God.

**Su:** Well, I'm glad you're here.

**Lore:** Well, I'm glad I'm here because I was just lying down to take a rest.

**Su:** Ah...

**Lore:** Oh my God.

**Su:** Well it's okay... Had you written it on your calendar? Yeah.

**Lore:** Where, where is it?

**Su:** Oh...See, it says it there but the calendar is such a mess because it's the last day of the month and it's kind of crowded out. Anyway...

**Lore:** Oh my God.

**Su:** But anyway, we had talked yesterday on the phone.

**Lore:** That happens to your mother. She's getting old. Forgetful. And just about everything...Well anyway, hi!

**Su:** Hi!

**Lore:** I'm glad you're here. And I just came from breakfast, can you believe this?

**Su:** Did you? What did you have for breakfast?

**Lore:** Oh, um, what did I have for breakfast?...What did I have for breakfast?...I can't remember.

**Su:** Yeah?

Maybe let's go for a walk?

**Lore:** What the heck did I have for breakfast?

**SCENE 11: TAKING THE WALK, AND ALLEGEDLY GOING FOR A SWIM**

**See old b&w images of Lore walking along the lakefront in Chicago, and of her swimming in the lake.**

Back in Chicago,  
she walked for hours  
by the lake.

And she swam and swam...

Even at age 93.

**See a current image of her feeding geese at the same lakefront,**

**Lore:** Well that's not true—I have another bag, which I'm going to keep for up there!

**See her sitting on a bench by the lake, watching people pass by, etc.**

**Lore:** Well I mean I'm, I'm sort of happy that I can do what I am doing. Especially with you coming, you know. I don't have to sit at home and you have to worry about me and you can't go anywhere. We can go, and go to the lake and go, go wherever we want to go.

**Su:** Oh, I know.

**Lore:** And that's why I said yesterday, with the movie: I don't want to go in the cab, I want to walk...Yeah...

**She looks at some passersby and the lake.**

**Lore:** What a treasure this lake is. My God. What a treasure, right?

**Su:** It's really amazing...Well I'm feeling a little bit hungry. I almost feel like walking up...

**Lore:** Well let's go and get something to eat somewhere.

**Su:** Okay!

**Lore:** Okay? Let's feed a few more pigeons.

**Su:** Wherever they may be.

**See the area she now walks in, and her walking through it.**

Now we walk  
in the gated community  
behind her place.

We never see  
pigeons...

or people.

**Lore:** I never in my life thought that I would live that long. Never! *Never!* Because I lost my mother early, I lost my father early, my older sister, my other sister...You know, they're all gone. I'm the only one surviving of this family! And I've often wondered, my God, why am I...? You know, why why why? But probably because I've been living...you know, from the point of view of eating, a very normal life, and was very careful that I was keeping it in perspective.

**CUT TO Lore and Su's feet, and then images of an outdoor swimming pool.**

At  
least  
there's  
the  
pool  
here.

**Su:** Beautiful...

**Lore:** It sure is. I'm sorry I feel so lousy and I can't go swimming. Ach! It would be so great. Ach!

**Lore sits in a lounge chair while Su swims laps.**

So instead, she shot her first movie...

...of me thinking about  
a recent conversation we'd had.

**Su:** You know the odd thing about it, is that when we came to look at this place, you know? We saw this pool and we thought, "What a phenomenal pool" – plus the indoor pool - and you know, since you've always been such a swimmer, we thought it would be so great. And, you know, it seems like maybe you're not so interested in swimming, or you don't feel well enough for it, or something, but it is really nice for me.

**Lore:** Oh, I have been swimming in there.

**(this is repeated 3 times while intercut with an image of the lake)**

**Lore:** Oh, I have been swimming in there.

**Lore:** Oh, I have been swimming in there.

**Su:** Oh you have?

**Lore:** Oh sure!

**Su:** Oh, okay!

(Not even once.)

**Lore:** Oh my God, yeah! I use the pool, but just not now.

**Su:** Oh...

**Lore:** Oh heavens, yes.

**Su:** Oh, okay.

**Lore (laughing):** No, no, no, that came in very handy for me.

**Su:** Yeah, well that's good to know.

**Lore:** Oh yes, of course.

**In old b&w footage, see Lore doing the backstroke way out in the lake.**

Imagination does "come in very handy."

She hates it here.

And so do I.

## **SCENE 12: A RESPITE, AND MANY REPETITIONS**

**FADE IN to Lore lying on the couch, dozing, in her new apartment. She wakes suddenly and starts talking. Su is off camera.**

**Lore:** So where has Cathy gone?

**Su:** She's down in the library reading until we're ready to go.

**Lore:** She's down in the library doing what?

**Su:** She's just reading until we're ready to go to the concert, but it doesn't start until 3 so we have some time, so if you want....(fades out as classical music comes in).

**On a stage, we see a man and woman dancing together in a seductive way. As the scene ends, they're in bed, half naked.**

We sometimes go to  
a nearby  
performing arts  
center.

(Sorry, they did that fade out.)

**Lore:** So where has Cathy gone?

I'm sort of  
getting used to her  
asking me the same questions.  
over and over and  
over again.

**Su:** So if you want to chill out, I will just do some banking...

### **SCENE 13: TAKING OVER HER LIFE**

**Maria and Lore are seen at the bank arranging to have the children take charge of her banking. Pete is off camera but later we see him signing some forms.**

**Lore (on the answering machine):** Hi Susie, this is Mom. I wonder if you would be so good--when you come to visit tomorrow, would you bring me the bank stuff?...

Luckily for us, she was frugal  
and had saved money  
from her modestly paid job.

**Lore:** ...I'm really very, very confused about what I have and what I don't have anymore and what is where, with, you know, all that has gone on now. So, if you could straighten that out for me, so that I have a picture of what I actually have, I would appreciate that very much. Okay? Thanks a lot. Bye.

We all felt weird  
about taking control  
of her money.

And of just about  
everything else.

**CUT TO Lore and Pete in a car, he's driving, Su is in the back seat. They're in a small town, it's a sunny day in fall.**

**Lore:** Well I tell you, it's not nice to be my age...

**Pete:** Well, Mom, it's not bad, considering your condition. You're in good shape for your age.

**Lore:** Yeah, that's what everybody says, you know. You should just be so happy. My god, look at the shape you are in... Well...(suddenly pointing and exclaiming) Look at the pumpkins! I love that. (laughing). Oh god....Hi Susie!

**Su:** Hi Mom.

**Lore:** You don't like me anymore, right?

**Su:** I'm not sure why you say that.

**Lore:** What?

**Su:** I'm not sure why you're saying that.

**Lore:** Oh, I'm just kidding, for God's sake.

**Su:** Oh, ha ha ha ha ha...Yeah....Why did that make you feel so old?

We'd just been to see the lawyer.

**Lore:** Uh, I don't know...it was just the whole conversation. It just made me realize just how old I am. That uh, three children, three grown up children...

She's always re-realizing how old she is.

But maybe we all do that.

**Lore:** ... talking about....talking about what you were talking about, you know? It's just... just... well...

**Pete:** Well, any of that life-planning stuff makes you feel old no matter what age you are.

**Lore:** That's true.

**Pete:** I mean, we did our first will a long time ago and I felt like I was 150 by the time I was done with that thing.

#### **SCENE 14: LET'S DISPENSE WITH THE EUPHEMISMS**

**Lore is in her apartment putting on her hearing aid (as classical music gets increasingly louder) and we see her table strewn with letters from the Social Security Administration, Medicare, etc. and then we see her hand as she picks a bright orange leaf from a bush and then walks away.**

Can we please dispense with

all those metaphors about  
the falling leaves

the autumn of our lives

the golden years

the blah, blah, blah...?

**CUT TO a scene at night on a highway, looking out the front window of the car.**

**Lore (heard in voiceover on the answering machine):** Hi Susie, this is Mom. I cannot remember when I have been as confused as I am today, with whom I should call or who left a message. So, forgive me, your mother is getting so much older in this place here because of all the old, old, old people with their wheelchairs and the this and the that. I have not had this feeling in Chicago and I'm really quite unhappy about it. It's affecting me in the most awful way, okay, so forgive me but I just...I just had to say it, okay? Bye-bye.

**SCENE 15: A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE, AND A WILD RIDE WITH GRANDMA**

**A car barrels down the highway on a bleak winter afternoon. We hear Su in the car talking over the sound of the music, which fades in...**

*Hey Hey Hey*

*What you think about me and you being together?  
Could you break and shake my cold and stormy weather?  
Have you got this under control?  
Show me you know about a woman's soul*

*So tell me babe  
(Tell me 'bout it)  
Tell me how you feel  
(How you feel)  
And if the feeling's real  
(Feeling's real)  
Tell me what's the deal , hey hey hey*

**SU:** Late January, no snow, another trip up there....trying to get my energy up with Joss Stone. I'm not sure I like her very much, but...hey.

When she first got here,  
I vowed to visit once a week.

Yeah...it's more like  
every three weeks.



And she usually  
doesn't remember it later.

*Tell me 'bout it  
(Tell me 'bout it)  
Tell me how you feel  
(How you feel)  
And if the feeling's real.... (fades out)*

I don't ask her anymore  
what she had for breakfast.

So off we go to the past.

**Lore is in her apartment holding a small two sided picture frame with an old photo of her and her sister as young girls. On the facing side is a picture of Maria and Su as young girls.**

**Su:** Mom, how old were you in this picture?

**Lore:** In which one?

**Su:** In this one.

**Lore:** In this one? I would sort of think eight or eight'ish and my sister ten'ish.

**Su:** Yeah.

**Lore:** Of course at that time you still got the gorgeous dolls for Christmas, right?

**Su:** Uh-huh, yeah.

**Lore:** Very, very big, very expensive dolls.

My sister  
and I  
1959

My mother  
and hers  
1928

**CUT TO images out at the Coney Island amusement park. We see a wild roller coaster....See Cathy sitting in a cabin of the Ferris wheel (with Su off camera.) Through the scene, the following song is playing..**

*As I walk along the street each day  
These are the words I hear some people say*

*Maybe a girl never dig that guy  
A deal is riding high  
Today you're up on top  
Tomorrow you're right down flat  
Everybody seem to turn their back  
You're all alone on your own  
Without a home no place to roam*

*Hey hey hey*

**The Ferris wheel has gone around and they're very high up in it.**

**Su:** Oh my God, oh my God. Oh Shit!

**Cathy:** What?

**Su:** It's scary!

**Cathy:** But I thought you were the big Cyclone person!

**Su:** I am, but that goes faster.

*Don't ya know?  
That's the way life goes  
Tomorrow one never knows,  
That's the way life goes today....*

What does Grandma Say?

**Su is standing in front of a fortune telling booth with a mechanical old woman inside. Su puts in a quarter and pulls out a little card.**

**Su:** Okay, I got a blue one. **(She reads the card)** "Trouble, trouble, boil and bubble over life's thorny pass you'll stumble. Then you'll awake one fine day and your troubles will have vanished away. You are nature's stepchild...(laughs)... always managing to get in trouble. Fortunately, you had an understanding mother who helped you smooth away your difficulties. One of these days you'll awake to a peaceful world and great happiness will be yours. You have a sensitive disposition and are easily hurt. Try to develop a tough skin. You can fit easily into any group. You are a very impulsive individual. Life for you should have no dull moments."

**SCENE 16: AN ONGOING PUZZLE**

**We enter the lobby of the facility where Lore lives, then see a woman standing at a large table working on a jigsaw puzzle.**

When I visit my mother,  
I usually stop first to see  
the puzzle lady downstairs.

**Su:** So how are you?

**Puzzle Lady:** Hi!

**Su:** Hi!

**Puzzle Lady:** A puzzle lady!

**Su:** You got a new puzzle.

**Puzzle Lady:** Oh, this one is impossible.

**Su:** Is it really?

**Puzzle Lady:** This is what it is.

**Su:** Ah...

**Puzzle Lady (laughing):** I've never seen anything quite as diabolical.

**Su:** Well if I could stay, I would help you.

**Puzzle Lady:** Oh...

**Su:** I'm sorry. I'll come another time and work on one.

**Puzzle Lady:** Oh, please do! They're such fun. They really, really are...

**We see a series of finished jigsaw puzzles, while part of a song plays and the title cards come up..**

*Some things that happen for the first time  
Seem to be happening again  
And so it seems we have met before (fades out...)*

I wish my mother  
would start hanging out  
with the puzzle lady.

But she doesn't do much socializing  
at her place.

Even after a year,  
she says that she just got here.

**SCENE 17: WHAT'S NEW?**

**Looking towards the windows in the living room of Lore's apartment. It's quite dark. Su walks towards the window and Lore enters the frame. The title cards are interspersed with the following dialogue.**

**Su:** Hi!

**Lore:** Hi Susie...

**Su:** Could I open the blinds a little bit? Cause it's...?

And during that year?

I have grown afraid  
of dying

I have grown afraid  
of living too long

But I'm more afraid  
of being afraid.

**Lore:** Yeah, sure!

**Su:** Okay...

**Lore:** Sure! I mean... I have them closed because the sunshine seemed...

**Su:** Okay....So...

**Lore:** So...What's new...?

**Su:** What's new...

**Lore:** ...in your life?

**Su:** Umm...Hmm...What's new?

**CUT TO various images of the same beach as earlier in the film. We see pelicans flying by, kids playing at the shore with their mom, etc. We hear Su talking in voiceover.**

I went back to the beach with Cathy...And it was pretty much exactly a year since we moved you here!

And I don't think this is what you meant by your question, but a lot of my friends are going through the same thing with *their* parents, and when we talk to each other, we ask, "What's your exit strategy?"

Because the thing is, *none* of us want to end up in a place like this.

So I'm like, "Well... I'm gonna jump off the Verrazano Bridge!" And Cathy's idea is that she's gonna caught in the crossfire of a drug deal gone wrong!

So I feel like this isn't something I should be *saying*, and I really don't even want to be *thinking* about it, but I just have no idea what to do...except to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

**SCENE 18: Final montage of images of Lore and her children, of Cathy's art show, of friends at a river, of Cathy and a friend looking at**

sunflowers, etc., all while the following song plays. The song continues to play under the tail credits...

I think about the life I live  
A figure made of clay  
And think about the things I lost  
The things I gave away.

And when I'm in a certain mood  
I search the halls and look  
One night I found these magic words  
In a magic book. . .

Throw it away!  
You can throw it away!  
Give your love, live your life,  
Each and every day.

And keep your hand wide open  
And let the sun shine through  
'Cause you can never lose a thing  
If it belongs to you. . .

There's a hand to rock the cradle,  
And a hand to help us stand.  
With a gentle kind of motion,  
As it moves across the land.

And the hand's unclenched and open  
Gifts of life and love it brings  
So keep your hand wide open  
If you're needing anything

Throw it awayyyy!  
Throw it away  
Give your love, live your life,  
Each and every day.

And keep your hand wide open,  
Let the sun shine through.  
'Cause you can never lose a thing  
If it belongs to you.

Tail credits:

CAMERA, WRITING, EDITING & SOUND EDITING  
Su Friedrich

CO-WRITER & EDITING CONSULTANT  
Cathy Quinlan

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Maria Shavers  
Georgene Simmons  
Teresa South  
Tess Takahashi  
Giancarlo Vulcano  
Michael Zryd

MUSIC BY

Joey Ramone  
J.S. Bach  
Peter, Paul and Mary  
Etta James  
Cat Stevens  
Israel Kamakawiwo'ole  
Claude Debussy  
Joss Stone  
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