

BUTTERFLY DREAMS
A University of Texas Experience

by Temi Rose

written with the cooperation of Oscar Mink and the students of
Whole Systems Thinking, Spring 1999
Austin, Texas

Dedicated, with great affection,
to the memory of Jesse Rae

Characters in order of appearance:

Claire Late twenties. Going for her MA in Language and Literacy.

Faith Almost forty. Going for her MBA.

Poet Already thirty. Going for his Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies (Humanities).

Professor Past fifty. Teaches Whole Systems.

Scientist Late twenties. Going for his Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies (Math and Science).

Hope Almost thirty. Going for her MA in Adult Education and Human Resource Development.

Original Cast
May 3 1999

<i>Claire</i>	Barbara Opyt
<i>Faith</i>	Mary Faria
<i>Poet</i>	Tom Cannon
<i>Professor</i>	Chris Seifert
<i>Scientist</i>	Mike Finn
<i>Hope</i>	Megan Richards

OVERTURE - hearing the music of the spheres --

CLAIRE: -- outside

HOPE: -- inside --

SCIENTIST: -- the origin of time --

FAITH: -- is a moment called decision --

POET: -- in that moment --

CLAIRE: -- when you decide --

PROFESSOR: -- is the time you will be given --

SCIENTIST: -- a cape of knowledge --

FAITH: -- which will ride upon your shoulders --

HOPE: -- burden, protection --

CLAIRE: -- a fabric of free will --

PROFESSOR: -- will you choose to be a chooser? --

CLAIRE: -- will you guide the light within you? --

POET: -- or will you refuse the task before you? --

SCIENTIST: -- the student as caterpillar --

FAITH: -- a butterfly who --

HOPE: -- will flap her wings --

PROFESSOR: -- and bring the storm --

Scene One - a semiotic universe: words, words, words --

POET: (*Thinking, a word escapes into audibility*) Always -

SCIENTIST: Always is an odd term.

POET: Like normal.

SCIENTIST: Lacks specificity.

FAITH: Lacks determinacy.

CLAIRE: (*Whispers to the scientist, a hint -*) Lacks agency.

(*The Scientist doesn't want a hint from her and sends her a look with that meaning.*)

POET: Where does *always* come from? Is always like a time thing? Like forever? Or is it *all ways*, as many ways as possible? Or as *often* as possible?

HOPE: (*Interested*) Always.

FAITH: Forever.

SCIENTIST: Lasting? Infinity.

CLAIRE: It's pointless to try and discuss things that are too big for our minds to even contain, much less contemplate.

SCIENTIST: Infinity never reaches its goal. It never gets anywhere. So it's the only concept that can last forever, the only conceivable reality that can outlast time.

POET: (*Agreeing*) No *where* at all. (*As no one seems to understand, he clarifies*) Infinity has no space or time; it is not a *where* or a *when*.

SCIENTIST: Just hangs there. Infinity is a static concept. Like always or forever. Like peace, an extended blur. It makes everything boundless, boundary-less, lacking distinction, lacking purpose. I like things to be clear, shape-full, not shape-less.

CLAIRE: I wish we would forget about abstractions and talk about *this* world, *this* place. My life, which has so many human faces, all of them tormented in one way or another, all of them in despair. What can infinity do for them?

FAITH: Abstractions can be a way of escaping reality.

SCIENTIST: Some abstractions make it easier to understand the world. Engineering is full of abstractions. Abstractions might be the only way to keep from being overwhelmed by reality.

HOPE: And sometimes I *want* to get outside, distance myself. I think I can see things more clearly sometimes, outside.

CLAIRE: The forest for the trees?

HOPE: Yeah. Sort of.

CLAIRE: But how many trees can we ignore or destroy before we notice that we have annihilated the forest?

POET: Infinity sucks everything into itself. Like a black hole.

HOPE: That's Armageddon. Infinity is hopeful.

SCIENTIST: I'm not much for this church language.

CLAIRE: Oh, but church has all the best words.

POET: Let's talk about words.

CLAIRE: What if the church was guarding the younger-son-and-daughter words? Those words that weren't going to inherit property?

SCIENTIST: This is strange.

HOPE: Which words inherit property?

CLAIRE: Words like strategy, power, rank, privilege, possessions, life, liberty.. those words are state words, secular words, concrete words...

POET: Words that stand for things we can own and categorize. Things we think we can measure or count.

FAITH: And the other kind of words are...?

CLAIRE: Words like faith, hope, charity, infinity, love, those words no one wanted to discuss *them* except the people who didn't care about owning much anyway. And those were the people who were willing to hang out around churches.

POET: If you had to choose between wearing fifty pound armor, chastity belts, pointy hats, charging around in drafty castles, fighting and screwing continuously for rank -- or you could hang out in gardens or high ceiled rooms with huge stained glass windows where people sang songs six times a day, studied the stars and growing things and wrote books? Hey, I know where I'd go.

CLAIRE: Church words are our inheritance as much as state words. And really, education is built more on the church words, it's only lately, in a spirit of, well, free enterprise, that we have encouraged an encroachment of our vocabulary by the language of commerce and politics.

SCIENTIST: (*Laughing*) What are we talking about?

FAITH: I don't know. I'm completely snowed under.

HOPE: I wonder where he is.

SCIENTIST: Waiting for Professor Godot?

POET: If you think about it, nothing really matters.

FAITH: I don't agree with you. I think *everything* matters.

POET: No way. If you allow things to matter, then it's impossible to do anything at all because you'd be paralyzed by the implications of the possible ramifications of your actions.

HOPE: (*Quietly, to Claire*) I don't know if I want him back.

CLAIRE: Do you love him?

HOPE: I think so but ---

CLAIRE: -- maybe you've outgrown him.

HOPE: I need a new name but he still calls me by my old name. But there isn't anyone in that name anymore. I moved and he can't find me.

FAITH: (*Joining the conversation*) You have a new address.

HOPE: I get really angry because he doesn't talk to me, then *he* gets angry because he says I'm being opaque. Do I seem opaque to you?

FAITH: Not at all.

CLAIRE: Crystal clear.

(*Meanwhile, in another conversation....*)

SCIENTIST: Don't you ever think about anything besides sex?

POET: You're the one who thinks everything is reducible to the physical. You're an intellectual Muslim.

SCIENTIST: If that's supposed to be an insult, it isn't working because I don't get it.

POET: Ok, I'll explain it.

SCIENTIST: Skip it.

POET: No, it's interesting. You'll like it.. to you a word that connotes any body part below the waist is a sexually potent word. We can only talk about body parts *above* the neck or *below* the wrists or ankles, right?

SCIENTIST: Why would you even need to talk about anything else?

POET: See! That's intellectual Muslimism!

FAITH: What are you two talking about? It's starting to sound interesting.

SCIENTIST: He thinks I'm a prude.

POET: No, no, Muslims aren't prudes. Their sexuality is very sophisticated I am told.

SCIENTIST: (*Horried but laughing*) Do not go there!

POET: Ok. What I'm trying to say is that we have restricted what's ok to talk about.

FAITH: So? Why shouldn't we? What makes you think that everything should be open for discussion?

CLAIRE: I think I know what he means. He's in a sort of metaphoric logic. (*To the Poet:*) Stop me if I'm wrong -- if the only things we can talk about are above the neck or below the wrists and ankles, we are restricting ourselves to issues of mentality and character (the face), issues of production (the hands), and issues of mobility (that's the feet). We are forbidding discussion about assimilation and waste (that's the gut), emotions, love and hate -

HOPE: The heart.

CLAIRE: -- connection to the ethereal (that's the lungs) and gender identities (the genitals) -- that's what you mean? Something like that?

POET: Not bad for a girl.

(*Some people groan, fed up with his antics*)

HOPE: That is beneath us. Just ignore him.

POET: And yet we leave the central question unanswered: what *is* appropriate for educational discourse?

FAITH: Dare I ask?

POET: Oh, and you left out the excretory organs (*He continues over people trying to interrupt him*) obviously, they stand for our ability to get rid of what we don't need and assimilate what we do need. Here he is at last, Professor Godot.

End Scene One

Scene Two - information is power: what's wrong with this picture? --

PROFESSOR: (*Introducing the class to the audience*) You all know each other, right? Faith here is an act of imagination that will illuminate the path when and if our intentions get murky with the push and pull of the opinions and wills of others.

Hope, sitting right here, is she who allows us to be secondary characters in other people's stories. By infiltrating their dreams we can enhance their glory. But, at the same time, move them towards ethical action. Yes?

Our Poet is not ashamed to walk in the shadow the sun casts on his nature. To act the fool or villain, he is none the less wise.

For our Scientist, life is a journey down the river of sense into an ocean of unspeakable joy. But he doesn't know that yet. I think now he wonders about the necessity of evil. May I say that, as far as I am concerned, there is no necessity for evil? It is simply a matter of, as Dewey or Bateson might say, bad mental habits.

Claire's life floods her unawares. Am I right? Like her namesake, our lady Saint Claire, she knows she knows more than she will ever know she knows.

Myself --

POET: (*Joining in with the Professor*) You dance in the raiment called sky in order to feel the delicious glitter the skin makes from inside. You are more than familiar with the rhythm of awkward solutions --

(*Back to reality...*)

PROFESSOR: I'm sorry I was late. I'm sure I missed something stimulating.

POET: -- dancing mastery.

HOPE: Are we doing mastery learning in this class?

POET: Competition is pointless, a joke fools to play on each other.

SCIENTIST: I'm competitive. I enjoy being competitive and I *know* you don't think I'm a fool.

FAITH: I'm very competitive. Against myself mostly and people I don't know. It's hard for me to compete against people I know.

POET: I'm not competitive.

HOPE: I beg to differ.

SCIENTIST: (*To the Poet*) You don't care what grade you get in this class?

POET: Of course I care.

CLAIRE: Grades are part of a competitive system.

HOPE: Do you freely give information to other students? Information that might make them look good? Better than you? (*Pause*) I rest my case.

POET: The power of evaluation is the power of the threat of isolation.

FAITH: There are no static evaluations. The whole point of evaluation, educational evals or business outcomes, is to decide whether or not to invest further energy in a person or a course of action.

SCIENTIST: The choice is between participation or isolation.

HOPE: And isolation is annihilation and death.

PROFESSOR: If you have a poor evaluation you will be determined to be unsuitable in some way and you will be dropped.

HOPE: I always find that logic to be so vastly absurd that I don't know where to begin deconstructing it.

SCIENTIST: Information is power. We're here to get more power. We do that by accumulating more information. When you give information away, you are giving away power.

HOPE: Someone else might get credit for what you earned, what you know. So you keep it to yourself.

CLAIRE: Except professors, they give information.

FAITH: Yeah, but it's mostly old information. The newest, best stuff, they mostly keep to themselves.

PROFESSOR: Is that what you think of me? That I'm withholding the best stuff?

FAITH: No, you're the exception. In your classroom we somehow, at least partly, stand outside the other system.

HOPE: Together.

CLAIRE: Yeah. The together is important.

HOPE: I see better together.

FAITH: Me too.

POET: I don't think we keep information to ourselves because we're hoarding power. I think students are always being frustrated in their desire to share, to discuss, to exchange, to impart.

SCIENTIST: I think we don't ever get asked.

POET: If you ask me what I know, I'll tell you.

HOPE: But we only really care what professors think because they are the only ones whose opinions are meant to count.

CLAIRE: Because they're the ones who give the grades. It's about evaluation, not values.

FAITH: But evaluation is supposed to be an application of values, a system of valuation.

HOPE: We pretend to care what professors say because that's part of how we get an A. We look attentive. The professor gets an ego boost and voila! a Pavlovian attachment has been secured between the professor's mental image of you and their feelings of pride. (*She snaps her fingers*) And, bingo: A.

CLAIRE: This is awful. We're being so cynical. I don't think I withhold anything. I just don't think I know very much, that's why I'm here, to learn.

SCIENTIST: (*Making cruel fun*) Tabula rasa.

POET: (*Continuing the maliciousness*) I came here empty, fill me up.

HOPE: That's a primal female symbol.

FAITH: Which, translated, becomes -the student feminized and deprived of power. Which is obviously terrifying the *boys*.

POET: Meow.

PROFESSOR: (*To Faith*) Why don't you explain what you mean.

FAITH: Women stand for the powerless. In a new left Marxist-Feminist schema. In situations where there are no women, a hierarchical system will create someone to act the part of the powerless in order to maintain the illusion of, or the illusive structures of, power. So people are picked to be the femmes, the powerless, the raped, the ones who need filling. The point is that it's that dichotomy, that particular polarity which is the fundamental lie keeping hierarchical systems stable.

SCIENTIST: Why do we always end up talking about sex?

CLAIRE: Because sex is the basis of human existence.

POET: The ultimate creative analogy.

HOPE: Are you saying that students are raped by their teachers? Mentally?

PROFESSOR: Maybe I should have skipped class today, what do you think?

FAITH: No. He was commenting that the image of being empty and needing to be filled connotes a kind of powerlessness. I was saying that education is based on the same symbolic principles as the rest of society. This is about the archetypal student and teacher relationship being based on an oppressive social constructivism. This is not about the social dynamic operating in this classroom.

PROFESSOR: It is my feeling that you all know a great deal. You know enough for your opinions to have value. More often, it seems to me, a question of your willingness to believe in yourselves, to value yourselves, rather than my evaluation of you.

HOPE: Can we talk about systems of power. Can we go back to that?

PROFESSOR: Of course.

HOPE: What I find curious is that everyone is talking about power as if it were a relation, a dynamic between persons, a communication system essentially.

CLAIRE: I'm not sure where you're going with this.

HOPE: But what if we go beyond the communication paradigm? (*Waits for a response, none is forthcoming. She continues.*) Ok, let's go backward then. In the classical paradigm, what is power? How is it defined? Interpreted?

FAITH: Well, in classical thought, power resided in roles, you were born into your station and your station had power or it didn't.

SCIENTIST: But the classical system also has that I can take your power, usurp your domains and acquire your role for myself.

CLAIRE: Ladder-like. Power was greater on the higher rungs. We climb up or fall down to our level and inherit our power from our position.

HOPE: (*Agreeing*) Ok, yes. And the dynamic paradigm?

POET: Power in conflict. Not inherent. Power negotiated.

SCIENTIST: Power not in a place or station but in the resolution of opposing forces, creating new entities which themselves have power.

FAITH: The machine.

HOPE: And the communication paradigm?

POET: Moving right along.

CLAIRE: Hush.

FAITH: That people and institutions can and should be responsible for their power, be their own antithesis.

HOPE: And that if someone oversteps and uses too much power, communication will bring them the ability to control themselves again.

POET: I don't exactly agree with this. I think that in the communication paradigm, communication is the *source* of the conflict. The communication paradigm says that the reason we have a power problem is because we don't communicate well.

HOPE: The field paradigm...

POET: Are you ignoring me?

HOPE: Only partly. I don't want to get caught up in another tangent right now.

POET: My ideas are tangents?

HOPE: It doesn't matter right now. Right now I'm trying to make a point. Can you let it go?

POET: Sure.

HOPE: The field paradigm transcends the communication paradigm.. how...?

CLAIRE: Well, I'm still not sure where you're leading us... but the field paradigm reminds me of the medieval mystical world view that saw everything has its place and its need for power as a sort of natural emanation, a result of its own place as a field among fields.

FAITH: I think that's a kind of metaphoric deformation...

SCIENTIST: What's a metaphoric deformation?

FAITH: I read it in a science fiction novel. It means that when we go to a new planet, where everything is totally, completely different, we don't allow ourselves to just *look*. We contort what we see. Force it, by asserting upon our vision a metaphor so we can understand it. We see a bunch of brown blobby globs swerving around on a green sea and

we say it looks like cows in a field. But it doesn't. It's not at all like cows in a field. That's a metaphoric deformation.

CLAIRE: The stepsister's foot in the glass slipper.

FAITH: Yeah, ok.

CLAIRE: So I am not grokking field theory am I? I'm forcing it into The Great Chain of Being, which I understand.

PROFESSOR: Grokking?

CLAIRE: Heinlein or Vonnegut? More science fiction.

SCIENTIST: It means comprehension beyond cognition.

PROFESSOR: Ah.

POET: Which leaves field theory still undefined. How about a move from communication to self expression?

HOPE: That doesn't sound like much of an evolution.

SCIENTIST: Moving steadily into solipsism and despair.

CLAIRE: (*To Hope*) Do you have a definition of the field paradigm?

HOPE: No but I'm becoming more aware that my power is in my choosing.

CLAIRE: If power can't be gained by position or negotiation, then that's pretty counter-intuitive. Look at all the people who get their power that way.

FAITH: Power is the result of internal balance.

HOPE: Or internal balance is the result of the correct execution of power.

SCIENTIST: Power as energy. Which we know can't be destroyed, only re-formed.

POET: As we approach an ecology of self...

CLAIRE: The trouble is that this way of looking at things leaves us powerless in the face of bullies.

FAITH: I've seen self responsibility turn into the Yuppie all-for-me nothing-for-you syndrome.

HOPE: I think I like the communication paradigm the best. With the field paradigm, everyone is totally isolated or totally blended. It's too extreme.

PROFESSOR: Before we run screaming back into the twentieth century, tearing out our hair, let's take a look at the function of co-operation in human systems.

SCIENTIST: Cooperation is a more complete vision than negotiation.

HOPE: Cooperation is like co-creation and does not presume any originating stance in particular.

CLAIRE: It focuses on the other but requires a clear demarcation around personal responsibility.

POET: I hate working with teams. People never take personal responsibility. It's virtually impossible to co-create with people. Frankly, I am feeling disheartened by the field theory thing. I thought I *was* cooperative but now I seem to be hearing that I am, in fact, antagonistic. It's really beginning to piss me off.

End Scene Two

Scene Three - the crux of the matter - lies in relationships --

SCIENTIST: I can see it, you know. How school teaches us the old paradigms and this slows down progress.

CLAIRE: (*An inner dialogue, spoken to the audience*) There must be better classes than this one but I can't think of one. It's like dancing on a flying carpet. I can't believe I'm not going to fall, plunge to my death. But I don't. I'm ok. I'm upright, in the sky, in the wind, moving along. You know it was worth being taunted for being smart. It was worth it to get here. To this room. To these people. To be in a room like this. This is what we do: we think. And when we think together it's like dancing, like dancing inside the wind.

PROFESSOR: Kinetic and sympathetic thought take more time and space in the brain than analytical thought. That is why analytical thought is so efficient. And so dry. It lacks the complexity of water, no flow. Flow charts are trying to capture the flow.

FAITH: I am looking for a place for kindness, and a system that supports and maintains, maybe even creates, kindness.

CLAIRE: How can people be kind to each other when everything around them is being trampled, and people are continuously being belittled?

HOPE: I still have the same wishes I always did. Maybe I was born with all my wishes. The way I have all my eggs. Right from the beginning. I carry all my wishes in little sacks, and some of them connect and grow and are born into a tangible place. And some of them just hang out with me for the whole journey, inside.

FAITH: I wish for the healing of severed connections. For attachments to grow and flourish. To build in little incremental steps, a dynamic, synergistic functioning connectedness.

SCIENTIST: The power of the destruction of the atom is nothing compared to the power in holding together. It takes more energy to hold together. Sometimes I can feel the energy surrounding me... I can know it, even if my mind can't really get a hold of it.

HOPE: (*An inner dialogue, to the audience*) I miss him so much. I feel like every cell in my body is burning. Billions of tiny bonfires

burning marshmallows, swelling, bursting, their sweet goo spills down over my charred stick and into my mouth.

Why doesn't he acknowledge me? What have I done that's so threatening? Or maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm boring. Maybe he's bored. I'm always studying. *He's* always studying. Why is it all going wrong?

PROFESSOR: We are all confounded by love.

CLAIRE: I think field theory is about teaching the gods to love.

SCIENTIST: To me, field theory is the place where creative systems and heuristic principles come together. What it tells us is that searching for meaning means creating meaning out of a vast expanse of unarticulated knowledge which itself is an infinitesimal part of all that exists.

POET: I dreamed I saw the alphabet walking.

HOPE: (*Still to the audience*) I know what's supposed to happen. Love is supposed to conquer all. But all my life I have seen love fail. But I can't seem to withdraw my hope that it might somehow prevail.

PROFESSOR: Art not only creates the structures which embody what we are, a means of production as well as the products themselves, art is an examination of process. Working things out in your imagination, you engage yourself. The more complexity your imagination can handle, the more intricate your understanding of systems' functionality.

FAITH: I think that consistency is about expectations. As long as we only allow ourselves to experience what we expect to experience, we cannot begin to enter field thinking. On the other hand, I think that leverage is about finding the keystone in a pattern. I don't think field theory gives us the leverage that we need to create change. I think leverage is necessary *and* mechanistic.

HOPE: Why can't all the tools be useful? Do we have to throw away the hammer because we have discovered the screwdriver?

POET: (*An inner dialogue, to the audience*) Watching her change, is like watching the rainforest disappearing. I don't want to talk to her. I don't want to be rational. I want her to stay beyond that. I want to scream to her, "Don't enter here! Go back!" But she's already here. And she likes it. And she's good at it. Love can be silenced by grief,

this is love's great weakness. (*Pause. Then to the class*) There is a thread that runs through us, a thread that runs through our souls and it extends to make a weave, but only if it connects. (*Talking to himself, to the audience, about Hope*) My soul is asleep when you are away from me. She inhabits the soft center of my bones. Crackling ironies, sprinkle fire into the solar system of desire. Can I tell you what it costs me to let you go?

PROFESSOR: We live in a new world. People want us to show them what it's like. They want to visit an amusement park.

CLAIRE: I get busloads pointing but only rarely do I meet someone who actually lives here.

SCIENTIST: The grass is always greener.

HOPE: But you find yourself and your idea of green, every *where* you go.

POET: An infinity of *where*'s.

HOPE: I want to feel oppressed but I can't. I feel caught, but part of what catches me. A node in a web.

CLAIRE: The issue, the field theory issue is context, where we are, right now. Who we are right now. Because it's all relative depending on where we are and how fast we're going.

SCIENTIST: We are students in a room.

FAITH: We come here for much more than making grades and manipulating professors.

POET: We came here because something inside us told us that we are smart, really smart, smart enough to make this investment in ourselves.

HOPE: And how will we spend this investment? Will we merely accumulate packets of knowledge, like antique collectors going to the store of ancient knowledge?

SCIENTIST: Or will we learn to think, to tackle problems as they occur in real life, in real time, to real people?

PROFESSOR: I am often asked to play the role of the intellectual, the master doling out zen koans. But what I know about myself is that I am a learner. I have been learning longer than most of you. Long enough to be considered an expert learner. Expert enough to have a healthy respect for the treacherous slopes of learning. And, as a man with a real life, a real family, and real problems I am often grateful for the knowledge and skills of others, especially that of my students.

FAITH: What's really going on is that we are part of a system, granted there are fewer of us, but that's because fewer of us are needed - we are an elite because we are *not* often needed. We keep trying to deny the peripheral nature of the role of intellectuals.

CLAIRE: But don't you think that it's *from* the periphery, by coaching, by getting out of the way, that we can have the most effect on any system? We can see so many fuzzy things and our vision of all those connections can benefit the majority -

POET: That majority, within which we never like to admit that we ourselves are subsumed.

SCIENTIST: We are like the boy in the basket at the top of the mast, our job is to look around and report what we see to others whose job it is to maintain the ship and all the people on it.

FAITH: We keep trying to trade information for status.

HOPE: People want privilege, to get out of the work that's necessary.

POET: On the contrary, my dear Watson: we are workaholics, impaling ourselves on work. We carry our work like a crucifix, hoping to nail ourselves and rise to a heaven which we can only pray exists.

HOPE: Our world is mired in systems which require us to sacrifice our lives, what we love, and the lives of everyone we associate with.

SCIENTIST: I believe that's called - The Greater Good.

FAITH: I think that just about any personal risk is worth the possibility of winning back our lives from the illusion that what is meaningful can ever be bought or sold.

HOPE: I want to argue with you. I want to make things simple. Put your idea on one side and mine on another. I want to argue that one

answer is clearly, incontrovertibly, the winner. But as soon as I feel myself wanting that, I stop wanting it. Another desire sweeps away the first. With the destructive passion of a tidal wave, in comes my desire to hear your story and to tell you mine, to mix and match our perspectives and our meanings, to be bigger than just me. And smaller too. I want that mixing.

PROFESSOR: Field theory asks us to become aware of ourselves sharing everything, the planet, this room, our government, the family. It is our world. Not small and Disneyesque, but malleable, discoverable, creatable. We make the world together, in the now, every moment, we choose and know -- or deny and destroy.

POET: You are setting up knowledge as the antithesis of destruction.

PROFESSOR: Try thinking that you can never completely destroy anything. Take homeopathy for example, they start with a very small bit of snake venom, say 1% of a solution which includes alcohol, say 99%.. and they continue to mix it down, extracting and measuring until there is no more snake venom at all in the mix. What results is a homeopathic remedy that has a powerful snake venom effect, but doesn't kill the patient.. but it *does* do everything else that the venom would do. But there is no venom there.

HOPE: Do you think that our systematic extraction of love and joy from our day to day lives will make love and joy more powerful?

PROFESSOR: Of course.

CLAIRE: Have you heard the pollution argument that says that we aren't destroying the planet, the planet will survive us; that what we are destroying is ourselves. Destroying the planetary conditions and systems that make human life possible, that support human life.

POET: Ah, yes. *This* I believe. We do not hate our planet so much as we hate ourselves.

SCIENTIST: So now feeling good will save the planet?

HOPE: Why not?

FAITH: Not out of context.

SCIENTIST: Who defines the context?

FAITH: The dominant context is predefined. It's the dominant ideology of the culture. Margaret Mead understood that. Our dominant context isn't capitalism or democracy. Commercialism and consumerism are the ideologies of choice in the United States today.

POET: We believe that we can sell freedom or, even worse, that freedom can be reduced to an exercise of free will in the marketplace. It's the economic empire's version of selling indulgences. Buying your way into heaven is old, old stuff. I cite Jesus throwing money men out of the temple.

SCIENTIST: Why not sell freedom? Money *can* buy you freedom.

FAITH: No way.

HOPE: The earning of freedom is what we mean by learning.

POET: Yes! Freedom is the result of the kind of discipline that can *only* be derived from an experience of passionate engagement.

SCIENTIST: How can we expect to intervene in systems which contain, define and limit us?

CLAIRE: How can we not?

POET: Change ourselves. That's our point of power.

SCIENTIST: That's an extraordinarily isolationist, individualistic thing to say.

FAITH: There are no discreet objects, entities or concepts. All structures are part of a continuum of inter-related structures, they are nested and overlap. Changing ourselves has to be the point of power because it's the only power that can be exercised without the use of manipulation or force.

POET: Hey, I *often* manipulate and force myself.

FAITH: Yes. But you don't have to. You could stop doing that.

SCIENTIST: I'm not sure that's true.

FAITH: It fits. It does. We are patterns and we are in patterns and they aren't completely out of our control *because* we're in them, participating in creating them.

End Scene Three

Denouement - *be all you can be* --

PROFESSOR: -- we occupy a whirlwind of space and time --

POET: -- all existence runs this thread --

FAITH: -- a tightrope walk --

CLAIRE: -- at speeds immeasurable --

HOPE: -- the danger cannot be fathomed --

SCIENTIST: -- and so might best be ignored --

HOPE: -- we move in synchrony --

POET: -- whether we wish to or not --

FAITH: -- we can actualize the time --

SCIENTIST: -- or negate it --

PROFESSOR: -- but we cannot exist outside it --

CLAIRE: -- we are space time critters --

HOPE: -- creatures of the now --