the basket. (Miss Emma touches him, gently.) You just want to talk to me? You want Professor Wiggins to go? (No response. Grant hands her the food.) Look what I brung you. You like my fried chicken. Yams and tea cakes.

JEFFERSON. Don't matter.

MISS EMMA. What?

JEFFERSON. I said don't matter.

MISS EMMA. It matter to me. You matter to me.

JEFFERSON. Chicken, yams, tea cakes. Don't matter.

MISS EMMA. Yeah, they do, Jefferson. Here. (Miss Emma takes a small bite of chicken.) Nothing wrong with this. You always liked my chicken. (Silence.) You want a yam? A tea cake?

JEFFERSON. You the one?

GRANT. What?

JEFFERSON. Go'n jeck that switch?

MISS EMMA. That's Professor Wiggins, your teacher. What switch?

(Jefferson slaps his chair and makes a loud buzz, like electricity.)

JEFFERSON. What fries a hog!

MISS EMMA. Oh, my boy! (Miss Emma starts toward him. He turns his back on her, slams down his feet and his shackles.)

JEFFERSON. I don't want you here!

MISS EMMA. Yes, you do! I want to help you!

JEFFERSON. Get her out of here!

MISS EMMA. Jefferson! (To Grant.) Say something to him!

GRANT. Jefferson.

JEFFERSON. Both of you! Leave me alone!

MISS EMMA. Oh, my boy! Jefferson!

JEFFERSON. Can't you leave me alone? (Miss Emma tries to hold Jefferson, but he breaks away from her.) All right! Knock for the man! (Grant knocks on the door.)

MISS EMMA. All right! But we're not through. We'll be back, with the Reverend Ambrose. (The door opens. Enter Paul.)

PAUL. That didn't take long.

MISS EMMA. Can I leave the food and the clothes?

PAUL. I suppose so.

MISS EMMA. If he don't want it, can you give it to others in the jailhouse?

PAUL. I suppose. (Paul take Jefferson out, closing the door on Miss Emma.)

MISS EMMA. We'll be back, Jefferson! We go'n make you feel better! (The door closes in her face. She puts her hands against the door.) Oh, Lord Jesus! Stand by me! (Lights, music. Exit Miss Emma, then Grant. Lights fade. A dim light on the table and flag at stage left. Voices of children are heard.)

CHILDREN'S VOICES. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands. One nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (Lights up on the table, which is a desk. A flimsy blackboard behind it. At its side, a worn American flag, on a pole. Enter Grant. He carries a cardboard box. He sits at his table/desk. He speaks to his pupils in front of him.)

GRANT. I have a few things to say before we begin classes. First, when you write a simple sentence, it doesn't slant up or down. It stays on a straight line. (He takes a small package out of the cardboard box.) Second, we are wasting chalk. The school board gave me what they say is enough for the year. It's about gone. When it runs out, they're not giving us any more. (He puts that back and takes out two battered textbooks.) Third, these hand-me-down textbooks from the white schools are fragile. You don't have to tear them apart, they come apart. So when they have pages gone, or torn out of them, find someone whose book has that page. When some pages are stuck together, with paste, or chewing gum, don't tear the pages apart. Pull gently or let me do it. We can't get other books. (He puts them back.) And fourth. For some of you, it's ladybug time in class. You sit playing with bugs. You think that's why I'm here, so that you can play with bugs? Do you know what is going on in Bayonne right now? Do you know what is going to happen to someone just like you? Who sits right where you are sitting now, only a few years ago? You all know who I'm talking about. Jefferson. They are going to kill him in Bayonne. They are going to sit him in a chair. They're going to tie him down with straps. They're going to connect wires to his head, to his wrists, to his legs, and they're going to shoot electricity into his body, until he is dead. What does that have to do with you? It's exactly what I am trying to stop, right here right now. I'm trying to make you responsible young men and young ladies, who don't wind up where Jefferson is. But you, you refuse to study! You won't write a straight sentence! You'll be playing with bugs the