

# Dirt

## *An Excerpt*

Book, Lyrics & Music  
by  
Chuck Puckett

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**Setting**

North Alabama, then points west (Tuscaloosa, New Orleans, Taos, Tahoe, Wyoming, San Francisco).

**Time**

1973.

ACT I

SCENE 1

I.1.1 "Overture"

Below Big Bridge on the Smith Lake in north-central Alabama, on late August afternoon in 1973. SANDY LOOMIS, LOIS MUDD and the CREEK CHORUS are lounging in the sun, some drinking beer. From offstage, we hear shouts.

TERRY

**(offstage)**

Watch this Bracken! Yeehah!

**SOUND: Big splash.**

LOIS

I swear, if those idiots weren't already trying to kill themselves, I'd do it for 'em.

SANDY

They're just trying to impress us. It's kind of sweet, in a way.

LOIS

Sweet! You mean sweet Jesus! Look at 'em, jumping off a bridge thirty feet above the water.

SANDY

Looks more like forty.

LOIS

There goes yours.

BRACKEN

**(offstage)**

Look out below, Terry! Ah-ooo-gah! Geronimo!

**SOUND: another splash.**

SANDY

**(flinching)**

Owww! That's gotta hurt. Landed right on his side.

LOIS

As long as the fool didn't land on his head. Come to think of it, that'd be the safest way he could land.

**BRACKEN THOMAS and TERRY FARMER enter in shorts and toweling off. BRACKEN is obviously sore on one side of his body. They grab a beer and receive applause and high-fives from CREEK CHORUS members. LOIS pointedly ignores them.**

TERRY

Man, you are something else! That was beautiful!

BRACKEN

Everything but the landing.

TERRY

Any landing you can swim away from is a good landing.

BRACKEN

**(hugging SANDY from behind)**

Did you see me, Sandy? Leaping into the abyss of being.

TERRY

Abyss of what? Bracken, you talk weird.

SANDY

No, I didn't see you. I can't look when you do that.

BRACKEN

But when I'm on that rail, just about to jump, I feel like I'm sitting on top of the world. Was that awesome or what?

LOIS

Definitely "what". Bracken Thomas, as smart as you are, sometimes you are too stupid for words.

TERRY

Stupid? You call jumping off a fifty-foot bridge stupid?

**LOIS stares at him.**

SANDY

It is a little scary, Bracken

BRACKEN

I think it's the stuff legends are made of.

TERRY

And extremely cool.

LOIS

Like hell it is! You guys scared us half to death. Why in the world do you do things like that?

TERRY

Why? The girl asks why. To prove something, that's why!

SANDY

Prove what? That gravity still works?

BRACKEN

Some people look at a fifty foot bridge and say, "What the hell?" I look at it and say, "Why the hell not?"

SANDY

Both of you are a little foolish, I must say.

LOIS

I repeat, what kind of person does crap like that?

### **I.1.2 "Fools Jump In"**

**([www.puckettpublishing.com/music/scores/FoolsJumpIn.htm](http://www.puckettpublishing.com/music/scores/FoolsJumpIn.htm))**

#### **Fools Jump In**

BRACKEN

THAT'S A TRICKY QUESTION  
YOU MUST BE PULLING MY LEG  
WE DON'T NEED AN INVITATION

TERRY & BRACKEN

WE DON'T NEED TO BEG  
NOBODY HAS TO PUSH US  
WE'RE FULLY GROWN UP MEN  
SO DON'T YOU TRY TO FOOL US  
'CAUSE IT'S FOOLS THAT JUMP IN

FOOLS JUMP IN  
WHERE THE WISE MAN WILL NOT GO  
THIS JUST IN:  
THERE'S A THING YOU DO NOT KNOW  
FOOLS JUMP IN  
DON'T SAY I DIDN'T TELL YOU SO

TERRY

I'M COOL WHEN I SHOW OFF

SANDY & LOIS

YOU ONLY SHOW YOUR ASS

BRACKEN

WHAT KIND OF FOOL AM I?

SANDY & LOIS

WHAT KIND OF FOOL? FIRST CLASS!

ALL

FOOLS JUMP IN  
WHERE THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT WADE  
TAKE A SPIN  
WHERE NO SANE MAN EVER STRAYED  
FOOLS JUMP IN  
THEN THEY THINK THEY'VE GOT IT MADE

SANDY & LOIS

THEY JUST MADE THEMSELVES LOOK LIKE FOOLS

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

TERRY & BRACKEN

AND WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?  
WE KNOW WHICH WAY TO JUMP

SANDY & LOIS

THEY THINK THEY'LL GO

SANDY, LOIS & CHORUS

**(bouncing on each "boing")**

BOING-BOING-BOING

ALL

FOOLS JUMP IN  
AND THEY THINK THEY'LL JUST GET WET  
SINK OR SWIM?  
A FOOL WILL TAKE THE BET  
FOOLS JUMP IN  
THEN THEY'RE SURPRISED BY WHAT THEY GET

SANDY & LOIS

THEY GET A CHANCE TO ACT LIKE FOOLS

ALL

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP?  
WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?  
THEY JUST TAKE A CHANCE  
THEY THINK THEY'LL GO

**SANDY, LOIS & CHORUS bounce in  
sequence like church bells**

BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING  
BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING

BRACKEN, TERRY, LOIS, SANDY

FOOLS JUMP IN  
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)

WHERE THE WISE MAN WILL NOT GO  
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)  
THIS JUST IN:  
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)  
THERE'S A THING YOU DO NOT KNOW  
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)

ALL

FOOLS JUMP IN  
DON'T SAY I DIDN'T TELL YOU SO  
DON'T SAY I DIDN'T TELL YOU SO  
TERRY & BRACKEN  
DON'T SAY I DIDN'T TELL YOU SO

LOIS

I told you so, alright. Somebody sure needs to.

TERRY

Nobody's gonna tell me nothing. Too many people  
already trying to tell me what to do.  
Seriously, I think there's a conspiracy out  
there to brainwash me.

LOIS

That would require a brain.

BRACKEN

Anyway, the point is the jumping, not that  
fools do it.

SANDY

Jumping is pointless. Where does it get you?

TERRY

To the bottom.

LOIS

So why are *you* jumping?

TERRY

Lois!

SANDY

No, really, where does it get you? Nowhere. And  
I want to go somewhere.

LOIS

You and Bracken have been talking about going  
somewhere ever since ya'll took old Lawson's  
philosophy course.

BRACKEN

You've never heard anything until you've heard a former Baptist preacher turned atheist trying to subvert the minds of innocent college freshmen.

**He holds an imaginary cup.**

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a coffee cup, one specific coffee cup. But Plato would insist that on the ideal plane, there exists an ideal coffee cup, that imbues this cup with its *cup-ness!*" Lawson the Apostate. He was a hoot, but he did make you think.

SANDY

Ha! The only thing he ever thought about was how to get the girls in his class drunk down at the Chukker.

BRACKEN

I remember him mainly trying to get you in his evil clutches.

SANDY

He had a good eye, what can I say? You should have taken his course, Lois.

LOIS

Me? I was lucky to get through Sociology 101.

TERRY

You didn't get much out of college, did you Lois?

LOIS

Terry, you didn't get anything out of college.

TERRY

I got through it, what else are you supposed to do? That was all Daddy wanted me to do, and I dood it. Got a real fine degree in Bidness Administration.

LOIS

So you can run your Daddy's farm. Surprised you didn't go to Auburn.

TERRY

Bite your tongue! Anyway, it's a good farm. And I don't miss college one bit.

BRACKEN

Except when it turns football weather. Bama's first game is tomorrow!

TERRY

Woo-hoo! Roll Tide!

SANDY

Who cares? I still want to go some place different, do something different.

BRACKEN

You know something, Sandy? I want to go somewhere, too. Somewhere far off, where they do things that mean something.

TERRY

I smell road trip. Where ya'll going?

SANDY

I don't know. Somewhere. Somewhere else, mainly. I get so tired of this place, this town, this bridge. Same old thing, we come out here every summer and Lois and I lay out in the sun, and you and Terry jump off that damn bridge. There's got to be something else. Or at least somewhere else.

### I.1.3 "Somewhere Else"

([www.puckettpublishing.com/music/scores/SomewhereElse.htm](http://www.puckettpublishing.com/music/scores/SomewhereElse.htm))

#### Somewhere Else

SANDY (CONT'D)

IT'S NOT THAT I DISLIKE THIS PLACE, AFTER ALL, IT'S HOME  
IT'S ONLY THAT SOME OTHER PLACE WOULD BE SO NICE TO ROAM TO  
IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE YOU GUYS,  
I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE MY FRIENDS  
IT'S ONLY THAT I'D LIKE TO SEE  
SOME OTHER SIGHTS IN FRONT OF ME  
THAT THERE'S SOME OTHER WAY TO BE  
BEFORE MY STORY ENDS

SOMEWHERE ELSE, THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO GO  
NOT TO STAY, BUT IF I DID, WELL THEN SO WHAT?  
SOME PLACE ELSE, THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO GO TO  
HERE'S OKAY, BUT HERE'S NOT ALL THE WORLD HAS GOT  
THERE'S SO MUCH MORE IT'S GOT IN STORE  
OUT THERE'S A FAR HORIZON  
SO MUCH TO SEE IN FRONT OF ME  
IF I'LL JUST KEEP MY EYES ON

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOMEWHERE ELSE IS WHERE I'LL GO

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE I'VE NEVER KNOWN  
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE THAT DOES NOT KNOW ME  
SOMEWHERE THIS BIRD HAS NEVER FLOWN

BRACKEN

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN  
FARAWAY, OR NOT SO FAR, JUST FAR ENOUGH  
TO MAKE IT NEW, THE KIND OF PLACE YOU DREAM OF  
DREAMS SO REAL, DREAMS MADE OUT OF STERNER STUFF  
WHAT COULD BE WRONG WITH WANTING MORE?  
OUT THERE'S A WORLD OF VISIONS  
SO MUCH TO SEE, SO MUCH TO BE  
IF WE MAKE THE DECISION

SANDY

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOMEPLACE I NEVER KNEW  
NOT TO STAY, BUT IF I DID, WELL THEN SO WHAT?

BRACKEN

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE THAT IS FOREVER NEW  
HERE'S OKAY, BUT HERE'S NOT ALL THE WORLD HAS GOT

BOTH

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE IT'S GOT IN STORE  
OUT THERE'S A FAR HORIZON  
SO MUCH TO SEE IN FRONT OF ME  
IF I'LL JUST KEEP MY EYES ON  
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOMEWHERE ELSE IS WHERE I'LL GO  
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE I'VE NEVER KNOWN  
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE THAT DOES NOT KNOW ME  
SOMEWHERE THIS BIRD HAS NEVER FLOWN  
SOMEWHERE THIS BIRD HAS NEVER EVER FLOWN

**MOSE JORDAN, an older man, dressed in black, wearing very dark shades (is he blind?) and completely out of place among these swimsuits, appears. The CREEK CHORUS members are the only ones to notice him. They stand around him, forming a coordinated group.**

BRACKEN

**(pointing up)**

We'll go somewhere, then. Where's that bridge go? We'll go there.

SANDY

Oh, great, the wilds of Walker county. You really know how to treat a girl, Bracken.

TERRY

You ever been over there? I never drove across this bridge, just jumped off it.

BRACKEN

Hey, it's got to go somewhere.

LOIS

Come to think of it, where does that bridge go?

MOSE

To the other side, of course.

LOIS

(startled)

Oh! What?

MOSE

All bridges go to the other side. That is their function.

TERRY

Oh, that's real helpful.

MOSE

A pleasure to be of service.

SANDY

Excuse me, mister, but I don't think we've seen you here before, have we?

MOSE

No, you've not seen me before. Most likely because you weren't looking for me before. Now, apparently, you are.

BRACKEN

What makes you think we're looking for you?

MOSE

Because you see me. Seeing's the effect, looking is the cause. It's really quite simple.

TERRY

This guy's been spying on us.

SANDY

Excuse me, Mister...?

MOSE

Jordan. Mose Jordan. Call me Mose.

SANDY

Well, Mister Mose, I'm-

MOSE

Sandy Loomis. And your boyfriend is Bracken Thomas, and that's Lois Mudd and he's Terry Clay. We've been through all that.

SANDY

**(a little frightened)**

When have we been through all that? I've never seen you before.

MOSE

Because you weren't looking for me, remember?

TERRY

Man, he has been spying on us! You're with the government, aren't you? What are you FBI? CIA?

BRACKEN

Who are you, Mister Jordan?

TERRY

Area 51! Gotta be, look at him! He's even dressed in black!

BRACKEN

Terry, man, will you shut up! We've never met you before, and yet you know us. Now, I'm not a schizo like Terry, but, I gotta admit, that's a little weird.

MOSE

I'm the man who's here to tell you what's over the bridge, just like you asked.

BRACKEN

So what's over there?

MOSE

Like I said: the other side.

#### **I.1.4 "The Other Side"**

**([www.puckettpublishing.com/music/scores/TheOtherSide.htm](http://www.puckettpublishing.com/music/scores/TheOtherSide.htm))**

##### **The Other Side**

THERE'S A RIVER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN OF YOUR LIFE  
THERE'S A STREAM RUNNING DEEPER THAN A DREAM  
THERE'S A BRIDGE RIGHT BEFORE YOU, AND YOU'RE BALANCED ON A  
KNIFE  
IF YOU FALL THEN THERE'S NOTHING BUT A SCREAM  
YOU CAN TELL WHEN YOU'RE FALLING THAT YOU'VE GOT A WAYS TO GO  
WHEN YOU LAND, THERE'S A QUESTION TO DECIDE:  
YOU'LL BE ASKED BY SOMEBODY IF YOU THINK YOU REALLY KNOW  
WHAT IS WAITING FOR YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE?

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?  
WOULD YOU LIKE MAYBE GO FOR A RIDE?  
IF YOU DON'T WHAT IS LOST, IF YOU NEVER TRIED  
TO FIND OUT WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?

MOSE

YOU'VE GOT CHOICES WAITING FOR YOU JUST A LITTLE DOWN THE  
ROAD  
THERE'S A "Y" WAITING FOR YOU IN THE WOOD  
YOU CAN CHOOSE WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT'S THE BEST WAY YOU SHOULD  
GO  
BUT CHOOSING MAKES YOU WONDER, "WAS IT GOOD?"  
IF YOU'RE BLIND WHEN IT'S OVER, YOU'RE JUST LEARNING HOW TO  
SEE  
IF YOU'RE NOT, THEN YOU HAVEN'T REALLY TRIED.  
YOU'LL GET LOST WHILE YOU'RE LOOKING, I CAN ALMOST GUARANTEE  
BUT YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF UPON THE OTHER SIDE.

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?  
WOULD YOU LIKE MAYBE GO FOR A RIDE?  
IF YOU DON'T WHAT IS LOST, IF YOU NEVER TRIED  
TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE?

SANDY

WHY SHOULD ANYBODY CARE  
WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE?  
IT'S A BRIDGE, IT'S A RIVER, IT'S A WALL.

BRACKEN

WHY WOULD ANYBODY DARE  
TO TAKE THIS CRAZY RIDE?

BRACKEN, SANDY, LOIS, TERRY

THERE'S A CHANCE IF YOU DANCE, YOU COULD FALL

MOSE

MAYBE SO, I DON'T DOUBT IT, IT'S A SUCKER BET AT BEST  
YOU'D BE CRAZY TO ACCEPT THESE LOSER ODDS  
THEN AGAIN, WHO WILL BARGAIN WHEN THEIR SOUL IS PUT TO TEST?  
ONLY MADMEN WANT TO TANGLE WITH THE GODS  
YOU'RE A FOOL TO GO MESSING WITH THE GODS!

ALL

DO WE KNOW WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?  
DON'T WE WONDER WHAT LIES ON THE OTHER SIDE?  
WILL WE WISH WE TOOK THE CHANCE TO TAKE THAT CRAZY RIDE?  
WILL WE LAY AWAKE AT NIGHT, OR TAKE IT IN OUR STRIDE?  
WHEN WE'RE GONE WILL THEY SAY WE WERE VICTIMS OF OUR PRIDE?  
IF WE NEVER TRIED TO FIND THE OTHER SIDE?  
IF WE NEVER TRIED TO FIND THE OTHER SIDE?