

SCENE 4

Same day, 3 PM. The room at St Mark's. SUGAR in the speaker's chair. NEIL and ANNA enter late, NEIL sits in the chairman's chair. A shock of recognition on JACK's face when he sees ANNA, who doesn't see him.

NEIL

Welcome to the Wednesday 3 o'clock meeting. I'm sorry I'm a bit late. If you don't object, I'll dispense with the reading of the preamble, so we can get right to our speaker. Please welcome our very own Sugar.

SUGAR

Hi everybody. My name is James Nelson Junior, but my friends all call me Sugar. I'm an addict and an alcoholic.

ALL

Hi Sugar.

SUGAR

Many of you have heard my story, so I'll be brief. I grew up in Bed Stuy, one of five kids. As a little boy, I liked to dress up. My mom was OK with it, Dad not so much. "James Nelson, Jr, when you gonna man up?" Got beat up a lot, but when I grew to my present size the other kids mostly left me alone. My father was an alcoholic. I started on the cheap wine he bought. All the street drugs came later, Red Devils and Black Beauties, all of it. I've done every drug in the book, but my favorite, besides weed, which I do not count, is wine. Fine wine if I can get it. The truth is my biggest addiction is probably sex. I think that's under control now, but you never know. Today is my one-year anniversary. I haven't touched any drugs or alcohol for a year.

(Applause and cheers.)

This is the best meeting in town. Neil helped get me my job at St Vincent's. I'm a nurse's aide now. The wards are full, I'm sorry to say. It's a good job and I'm good at it, but it doesn't pay much, so I have to supplement sometimes. I may have to give that up, too. The danger, you know...but maybe not just yet.

Scene shifts to West Side Highway, late at night. Windy, cold and dark. Cars pull up and pull away, glimpses of heads bobbing up and down. Streetlights cut through fog.
ENSEMBLE *playing sex workers and clients.*

“HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT”

HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT
HIGHWAY LOVE AS YOU CRUISE ALONG
BENEATH THE WEST STREET LIGHTS
HIGHWAY LOVE IN YOUR FANCY CAR
DOES THAT THRILL YOU WITH DELIGHT?

HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT
HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT

WHEN THE WIND SWEEPS OFF THE RIVER ENSEMBLE WORDS
AND THE FOG HIDES EVERY PLEASURE
THAT YOU TAKE
DO YOU STILL PRETEND

THAT THE KIND OF LOVE OOHS.....
YOU CAN'T GET AT HOME
WHERE YOU SPEND YOUR LIVES
TOGETHER BUT ALONE
IS TRUE LOVE MY FRIEND?

SUGAR *goes to a car with a “CLIENT” inside, sticks her head in.*

Hi honey, you need a little lovin' tonight? Don't be shy. The little wife won't know and you wouldn't be here if she took better care of you now, would you? There's no need to hide here.

SUGAR *lifts her dress.*

Who's the sweetest girl in town?

She gets in the car, gets out of car, car drives off in a hurry. (She's angry and shouts after the car)

You owe me twenty bucks! Bastard!

HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT
WATCH HER BODY MOVE OUT ON THE PIER
IN THAT DRESS SO SHORT AND TIGHT
WHAT'S UNDERNEATH THAT CALLS YOU BACK
TO A LOVE THAT ISN'T RIGHT?

HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT.....ENSEMBLE
HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT
HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT

HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT
HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT
HIGHWAY LOVE TONIGHT

(Sugar stands defiantly as the song ends)

BLACKOUT