

# WHERE THE HEART IS

*by Cynthia & Michael Marion*



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**WHERE THE HEART IS**  
**By Cynthia & Michael Marion**

*In Memory  
of  
Martha M. Boucher*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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The idea for the "Man With the Hat" was suggested by an article by Rebecca J. Laird, "The Plight of the Homeless in America," found in the book *Trevor's Place* (Harper and Row, 1985).

The song "No Longer Homeless" was inspired by a plaque which hangs in the chapel of reStart, Inc., a center for homeless persons in Kansas City, Missouri.

"Where the Heart Is" would not have been possible without the support and creative energies of the members of the Woodlawn United Methodist Church in Derby, Kansas, and the Kechi United Methodist Church in Kechi, Kansas, and the cast of the Wichita production at The Wichita Center for the Arts directed by Gina Austin-Fresh and Laura Bergquist and produced by Brian and Glenna Haney.

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**Volunteer**  
**Streetwise**  
**Runaway Girl**  
**Man With the Hat**  
**Man Who Is Sick**  
**Evicted Woman**  
**Mother**  
**Child 1**  
**Young Man**  
**Ex-Farmer**  
**Woman With Cart**  
**Man Who Was Robbed**  
**Stranded Family**  
**(Mom, Dad, Daughter)**  
**Veteran**  
**Child 2**  
**Child 3**  
**Homeless Woman**  
**Man and Pregnant Woman**  
**Additional homeless men, women, families and runaways**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

*Where the Heart Is* seeks to put human faces on the impersonal statistics of homelessness in America. It does this by telling people's stories through monolog and song. The play may be most effectively presented when the characters tell their stories as if they are sharing their innermost thoughts with the audience. Lighting, such as a follow spot, may be helpful to emphasize and isolate each story.

The musical is adaptable to a variety of settings. All of the action takes place in front of a shelter for the homeless. The only set requirement is a door that represents the entrance to the shelter. The Volunteer enters and exits through this door, and most of the actors will exit through this door at the end of the play. In church settings, a door in the chancel area of the sanctuary may work as the shelter entrance. A bench may be provided for Streetwise, or he/she may simply lie on the floor. This minimalist approach works well to focus attention on the characters; however, if a more extensive set is desired, a street scene may be created with a backdrop of buildings and objects such as signs and trash cans.

Costumes may easily be obtained by using old clothes or thrift-shop finds appropriate to the various characters. The only specific costume needs are a sharp new hat for the man and padding and maternity clothes for Pregnant Woman.

Use stage make-up to create the bruise on Runaway Girl's face.

Only a few props are needed: a piece of trash (on the floor) and a grocery cart with an old doll and an old formal dress inside for the Woman With the Cart, an empty liquor bottle for the Veteran and a newspaper for Streetwise.

The flexible nature of this musical provides numerous opportunities for soloists, one duet, and two small groups of singers from within the Company: the Women Carolers and the Runaways (a mixed group). Some of the solos are specifically indicated for a particular character. The six parts marked "Soloist" may be performed by any member of the Company. (Where appropriate, gender has been specified.)

*Where the Heart Is* may be presented by youth and intergenerational casts. There are many opportunities for extras if desired. The musical may be abridged for presentation in worship settings. It is an excellent kick-off to a missions project involving the homeless, or merely to raise consciousness about this growing problem in our society. Although it was written as an Advent/Christmas musical, it has been produced successfully during other seasons of the year by omitting "Away in a Manger" at the beginning and the end, and substituting a reprise of "There Is Room in Your Heart" at the end of the performance.

## ***MUSICAL NUMBERS***

- 1. Throw-Away People**
- 2. I Don't Like Rules**
- 3. Foxes Have Holes**
- 4. Throw-Away People (Reprise 1)**
- 5. Even the Hairs of Your Head Are Numbered**
- 6. Golden Sea**
- 7. This Is My World**
- 8. Welcome the Stranger**
- 9. Throw-Away People (Reprise 2)**
- 10. Johnny Came Marching**
- 11. No Longer Homeless**
- 12. There Is Room in Your Heart**
- 13. Epilogue**

**AT RISE:** The scene opens on a city street, outside a shelter for the homeless. It is a cold December evening. A Volunteer is ringing a bell and taking donations for the needy. Last-minute shoppers are passing by. A homeless person, Streetwise, is asleep on a bench, covered by a newspaper. In the distance, the voices of carolers can be heard singing, a capella.

**WOMEN CAROLERS:** (*Singing from Off-stage*)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

(*Music begins for "Throw-Away People."*)

**ALL:** (*Entering and singing*) Where do we go?

What do we do?

Just yesterday we were people like you,  
Now we're homeless, throw-away people.

We come by foot,  
Car, boat, or train,  
Hoping our lives we might somehow regain,  
But we're homeless, throw-away people.

No hope in sight,  
Nothing to lose,  
Coping with life on narcotics and booze,  
We are homeless, throw-away people.

Please understand  
Why we're this way,  
All that we ask is to live one more day,  
We are homeless, throw-away people.

What lies ahead for us?  
What happens now?

1       **We've got to find shelter before dark somehow.**  
 2       **Night is coming,**  
 3       **The temperature's falling,**  
 4       **The children are hungry,**  
 5       **So why are they stalling?!**

6  
 7       **Knowing we're lost,**  
 8       **Praying we're found.**  
 9       **Help us get off this un-merry-go-round.**

10  
 11       *(ALL begin moving toward the shelter entrance.)*

12       **Where do we go?**  
 13       **(Where do we go?)**

14       **What do we do?**  
 15       **(What do we do?)**

16       **Just yesterday we were people like you,**  
 17       **(Just yesterday we were people like)**

18       **Now we're homeless,**  
 19       **Throw-away people.**

20       **Throw-away people.**  
 21       **Throw-away people.**

22       **VOLUNTEER:** *(Speaking)* **All right! All right! I think we've got**  
 23       **room for most of you, but we won't start handing out bed**  
 24       **tickets for about half an hour.** *(Disappointed groans from*  
 25       *crowd)* **Just wait here and I'll be back in a little while.**  
 26       *(VOLUNTEER exits into the shelter.)*

27       **ALL:** *(Singing)* **Where do we go?**

28       **(Where do we go?)**

29       **What do we do?**

30       **(What do we do?)**

31       **Just yesterday we were people like you,**  
 32       **(Just yesterday we were people like)**

33       **Now we're homeless,**  
 34       **Throw-away people.**

35       **Throw-away people.**

- 1       **Throw-away people.**  
 2       *(End of song. ALL find places to sit and wait in front of the*  
 3       *shelter.)*
- 4       **STREETWISE:** *(Waking up)* **What's all the racket? Oh! It's them**  
 5       **again! It's getting so a guy can't get any sleep around here.**  
 6       **It didn't used to be this way — so many people, I mean.**  
 7       **More and more every day are coming to this "shelter for**  
 8       **the homeless." Me? I stay away from these places as much**  
 9       **as I can, unless it's really cold. Too many kids. Too many**  
 10       **rules and regulations. I like my freedom!** *(Music begins for*  
 11       *"I Don't Like Rules." STREETWISE, singing)*  
 12       **I don't like rules,**  
 13       **They're for fools,**  
 14       **I just like a life that's free:**  
 15       **Free from work,**  
 16       **Free from stress,**  
 17       **Free from all that . . . responsibility.**  
 18
- 19       *(Speaking)* **Besides, to get a job you've gotta stand in line**  
 20       **all day.**  
 21
- 22       *(Singing)* **Standing in line is sure not for me.**  
 23       *(Speaking)* **You might miss the free meal at the mission,**  
 24       **you see?**  
 25
- 26       *(Singing)* **I don't expect**  
 27       **Much from life,**  
 28       **So don't expect much from me.**  
 29       **I just live**  
 30       **for today,**  
 31       **Tomorrow's only . . . a possibility.**  
 32
- 33       *(Speaking)* **We may not live till tomorrow!**  
 34  
 35       *(Singing)* **Staying alive is what it's about.**

1       *(Speaking)* Why worry over something when it's existence  
2       you doubt?

3  
4       *(Singing)* I don't like rules,  
5       They're for fools,  
6       I just like a life that's free:  
7       Free from work,  
8       Free from . . . hope.

9       *(Speaking)* Well, that's enough about me. *(End of song.)*

10  
11       I choose to be here. That's just me! But with these other  
12       people it's a different story. Or should I say *stories*. They're  
13       here for many reasons. And between you and me, a lot of  
14       it's "economics"—and family problems. Some are  
15       running scared. Others are running away. What they've  
16       got in common is that they've got no place to run to.

17    RUNAWAY GIRL: I had to get away from there. I couldn't  
18       take it anymore. All the shouting . . . throwing things . . .  
19       the arguing. My father did this. *(Points to bruise on cheek.)*  
20       He was drunk. Just like he was the night before when he  
21       hit me, and the night before that. I decided to take my  
22       chances out here. I'm scared. I don't have any money. I  
23       don't know where I'm going. I just knew I had to get out  
24       of there. It wasn't always like this. I remember when I was  
25       little, laying my head on his shoulder. I felt so safe . . . so  
26       warm. But now I have no place . . . and I am so tired . . . so  
27       very tired. *(Music begins for "Foxes Have Holes." She sings)*  
28       Foxes have holes and birds have nests,  
29       But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,  
30       And neither do I.

31    RUNAWAYS: Foxes have holes and birds have nests,  
32       But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,

33    SOLOIST 1: And neither do I.

34  
35       I used to have a happy home,

1           **Then suddenly it changed.**  
 2           **Now I don't know where to turn —**  
 3           **My whole life is rearranged.**  
 4   **ALL: All of life is rearranged.**  
 5  
 6           **Foxes have holes and birds have nests,**  
 7           **But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,**  
 8           **And neither do I.**  
 9   **RUNAWAYS: (Foxes have holes and birds have nests)**  
 10           **(Foxes have holes and birds have nests)**  
 11   **ALL: Foxes have holes and birds have nests,**  
 12           **But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,**  
 13   **RUNAWAYS: (Foxes have holes and birds have nests)**  
 14           **(Foxes have holes and birds have nests)**  
 15   **SOLOIST 2: (Male) And neither do I.**  
 16  
 17           **I used to have a steady job,**  
 18           **And then the lay-offs came.**  
 19           **Now I'm living on the streets.**  
 20           **I know I'll never be the same. (Optional chorus)**  
 21   **SOLOIST 3: (Female) We were barely hanging on**  
 22           **When he skipped town that day.**  
 23           **Now we're living in our car,**  
 24           **Why does it have to be this way?**  
 25   **ALL: Does it have to be this way?**  
 26  
 27           **Foxes have holes and birds have nests,**  
 28           **But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,**  
 29           **And neither do I.**  
 30   **RUNAWAYS: (Foxes have holes and birds have nests)**  
 31           **(Foxes have holes and birds have nests)**  
 32   **ALL: Foxes have holes and birds have nests,**  
 33           **But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,**  
 34           **And neither do I.**  
 35

1       We used to have a place that we could call our “home  
2           sweet home.”

3       But life has dealt us all a blow,  
4       And now we’ve got no place to go.  
5       Now we’ve got no place to go.

6  
7       Foxes have holes and birds have nests,  
8       But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,  
9       And neither do I.

10    RUNAWAYS: (Foxes have holes and birds have nests)  
11       (Foxes have holes and birds have nests)

12    ALL:   Foxes have holes and birds have nests,  
13       But the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest,  
14       And neither do I.  
15       And neither do I.  
16       And neither do I.

17    MAN WITH THE HAT:   And neither do I.

18       *(End of song. He speaks.)* You may be wondering about my  
19       hat. Beautiful, isn’t it? Not another one like it around here!  
20       I had just gotten my government check when I saw this  
21       hat for the first time, and I spent every last cent on it. You  
22       may think it’s kind of strange that I would spend all my  
23       money on a hat. I mean, the church down the street  
24       would’ve given me one. I could have spent that money on  
25       food or something I really needed. But you see, when I  
26       wear this hat, I’m *somebody*. And I have to be somebody,  
27       don’t I? I suppose that’s hard for a lot of people to  
28       understand. I’m sure that when they buy a big new house  
29       or a new fancy car, it’s because they *need* it, right? Well,  
30       anyway, I thought you might be wondering about my hat.  
31       *(Music begins for “Throw-Away People,” Reprise 1.)*

32    SOLOIST 4: *(Singing)* Please understand  
33       Why we’re this way  
34       All that we ask is to live one more day . . .  
35       *(End of song.)*

1     **MAN WHO IS SICK:** I'm living in a shelter. The important  
 2         word here is living. Oh, I used to have a nice apartment,  
 3         a good car. I was going to have everything. The problem  
 4         is, I ended up having something I wasn't counting on —  
 5         cancer. It changes your life — hospitals, chemotherapy,  
 6         radiation . . . I still work, but I've had to cut back on my  
 7         hours. I just don't have the energy. But now I don't have  
 8         the income either. So I had to make the decision: do I pay  
 9         the rent, or do I keep paying for my health insurance?  
 10        Well, the doctors say I need the treatments, and I want to  
 11        fight this! So, I'm living in a shelter.

12   **CHILD 1:** Mother, I'm cold. (*Music begins for "Even the Hairs of*  
 13       *Your Head Are Numbered."*)

14   **MOTHER:** (*Singing*) Even the hairs of your head are  
 15       numbered.

16       Don't worry, God will take care of you.

17       If God clothes the grass,

18       Won't he all the more clothe you?

19   **CHILD 1:** Mother, I'm hungry.

20   **MOTHER:** Even the hairs on your head are numbered.

21       Look at the birds and you'll know it's true.

22       If God feeds the birds,

23       Won't he all the more feed you?

24   **EVICTED WOMAN:** (*Speaking over music*) The kids and I got  
 25       evicted last week. I can't believe it happened. It started  
 26       when the apartment manager came and told us that we  
 27       were all being evicted. A big company had bought our  
 28       building and they were going to tear it down — turn it into  
 29       offices or something. He said I'd been a good tenant, had  
 30       always paid on time, and that he would give me a good  
 31       reference. But it's hard to find a place you can afford.  
 32       They all want your first and last month's rent and all kinds  
 33       of deposits. I don't get paid enough to handle that. And  
 34       to top it all off, two days later I got this letter from the  
 35       company telling us we were being evicted. They sent it to

1       **"Dear Occupant."** I wasn't even a person. I was an  
 2       **occupant!**

3       **MOTHER:** *(Singing)* Even the hairs of your head are  
 4       **numbered.**

5       **Don't worry, God will take care of you.**

6       **If God clothes the grass,**

7       **Won't he all the more clothe you?**

8       **WOMEN:** Even the hairs of your head are numbered.

9       **Even the hairs of your head are numbered.**

10      **EVICTED WOMAN:** *(Says with indignation.)* **Occupant!** *(End of*  
 11      *song.)*

12      **YOUNG MAN:** I had an idea. I thought I'd go home for  
 13      **Christmas this year! See, I've been on drugs, but now I'm**  
 14      **clean. I have been since September 16! And so I thought,**  
 15      **"Yes! I'll get all dressed up and walk right up to the door,**  
 16      **ring the doorbell, and announce, 'Look Mom, Dad! The**  
 17      **prodigal's come home for Christmas!'" And I had it**  
 18      **pictured like everybody would run and give me a hug and**  
 19      **tell me how wonderful it was to see me and everything**  
 20      **just like in the movies. So I did it! I went to the phone and**  
 21      **called home. "Hello Dad? It's me. I wanna come home for**  
 22      **Christmas!" There was a long pause on the other end of**  
 23      **the line . . . and I just hung up. I knew I had made a**  
 24      **mistake. I would have ruined their Christmas by showing**  
 25      **up. It would be like some drug addict bum showing up**  
 26      **from off the street. They would probably throw me out.**  
 27      **And maybe I'd deserve it.** *(He starts to exit, then turns back.)*  
 28      **Mom, Dad . . . I'm sorry.** *(Music begins for "Golden Sea.")*

29      **EX-FARMER:** *(Singing)* He cleared the ground with his own  
 30      **two hands.**

31      **My granddad was a rugged man.**

32      **A team of horses pulled the plow,**

33      **By summer there was wheat somehow.**

34      **Golden sea upon the land,**

35      **Seeds were sown and dreams were planned,**

1           A legacy that was begun,  
 2           And handed down from son to son.  
 3  
 4           So years rolled by, and the farm went on,  
 5           It seemed the hard times made us strong.  
 6           My father prayed when there was no rain,  
 7           By summer there was wheat again.  
 8   **ALL:**   Golden sea upon the land,  
 9           Seeds were sown and dreams were planned,  
 10          A legacy that was begun,  
 11          And handed down from son to son.  
 12   **EX-FARMER:**   Again time passed, and the farm was mine,  
 13          For the golden sea, the times were fine.  
 14          The smell of diesel filled the air,  
 15          And things were growing everywhere.  
 16   **ALL:**   Golden sea upon the land,  
 17          Seeds were sown and dreams were planned,  
 18          A legacy that was begun,  
 19          And handed down from son to son.  
 20   **EX-FARMER:**   But then things changed, and the debts grew high,  
 21          They seemed to nearly reach the sky.  
 22          We fell from heaven down to hell,  
 23          Come summertime, we had to sell.  
 24  
 25          Sorry Granddad, sorry Dad,  
 26          I thank you for the chance I had.  
 27          Now I've lost what was given me,  
 28          The tide has turned on the golden sea.  
 29   **ALL:**   Golden sea upon the land,  
 30          Seeds were sown and dreams were planned,  
 31          A legacy that was begun  
 32   **EX-FARMER:**   And handed down — no more —  
 33          From son to son.  
 34          *(End of song.)*  
 35   **STREETWISE:**   When you lose your home, you lose a lot more

1       than a roof over your head. You lose your security. You  
 2       lose your pride. And it's no wonder that some who can't  
 3       cope even lose their minds. Of course, some people are  
 4       here because they aren't able to cope with the world in  
 5       the first place. It's kind of sad. They can't get jobs. There's  
 6       no one to take care of them. So they wander the streets in  
 7       a world of their own. (*Music begins for "This Is My World."*)

8   **WOMAN WITH CART:** (*Singing*) This is my world.

9       Can you see into my world?

10      Sometimes it's clear,

11      Often it's clouded.

12      (*Takes an old doll from the cart. She speaks.*) Ah! And what  
 13      is this? Oh, I remember. Thank you, Momma! It's just the  
 14      one I wanted. I'll keep it always. Oh, we had so much fun,  
 15      Momma. Where did you go? (*She sings. Two others from*  
 16      *CHORUS sing lyrics in parentheses.*)

17      This is my world.

18      (*This is my world*)

19      Can you see into my world?

20      (*Into my world*)

21      Sometimes it's clear,

22      Often it's clouded.

23

24      This is my world.

25      (*This is my world*)

26      Spinning around in my world.

27      (*Around in my world*)

28      Being alone,

29      Even when crowded.

30      (*She takes an old formal dress from cart and speaks.*) And what  
 31      is this? Yes, I remember. You took me to the dance! And  
 32      we had such a wonderful time. (*She holds dress and dances*  
 33      *to the music.*) Oh, we loved each other so much. But where  
 34      did you go? (*She sings.*)

35      This is my world.

- 1 Can you see into my world?  
 2 Sometimes it's clear,  
 3 Often it's clouded.  
 4 (*She picks up a piece of trash from the "sidewalk" and speaks.*)  
 5 Oh, and what is this? Yes, I remember . . .  
 6 **ALL THREE:** (*Singing*) This is my world!  
 7 (*End of song.*)  
 8 **MAN WHO WAS ROBBED:** You know, this is really embar-  
 9 rassing. I've never been in this kind of situation before. I  
 10 feel really funny asking for help. But, you see, what  
 11 happened was that I was working with some guys doing  
 12 construction here in town, and I was staying in this motel  
 13 down on the south side. I had just finished the job and I  
 14 had gotten paid. Well, that night I heard a woman scream  
 15 outside my motel room. When I opened the door, these  
 16 two big guys jumped me and took all my money. It was  
 17 all I had. I slept the last two nights under a bridge. It's  
 18 starting to get cold, and I'm pretty hungry, too. If I can  
 19 just get down South, I know I can find a job there. I've  
 20 got skills, you know. But at my age, it gets harder and  
 21 harder to find someone to hire you. Those young bucks  
 22 are strong, but they don't have the skills. A lot of them  
 23 are lazy. Not me. If only I could get down South. (*Musical*  
 24 *interlude of "Welcome the Stranger" before members of the*  
 25 *STRANDED FAMILY begin their stories.*)  
 26 **STRANDED MOM:** (*Angry and frustrated*) We don't know  
 27 anybody this far south! If we did, then maybe we could  
 28 get the money to get the stupid car fixed so we could get  
 29 out of here. OK, here's what happened. My family and I  
 30 are heading across the country to Texas to stay with my  
 31 sister until my husband gets settled in his new job. After  
 32 he lost his job in California, we sold everything we could  
 33 to get enough money to pay for the move. What stuff we  
 34 have left is packed up in our car. Now the car has broken  
 35 down, and we don't have enough money left to pay the



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