

VELMA:

When some people look at me, they think I'm fragile. They think I'll crack like a shell. But I'm tough. I've known some hard times. People who've never known hard times have nothing to fall back on. We never had a lot of money. But we had our farm. It was in our family for three generations. Tobacco was the only crop we raised. We never wanted to get up in the mornings. We woke up at five and it was always cold and the tobacco was still wet from dew. We'd put on these raggedy overalls and old shoes – nothing good because that tobacco gum is hard to remove. My sisters Lynne and Myrna and I would wrap our heads with those bandanna scarves. Lynne and I would fold over our scarves in a rectangle and just tie it on our head. We wouldn't even look in the mirror. But Myrna was so prissy and fashion-conscious. She would tie her scarf in a way that it looked like a hat. She looked like a model even in the tobacco field. We would get so mad at her. She would be all up in the mirror, taking forever. *(JEANETTE shifts, putting on perfume and lipstick)* I love her, but she thought she was too good to be out there. She'd always cry that her back was hurting, her back was hurting. My grandmother told her she was too young to even have a back. But one time my mother said Myrna could go home. Lynn and I were mad as fire. But we fixed her. One day, Lynn and I put tobacco worms on her scarf. Myrna hated tobacco worms. They were slimy, juicy-fat and lime green. They crawled around her scarf for a while, then they crawled down her neck. She screamed and started crying. She was so upset she almost stripped her clothes off. We told her the worms were jewels for her crown.