The States Collection – South Dakota
The Sunflower Field
By Claudia I. Haas

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CAST: 2 female, sisters
Mariah (f) 20 – elder of the sisters, the “smart” one
Sondra (f) 18 – the “pretty one”

Lights up in the middle of a sunflower field.
SONDRA has a makeshift urn.

Mariah

This is worse than a corn field.

Sondra

It’s pretty.

Mariah

From afar. All I see are long stems.

Sondra

Look up. It’s like a million suns are greeting you. It’s the prettiest sunflower field in the county. Can’t you enjoy anything?

Mariah

No. Just dump everything here and let’s go.

Sondra

We need a ceremony.

Beat.

Mariah

Dear Mom: I am here. Even though you never liked me and Sondra was always your favorite. I’m still here. For you. Amen.

Sondra

Well, that was … uninspiring.

Mariah

Do better.

Sondra

Dear Mom: You will always be like a sunflower to me. You will never fade away in time.
MARIAH
But sunflowers do fade. And die. (Beat.) Just like Mom.

SONDRA
But they drop their seeds and return year after year.

MARIAH
Sometimes they do and sometimes they don’t.

SONDRA
You won’t.

MARIAH
What?

SONDRA
Return.

MARIAH
No.

SONDRA
We’re her seeds.

MARIAH
I’m the seed that got carried away by the wind. You’re the seed that got planted.

SONDRA
You were always “smart Mariah.”

MARIAH
And you were always “pretty Sondra.” And “pretty” Sondra always got the goods.

SONDRA
I’ll share. You know I will.

MARIAH
You can have it. The land. The farmhouse. I am done with South Dakota.

SONDRA
It’s a pretty state.

MARIAH
Pretty is as pretty does.
SONDRA

Come home for my wedding.

MARIAH

I never hear from you.

SONDRA

You're all I have left.

MARIAH

You're only eighteen.

SONDRA

Have to get married before my looks fade.

MARIAH

Ahh! The infamous Mom quote. Can we just dump the ashes? I have a bus to catch.

SONDRA

Mom said that when I was born you tried to swap me for a rabbit.

MARIAH

Not an entire rabbit. Just a lucky rabbit’s foot.

SONDRA

Want to know a secret? I always wished I was the smarter one.

MARIAH

And I wished I was the prettier one.

(The SISTERS smile at each other.)

SONDRA

Shall we?

MARIAH

Together.

(And together the SISTERS open the top of the container to spread the ashes as the lights fade to black.)