

## THEY CALL ME TEACHER

**MEI LI**

Goodbye, teacher. Thank you.

**MR. JOHNSON**

You're welcome, Mei Li. See you tomorrow?

**MEI LI**

Oh, yes.

**MR. JOHNSON**

That's fine. Don't forget to do your reading.

**MEI LI**

Yes, I will. I mean, I won't. Goodbye teacher.

*MEI LI runs out in a fluster.  
MR. JOHNSON finds her behavior  
somewhat odd but quickly  
dismisses as HE absent-mindedly  
picks up his ATTENDANCE SHEET.*

*Returning to his DESK. HE starts  
to reflect on the day's events,  
and especially his newly  
bestowed title.*

**MR. JOHNSON (Continued)**

*(softly to himself)*

Teacher.

*HE speaks the word a bit louder,  
still getting used to it.*

**MR. JOHNSON (Continued)**

Teacher. They call me "Teacher."

*(up music: Song: They Call Me Teacher)*

WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT  
THAT I COULD BE A SOMETHING?  
THERE WERE SO MANY TIMES  
I THOUGHT I'D BE A NOTHING  
BUT NOW I LOOK AROUND ME  
THERE'S A BRAND-NEW KIND OF CREATURE  
SHH! THEY CALL ME TEACHER

IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY  
THAT I WAS LOST IN WONDER  
A STORY WITHOUT AN END  
THAT I COULD ONLY PONDER  
BUT NOW THAT TALE IS OVER  
THERE'S A BRAND-NEW DOUBLE FEATURE  
SHH! THEY CALL ME TEACHER

CHOOSE THAT TEXT  
AND PLAN THE CLASSES  
RUN THOSE COPIES  
WRITE THOSE PASSES  
GIVE THE HOMEWORK  
DON'T TAKE SASSES  
SHH! THEY CALL ME TEACHER

*The STUDENTS re-enter, college prep clothes and textbooks in hand, the ideal of a good American education.*

#### **STUDENTS**

WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT  
THAT HE COULD BE A SOMETHING?  
THERE WERE SO MANY TIMES  
HE THOUGHT HE'D BE A NOTHING  
BUT NOW WE LOOK AROUND HIM

#### **MR. JOHNSON**

THERE'S A BRAND-NEW KIND OF CREATURE  
SHH! WE CALL HIM TEACHER

**VUONG ANH**

A BRAND-NEW CHANCE AT LIFE  
HOW CAN WE EVER THANK HIM?

**MEI LI**

I'D LIKE TO BE HIS WIFE

**NGUYEN TRAN**

THE THOUGHT IS TOO EXCITNING (sic)

**JOSE**

I DIG THAT CRAZY CHALK DUST  
IT'S BETTER THAN A REEFER

**STUDENTS**

SHH! WE CALL HIM TEACHER

**MR. JOHNSON**

OUT OF THE BOOKS AND INTO THE FIRE  
THAT'S WHAT COMES FROM ALL THAT HIGHER LEARNING  
YEARS AND YEARS OF STUDY IT TOOK  
ALWAYS BURIED IN A BOOK AND YEARNING  
TO BE A TEACHER  
TO BE A TEACHER  
NOW I'M A TEACHER

*The music continues and MR. JOHNSON surprises the STUDENTS with a few steps of his own. When it is over, THEY gather around their teacher as if to attend a lecture. Some of the STUDENTS begin to chatter.*

**MR. JOHNSON (Continued)**

STUDENTS WAITING  
ALL ASSEMBLE  
HOPE MY CLASSES  
WON'T BE TOO DULL

*MR. JOHNSON points to the disruptive STUDENTS.*

**MR. JOHNSON (Continued)**

TRY TO REACH HIM  
TRY TO REACH HER

*(shushes them)*

SHH!

*The STUDENTS stop their chatter.*

**MR. JOHNSON (Continued)**

THEY CALL ME TEACHER

*A blanket of fog sweeps the stage as MR. JOHNSON leaps up onto his desk.*

**MR. JOHNSON (Continued)**

OUT OF THE FOG AND INTO THE LIGHT  
WALKING ON TOP AND DOING IT RIGHT AWAY  
PICKING UP TIME AND HAVING A BALL  
LOOKS LIKE WE CAN HAVE WIN IT ALL TODAY  
THEY CALL ME TEACHER  
THEY CALL ME TEACHER  
THEY CALL ME...

*It is now the STUDENTS' turn to shush their over-exuberant teacher.*

**STUDENTS**

SHH!

**MR. JOHNSON**

*(softly)*

TEACHER.

*(end scene)*