**Fireflies**

Characters:

Phoebe

Gussie, her dog

Ken (voiceover only)

*Scene 1: Phoebe's Kitchen. But we're not watching a staged piece; it's a video, shot with a couple of cameras, and streamed to the Internet. There's a laptop on the table, and a coffee mug next to it. The overhead light is the only illumination. We hear a door slam and Phoebe and Gussie enter, the former holding the latter's leash.*

PHOEBE: Well, that was a nice walk, wasn't it Gussie? You were such a good girl. I know, the cement Labrador scared you, but I promise it's just a statue. We live in the suburbs now, girl. The statue salesman probably comes around once a year. Let's get that leash off you, and get you some dinner, and then I'll unpack the books. Okay? Sit.

*GUSSIE sits. PHOEBE removes the leash, coils it, and leaves it on one end of the table. Then she goes to a bin and scoops dog food into a bowl near the table.*

PHOEBE: Alright, girl. Eat up.

*PHOEBE sits at the table and looks at the computer, then closes the lid. She picks up the coffee mug, sips from it and grimaces. GUSSIE eats her dinner. Noisily.*

PHOEBE: Gross. Cold.

*PHOEBE gets up and carries the coffee mug to the sink, dumps it, rinses it, and then sets a kettle on to boil on the stove. She reaches into a cabinet for a box of tea, pulls out a teabag, and puts in the mug. The kettle whistles. She pours water over the bag… agitates it with a spoon… leaves the spoon on the counter and takes the mug with her.*

PHOEBE: Mmm. Peppermint. (sips, sighs) Guess I'd better start on boxes.

*PHOEBE flips a lightswitch on the wall, and the other end of the room – the living room – lights up. We see a wall with a fireplace flanked by bookshelves. Several cartons, presumably holding books, are stacked near a red couch.*

PHOEBE: (opening the top carton, talking half to herself, half to the dog): Wow, I haven't seen these in years. *Norton's* *Anthology*… *Dancing at the Edge of the World*… *Great American Poetry*… Poetry… I was never much good at it. But I remember…

*She flips open the poetry book, and a folded page falls out. She bends to pick it up.*

PHOEBE: Wow… I'd forgotten about this. We were studying American poets and we'd gotten to Robert Frost, and Ken said there were better poems than the familiar ones we all know… "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," and "Acquainted with the Nights."

*She starts to read the poem aloud but after a line or two a male voice takes over.*

PHOEBE: Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,

And here on earth come emulating flies,

PHOEBE & KEN (/vo): That though they never equal stars in size,

(And they were never really stars at heart)

Achieve at times a very star-like start.

Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

PHOEBE: *(sighs)* I remember that was the night we first kissed. We weren't on campus. He'd invited me to spend part of summer break with his family in South Carolina. Folly Beach and fireflies… and he kissed me as we lay on a sand dune in the twilight. *(laughing)* A few weeks later we did more than just kissing on that sand dune…

GUSSIE whines, comes to PHOEBE's side and paws her lag.

PHOEBE: You have to go out, girl? (GUSSIE barks once) Let's go to the back yard. You've never had a whole yard before. All yours, and they checked the fence before we moved in, girl.

*They go to the back door and open it, and GUSSIE races out into the twilight. PHOEBE follows more slowly, pausing in the door and looking out. We see the twinkle of fireflies.*

PHOEBE: (musing) "… achieve at times a very star-like start…" Fireflies. I live in a place with fireflies. I should call Ken. See what he's been up to lately…

*Blackout.*