

SOUL ON VINYL

Book and Lyrics by Fengar Gael

Music composed by Dennis McCarthy

AGENT CONTACT:

Elaine Devlin Literary, Inc.
411 Lafayette Street (6th floor)
New York, NY 10003
212-842-9030
elaine@edevlinlit.com

Fengar Gael

14 Del Rey
Irvine, CA 92612
Phone: (949) 509-1338
Mobile: (949) 307-4815
gaelfengar@gmail.com

*“We come spinning out of nothingness,
Scattering stars like dust.
The stars form a circle
And in the center we dance.”*

Jalaluddin Rumi

*“All things are but altered, nothing dies;
And here and there the disembodied spirit flies,
By time or force or sickness dispossessed,
From tenement to tenement is tossed;
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost;
And as the softened wax new seal receives,
This face assumes and that impressions leaves;
Now called by one, now by another name;
The form is only changed, the wax is still the same.”*

Publius Ovidius Naso

CHARACTERS

Soul on Vinyl can be performed by a minimum ensemble cast of eight: four men (actors 1, 2, 3, 4), and four women (actors 5, 6, 7, 8)

THE REVEREND

ROGER BILLY STARKS, an evangelical preacher; age thirty and fifty

THE ANGELICALS

DAPHNE BALMER, age mid-twenties and mid-forties

LUCINDA FLAKES, age mid-twenties and mid-forties

NADINE MADDEN, age late twenties and late fifties

THE NEW YORKERS

RUPERT TWIST, a taxi driver

HOMELESS NESS LOONE, a vagrant

DELROY POTTS, a real estate agent

WILLIE WHACKS, a gang member

LESTER SNAPPS, a gang member

SERGEANT RON MOODY, a police officer

DWAYNE NUTTALL, a prison guard

JULIO DELIRIO, a prisoner

SHAMAL FURIA, a prisoner

BRUNO BATSON, a prisoner

RUMBOY MULLOY, a peddler

EMMA TRIPP, a pedestrian

VERA CROCKER, a Wall Street broker

LOIS LESTRANGE, a Wall Street broker

NORMAN RAVEN, a Wall Street broker

IVAN KRACKOWSKY, a short order cook

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY, Ivan's cousin

MILTON ADDLEMAN, an orthodox rabbi

STINGY DAN LOONE, a Vietnam veteran

THE TEXANS AND OTHER CHARACTERS

RECORDING TECHNICIAN, TWO MEDICS, FOUR DOCTORS, NURSE JUDY, STORE CLERKS, PRISONERS, TRANSIT STRIKERS, DINERS, MANNEQUINS, DUMMY DOLL, SHADOW SINGERS, SHATTER CLUB PATRONS

TIME

1999 and the present

PLACE

Global Gospel Records, a recording studio in the fictitious town of Swampwater, Texas; interstate highways; vintage record shops; and various locations in New York City.

CHARACTERS

ACTOR #1: Roger Billy Starks

ACTOR #2: Medic, Doctor #1, Rupert Twist, Delroy Potts, Julio Delirio, Rumboy Mulloy, Transit Striker, Viktor Krackowsky, Shadow Singer, Shatter Club Patron

ACTOR #3: Medic, Doctor #2, Willie Whacks, Santos Furia, Dwayne Nuttall, Transit Striker, Norman Raven, Diner Patron, Shadow Singer, Stingy Dan Loone, Rabbi Milton Addleman

ACTOR #4: Recording Technician, Doctor #3, Sergeant Ron Moody, Lester Snapps, Bruno Batson, Transit Striker, Ivan Krackowsky, Shadow Singer

ACTOR #5: Daphne Balmer, Nurse Judy, Transit Striker, Diner Patron, Shadow Singer

ACTOR #6: Lucinda Flakes, Transit Striker, Diner Patron, Dummy Doll, Shadow Singer

ACTOR #7: Nadine Madden, Transit Striker, Lois Lestrangle, Diner Patron, Shadow Singer

ACTOR #8: Doctor #4, Homeless Ness Loone, Emma Tripp, Transit Striker, Vera Crocker, Diner Patron

PROLOGUE: THE SPIRIT FLIES

(A globe tilts above the “Global Gospel Records” sign of a dilapidated recording studio in Swampwater, Texas. An amplified chord is struck as thirty year old REVEREND ROGER BILLY appears, singing into a microphone. Behind him stand three young backup singers, The Angelicals: DAPHNE, LUCINDA, and NADINE. To the side, at the controls, is the RECORDING TECHNICIAN.)

ROGER BILLY

WELCOME TO THE EVANGELICAL,...

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

WELCOME...

ROGER BILLY

COUNTDOWN TO THE BIMILLENNIAL,...

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

COUNTDOWN, OUUUUUUUUUUUUU...

ROGER BILLY

*FOR ALL YOU OLD AND NEW ARRIVALS,
ALL YOU PEOPLE WHO WANNA BE SAVED!*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

WANNA BE SAVED...

ROGER BILLY

*WE’VE GOT RELIGION HERE IN AMERICA,
OUR CITIZENS ARE THE BEST;
GONNA BE SAVED IN AMERICA,
‘CAUSE OUR DESTINY’S MANIFEST!*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*SING IT, ROGER BILLY! SING IT, ROGER BOY! SING IT, ROGER BILLY! SING IT,
ROGER BOY!*

(ROGER BILLY slaps his hands, stomps his foot, and stops the song.)

ROGER BILLY

No, no, no!
 Look alive, you're too polite;
 We're gospel rock, not gospel light!
 This song's the last on the second side;
 My best record yet, my vinyl pride!
 This album's destined to make my name;
 Lead me to riches and great acclaim!
 So girls, my girls, cut the attitude!
 I want respect, some gratitude!
 Your faith in my mission shining through!
 Now take it from the "sing it" cue!

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*SING IT, ROGER BILLY! SING IT, ROGER BOY! SING IT, ROGER BILLY! SING IT,
 ROGER BOY!*

(DAPHNE, LUCINDA, and NADINE croon angelic
 "ooohhs and ahhs" as ROGER BILL continues.)

ROGER BILLY

*RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG.
 AND WE'LL ALL GET ALONG;
 RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
 AND TOGETHER WE'LL BE STRONG!*

*WHEN YOU THINK THAT THE WORLD'S GONE CRAZY
 AND NOTHING'S GOING RIGHT,
 THAT WE'LL ALWAYS BE AT WAR,
 OUR SOLDIERS ARMED TO FIGHT.
 WELL, HERE'S A GREAT SOLUTION,
 IT CAME TO ME ONE NIGHT:
 WE'LL JOIN THE CHOIR OF ANGELS;
 WE'LL TURN THE DARK TO LIGHT!*

ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
 AND WE'LL ALL GET ALONG;
 RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
 AND TOGETHER WE'LL BE STRONG!*

ROGER BILLY

*WHEN YOU RAISE YOUR VOICE BY SINGING,
IT'S HARD TO FUEL THE FIRES;
THE RAGE WITHIN THE HEART,
TURNS TO ASHES ON THE PYRES.
YOU FEEL YOUR SOUL ASCENDING,
LIKE SMOKE THAT RISES HIGH,
THAT DRIFTS BEYOND THE DARKNESS,
TOWARDS SUNSHINE IN THE SKY!*

ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND WE'LL ALL GET ALONG;
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND TOGETHER WE'LL BE STRONG!*

*RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND WE'LL ALL GET ALONG;
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND TOGETHER WE'LL BE STRONG!*

(DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE hold their high notes as ROGER BILLY sings:)

ROGER BILLY

*AMERICA, AMERICA, WHERE EVERYONE IS FREE,
HER BEACON BRIGHT FOR ALL THE WORLD,
THE HOME OF LIBERTY -- accccchhhhhooooooooo!*

(ROGER BILLY sneezes then collapses to the floor.)

RECORDING TECHNICIAN

Cut! Damnation!

LUCINDA

Oh, nooooo...

NADINE

What the hell...?

DAPHNE

Roger Billy...?

(DAPHNE and LUCINDA rush to revive ROGER BILLY, kneeling by his body, fanning his face.)

NADINE

Is he dead?

LUCINDA

Somebody call a doctor!

(Lights flash and a siren is heard approaching as TWO MEDICS appear with a stretcher and remove ROGER BILLY, trailed by the fretful ANGELICALS. The lights cease flashing as FOUR DOCTORS dressed in lab coats crisscross the stage, then stop to dictate their diagnoses.)

DOCTOR #1

A hemorrhagic bubble burst, bleeding in the brain.

DOCTOR #2

Severe ischemic strokes caused an oxygenic drain.

DOCTOR #3

His cortex was fried;
Cells appear to have died.

DOCTOR #4

He's so deeply unconscious, I fear a flat line.

DOCTOR #1

Let's not give up hope; let's give the man time.

DOCTOR #2

Cases like this are every man's fear;
The mind in suspension, year after year;
The heart keeps beating, blood continues to flow;
Will the patient wake up?

DOCTOR #3

If he does, will he know?
Will he be condemned to continuous care,
Living the life of the unaware?

DOCTOR #2

He'll be deaf; he'll be mute,
With the mind of a fruit!

(A mournful hum accompanies DOCTORS #1, #2, and #3 who depart, leaving DOCTOR #4 as dim lights reveal ROGER BILLY lying comatose in bed, tubes sprouting from his body. Clock ticking sounds are heard as the globe spins, indicating the passage of years, then stops. NURSE JUDY enters and approaches the bed as ROGER BILLY, now two decades older with unruly gray hair, sits upright and moves his lips. NURSE JUDY gasps, bends to listen, then dashes towards DOCTOR #4.)

NURSE JUDY

Doctor, doctor, he's no longer supine!
He sat up like a man; he asked for the time!

(DOCTOR #4, followed by NURSE JUDY marches towards ROGER BILLY'S bed.)

DOCTOR #4

So many years have passed since you fell.

ROGER BILLY

Oh, Lord...

DOCTOR #4

My God, he's talking!

ROGER BILLY

Does this mean I'm well?

(Pause as wide-eyed ROGER BILLY gazes around the room, frightfully clutching his chest.)

ROGER BILLY

But something's gone wrong; I don't feel same;
Inside I feel empty; has sleep doused the flame?
Has God stopped speaking; has he left my side?
Am I really awake or in hell 'cause I died?

NURSE JUDY

Our Lord never leaves us; he's always on call;
Our souls sense his presence from birth till we fall.

ROGER BILLY

Then my soul's left my body 'cause I can't hear his voice;
And I was a preacher, his teacher of choice.
Oh, what did I do to incur his cruel wrath?
Was I needy or greedy; did I stray from the path?

DOCTOR #4

Now try to remember, try to think back;
What were you doing when you had your attack?

ROGER BILLY

Recording a song, my voice reaching high;
Then I sneezed and beheld a cloud drifting by.
I thought that cloud was cigarette smoke,
Instead of my soul -- rising up from my throat.

(DOCTOR #4 and NURSE JUDY look skeptical
as ROGER BILLY sighs mournfully and lights fade
to black.)

SCENE 1: THE REUNION

(In Swampwater, in the present, ROGER BILLY is
seated on a bench, wearing glasses, rumpled clothes,
with his suitcase nearby. As HE speaks, DAPHNE,
LUCINDA, and NADINE enter. THEY have also aged,
and appear careworn and discouraged.)

ROGER BILLY

Welcome, my Angelicals! (*hugging them*) Daphne! Lucinda! Nadine!
How blessed to be united with my beautiful dream team!

LUCINDA

Good to see you back on your feet.

NADINE

I won't lie; you're lookin' beat.

ROGER BILLY

It's been twenty years, but you're looking fit.

NADINE

Can the bull; we look like shit!
 So cut to the chase, Roger, what's on your mind?
 And don't tell me you're cured, 'cause I ain't blind!

ROGER BILLY

It began with that sneeze while recording;
 Yes, that sneeze was my soul's demise.
 It flew past my lips through the microphone,
 Oh, how the spirit flies!

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES!

ROGER BILLY

My soul passed through the wires,
 That the master disc requires.
 Then it spun around,
 Till it hit the ground,
 Oh, how the spirit flies!

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES!

ROGER BILLY

Then during mass production,
 Through electro-static suction,
 My soul slipped into a record groove,
 So it's somewhere in the country,
 Which is why I'm on the move.

DAPHNE

So your soul's inside a record?
 Somewhere in a groove...?

ROGER BILLY

Somewhere in the country,
 Which is why I'm on the move.
 I know you think I'm crazy;
 You think I'm telling lies;
 But I swear my soul's departed,
 Oh, how the spirit flies!

ROGER BILLY (cont'd)

*OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES,
OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES;
RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES,
OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES.*

*JUST BECAUSE WE TAKE A BREATH
THE DAY WE'RE BORN ALIVE;
AND JUST BECAUSE WE WALK AND TALK,
WE THINK WE'RE GOING TO THRIVE;
JUST BECAUSE WE LEARN IN SCHOOL
TO EARN A LIVING WAGE,
OH, IT DOESN'T MEAN WE HOLD OUR SOULS
INSIDE THIS MORTAL CAGE.*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE and ROGER BILLY

*OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, SPIRIT FLIES!
OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, SPIRIT FLIES!
RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES,
OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES, SPIRIT FLIES!*

ROGER BILLY

*JUST BECAUSE WE MARRY WELL
THE PARTNER OF OUR DREAMS;
JUST BECAUSE WE RAISE OUR KIDS,
AND LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS;
JUST BECAUSE WE'RE GROWING OLD,
AND MOURN UNTAKEN ROADS,
DOESN'T MEAN OUR SOULS ENDURE
THE WEIGHT OF HEAVY LOADS.*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE and ROGER BILLY

*OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, SPIRIT FLIES!
OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, SPIRIT FLIES!
RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES,
OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, SPIRIT FLIES!*

ROGER BILLY

*JUST BECAUSE, OH, JUST BECAUSE,
THIS GREAT IMMORTAL RACE
DWELLS UPON THE PLANET EARTH
AS WE FLY -- FLY THROUGH OUTER SPACE;
JUST BECAUSE, OH, JUST BECAUSE
WE KNOW WE'RE BORN -- BORN TO DIE,
DOESN'T MEAN OUR SOUL'S OBLIGED
TO SLEEP WHEN IT CAN FLY!*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE and ROGER BILLY

*OH, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES, OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, HOW THE SPIRIT, HOW THE
SPIRIT, HOW THE SPIRIT FLIES...*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

OH, HOW THE SPIRIT, SPIRIT FLIES!

(Pause as THEY recover themselves.)

NADINE

While you were supine and sound asleep,
Our way of recording became obsolete.

LUCINDA

Some folks are still making vinyl these days;
But we're digitized; we've changed our ways.
I surfed the net to track it down;
Typed in the title, but it couldn't be found.

ROGER BILLY

What was the title?

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

"The Final Vinyl."

DAPHNE

Don't you remember? It was going to be your last;
You were going to run for president, but now you've got a past.

ROGER BILLY

Folks said I had a future:
I was handsome; I was smart;
They said I had charisma,...

NADINE

A shame about your heart.
 So maybe your soul's like a mongrel,
 A hound dog escaping to roam,
 'Cause even when it had a leash,
 It wasn't tied to home.

DAPHNE

Shush, Nadine!

NADINE

Or maybe your soul's like a flower,
 And your ego's a hungry weed;
 It sucked up all the sunshine,
 So your soul just went to seed.

ROGER BILLY

My soul is no lost mongrel,
 Or wilted like a flower;
 My soul is my essence eternal,
 Beyond your descriptive power.

NADINE

Yeah, well, your doctors said, "Delusions!"
 Delusions running deep;
 You never had a soul to lose;
 Your mind just went to sleep!

ROGER BILLY

Well, the doctors are wrong;
 Souls exist, and mine's gone!
 I know because there's echoes
 From hollows in my heart
 That make me feel forsaken,
 Connections torn apart.
 I've lost my inner compass,
 My confidence and zeal,
 But still discern the difference
 'Tween what's fantasy and real.

NADINE

Uh huh...

LUCINDA

Right.

ROGER BILLY

It's not that God stopped speaking,
 The soulless just can't hear;
 His blessed voice is muted
 When he sings to a deaf ear.
 But I know my soul's on vinyl,
 And beckons to be found,
 'Cause when someone plays my record,
(twirling) I can feel it spinning round!
 So let's seek my soul together,
 It's time to reunite!
 Oh, ladies, please come with me;
 We'll start our trip tonight!

LUCINDA

Tonight?!

NADINE

No way!

DAPHNE

Why not? We've got nothing else to do.
 Let's find his soul on vinyl,
 And save our own souls too!

NADINE

Speak for yourself, honey.

DAPHNE

All right, I will: I lost my heart to a farmer named Ray,
 But he got cancer and passed away.
 I'm still mourning, but primed to hire,
 I need a change to light my fire.

LUCINDA

I raised three kids with a man named Wong,
 But the kids are grown and Wong's long gone.
 After twenty years, he left a note;
 If it weren't for the choir, I'd slit my throat.

NADINE

My girlfriend split with a no good whore;
 Stole my savings and left me poor.
 Now I sell burgers and sing in a bar;
 But my voice is great, I could still go far.

DAPHNE

So we're coming, Roger Billy!
 We'll drive to hell and back!
 Looking for that soul of yours,
 We'll hire ourselves a hack!

SCENE 2: THE JOURNEY BEGINS

(A cab driver, RUPERT TWIST, rolls in, clasping a steering wheel. ROGER BILLY flags him down while DAPHNE, LUCINDA, and NADINE retrieve their luggage.)

RUPERT TWIST

So where you folks a-goin' today?
 I can drive anywhere, anyway.

LUCINDA

(holding her smartphone) I've googled directions,
 To some vintage record shops,
 Still buying and still selling
 Golden oldies, hits and flops.

ROGER BILLY

We'll loop around the Bible Belt,
 Head east until we find
 Our final destination:
 My soulful peace of mind.

RUPERT TWIST

Whooooa! This country's big,
 The roads are wide;
 My meter's runnin',
 So step inside!

(ROGER BILLY enters the cab and sits on his suitcase next to RUPERT. Behind Roger, DAPHNE, NADINE, and LUCINDA sit on their luggage. The engine roars and THEY'RE off, moving their torsos with the turns.)

RUPERT TWIST

*FROM LUBBOCK TO DALLAS ON INTERSTATE TURF,
 A'DRIVIN' OVER CHUG HOLES,
 LIKE A RIDER ON THE SURF.
 FROM DALLAS TO SHREVEPORT A'RAILIN' ON A TRAIL,
 A'PUFFIN ON A CHOO CHOO,
 FARTIN' SMOKE FROM OUT 'ER TAIL.
 FROM SHREVEPORT TO JACKSON A 'BUSSIN ON A DRAG,
 LIKE A BREEZE BENT FOR BUSINESS,
 GETTIN' OFF MY NICKEL BAG.
 FROM JACKSON TO SELMA A'FLYIN' ON A CLOUD,
 FEELIN' KINDA QUEASY,
 GETTIN' STONED AND GETTIN' PLOWED.*

RUPERT, ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*OH, PAY OFF THE HACK,
 PACK UP THE RACK,
 HUMP THE TAIL,
 AND BALL THE JACK.*

*GIVE 'ER THE GAS,
 RIP OFF 'ER ASS,
 EAT THAT GRAVEL,
 AND PASS, PASS, PASS, PASS!*

(Signs reading “Goldie’s Oldies” and “Harry’s Hot Wax” appear as the taxi stops. RUPERT remains seated while ROGER BILLY and DAPHNE approach a store in one direction; LUCINDA and NADINE in another. TWO CLERKS stand in separated areas, surrounded by stacks of albums.)

ROGER BILLY

Do you have “The Final Vinyl”?

LUCINDA

Do you have “The Final Vinyl”?

DAPHNE

For Christians young and old.

ROGER BILLY

Look under “greatest gospel rock”.
 Though our albums made have sold.

LUCINDA

We'll pay cash if you have it.
(to Nadine) Keep checking through that stack!

DAPHNE

'Course it wasn't a best seller...

NADINE

It's time we faced a fact:
 Our album made no claim to fame.

LUCINDA

No harm lookin' just the same!

(Discouraged, THEY return to the taxi and take off.)

RUPERT TWIST

*FROM SELMA TO NASHVILLE A'CRUISIN' BY CANOE,
 A'DRIFTIN' KINDA EASY,
 OR YOU'LL ANCHOR UP YOUR STEW.
 FROM NASHVILLE TO CHARLOTTE A'GREASIN' BIWAY,
 A'GOOSIN UP THE PAVEMENT,
 LIKE A WHORE YOU GOTTA LAY.
 FROM CHARLOTTE TO RICHMOND A'WINGIN' UP THE SUN,
 A'SOARIN OVER MAINLINES,
 LIKE A JUNKIE ON THE RUN.*

(Store signs reading "Vintage Vinyl" and "Retro Records" appear as RUPERT stops the taxi. ROGER BILLY pairs up with NADINE, and DAPHNE with LUCINDA as they approach the SHOP CLERKS.)

LUCINDA

The jacket's cheap,
 But the songs are deep.

DAPHNE

It was cut for true believers
 Folks inspired to be achievers.

ROGER BILLY

My songs implored us to atone
 Or heaven cannot be our home.

NADINE

(to Roger Billy) Which may be why your songs don't sell,
Who wants to hear they're going to hell?

ROGER BILLY

My songs stressed salvation for seekers of the light;
A reconciliation with God who knows what's right!

LUCINDA

All these stores -- and not a lick of luck!

DAPHNE

Lord, I'm tired, but we can't give up!

(THEY reenter the taxi, and RUPERT takes off.)

RUPERT TWIST

*FROM RICHMOND TO PITTSBURGH A'HOOBIN' INTO HIGH,
A'SCORCHIN' UP THE MOTOR,
THAT CAN BLOW THE WORKS GOOD-BYE.
FROM PITTSBURGH TO NEW YORK, A'HOPPIN' ON THE TAR,
A'LEVELIN' THE HIGHWAYS,
LAYIN' RUBBER LIKE A SCAR.*

RUPERT, ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*OH, PAY OFF THE HACK,
PACK UP THE RACK,
HUMP THE TAIL,
AND BALL THE JACK.*

*GIVE 'ER THE GAS,
RIP OFF 'ER ASS,
EAT THAT GRAVEL,
AND PASS, PASS, PASS, PASS!*

(The cab races on.)

SCENE 3: PARADISE GHETTO

(The New York skyline appears as LUCINDA and NADINE gape in wonder while DAPHNE takes photos with her camera.)

RUPERT TWIST

Here we are folks: New York City!
Check out the skyline, ain't it pretty?

ROGER BILLY

They say it's Sodom and Gomorrah full of felons on the run,
It's an island of temptations,...

NADINE

...I can't wait to have some fun!

ROGER BILLY

Now, ladies, don't forget:
Our mission is a quest:
The devil's in distractions,
And the city is a test.
Of righteous beauty over blight,...

NADINE

...But it's also called "Big Apple,"...

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE,

...And we plan to take a bite!

RUPERT

You girls ain't seen nothin' yet;
The Apple's so much more.
We're only on the seedy side;
You haven't seen the core!
There's shops in all five boroughs,
But first reset your clocks;....

ROGER BILLY

...Yes, here we'll find my album,
'Cause the Final Vinyl rocks.

DAPHNE and LUCINDA

The Final Vinyl rocks!

(Suddenly the taxi stops with a screeching jerk!)

RUPERT TWIST

Bad news, folks,
It's the end of the ride.
This cab's got a flat;
There's no tire inside -- the trunk.

NADINE

You skunk!
You can't just leave us
In this dump!

RUPERT TWIST

Sorry, but like I said:
There ain't no spare,
So suck it up,
And pay the fare!

(ROGER BILLY pays the fare, and RUPERT walks off.
DAPHNE, LUCINDA, and NADINE lug their suitcases
towards a littered stoop. HOMELESS NESS is perched
on top, reading a careworn book.)

NADINE

We've got to call another ride;
To stick around is suicide.

LUCINDA

Damn! Our phones are out of juice!
Has anybody seen a booth?

DAPHNE

There's a woman sitting there;
Maybe she's got a phone to share.
Hey, lady, have you got a phone?

HOMELESS NESS

Honey, I ain't got a home!

ROGER BILLY

My dear madam, you look so low.
Has fate dealt you a bitter blow?

HOMELESS NESS

Hell, yes. *(rising from her stoop to sing)*
I WAKE IN THE MORNING, FEELING LOST,
WORRY ABOUT THE WAY THINGS COST;
FOOD STAMPS TO PICK UP, THEY GO FAST,
GOT COMPENSATION, BUT IT WON'T LAST.
OH, THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...

ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE, NESS

OH, THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...

HOMELESS NESS

WE HELP OTHER COUNTRIES FAR AWAY,
HOW'S THAT TO HELP OUR KIDS TODAY?
I NEED SOME WORK BAD, WHY NOT ME?
I NEED A JOB FOR MY FAMILY.

ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE, NESS

OH, THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...
OH, THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...

HOMELESS NESS

THE BLUES GET ME DOWN, IT JUST AIN'T FAIR,
WHY AREN'T THE RICH INCLINED TO SHARE?
I WAS BORN POOR AND LEARNED TOO LATE;
YOU NEED MORE SCHOOLIN' TO CHANGE YOUR FATE.

ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE, NESS

OH, THE ACHING WORRY, OH, THE ACHING WORRY, OH THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...

ROGER BILLY

ALAS, THE LORD CAN'T PAY THE RENT,
OR MAKE A CIRCLE SQUARE,
BUT THERE'S PIE IN THE SKY,
THE BIG BLUE SKY,
WITH SLICES O' PLENTY TO SPARE.

HOMELESS NESS

*I DON'T WANNA WAIT
FOR THE BIG BLUE SKY,
I DON'T WANNA WAIT
FOR MY SLICE OF THE PIE;
I WANT IT NOW,
TODAY NOT TOMORROW;
I WANT IT NOW,
TODAY NOT TOMORROW;
I WANT IT NOW,
TODAY NOT TOMORROW!*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*SHE WANTS IT NOW,
TODAY NOT TOMORROW.*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE, NESS

*OH, THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...
OH, THE ACHING WORRY
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BLUES...*

(Suddenly ROGER BILLY starts spinning in circles like
a whirling dervish, his eyes bulging!)

NADINE

What the hell...?

LUCINDA

Give the man space!

DAPHNE

He's gone crazy!
Look at his face!

(ROGER BILLY ceases spinning, giddy with joy!)

ROGER BILLY

I could feel the spins!
I could feel the heat!
My soul was sending vibes;
From somewhere on this street!

HOMELESS NESS

Oh, yeah?

(DELROY POTTS enters, strolling down the street.)

DELROY POTTS

Did I hear you say
You're planning to stay?

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

No waaaaaay!

ROGER BILLY

My Angelicals and I are hoping to rent.

DELROY POTTS

Well, I'm your man, yeah, I'm heaven sent!

NADINE

Where the hell are we?!

DELROY POTTS

Paradise Ghetto!
It's named for the folks who lived here first,
But they split the scene, said the street was cursed.
Now I own the buildings; the hood is prime;
You can pay today or pay on time.
I'll offer you a bargain price;
Just follow me to paradise!

(DELROY enters his decrepit tenement, followed by
DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE and ROGER BILLY
who appear to be inspecting the rooms.)

DELROY POTTS

*NOTICE IF YOU WILL,
THIS MODEL GHETTO HOME:
THIS SUITE OF GREAT GRAFFITTI
CAN BE YOURS FOR A SMALL LOAN.*

NADINE

*EQUIPPED WITH GARBAGE DECOR
AND TOILETS WITH A LEAK,...*

DELROY POTTS

*YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
KEEPS YOU DANCIN' IN THE STREET!*

*NOTICE IF YOU WILL,
THE WINDOWS AND THE WALLS,...*

LUCINDA

*SO BROKEN AND SO THIN,
YOU CAN HEAR THE DRUNKS TAKE FALLS!
EQUIPPED WITH SPECIAL WIRING
THAT'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FEET,...*

DELROY, NESS, ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
*YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
KEEPS YOU DANCIN' IN THE STREET!*

DELROY POTTS

*NOTICE IF YOU WILL,
THERE'S FEWER GHETTO CHORES,...*

DAPHNE

*'CAUSE THE ROACHES SUCKIN' FOOD
WILL SWEEP CLEAN YOUR KITCHEN FLOORS!
EQUIPPED WITH GREAT DISEASES
THAT'LL LEAVE YOU FEELIN' BEAT,...*

DELROY, NESS, ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
*YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
KEEPS YOU DANCIN' IN THE STREET!*

DELROY POTTS

*NOTICE IF YOU WILL,
HOW DEPRESSION HERE'S NO SHAME,
'CAUSE THE GHETTO HAS THE CURE ALL,...*

NADINE

*AND THE PUSHER KNOWS THE GAME!
EQUIPPED WITH VEINS AND NEEDLES,
THE JUNKIES SHOOT UP NEAT,...*

DELROY, NESS, ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
*YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
 KEEPS YOU DANCIN' IN THE STREET!*

DELROY POTTS

*NOTICE IF YOU WILL,
 HOW MURDER HERE'S NO CRIME,...*

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

*'CAUSE ONCE YOU JOIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD,
 IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME!
 EQUIPPED WITH KNIVES AND PISTOLS,
 WE KILL TO BEAT THE HEAT,...*

DELROY, NESS, ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
*YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
 KEEPS YOU DANCIN' IN THE STREET!
 YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
 YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
 YEAH, LIVIN' IN THE GHETTO,
 KEEPS YOU DANCIN' IN THE STREET!*

(EVERYONE dances, then DELROY approaches
 ROGER BILLY.)

DELROY POTTS

So Mister Preacher Man,
 What do you say?
 Move in tomorrow?

ROGER BILLY

Why not today?

NADINE

Why not today?! I'll tell you why not!
 Even from here, you can smell the dry rot!

LUCINDA and DAPHNE

Yeah!

ROGER BILLY

Have patience, sweet sisters, it's only for a while.
 Once we find my wayward soul, we'll upgrade in style!

(As ROGER BILLY continues, two gang members, WILLIE WHACKS and LESTER SNAPPS stroll by with guns tucked into their pockets.)

ROGER BILLY

Then we'll redeem the faithless,
The heathens and the whores,
Criminals of every stripe,
Illegals on our shores!
We'll banish pagan perverts,
Despoilers of the land!
Yes, we're soldiers in God's army,
And God's army loves a band!

(Suddenly the sound of a car roars by and shots ring out!
LUCINDA falls to the ground!)

LUCINDA
Ahhhhhh! My leg! My leg!!

DAPHNE
Oh, nooooooooooo!!

NADINE
Shhhhhhit!!!

NADINE

(to Delroy) Lucinda's been shot! Call a doctor and quick!
(to Willy) Who did this and why?! What cowardly dick?!

WILLIE WHACKS

It's drive by sass,
Didn't like her ass!

NADINE

They should tell her,
Not shell her!

WILLIE WHACKS

Hey, don't look at me; that shot's from a gang.
We're called the Claws, and he was a Fang.

ROGER BILLY

Does everyone in this country own a gun?

LESTER SNAPPS

(wielding a revolver) The boys and I've been packin' chrome.
Since we were twelve and on our own.

DELROY POTTS

I hide my piece 'neath the seat of my wheels,
(brandishing a gun) But take it out when I'm makin' deals.

HOMELESS NESS

(patting her pocket) You want to buy my pearly pistol?
 I'd sell it cheap to score some crystal.

NADINE

My Colt's loaded and ready to shoot,
(drawing forth a pistol) I keep it hidden inside my boot.

ROGER BILLY

Nadine, I'm surprised...

LUCINDA

(waving a Luger) Ole granddaddy's Luger's tucked under my flag,
 But when I travel, it's in my bag!

ROGER BILLY

But surely, Daphne...?

DAPHNE

Well, I confess, inside my bra,
(pulling out a pocket pistol) Is a little keepsake from dear old pa.

WILLY WHACKS

Ain't nothin' can beat ownin' some heat.
 If you wanna have fun, *(whipping out a machine gun)* Invest in a gun!

(WILLIE, LESTER, and DELROY sing in harmony.)

WILLIE, LESTER, DELROY

*WHY GO THROUGH HOURS OF HEATED DEBATE,
 WHEN A LITTLE LEAD BULLET CAN SETTLE YOUR FATE?
 WHY WORRY AND FRET AND EXCHANGE POINTS OF VIEW
 THAT A LITTLE LEAD BULLET EXPRESSES FOR YOU?
 WHY PROCESS THE LAW AND SPEND FORTUNES IN COURTS,
 WHEN THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS CAN SETTLE YOUR TORTS?*

(WILLIE, LESTER, and DELROY aim their guns.)

WILLIE, LESTER, DELROY

*AMERICA SHOOTS 'CAUSE WE YANKS GIVE A DAMN,
WE'LL TICKLE THE WORLD TILL IT CRIES UNCLE SAM!
UNCLE SAM, BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!
UNCLE SAM, BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!*

*THE WILD RED SAVAGE, OUR SCALP HUNTING FOE,
LEARNED THAT BULLET WAS FASTER THAN ARROW AND BOW,
OUR LONG-BARRELED RIFLES SHOT REDCOATS TO RUST,
AND BLASTED COLONIAL TORIES TO DUST.
TRAINED IN THE LANGUAGE AND USAGE OF GUNS,
THE CIVIL WAR ARMIES TAUGHT DADS TO SHOOT SONS.*

WILLIE, LESTER, DELROY, NADINE and DAPHNE

*AMERICA SHOOTS 'CAUSE WE YANKS GIVE A DAMN,
WE'LL TICKLE THE WORLD TILL IT CRIES UNCLE SAM!
UNCLE SAM, BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!
UNCLE SAM, BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!*

WILLIE, LESTER, DELROY

*IF A GUN SAYS A LOT THAT WORDS CAN'T CONVEY,
IMAGINE WHAT GRENADES AND BOMBERS COULD SAY.
IN WORLD WARS ONE AND TWO WE ALL FOUGHT,
WITH LAND MINES AND MISSILES AND OTHER SMALL TALK.
THEN WE BOMBED THE JUNGLES, THE DESERTS, AND NEXT,
WE'LL NUKE THE WHOLE PLANET AND ERASE THE TEXT!*

DELROY POTTS

(shouting) Damn straight!

WILLIE, LESTER, DELROY, NADINE, DAPHNE

*AMERICA SHOOTS 'CAUSE WE YANKS GIVE A DAMN,
WE'LL TICKLE THE WORLD TILL IT CRIES UNCLE SAM!
UNCLE SAM, BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!
UNCLE SAM, BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!*

(A siren is heard blaring; lights flash!)

NADINE

I hear an ambulance down that street;
You grab her arms, I've got her feet!

(DAPHNE and NADINE drag LUCINDA off in one direction; WILLIE, LESTER, and DELROY dash off in the other, abandoning ROGER BILLY with HOMELESS NESS.)

ROGER BILLY

Hey, where's everybody gone?
 What's happenin'? What's wrong?
 Where's my suitcase, where's my stash?
 Where's my wallet, where's my cash?!

(As HOMELESS NESS speaks, SHE taps powder from a vial into her palm.)

HOMELESS NESS

Tough luck, mister, welcome to the city;
 Now you're a member of the club they call "self pity."

ROGER BILLY

At least I can cope
 Without using dope!
 Your life must seem an endless night,
 A pity you can't see the light.

HOMELESS NESS

Oh, I can see the light all right,
 Straight through your pompous ass!
 You don't even have a soul,
 All I see is gas!

ROGER BILLY

Lord, I must confess it's true:
 I lost my soul on vinyl,
 Which is why I'm here -- with you.

(Suddenly ROGER BILLY spins again, then starts to walk off.)

HOMELESS NESS

Hey, don't leave! (*extending her hand*)
 Folks here call me "Homeless Ness."
 Have a seat; relieve the stress.

(ROGER BILLY sits beside HOMELESS NESS who
pulls out a pint of whiskey and drinks.)

HOMELESS NESS

You're twirling like you've gone beserk,
Reminds me of an ancient Turk:
Rumi, the Whirling Dervish spinner,
Whose poems give solace to this sinner.

ROGER BILLY

If you read rhymes while swilling rot,
What made you such a sorry sot?

HOMELESS NESS

I wasn't always on the skids;
I led choirs of troubled kids.
Till I found myself evicted
For being twice convicted.
You see, it started with a smoke,
Which led to dealing for a toke.
Then a tweak came with my weed,
Which helped create a deeper need.

ROGER BILLY

You infidels need drugs,
But what's the big attraction?
If life becomes unbearable,
Can't prayers provide distraction?

HOMELESS NESS

If you're asking why
Folks like me get high,
It's 'cause crystal, glass, and ice
Give life a little spice.

(HOMELESS NESS smiles, then sings, slowly creating
a dreamlike dance as magical lights glimmer.)

HOMELESS NESS

*WHEN I'M HIGH, I SEE DOORS,
DOORS THAT WERE CLOSED
TO THE LONELY AND BROKEN,
FLY OPEN!*

*THE DOORS LEAD TO HALLS
WITH MARBLE CAKE WALLS
AND CEILINGS OF CUSTARD AND CREAM.
I HAVE TO MOVE SLOW
'CAUSE THE FLOOR STARTS TO FLOW,*

*TURNING INTO A STREAM
FILLED WITH LIGHT...*

*THEN THE STREAM LEADS TO STAIRS,
TOO STEEP TO CLIMB
FOR THOSE PAST THEIR PRIME,
SO I RIDE...*

*THE STAIRS LEAD TO PATHS,
DEEP CARPETS OF GRASS,
STREWN WITH ROSES THAT LAST
FOR MILES...*

*THEIR SCENT ATTRACTS SWARMS
OF BUTTERFLY STORMS;
THEN THE BEE SEASON COMES,
AND MY WHOLE BODY HUMS;
OH, MY DEAR, CAN'T YOU HEAR...
THE BUZZZZZZZZZZZ...*

*THEN THE BREEZE I CALL BLISS
LEAVES A STRANGE KIND OF KISS,
I CAN FEEL ON MY BROW,
EVEN NOW...*

*HOLY DAYS, HOLY NIGHTS,
HOW I CRAVE SUCH DELIGHTS;
EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR,
YOU WOULD TOO, IF YOU KNEW
HOW TO FLY...*

(HOMELESS NESS returns to her stoop as lights dim.)

ROGER BILLY

Sorry, Ness, I don't approve.
 You're in a place that's not my groove.
 When you felt yourself forsaken.
 The Lord had paths you should've taken.

HOMELSS NESS

Speaking of paths, it's time to blow,
 I feel the hunger, a craving for snow.

(HOMELESS NESS departs as a police officer,
 SERGEANT RONALD MOODY, strolls by.)

ROGER BILLY

Pardon me, Officer,
 I've been robbed; I've been rolled.
 Everything I own is gone;
 Those thieves were mighty bold!

SERGEANT MOODY

Gee, that's tough,
 I feel your loss,
 But you're loiterin' here;
 It's my turf; I'm the boss.

ROGER BILLY

I'm no loiterer; I'm a preacher,
 A teacher of the word.
 My wayward soul has come to town
 In case you haven't heard.

SERGEANT MOODY

Your soul, huh?
 Well, has your body got some I D?

ROGER BILLY

No, sir, I just told you...

SERGEANT MOODY

No license? No credit cards?

ROGER BILLY

No, sir...

SERGEANT MOODY

Then I guess you're
*MISTER ZERO, MISTER HOMELESS,
 MISTER GUY WITH OUT A DIME,
 COME ON DOWN TO MY PLACE,
 AND SPEND A LITTLE TIME!*

(SERGEANT MOODY snaps handcuffs on ROGER BILLY'S wrists, then leads him away.)

SCENE 4: PRISONERS LONG GONE

(A metallic clang is heard as the shadowy bars of a cell appear, and ROGER BILLY stands alone in jail.)

ROGER BILLY

Oh, infamy and scandal -- confinement in jail!
 Where are my girls to post my bail?
 Daphne! Lucinda! Nadine!
 Where have my Angelicals gone?
 We're supposed to be a team!

(Pause as ROGER BILLY gazes at the graffiti on the walls of his cell.)

ROGER BILLY

Oh, Lord, how I long for your righteous voice,
 Or a Bible to read, but I have no choice.
 Instead of the scriptures, I scan these walls
 From prisoners long gone, their faded scrawls.

(As ROGER BILLY reads his walls, HE is joined by the VOICES of PRISONERS LONG GONE who scrawled the graffiti.)

ROGER BILLY

*ON THE WALLS, AROUND MY CELL,
 I READ THE WORDS SAY "GO TO HELL,"
 AND NOW I READ "BETTER DEAD THAN RED,"
 OH, LORD, THE THINGS THESE WALLS HAVE SAID:*

VOICE OF A PRISONER LONG GONE

*"I DON'T USE A PLOW OR SICKLE,
AND NOW I DRIVES ME A MOTORCYCLE.
BILLY GRAHAM IS MEANT FOR GLORY,
THE DEATH OF GOD AIN'T NO NEW STORY.
THE LORD HE IS AN INDIAN GIVER,
SO TAKE IT UP YOUR LAZY RIVER."*

ROGER BILLY and PRISONERS LONG GONE

*"OH, MARGIE IS A REAL GREAT SCREW,
CALL 336-4852;
SHE'S THE GAL FOR GETTIN' PLEASURE,
WISH I HAD THE TIME, TIME, TIME FOR LEISURE."*

ROGER BILLY

*ON THE WALLS, AROUND MY CELL,
I READ THE WORDS SAY "WISH ME WELL
'CAUSE NOW I KNOW MY FREEDOM'S GONE."
OH, LORD, THESE WALLS TALK ALL DAY LONG.*

VOICE OF A PRISONER LONG GONE

*"I LOVED LORNA MORE THAN LIFE,
THAT'S WHY I STABBED HER WITH MY KNIFE.
I MADE LOTS OF MONEY SELLING COKE,
BUT I GOT BUSTED AND NOW I'M BROKE.
I LIKED 'EM YOUNG AND HOT TO TROT,
BUT NOW IT'S TUCKED AWAY TO ROT."*

ROGER BILLY and PRISONERS LONG GONE

*"OH, MARGIE IS A REAL GREAT SCREW,
CALL 336-4852;
SHE'S THE GAL FOR GETTIN' PLEASURE,
WISH I HAD THE TIME, TIME, TIME FOR LEISURE."*

VOICE OF A PRISONER LONG GONE

*"LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE CRUISIN',
S AND M WILL DO THE BRUISIN'.
FOR REAL FINE LOVIN' YOUNG AND GAY,
YOU GOTTA BE OLD ENOUGH TO PAY.
STAND UP CLOSE BEFORE YOU PUT IT,
IF YOU'RE SOUTHERN AND BARE FOOTED.
I'M GONNA HANG MYSELF AT NOON,
SO KEEP THE POPE OFF OF THE MOON."*

VOICE OF A PRISONER LONG GONE (cont'd)

*"I WISH, I WISH, BUT I WISH IN VAIN,
THAT I COULD BE A CHILD AGAIN."*

ROGER BILLY and PRISONERS LONG GONE

*"OH, MARGIE IS A REAL GREAT SCREW,
CALL 336-4852;
SHE'S THE GAL FOR GETTIN' PLEASURE,
WISH I HAD THE TIME, TIME, TIME FOR LEISURE."*

ROGER BILLY

"I WISH I HAD, I WISH I HAD THE TIME FOR LEISURE."

(ROGER BILLY sits as three prisoners approach:
JULIO DELIRIO, SHAMAL FURIA, and BRUNO
BATSON. JULIO speaks with a Spanish accent;
SHAMAL with an Arabic accent.)

JULIO DELIRIO

Hey, who's the new dude?

ROGER BILLY

Don't mean to intrude.
I'm Roger Billy Starks,
I'm a preacher, so I preach.

BRUNO BATSON

Like a Bible-thumpin' leech?

SHAMAL FURIA

Hey, bro, for all we know,
You're a freak from outer space;
Truth be told, you broke the mold;
Never saw such an ugly face.

ROGER BILLY

Then you haven't seen my albums.
My face is on all the covers;
Posing with my Angelicals,
We're all of us Jesus lovers.

JULIO DELIRIO

Looks like they left you high and dry;
Swapped you for some other guy.

BRUNO BATSO

It's the same old shit: a fall from glory;
So what went wrong; what's your story?

ROGER BILLY

Well, back in Swampwater, I sneezed up my soul;
Fell into a coma which has taken its toll.
Deafness has caused my voice to change;
The highest notes are out of range.
But lately I sense a turning, a needle on the move;
My sorry soul is beckoning; it's time to leave its groove!

JULIO DELIRIO

Man, you are one cracked nut!
Me -- I'm Catholic!

BRUNO BATSON

Me -- I'm a Jew!

SHAMAL FURIA

Me -- I'm a Muslim!
What about you?

ROGER BILLY

I was raised Baptist, christened in a swamp;
The seventh son of drifters, the child they didn't want.
But we're all of us God's creatures...

SHAMAL FURIA

...Yeah! Descended from the apes!
It's human evolution, and nobody escapes!

JULIA DELIRIO

I'm here cause I set a house on fire.

BRUNO BATSON

I hacked into porn sites.

SHAMAL FURIA

And I'm a born liar!
 Passed myself off as merchant of taste;
 What folks thought were pearls
 Were really just paste.

BRUNO BATSON

But look at us now: we're the cream of the crop!
 The hunks of high society: "A" listed at the top!

JULIO, SHAMAL, BRUNO

*WE'RE WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA
 FROM CRIME'S GREAT HALL OF FAME;
 WE'VE CARVED OUR NAMES IN AMERICA,
 IN THE GALLERY, THE GALLERY OF SHAME!*

JULIO DELIRIO

It's not our fault.
 It's logic, man, logic!
*IF THERE HADN'T BEEN AN AXE,
 LIZZIE BORDEN COULDN'T KILL;
 IF THERE HADN'T BEEN A JESSE JAMES,
 THEN THERE MIGHT NOT BE BOOT HILL;
 IF THERE HADN'T BEEN CHICAGO,
 WHO'D FINANCE AL CAPONE?
 IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR BANKING,
 CLYDE AND BONNIE WOULD STAY HOME.*

JULIO, SHAMAL, BRUNO

*WE'RE WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA
 IN CRIME'S GREAT HALL OF FAME;
 WE'VE CARVED OUR NAMES IN AMERICA,
 IN THE GALLERY, THE GALLERY OF SHAME!*

SHAMAL FURIA

*IF THERE HADN'T BEEN BEEN A MOTHER,
 WHO'D FEED NELSON'S BABY FACE?
 IF THERE WERE NO EVOLUTION,
 THEN THE KLAN COULD HATE NO RACE;
 IF THERE HADN'T BEEN A CYCLE,
 THEN HELL'S ANGEL'S COULDN'T RIDE!
 OH, I TELL YOU IT'S THE SYSTEM
 THAT'S REALLY ON OUR SIDE!*

JULIO, SHAMAL, BRUNO

*WE'RE WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA
IN CRIME'S GREAT HALL OF FAME;
WE'VE CARVED OUR NAMES IN AMERICAN,
IN THE GALLERY, THE GALLERY OF SHAME!*

BRUNO BATSON

*IF THERE HADN'T BEEN AN S L A,
WHO'D KIDNAP PATTY HURST?
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR TEAMSTERS
WHO'D QUENCH JIMMY HOFFA'S THIRST?
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR STALIN,
WHO'D MCCARTHY DARE CALL RED?
IF THERE WERE NO CHARLES MANSON
HOW COULD SQUEAKY MISS FORD'S HEAD?*

JULIO, SHAMAL, BRUNO

*IF THERE HADN'T BEEN RELIGIONS,
HOW COULD COUNTRIES GO TO WAR?
IF THERE WEREN'T SO MANY ALTAR BOYS,
WHAT PRIESTS WOULD WANT TO SCORE?
IF THE TRADERS WEREN'T SO GREEDY
TAXES SPENT TO SAVE THEIR PRIDE,
THEN WE MIGHT HAVE SAVED THE SYSTEM,
BUT MY CREDIT'S BEEN DENIED!*

JULIO, SHAMAL, BRUNO

*OH, WE'RE WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA
IN CRIME'S GREAT HALL OF FAME;
WE'VE CARVED OUR NAMES IN AMERICA
IN THE GALLERY, THE GALLERY OF SHAME!
OH, WE'RE WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA
AND THE SYSTEM TAKES THE BLAME;
THEY CARVED OUR NAMES IN AMERICA,
IN THE GALLERY, THE GALLERY OF SHAME!*

(DWAYNE NUTTALL, a prison guard, approaches.)

DWAYNE NUTTALL

Shaddup in there! *(to Roger Billy)* Hey, you!
MISTER ZERO, MISTER HOMELESS,
MISTER GUY WITHOUT A DIME;
WE DON'T TOLERATE MALINGERING
'CAUSE VAGRANCY'S A CRIME.

ROGER BILLY

I'm innocent, so let me go!
 I've got a name,
 And it's not Zero!
 It's Roger Billy Starks,
 I'm a preacher of the Lord,
 A Bible belting Baptist,...

DWAYNE NUTTALL

And you're gettin' room and board --
 Courtesy of the state of New York!

(ANOTHER GUARD approaches and hands
 DWAYNE NUTTALL a note.)

DWAYNE NUTTALL

Well, well, look at this:
MISTER ZERO, MISTER HOMELESS,
SOME LADIES POSTED BAIL,
SEEMS YOU'VE GOT CONNECTIONS
NOW YOU'RE SPRUNG FROM OUR JAIL.

ROGER BILLY

Oh, praise the Lord, I knew I'd be found;
 Must be my Angelicals finally coming 'round!

DWAYNE NUTTALL

Sorry, pal, but your angels ain't here.
 The ladies left a note for you to appear
 At some sleazy club in the heart of midtown.
 You can take the subway to get around.
 Here's a card, a one way fare;
 Now get the hell out, enjoy the fresh air!

(DWAYNE NUTTALL escorts ROGER BILLY
 from the jail as SHAMAL FURIA shouts.)

SHAMAL FURIA

Lucky you, man,
Sprung from this hole;
Don't forget Shamal...

ROGER BILLY

I'll pray for your soul!

(ROGER BILLY strolls onto a city street and sits on a bench to read his note as dim lights reveal DAPHNE writing the same note while singing its contents. Behind DAPHNE stand LUCINDA and NADINE humming.)

DAPHNE

*WE SEARCHED FOR DAYS, ALL OVER TOWN,
THEN CALLED THE COPS WHO TRACKED YOU DOWN.
WE'VE CHECKED INTO THE HOTEL APPLE SEEDY,
LUCINDA'S BEEN TREATED, BUT HER DOCTOR'S GREEDY.
HER MEDICAL BILLS ARE SO OUT OF SIGHT,
WE'RE PAYING THEM OFF, SINGIN' DAY AND NIGHT
AT THE SHATTER CLUB IN THE HEART OF TIMES SQUARE.
THEY DIG OUR SOUND, BUT THEY AIN'T PAYIN' FAIR.
WE NEED YOUR VOICE; WE NEED YOUR MUSCLE;
SO FIND YOUR SOUL, AND TRY TO HUSTLE!
LOVE, YOUR FAITHFUL TEAM, DAPHNE...*

LUCINDA and NADINE

Ooooooooooooooooooooo...

LUCINDA and DAPHNE

...LUCINDA...

NADINE, LUCINDA, DAPHNE

...AND NADINE.

(Lights fade on DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE as ROGER BILLY tucks the letter into his pocket.)

SCENE 5: TRANSIT STRIKERS

(ROGER BILLY strolls towards a “Bus Stop” sign where EMMA TRIPP is resting with her grocery cart. SHE speaks with a Brooklyn accent.)

ROGER BILLY

Pardon me, Miss, I need information;
Could you please point me to a subway station?

EMMA TRIPP

Forget it, Mister, the subway’s shut down;
Conductors are striking all over town.

ROGER BILLY

Oh, dear, what a shame. Well, no need to fuss.
I can always wait here and catch the next bus.

EMMA TRIPP

No such luck, it’s a transit strike.
You can take a cab or take a hike.

ROGER BILLY

A cab will cost me too much money.

EMMA TRIPP

Then time to join us walkers, honey.
The strikers are marching; they’re coming this way;
It’s the same old beef: they want better pay!

(ROGER BILLY and EMMA TRIPP step back as irate TRANSIT STRIKERS march in holding signs: “Unfair wages!” “No raise, no ride!”)

TRANSIT STRIKERS

*AT THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TABLE,
WE SAID RAISE OUR WAGES.
THEY SAID THEY WOULD ARBITRATE
TO GET OUR WAGE IN STAGES.
SO WE WAITED DAY AND NIGHT,
AND NIGHT AND DAY AND DAY AND NIGHT;*

TRANSIT STRIKERS (cont'd)

*AND STILL NO RAISE, NOT ONE RED CENT,
AND PROMISES DON'T PAY THE RENT.
SO WE VOTED FOR A SIT DOWN STRIKE,
'CAUSE STRIKIN' IS HOW WE WORKERS CAN SCORE
WHEN THE SUITS IN CHARGE MAKE MILLIONS MORE!*

*OH, WE CAN ARBITRATE BOYS,
WE CAN ARBITRATE;
JUST USE A LITTLE HATE, BOYS,
AND WE CAN ARBITRATE!*

(The TRANSIT STRIKERS march off as EMMA TRIPP sings, explaining to ROGER BILLY)

EMMA TRIPP

*WELL, A SIT DOWN STRIKE AIN'T AS SMART AS IT SEEMS;
THEY LL WAKE UP REPLACED BY KEYBOARDS AND SCREENS.
THE LATEST COMPUTERS MAKE MEN OBSOLETE,
THE ONLY JOBS LEFT ARE FOR SWEEPIN' -- SWEEPIN' THE STREET!*

(EMMA TRIPP walks off pushing her cart.)

SCENE 6: SIDEWALK SALES

(RUMBOY MULLOY, a Jamaican vendor, enters pulling a table stocked with hats, scarves, purses, and umbrellas. HE speaks with a Caribbean accent.)

RUMBOY

Hey, there, man, you need a nice hat?
A handbag for a lady...?

ROGER BILLY

I'm in no mood to chat!

RUMBOY

Yeah? Why's that?

ROGER BILLY

'Cause I'm broke, that's why -- with no I. D.

RUMBOY

You're an illegal alien -- just like me!
 I sailed over in a crate full of rum,
 Along with a funky Jamaican bum.
 But I'm no bum, man, I had a job.
 I even made good bread.

ROGER BILLY

What was your profession, sir,
 Your life before you fled?

RUMBOY

I fished the seas, till a storm sank my boat,
 Then sold some weed to keep afloat.
 Now here I am, man, just skin and bone,
 This old sidewalk is home sweet home.
 Plenty of tourists buy my stuff,
 But somehow it just ain't enough
 To stash some cash and pay my fare
 Back to the beaches and balmy air.

ROGER BILLY

Tough luck.

RUMBOY

I see my future, ten years from today:
 A beggar's funeral with no one to say:
 "This poor old Jamaican, his name unknown;
 Has his wife remarried, are his children grown?
 Where did he come from; where has he gone?
 Poor Rumboy Mulloy -- he didn't live long."

ROGER BILLY

What a shame, he died too soon...

RUMBOY

...But his misguided life has inspired a tune:
*IF EVER HE MISSED HIS LOVING WIFE,
 WITH HIS CHILDREN ALL GATHERED ROUND;
 IF EVER HE MISSED HIS HOMEY HEARTH,
 AND HIS SLIPPERS BROUGHT IN BY THE HOUND;
 IF EVER HE MISSED THE NIGHTLY JOY,
 OF TUCKING HIS BABES IN BED;*

RUMBOY (cont'd)

*THEN THE WORLD WILL SAY, HE FELL INTO THE SEA,
AND THE SAILORS HAVE FOUND HIM DEAD,
OH, THE SAILORS HAVE FOUND HIM DEAD.*

RUMBOY and ROGER BILLY

*POOR RUMBOY MULLOY,
HE DIDN'T LIVE LONG;
WHO KNOWS WHERE HE CAME FROM;
WHO KNOWS WHERE HE'S GONE.
POOR RUMBOY MULLOY,
OH, WHERE CAN HE BE?
THE SAILORS HAVE FOUND HIM
DROWNED IN THE SEA.*

RUMBOY

*IF EVER HE MISSED THE SALTY WINDS,
WHILE FISHING ALL DAY ROUND THE BAY;
IF EVER HE MISSED THE MARKETPLACE,
WHERE HE TRADED HIS CATCH OF THE DAY;
IF EVER HE MISSED HIS DRINKING MATES,
AND THE PIRATES WHO FILLED HIM WITH DREAD;
THEN THE WORLD WILL SAY, HE FELL IN THE SEA,
AND THE SAILORS HAVE FOUND HIM DEAD,
OH, THE SAILORS HAVE FOUND HIM DEAD.*

ROGER BILLY and RUMBOY

*POOR RUMBOY MULLOY,
HE DIDN'T LIVE LONG;
WHO KNOWS WHERE HE CAME FROM;
WHO KNOWS WHERE HE'S GONE.
POOR RUMBOY MULLOY,
OH, WHERE CAN HE BE?
THE SAILORS HAVE FOUND HIM
DROWNED IN THE SEA.*

(ROGER BILLY pats RUMBOY on the shoulder.)

ROGER BILLY

I must confess I feel your despair,
The cruel revelation that life is unfair;
But to dwell on our sorrows is suicide;
Try to believe that the Lord will provide.

RUMBOY

I know Allah watches, that this is his way,
I try to be grateful for each blessed day;
For giving me trials, great crosses to bear;
On the way to salvation, my burdens he'll share.

(Loud thunder is heard as RUMBOY opens an umbrella to protect his wares, then hands one to ROGER BILLY.)

RUMBOY

Take this umbrella, and remember my name!
Rumboy Mulloy, your refuge from rain!

(RUMBOY dashes off as ROGER BILLY glances after him and waves. Suddenly, the TRANSIT STRIKERS reappear, marching.)

TRANSIT STRIKERS

*WE KEEP ON MARCHING DAY AND NIGHT,
AND NIGHT AND DAY AND DAY AND NIGHT;
AND STILL NO RAISE, NOT ONE RED CENT,
AND PROMISES DON'T PAY THE RENT.*

*OH, WE CAN ARBITRATE BOYS,
WE CAN ARBITRATE;
JUST USE A LITTLE HATE, BOYS,
AND WE CAN ARBITRATE!*

(The TRANSIT STRIKERS march off.)

SCENE 7: WALL STREET REVELATIONS

(As ROGER BILLY sits shivering, a bolt of lightning strikes, sending vibrations through his body! When the lightning ceases, ROGER BILLY glances heavenward.)

ROGER BILLY

Eureka! Eureka! Revelations have occurred!
Bolts from the blue, what voices I heard!
Angels recalling the stocks I can sell!
My modest portfolio doing quite well.
I even remember my broker's address;
I'll sell all that I own and start life afresh!

(The sun shines and ROGER BILLY unfurls his umbrella, then leaps to his feet.)

ROGER BILLY

Since the Lord's provided my two flat feet
It's high time I headed towards "Wall Street".

(ROGER BILLY strolls towards a Wall Street sign. HE enters an office where his broker, VERA CROCKER, is typing on her computer along with fellow brokers, LOIS LESTRANGE and NORMAN RAVEN.)

ROGER BILLY

Thank the Lord you're here, my personal broker.
It's been so long, does your memory need a poker?
(pause) I'm Reverend Roger Billy and you're Miss Vera Crocker!

VERA CROCKER

Not the preacher from Texas who went off his rocker?!

ROGER BILLY

Well...

VERA CROCKER

You've been declared incompetent and possibly insane,
So we took the liberty of trading in your name.

ROGER BILLY

Well, I'm here in the flesh, restored and alive,
Nearly impoverished, but resolved to survive.
So let's cease the chatter, and cut to the chase:
Sell all that I own; now I've stated my case.

VERA CROCKER

We bought and sold at our discretion,
But the market's been down from a recession.
Let's bring up your files and track your stocks;
You better sit down, there may be some shocks.

(ROGER BILLY seats himself as VERA snaps her fingers and LOIS and NORMAN join her, staring at a screen as VERA reads.)

VERA CROCKER

Sorry, Roger Billy, but...

*THE GENERALS DYNAMICED TO MICROSOFT MILLS
WHILE WELLS FARGOED KODAK TO POLOROID STILLS.
KRISPY KREMED ENRON AND KRAFT HAD A BITE,
A TACO BELL BENDIX PENN CENTRAL DELIGHT.
COORS GULFED THE KAISER WITH BUDWEISER BEER,
AND GOOGLED WALT DISNEY TO HAVE A GOODYEAR.*

VERA, LOIS, NORMAN

*OH, WE LOVE MONOPOLIES, CARTELS, AND TRUSTS,
TAXBREAKS AND LOOPHOLES, KICKBACKS, AND BUSTS!
INVEST YOUR SAVINGS, TRADE THEM FOR SHARES;
GAMBLE YOUR ASSETS, COME BULL AND COME BEARS.*

*YOU INVESTED YOUR SAVINGS, YOUR PIECE OF THE PIE,
YOUR DREAMS OF THE FUTURE, YOU KISSED THEM GOOD BYE.
YOU LAID DOWN YOUR MONEY, PAID WITH A CHECK;
TOOK A BROKER TO LUNCH, AND SHE PLACED YOUR BET!*

NORMAN RAVEN

*OH, PLAYTEX AND PROCTOR, A WURLITZER TEAM,
GAMBLED THE DOCTOR TO PEPPER SUNBEAM.
DOW CHEMICALLED HILTON TO WALMART DRUG FAIR,
WHILE SEARS SHELLLED MCDONALD'S TO HOUND A GREY HARE.
GILLETES UNIVERSAL AVONED FABERGE,
WHILE DOW JONESED ADIDAS TO TIME-LIFE'S SAFEWAY.*

LOIS LESTRANGE

*FLY ME, I'M STARBUCKS, THE MILLER OF PABSTS,
THE PEPSI OF COLAS, THE REYNOLDS OF WRAPS,
THE BOEING OF LOCKHEEDS, THE CHRYSLER OF FORDS,
THE DELTA OF AIRLINES, ENVIRONTECH WARDS.
THE ZENITH OF ACME, THE KELLOGGED PAN AM,
THE ANALOG APPLE, MADE SCOTT IN JAPAN!*

VERA, LOIS, NORMAN

*OH, WE LOVE MONOPOLIES, CARTELS, AND TRUSTS,
TAXBREAKS AND LOOPHOLES, KICKBACKS, AND BUSTS!
INVEST YOUR SAVINGS, TRADE THEM FOR SHARES;
GAMBLE YOUR ASSETS, COME BULLS AND COME BEARS!*

YOU INVESTED YOUR SAVINGS,

ROGER BILLY

My savings...

VERA, LOIS, NORMAN

YOUR PIECE OF THE PIE,...

ROGER BILLY

My piece of the pie...

VERA, LOIS, NORMAN

YOUR DREAMS OF THE FUTURE,

ROGER BILLY

My dreams of the future...

VERA, LOIS, NORMAN

YOU KISSED THEM GOOD BYE...

ROGER BILLY

Good bye...?

VERA, LOIS, NORMAN

*YOU LAID DOWN YOUR MONEY, PAID WITH A CHECK;
TOOK A BROKER TO LUNCH, AND SHE PLACED YOUR BET!*

VERA CROCKER

Let's see: your initial investment was fifty grand,
From sales of your records and acres of land.
Now the current total from the sale of your stocks
Is enough hard cash to purchase some...socks!

ROGER BILLY

Socks...?

NORMAN RAVEN

Just like you, the stock market swings,
It's a bi-polar sport till that little bell rings!

VERA CROCKER

Poor Roger Billy, don't look so down.
I'll loan you fifty dollars for a taxi out of town.

ROGER BILLY

I can't take your money and run.
My mission's unfinished; my search just begun.
You see, I'm looking for my album...

VERA CROCKER

Only purists play albums, they're obsolete;
Now we download to catch the beat.

LOIS LESTRANGE

Oldies are moldies, I tossed mine away.

VERA CROCKER

Time to face the music: you're finished; you're passé.

ROGER BILLY

Well, bless you, Miss Vera, thanks for the loan.
I'll pay you back with interest...

VERA CROCKER

Oh, shush! I'm on the phone!

(ROGER BILLY starts to leave, but hears VERA
whispering to LOIS and NORMAN.)

VERA CROCKER

Poor old Roger Billy, still crazy as a loon.
It started with a stroke, they say...

NORMAN RAVEN

...They let him out too soon!

(VERA, NORMAN and LOIS snicker as ROGER BILLY
departs, crestfallen. Traffic sounds echo as ROGER
BILLY strolls onto the city streets, ruminating.)

ROGER BILLY

Can God's voice be heard in the sounds of the city?
Is the honking of horns his crying for pity?
Are the squealing of brakes and the clicking of wheels,
The alarms and the sirens all hidden appeals?
Is God sending his message to the lost and alone,
Is he saying "You're welcome," or is he saying "Go home?"

(Suddenly, the TRANSIT STRIKERS reappear.)

TRANSIT STRIKERS

*WE KEEP MARCHING DAY AND NIGHT,
AND NIGHT AND DAY AND DAY AND NIGHT;
AND STILL NO RAISE, NOT ONE RED CENT,
AND PROMISES DON'T PAY THE RENT!*

(Overlapping their song, a SINGLE STRIKER shouts.)

A SINGLE STRIKER

*(to Roger Billy) ALL THESE COMPUTERS MEAN NO NEW HIRES,
WE OUGHT TO PAY HACKERS TO CROSS THE WIRES.
THEN TRAINS COULD CRASH AND MAKE THE BOSS SORE,
SO HE'LL HIRE US BACK TO AVOID -- AVOID A WAR.*

ROGER BILLY

You can't be serious?!

(As the TRANSIT STRIKERS march off, one drops a map which ROGER BILLY picks up and unfolds.)

ROGER BILLY

What good fortune; it's a new city map!
Is this a sign I should be where I'm at?
Since the walk to midtown is quite a few blocks,
I'll need some refreshments, some bagels and lox!

(ROGER BILLY strolls off, clutching his map.)

SCENE 8: THE MELTING POT DINER

(The clatter of a busy restaurant is heard as ROGER BILLY enters "The Melting Pot Diner" where several PATRONS are seated. ROGER BILLY sits at a counter next to RABBI MILTON ADDLEMAN, across from IVAN KRACKOWSKY who wears a chef's hat and stained apron.)

ROGER BILLY

Can God's voice be heard in the lighthearted chatter?
 The ringing of phones, the chinaware clatter?
 Oh, Lord, I could swoon from the savories and sweets,
 Cuisines of all nations, papayas, pickled beets.
 I can smell Italy, I can taste France...

RABBI ADDLEMAN

(with an Israeli accent) The spices of India make my tongue dance!
 Yes, here we all gather, all dining in peace;
 Friends from Morocco, New Zealand and Greece.

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

(with a Russian accent) Da, I see and hear and serve all races;
 Imports and exports that mating refaces.
 I new immigrant to United States.
 I study history; I memorize dates.

ROGER BILLY

Indeed, how admirable.

(IVAN sings with operatic passion.)

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*THE RED MEN CAME FIRST AND OPENED THEIR TENTS
 TO TEA SIPPING BRITS WHO REFUSED TO PAY RENTS.
 NEXT CAME THE IRISH, THOSE POPE LOVING HICKS,
 REEKING OF WHISKEY TO BREED LITTLE MICKS.*

IRISH-AMERICAN DINER

Who you callin' a mick?! Dick!

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*THEN FROM THE NORTH THE CANUCKS ARRIVED
 TO PROVE ONCE AGAIN THAT THROWBACKS SURVIVED.*

CANDIAN-AMERICAN DINER

Oh, yeah! *(hurling a grapefruit)* I'll show you a throw back!

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*NEXT DOWN THEIR GANGPLANKS CAME GREASY-HAIRED WOPS,
 WHO GOT PAID FOR PROTECTION AND BOUGHT OFF THE COPS.*

ITALIAN-AMERICAN DINER

You wanna wop, man?! (*flinging a pizza*) Ba-da-bing!

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER, DOWN MEXICO WAY,
CAME MACHO MUCHACHOS PICKING FRUIT FOR LOW PAY.*

MEXICAN-AMERICAN DINER

You want fruit? (*hurling lemons*) Mira, hombre!

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*NEXT CAME THE GERMANS, THOSE WAR-LOVING SWINE,
ALONG WITH THE FRENCH FRIED SWILLERS OF WINE.*

FRENCH-AMERICAN DINER
(*throwing a baguette*) Vulgarian!

GERMAN-AMERICAN DINER
(*pitching a sausage*) Bigoted swine!

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*FOLLOWED BY AFRICAN DRUM BEATING TRIBES,
WHO RAPPED UP THE AIRWAVES WITH EAR SPLITTING VIBES.*

AFRICAN-AMERICAN DINER

I'll give you a rap, bro! (*hurling a wrap*) Yo!

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*THEN SHIPMENTS IN FLIP FLOPS WHO USED TO BE COMMIES
CAME MIXED WITH THE CURRY-FED INDIAN SWAMIS.
LAST FROM THE SANDS OF THE DESERT CAME SHEIKS,
WHO KEPT THEIR WIVES COVERED SO NOBODY PEEKS.*

(By now IVAN is dodging a barrage of hurled food,
shielding himself with a frying pan.)

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

*YOU'RE INBRED AND OUTBRED;
LIKE DOGS GONE ASTRAY;
THE WINNERS AND LOSERS
OF THE U S OF AAAAAAAA!*

RABBI ADDLEMAN

Stop, stop! For heaven's sake, cease fighting!

(The DINERS cease assaulting IVAN as RABBI ADDLEMAN wields a broom for attention.)

RABBI ADDLEMAN

What is this I'm hearing? Is bigotry our fate?
This country is progressive, we're post-racial, we're post-hate!

SEVERAL DINERS

Amen!

ROGER BILLY

(to Rabbi Addleman) You sound like a teacher,
A friendly fellow preacher.

IVANKRACKOWSKY

Hah! He's a matzo munching Jew, a rabbi cracker face,
He can peel potato, but not the skin of race!

RABBI ADDLEMAN

The soul is what matters, never mind your race.
We're all of us God's children, from the saintly to the base.

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

Bullshit! God's children are starting to spoil;
His melting pot opera has come to a boil.

RABBI ADDLEMAN

(addressing the women diners) My dear ladies, please, explain to the man:
This melting pot opera's no flash in the pan.

THE WOMEN DINERS

*WE GIRLS BECOME BRIDES AND THEN BECOME MOTHERS;
WE BEAR ALL OUR CHILDREN, THEIR SISTERS AND BROTHERS;
THEY GROW UP SO QUICKLY, THE LIMBS ON OUR TREE;
AMERICA'S FAMILY, IT STARTED WITH ME.
YES, WE'RE INBRED AND OUTBRED,
THE GREAT, THE UNKNOWN,
THE MELTING POT OPERA,
NEW YORK IS OUR HOME!*

IVAN KRACKOWSLY

*YOU'RE INBRED AND OUTBRED,
LIKE DOGS GONE ASTRAY;
THE WINNERS AND LOSERS
OF THE U S OF A!*

RABBI ADDLEMAN

No, no, no! My dear sirs, explain to the man...

THE MEN DINERS

*WE BOYS MARRY GIRLS WHO THEN BECOME MOTHERS,
WE RAISE ALL OUR CHILDREN, THEIR SISTERS AND BROTHERS;
THEY GROW UP SO QUICKLY, THE LIMBS ON OUR TREE;
AMERICA'S FAMILY, IT STARTED WITH ME.
YES, WE'RE INBRED AND OUTBRED,
THE GREAT, THE UNKNOWN,
THE MELTING POT OPERA
NEW YORK IS OUR HOME!*

RABBI ADDLEMAN, THE DINERS, and ROGER BILLY

*YES, WE'RE INBRED AND OUTBRED;
THE GREAT, THE UNKNOWN,
THE MELTING POT OPERA,
NEW YORK IS OUR HOME!
WE'RE THE WINNERS AND LOSERS,
WE'RE ALL HERE TO STAY;
THE MELTING POT OPERA:
THE U S OF AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!*

(As the song ends, RABBI ADDLEMAN shoves the broom into ROGER BILLY hands and departs. ROGER BILLY sweeps the debris, then approaches IVAN.)

ROGER BILLY

If you want to be a citizen, your attitude should change...

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

Who the hell are you
To tell me what to do?!
Meet my cousin, Viktor,
Who took the test and passed!
(*to Viktor*) Tell us what you learned,
And that beer won't be your last.

(VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY struts towards ROGER BILLY, speaking with a Russian accent.)

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

If you want to be citizen,
 You got to take test,
 And slap your titties to America's flag,
 'Cause this system is the best!
 Every city has corruption:
 Ask the mayor and police,
 Lawyers, loan sharks, whoring hustlers,
 All get paid to keep the peace.

ROGER BILLY

Good Lord, you've become such cynical rubes;
 You talk like the country's gone down the tubes.
 Listen to the rabbi, speaking from his heart.
 He sees us all together, not in classes drawn apart.

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

You mean a social revolution, a sharing of the pie?
 So we can all attend your concerts, we can all afford to fly?

ROGER BILLY

Well,...yes.

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

(to Ivan) What are you, fucking crazy? Escaped from local zoo?
 Where have you been; what's the matter with you?!

ROGER BILLY

Well, I missed a lot, slept through twenty years;

IVAN KRACKOWSKY

Then pull up a chair, have a few beers!

ROGER BILLY

Well, thank you kindly, don't mind if I do.
 I don't usually imbibe, but could use a cold brew.
 You see, I'm a preacher, a teacher of the word;
 Once my soul's returned to me, God's message will be heard.

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

Who cares what you preach?
There's no heaven, there's no hell;
Religion is for morons.

ROGER BILLY

Back off, sir, you smell!
I mean your breath stinks
From too many drinks.

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

How dare you insult me!
You call my breath foul?!
For this you must suffer,...

(VIKTOR punches ROGER BILLY who falls!)

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

Now hand me a towel!

(IVAN tosses a towel to VIKTOR who wipes his hands
as ROGER BILLY staggers to his feet.)

VIKTOR KRACKOWSKY

Get out of this diner, you crazy old punk!
No one calls Viktor a stinky old drunk!
Take your do-gooder bullshit and howl at the moon;
Your melting pot opera has gone out of tune!

ROGER BILLY

Maybe, but it still sounds sweet:
WE'RE INBRED AND OUTBRED,
THE GREAT, THE UNKNOWN,...
THE MELTING POT OPERA,...

ALL THE DINERS

NEW YORK IS OUR HOME!

ROGER BILLY and the DINERS

WE'RE THE WINNERS AND LOSERS,
WE'RE ALL HERE TO STAY;
THE MELTING POT OPERA:
THE U S OF AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!

(IVAN and VIKTOR kick ROGER BILLY out of the diner and onto the street where HE staggers past city storefronts as UNSEEN VOICES echo.)

ECHOING VOICES

Walk, walk, walk walk,
 Don't look back.
 Clickity, clickity, clickity, clickity,
 Clickity, clickity, clack!
 Walk, walk, walk walk,
 Don't look back.
 Clickity, clickity, clickity, clickity,
 Clickity, clickity, clack!

ROGER BILLY

I was safer in jail;
 My whole body's sore.
 Will my poor feet prevail
 How many blocks more?
 My back is breaking;
 There's a stone in my shoe;
 My belly's aching,
 I'm bruised through and through.

(The TRANSIT STRIKERS appear once again.)

TRANSIT STRIKERS

*SO WE SAT DOWN DAY AND NIGHT,
 AND NIGHT AND DAY AND DAY AND NIGHT;
 AND STILL NO RAISE, NOT ONE RED CENT,
 AND PROMISES DON'T PAY THE RENT.*

*OH, WE CAN ARBITRATE BOYS,
 WE CAN ARBITRATE;
 JUST USE A LITTLE HATE, BOYS,
 AND WE CAN ARBITRATE!*

(The TRANSIT STRIKERS march off singing.)

ROGER BILLY

Despite the commotion, the sun's beaming down;
 Shedding light on my journey through the streets of the town.

SCENE 9: DELUSIONS

(ROGER BILLY continues his stroll, then stops before a store window filled with MANNEQUINS. HE wipes his brow, then suddenly leaps up!)

ROGER BILLY

Hey, someone's tapped my record!
 I'm tingling from within!
 Ouch! I feel the needle;
 My soul's about to spin!

(ROGER BILLY twirls for several seconds, then stops.)

ROGER BILLY

My record ceased playing; I'm so dizzy, I could fall
Unless I lean my aching back against this storefront wall.

(ROGER BILLY turns to stare at the MANNEQUINS.)

ROGER BILLY

Have I neglected to notice the shops of the city,
The dummies in the window looking so pretty?

(The MANNEQUINS move their arms and sing.)

MANNEQUINS

*WE'RE THE DUMMY DOLLS IN A WINDOW OF THE CITY,
WHO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE PASSING BY.
WE'VE GROWN TIRED OF STANDING IN THIS POSE;
IF YOU LISTEN, WE'LL TELL YOU WHY.*

ROGER BILLY

Wh...wh...why?

MANNEQUINS

*OUR ARMS ARE SCREWED,
OUR HANDS ARE NAILED,
OUR LEGS LOCKED INTO A BRACE;
WE SEE THE WORLD THROUGH GREEN GLASS EYES,
OUR SMILES FROZEN ON OUR FACE.*

*PLEASE TAKE US OUT OF THIS WINDOW IN THE CITY;
IF WE STAY, WE CAN NEVER GROW.
OUR OWN REFLECTIONS DAY AFTER DAY
IS ALL WE WILL EVER KNOW.*

ROGER BILLY

Gee, well, I...I don't know. It's like you said:
*YOUR ARMS ARE SCREWED,
YOUR HANDS ARE NAILED,
YOUR LEGS LOCKED INTO A BRACE;
YOU SEE THE WORLD THROUGH GREEN GLASS EYES,
YOUR SMILES FROZEN ON YOUR FACE.*

(Now a single mannequin, the DUMMY DOLL, alters her pose, gesturing towards ROGER BILLY.)

DUMMY DOLL

*PLEASE TAKE ME OUT OF THIS WINDOW IN THE CITY;
DRIVE ME HOME IN A CAR LIKE A QUEEN;
BUY ME A DRESS OF SATIN AND LACE;
AND A THRONE BY THE TEE VEE SCREEN.*

*IF YOU'LL TAKE ME OUT OF THIS WINDOW IN THE CITY;
WE'LL KISS AND YOU'LL BE MY GUY.
I WON'T GROW OLD OR BETRAY YOUR TRUST,
I'LL BE YOURS TILL THE DAY YOU DIE.*

ROGER BILLY

Sorry, I'd have to steal you from the store.
I've got troubles enough, don't need any more.

DUMMY DOLL

*YOU MUST TAKE ME OUT OF THIS WINDOW IN THE CITY!
I WANT YOU TO BREAK THE GLASS!
IF YOU WON'T, I'LL DO IT MYSELF,
THEN I'M COMING TO CHASE YOUR ASS!*

(Glass breaking sounds are heard as the DUMMY DOLL breaks the window and pursues ROGER BILLY!)

ROGER BILLY

Oh, God, I'm having visions, deliriums abound!
Lord, help me stay lucid 'till my sorry soul is found!

ROGER BILLY and ECHOING VOICES

Run, run, run, run,
Don't look back!
Clickity, clickity, clickity, clickity,
Cickity clickity, clack!

(ROGER BILLY dashes towards the ghetto where HOMELESS NESS is seated on her stoop. The DUMMY DOLL lingers nearby.)

ROGER BILLY

Praise the Lord, I'm back in the hood!
(to Homeless Ness) I remember you; you're looking good.

HOMELESS NESS

Oh, yeah?

(ROGER BILLY spies the DUMMY DOLL.)

ROGER BILLY

Oh, Lord, do you see what I see
 Following me around?
 The dummy from the window
 Tracking me like a hound.

HOMELESS NESS

Oh, sure, I see that dummy.
 She's wearing a big black hat,
 And a purple dress with silver shoes,
 And behind her's a yellow cat.

ROGER BILLY

A yellow cat...? I don't see that.

HOMELESS NESS

Then you're not high enough to see;
 That cat's as clear as clear can be.
 If you don't want that dummy to stay,
 I can chase the bitch away.

ROGER BILLY

For pity's sake, please do!

HOMELESS NESS

Shoooo! Shoo! Shoo!

(HOMELESS NESS chases the DUMMY DOLL, then returns to her stoop. ROGER BILLY sits beside her.)

ROGER BILLY

So you behold illusions
 From drug induced delusions?

HOMELESS NESS

When I'm snorting crystal meth,
 I can even see past death.
 I can see the shadows
 Of folks who don't belong.
 The veils of life are lifted;
 The dead can hear my song.

(As HOMELESS NESS sings, deceased SHADOW
 SINGERS flutter in slow motion around her.)

HOMELESS NESS

*THE VEIL IS GROWING THINNER
 'TWEEN THE LIVING AND THE GONE;
 WHEN I'M HIGH I SEE THEM,
 THE FOLKS WHO DON'T BELONG....*

*SO MANY LONELY PEOPLE
 HAUNT THE STREETS AT NIGHT;
 THEY COME DISGUISED AS BEGGARS,
 THEIR EMPTY CUPS HELD TIGHT.
 THEY CRY AS STRANGERS PASS THEM,
 "HELP ME MAKE IT THROUGH;
 FILL MY CUP WITH KINDNESS,
 AND I'LL PASS IT ON TO YOU."*

HOMELESS NESS and SHADOW SINGERS

*THE VEIL IS GROWING THINNER
 'TWEEN THE LIVING AND THE GONE;
 WHEN I'M HIGH I SEE THEM,
 THE FOLKS WHO DON'T BELONG....*

HOMELESS NESS

*SO MANY LONELY PEOPLE
 PASS ME ON THESE STAIRS;
 THIS SIDEWALK IS THEIR MATTRESS,
 THEY OFTEN SLEEP IN PAIRS.
 THEY WAKE UP IN THE MORNINGS,
 A-GLIMMER WITH THE DEW;
 THEN SWIM INSIDE MY COFFEE,
 FORMING VAPORS IN MY BREW.*

HOMELESS NESS and SHADOW SINGERS

*THE VEIL IS GROWING THINNER
 'TWEEN THE LIVING AND THE GONE;
 WHEN I'M HIGH I SEE THEM,
 THE FOLKS WHO DON'T BELONG.*

HOMELESS NESS

*SO MANY LONELY PEOPLE,
 PASSING THROUGH THE LIGHT;
 A GENTLEMAN'S BEHIND YOU,
 A LADY'S ON YOUR RIGHT.
 THEY BEND TO KISS A FOREHEAD,
 OR STROKE A KNOBBY KNEE;
 THEY'RE HERE TO LET US KNOW,
 THINGS GET BETTER WHEN WE'RE FREE.*

HOMELESS NESS and SHADOW SINGERS

*THE VEIL IS GROWING THINNER
 'TWEEN THE LIVING AND THE GONE;
 WHEN I'M HIGH I SEE THEM,
 THE FOLKS WHO DON'T BELONG.*

(Pause as the SHADOW SINGERS vanish and ROGER BILLY breaks the spell to speak.)

ROGER BILLY

Lately I feel I'm one of those folks...

HOMELESS NESS

Yeah?

ROGER BILLY

I used to think that I belonged;
 Deserved a first class seat.
 Conversions were my destiny;
 I never knew defeat.
 Lately I've stepped off that train,
 A stranger at the station;
 A mystery even to myself,
 In an unfamiliar nation.

HOMELESS NESS

Well, make yourself at home, my friend,
 Yes, here you'll find a place,
 We have folks of every class,
 Every culture, every race.

ROGER BILLY

I heard New York was a city of sin,
 The New Babylon, but instead I begin
 To behold revelation, the light from above
 Shines right here in you, my love.

HOMELESS NESS

Me...?!

ROGER BILLY

There's something about you that stirs my heart.
 Let's stick together, make a fresh start.

HOMELESS NESS

You gotta be joking; old Ness is a wreck;
 You might as well hang a noose round your neck!
 Face facts, Roger Billy, it wouldn't be right;
 My next trip's on a gurney -- a nonstop flight.

ROGER BILLY

Maybe so, but it lands at my feet,
 I'm here for you, Ness; I think you're sweet.
 Forget your date with crystal meth;
 Let's stay together unto death.

HOMELESS NESS

If that's a proposal, you're out of your mind;
 Stop screwing around, and stick to your kind!
 What I want to know is what do you see?
WHAT DO YOU SEE
WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME?

ROGER BILLY

WHAT DO I SEE
WHEN I LOOK AT YOU?
I SEE MYSELF,
MYSELF TIMES TWO.

ROGER BILLY (cont'd)

*I SEE SUNSHINE, I SEE ICE.
WITH GOD'S BOUNTY COMES A PRICE:
WITH THE FLOWERS COME THE WEEDS,
WITH THE MELONS COME THE SEEDS;
WITH THE ROOSTER COMES THE RAT,
WITH THE FEASTING COMES THE FAT;
WITH THE DRY SPELLS COME THE RAIN,
WITH THE BLESSINGS COME THE PAIN.*

HOMELESS NESS

*THAT'S WHAT YOU SEE
WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME?*

ROGER BILLY

*THAT'S WHAT I SEE
WHEN I LOOK AT YOU.
I SEE MYSELF,
MYSELF TIMES TWO.*

*I SEE PLENTY, I SEE POOR;
WITH GOD'S RICHES, LESS IS MORE,
WITH THE TIMID COMES THE BOLD;
WITH THE CHILDREN COME THE OLD,
WITH THE BRIGHTNESS COMES THE DIM;
WITH THE RIGHTEOUS COMES THE SIN,
WITH THE FUTURE COMES THE PAST;
WITH YOU NESS, I'M HOME AT LAST.*

HOMELESS NESS

*THAT'S WHAT YOU SEE
WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME?*

ROGER BILLY

*THAT'S WHAT I SEE
WHEN I LOOK AT YOU.
I SEE MYSELF,
MYSELF TIMES TWO.*

HOMELESS NESS and ROGER BILLY

*THAT'S WHAT I SEE
WHEN I LOOK AT YOU.
I SEE MYSELF,
MYSELF TIMES TWO.*

(THEY kiss, then hold hands as DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE enter. When ROGER BILLY sees them, He leaps to his feet.)

ROGER BILLY

Welcome my Angelicals! So glad you finally came!

DAPHNE

So did you find your wayward soul?

LUCINDA

I think you look the same.

NADINE

No, he doesn't; he looks like shit.
If he found his soul, it's a lousy fit!

ROGER BILLY

I haven't found it yet, but I'm better than before;
I've had some revelations, and I'm hoping to score more.
Somehow Homeless Ness has captured my restless heart.

HOMELESS NESS

Yeah, he's my whirling dervish -- until we drift apart.

(Pause as DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE roll their eyes in disbelief.)

LUCINDA

Is he serious...?

DAPHNE

Gee, that's...swell.

NADINE

Now listen up, Roger:
Our Shatter Club spot has made us girls hot;
We're a trio for hire, and the club scene's on fire.
So don't take offense, but a trio means three.
We don't need a fourth; we like being free.

ROGER BILLY

But I have plans, you can't leave me now;
 We'll speed the Earth's rotation; let me show you how:
 We'll spin away old platitudes, toss grievances aside;
 Till there's no longer reasons to conquer and divide.

LUCINDA

(to Daphne and Nadine) He's crazy as ever; he's still not for real.

DAPHNE and LUCINDA

(to Nadine) We still want him to join us!

NADINE

(to Roger Billy) Then here's the new deal:
 No one gets top billing, we're equals fair and square!

ROGER BILLY

Take everything you need; you can even have my share.
 But first we need to find my soul;
 Since after all, that was our goal.
 I know it's near, spinning round and round,
 'Cause someone plays our album; someone digs our sound.

HOMELESS NESS

(pointing) Over there, across the street
 Lives a traumatized G. I.
 Who stays inside his bedroom,
 And plays his old hi fi.
 He's got boxes full of records,
 So maybe he's your man.
 He's a miser though and shiftless,
 So we call him Stingy Dan.

ROGER BILLY

Have you ever seen his albums?
 His collection of L. P.s?
 My soul's on "The Final Vinyl,"
 It came up with a sneeze.

HOMELESS NESS

Sure, I've seen his albums; I know them very well;
 I'm Stingy Dan's big sister, and his life has gone to hell.

ROGER BILLY

So lead us to his door, 'cause maybe Dan's my man.
My sorry soul's deliverance, a gospel rockin' fan.

(ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE
depart, following HOMELESS NESS as a few
straggling TRANSIT STRIKERS march by.)

TRANSIT STRIKERS

*OH, WE CAN ARBITRATE BOYS,
WE CAN ARBITRATE;
JUST USE A LITTLE HATE, BOYS,
AND WE CAN ARBITRATE!*

(The TRANSIT STRIKERS march off.)

SCENE 10: THE FINAL VINYL

(In an unkempt room filled with stacks of albums,
STINGY DAN lies asleep on a careworn cot wearing
pajamas. HOMELESS NESS approaches, followed by
ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE.)

HOMELESS NESS

Here we are, I'll ring the bell.

(Chimes awaken STINGY DAN who staggers to the
door.)

STINGY DAN

What the hell...?

HOMELESS NESS

Hey there, Dan, it's your lucky day.
This preacher wants deliverance,
And it looks like he's willing to pay.
There's someone on this street
Who digs his gospel sound,
'Cause when he plays the record,
He starts to spin around.

STINGY DAN

Uh huh...

HOMELESS NESS

So if you have his album,
That someone would be you.
Help him end his searching...

ROGER BILLY

...'Cause I'm weary through and through.

*I'M FEELING LOW, LOW, LOW,
AS LOW AS FEELINGS GO.
I DON'T MIND SAYING,
I'M TIRED OF PRAYING,
TIRED THROUGH AND THROUGH,
SO PLEASE HELP ME DO,
MISTER DAN, MISTER DAN,
BE MY MAN.*

STINGY DAN

*I'M FEELING LOW, LOW, LOW,
AS LOW AS FEELINGS GO,
I'M TIRED OF LIVIN'
I'M LONG PAST GIVIN',
TO WACK JOBS LIKE YOU,
SO DON'T TRY TO SCREW
MISTER DAN, MISTER DAN,
I'M NO FAN!*

ROGER BILLY

*I'M FEELING LOW, LOW, LOW,
AS LOW AS FEELINGS GO.
I'M TIRED OF HEARING
HOW FOLKS ARE FEARING
TO PLAY THEIR PARTS
WITH OPEN HEARTS,
MISTER DAN, MISTER DAN,
SAY YOU CAN!*

STINGY DAN

*I'M FEELING LOW, LOW, LOW
AS LOW AS FEELINGS GO,
I'M TIRED OF CRYIN'
FOR FOLKS PAST TRYIN',
TO SEE THE SIDE
OF A BONA FIDE
SOLDIER OF WAR!
WE KNOW THE SCORE!
AND GOD'S NOT PLAYIN'
SO I'VE STOPPED PRAYIN'
MISTER DAN, MISTER DAN'S
NOT YOUR MAN.
NO, GOD'S NOT PLAYIN'
SO I'VE STOPPED PRAYIN'
MISTER DAY, MISTER DAN'S
NOT YOUR MAN!*

ROGER BILLY

*I'M FEELING LOW, LOW, LOW,
AS LOW AS FEELINGS GO.
I DON'T MIND SAYING,
I'M TIRED OF PRAYING,
TIRED THROUGH AND THROUGH,
SO PLEASE HELP ME DO,
MISTER DAN, MISTER DAN
BE MY MAN.*

ROBER BILLY

So is "The Final Vinyl" in your collection,
The end of my search for resurrection?

STINGY DAN

Yeah, I own that piece of crap;
I play it when I need a nap.
So tell me just how much you'll pay,
Not that I'm sellin' any way.

ROGER BILLY

All I have is thirty dollars;

STINGY DAN

Sorry, that ain't near enough.
I need that Bible thumpin' stuff.
Sounds of rapture don't come cheap;
They're great for puttin' folks to sleep.

DAPHNE

Well, I've forty dollars.

LUCINDA

And I've got fifty-three.

NADINE

Here's a crisp new hundred.

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE

Now set his poor soul free!

ROGER BILLY

You keep the record, just play the song;
I'll be grateful my whole life long.
You can find the number; it's the first on side B;
Please, Mister Dan, set my sorry soul free!

STINGY DAN

Why should I set your sorry soul free?
What's in it for Ness and Me?
If you're a preacher and claim to know,
Where do all we heretics go?!
What happens when our lives expire?
Are we doomed to everlasting fire?

ROGER BILLY

(pause) Years ago I thought I knew;
Now I'm uncertain; my mind's askew.
My beacon of faith has ceased to shine;
I can't lead souls if I can't find mine.
I've prayed for guidance, to hear His song,
To judge what's right and what's gone wrong.

STINGY DAN

(furiously) What's gone wrong is there is no song!
WHERE IS GOD'S VOICE
WHEN WE GO TO WAR?
WHERE IS HIS MUSIC
WHEN BAD GUYS SCORE?
WHEN THEY CRIPPLE COUNTRIES
BY DROPPING BOMBS,
KILLING CHILDREN
AND RAPING MOMS!

STINGY DAN (cont'd)

*HOW CAN GOD'S MUSIC
HEAL OUR WOUNDS,
REBUILD THE TOWERS
AMONG THE RUINS?!
WHERE WAS GOD THEN?
DID HE FLEE THE CITY?
WHERE WAS HIS HEART?
WHERE WAS HIS PITY?*

ROGER BILLY
*I WISH I KNEW,
I WONDER TOO,
THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS
ALL SEEKERS MUST ASK;
KEEPING THE FAITH
IS A DIFFICULT TASK.*

STINGY DAN
*WHERE IS GOD'S MUSIC?
WHY HAS IT CEASED?
CAN YOU HEAR IT IN AFRICA,
THE WEST OR MIDDLE EAST?
WHERE IS GOD'S VOICE,
HIS MUSIC OF CHOICE?*

STINGY DAN and HOMELESS NESS

*WHERE IS GOD'S VOICE?!
WHERE DID HE GO?*

ROGER BILLY, STINGY DAN, HOMELESS NESS

WHERE IS GOD'S VOICE?

ROGER BILLY

Maybe his silence is a spiritual test,
Maybe the answer lies in the quest.
(to Homeless Ness) Now please before I move along,
Beg your brother to play my song.

HOMELESS NESS

Oh, play it, Danny, you've got nothin' to lose.
Take the damn money and buy us some booze!

STINGY DAN

(snatching the money) Okay, but I've just raised the price;
That shirt and jacket would fit me nice.

ROGER BILLY

Take them, they're yours!

STINGY DAN

How about those socks and shoes?
Your belt and pants -- now you've nothin' to lose!

(ROGER BILLY strips to his red, white, and blue striped shorts as HOMELESS NESS retrieves the album.)

HOMELESS NESS

I've found The Final Vinyl!

DAPHNE
Yaaayyyyy!!

LUCINDA
Finally!

NADINE
Thank Christ!

HOMELESS NESS

(*to Stingy Dan*) Now play that platter, lay it down!
Spin that record round and round!

(STINGY DAN removes the record from its sleeve.)

HOMELESS NESS

Shit, Dan, you've got the morning shakes;
I'll have your ass if that record breaks!

(As STINGY DAN starts to place the record on the turntable, HE drops it, and ROGER BILLY faints.)

DAPHNE
Oh, my god!

NADINE
Crazy moron!

LUCINDA
He's fainted!

HOMELESS NESS

Lucky for you it didn't break!
Now play the song for heaven's sake!
Play that platter, lay it down!

DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE and HOMELESS NESS
Spin that record, round and round!

(STINGY DAN places the record on the turntable, and listens to the same song ROGER BILLY recorded in the "Prologue." As the music plays, ROGER BILLY slowly rises and starts to twirl and DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE sing along.)

THE RECORDING OF ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND WE’LL ALL GET ALONG;
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND TOGETHER WE’LL BE STRONG!

ROGER BILLY
WHEN YOU RAISE YOUR VOICE BY SINGING,
IT’S HARD TO FUEL THE FIRES;
THE RAGE WITHIN THE HEART,
TURNS TO ASHES ON THE PYRES.
YOU FEEL YOUR SOUL ASCENDING,
LIKE SMOKE THAT RISES HIGH,
THAT DRIFTS BEYOND THE DARKNESS,
TOWARDS SUNSHINE IN THE SKY!

ROGER BILLY, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND WE’LL ALL GET ALONG;
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND TOGETHER WE’LL BE STRONG!

RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND WE’LL ALL GET ALONG;
RAISE EVERY VOICE IN SONG,
AND TOGETHER WE’LL BE STRONG!

(DAPHNE, LUCINDA and NADINE hold their high notes as ROGER BILLY sings:)

ROGER BILLY
AMERICA, AMERICA, WHERE EVERYONE IS FREE,
HER BEACON BRIGHT FOR ALL THE WORLD,
THE HOME OF LIBERTYyyy -- accccchhhhoooooo!

(The “oooooo” of “achoooo” becomes an amplified choral hum as an unseen CHORUS OF ANGELS sing.)

CHORUS OF ANGELS
Ooooooooooaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

(Glimmering beams of radiant light appear as ROGER BILLY's soul enters his body, propelling him into the accelerated spins of a whirling dervish.)

ROGER BILLY
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

CHORUS OF ANGELS
Ohhhhhoooooooooooooooooooooooooo...

HOMELESS NESS
Holy shit!

DAPHNE
Hells bells!

LUCINDA
(*gasps*) Whoa...

NADINE
Impressive.

(ROGER BILLY and the ANGELS cease singing, then HE collapses. HOMELESS NESS stoops to whisper.)

HOMELESS NESS
Hey, Roger Billy, are you okay?
Did you hear God's voice? What did He say?

(ROGER BILLY staggers to his feet.)

ROGER BILLY
*IN A MYSTICAL MOVE,
MY SOUL LEFT ITS GROOVE;
FLEW INSIDE WITH ONE BREATH
TO CLEAVE UNTO DEATH
DEEP INSIDE.*

CHORUS OF ANGELS
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...
Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

HOMELESS NESS, DAPHNE, LUCINDA, NADINE
*HOLY DAYS, HOLY NIGHTS,
HOW I CRAVE SUCH DELIGHTS...*

ROGER BILLY
*THERE'S A CHOIR OF ANGELS,
WHOSE MESSAGE IS CLEAR:
GOD'S VOICE IS IN HEAVEN,
BUT IT'S ALSO RIGHT HERE.
I'M HEARING IT NOW
WHENEVER YOU SPEAK;
GODS VOICE IS IN YOU,
IN THE STRONG AND THE WEAK,
IN THE SONG OF ALL CREATURES
OF THE SEAS AND THE SKIES;
ON THE EARTH AND BENEATH IT:
IN THE FLUKES AND THE FLIES.*

CHORUS OF ANGELS
Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...
Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

STINGY DAN

So God's voice is here in the buzz of this fly?

ROGER BILLY

Yes!

STINGY DAN

Gee, that's too bad, (*swatting the fly*) 'cause it's destined to die!
I guess God likes a joke, 'cause his creatures all croak.

*IS THAT CHOIR OF ANGELS
WHOSE MESSAGE YOU HEAR
MEANT FOR US SOLDIERS
WHO CONQUERED OUR FEAR?
WHO FOUGHT IN THE BATTLES,
THE WARS AGAINST HATE,
THEN WOUND UP FORGOTTEN,
MERE PUPPETS OF FATE?*

ROGER BILLY

*YES, GOD WAS ON YOUR SIDE,
BUT THEIR SIDE AS WELL;
GOD'S VOICE IS WITH JUSTICE.*

STINGY DAN

GOD'S JUSTICE IS HELL!

ROGER BILLY

Oh, cheer up, Dan, despite the strife
Let's celebrate what's good in life.

(ROGER BILLY steps forward to sing, joined by
the ANGELICALS and the CHORUS OF ANGELS.)

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Holy Rock Revival.....Roger Billy, Daphne, Lucinda, Nadine
2. How the Spirit Flies.....Roger Billy, Daphne, Lucinda, Nadine
3. Ball the Jack.....Rupert, Roger Billy, Daphne, Lucinda, Nadine
4. Unemployment Blues.....Homeless Ness, Roger Billy, Daphne, Lucinda, Nadine
5. Livin' in the Ghetto.....Delroy, Homeless Ness, Roger Billy, Daphne, Lucinda, Nadine
6. Tickle the World.....Delroy, Lester, Willie, Daphne, Nadine
7. Sweet Sensations.....Homeless Ness
8. The Graffiti Song.....Roger Billy & Prisoners
9. Who's Who in America.....Julio, Santos, and Bruno
10. Dear Roger Billy.....Daphne, Lucinda, Nadine
11. Rumboy Mulloy.....Rumboy Mulloy & Roger Billy
12. Take a Broker to Lunch.....Vera, Lois, & Norman
13. Raise Every Voice in Song.....Roger Billy, Vera, Lois, & Norman
14. The Melting Pot Opera.....Roger Billy, Carl, and Diner Patrons
15. Striker's Song.....Miss Tripp & the Strikers
16. The Dummy Doll.....Store Mannequins, Dummy Doll & Roger Billy
17. Lonely People.....Homeless Ness & Shadow Singers
18. Myself Times Two.....Roger Billy & Homeless Ness
19. Mister Dan.....Stingy Dan & Roger Billy
20. Where is God's Voice?.....Stingy Dan & Roger Billy
21. His Message.....Roger Billy, Stingy Dan, Homeless and Angelicals

