

Singing Threshold

By Francis Brabazon

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SINGING THRESHOLD

Francis Brabazon



SINGING THRESHOLD

By the same author

EARLY POEMS

SEVEN STARS TO MORNING

PROLETARIANS - TRANSITION

CANTOS OF WANDERING

SINGING
THRESHOLD

Francis Brabazon

Beacon Hill Press Sydney
1958

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Happy Monody

A PLAY, WITHOUT SCENERY, FOR CHILDREN

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Radio, 1st Voice	Second Happy Character
Radio, 2nd Voice	Third Happy Character
Fishmonger	Ann
Butcher	Jimmie
Fruit and Vegetable Man	Man
Clothes-stall Woman	Shopkeeper
First Happy Character	

Across the stage four small wooden boxes, such as fruit cases, are placed representing a Fish Stall, a Butcher's Stall, a Fruit and Vegetable Stall and a Second-hand Dress Stall. Opposite, on side of stage, are two small tables, some chairs representing a Coffee Shop.

The Stall owners are arranging goods on their stalls by dumb-show. People walk up and down the "street", stopping to look at the goods on the stalls, etc. The Coffee Shop Keeper comes on and also by dumb-show, turns on Radio and wipes down and sets tables.

Radio,

First Voice Although there has been ground lost in some fields of production, the Fisheries have gained water. The widespread drought is continuing, except in the Interior where good falls have been registered. The Wheat is sending a deputation to the Minister of Assembly and Removal. It will state that the Wheat could do a lot better, but that it is frankly discouraged—there is little real affection on the part of the consumer. People just take it for granted that Wheat will keep on producing itself for bread. The Deputation will put forth the novel theory that willingness to reproduce oneself is somewhat dependent on love.

The Trees also sent in a deputation which stated that if the people had not cut down the forests there would be plenty of rain. The Trees had always had a reciprocal understanding with the Rains: that the Rains always came when a number of Trees were gathered together in the one forest; and that the Trees, on their part, conserved the water which the Rains gave. The Deputation demanded that the

Government take action immediately to implement the following plan: that top priority be given to, and funds provided for, research into the causes of that particular kind of agitation in Man which causes peoples' hands to itch to grab an axe as soon as they see a member of the tree family. The Minister asked the Deputation did it know there was a housing shortage? At this the junior member distinctly sniggered.

The next News will be interlocked with, and dispersed over, our entire network at 4.15 general standard time. Goodmorning.

Second Voice (very cultured) In continuance of our policy of Nature-education, we will relay our 3-minute program of Nature Music. The piece selected for your enjoyment this morning is "Forest Murmurs". This recording was actually made on location in a real forest.

(A few bars of music which could easily be made up of knocking, sawing and wavering notes on a tin whistle, and then silence.

A man, middle-aged and very shabbily dressed, comes on and sits at table nearest back. Shopkeeper serves him coffee. Although his clothes are very old and shabby, he looks very dignified and commanding. He has a far-away look and does not speak to Shopkeeper. Shopkeeper goes off.)

Fishmonger Fresh fish! Right out of the nets!
Just brought in this morning.
Fish with a coin in its mouth—render unto Caesar.
Fish with a golden needle in its mouth
For the Dervish to sow a patch on his coat.
The believing Eye pierces the mists of doubt
And commands the homage of the unbelievers.

Butcher Good prime meat! Good prime meat!
First, you were weaned from milk and put on meat—
One of these days you will be weaned from meat
And you will drink milk again.
In the meantime, here's a fine leg!
Kidneys, tripe, brains!

Fruit and Vegetable Man Apples! Apples! As good as ever grown
In the garden of Eden. Or if you prefer them,
Sun-ripened oranges. Pineapples
And bananas. Now coming to the vegetables—
Potatoes, fruit of the earth! And good pumpkins.
Pumpkins can be used for many purposes.

One of the best is to tie one on to your foot
When you go to bed at night so that when you wake
In the morning you will know you are still you.

Clothes-stall

Woman Nice dresses to decoratively cover you.
Of course, you yourself are the only cover over yourself,
And one day you'll be as naked as the day you were born.
Your activity covers your mind,
And your mind covers you; so buy
A nice dress to cover you some more.
It's hot ain't it?

(Enter three Happy Characters.)

First H.C. In the street, in the bus, in all the shops
I saw nothing but love looking at me.
Every face was love beaming brightly at me.
Before and behind the crowded counters
There was nothing but love winking at me.
Everywhere was love claiming eagerly my attention.
How I laughed when love jostled me, nearly knock-
ing me over!
How I winked when love pouted her pretty lips
when someone stood on her toes!
Because love kept beaming at me—
Beaming brightly as one who must keep a secret.
It was all like being at the theatre—
Everyone so serious playing his part properly:
And love looking at me all the while
Claiming my attention and returning smile.

Second H.C. What a mad song.

First H.C. Match it!

Second H.C. If you get on the right train it takes you to the right place.
But if you get on the wrong train it takes you to the
wrong place.

I was on a train once, and the man opposite me
Kept looking back towards the mountains.
Now this was wrong. We were on a train
Travelling towards the ocean and he kept looking
back
Towards the mountains. It would have been better
If he'd had his eyes on top of the mountains
Looking towards the sea, because there is every hope
For one if one gets drowned deep enough.

But it is not an easy matter to make up one's mind.
There are so many names on the train board—
And if you look at it this way
The world is a very big place.

You have to trust the porter's directions
And the conductor who calls the stops,
For if you get on the wrong train
It will not take you to the right place.

Third H.C. (to audience)

Poor fellows, they can't help it you know—
Incomprehensive, and psychiatrists are so expensive.

First and

Second H.C. Hey! Who are you talking to?

Third H.C. I was just telling the people here in the audience
That you are a trifle mad, but not to mind.

First and

Second H.C. We'll mind you if you can't make us up a good one
And leave us go thirsty.

Third H.C. All right! But listen carefully, or you'll find
This verse will be beyond your mind!

The person in the basement said
When it is foggy
You don't get much light through the window.
The person on the first floor said
I look forward to the spring—then
There's a tree blooming outside my door.

The person on the second floor remarked
How blue was the sea.

The third floor dweller told us
The light in this room
Comes down through the ceiling
And goes out through the window on fine days.

And the person on the sun deck
Meditated how to deflect a few more sunbeams
Onto a little plant that grew in the shadow of the
wall.

Second H.C. (to First H.C.) He's madder than you!

First H.C. And you're madder than me!

Third H.C. (pointing to the First H.C.) And he's the maddest of the—

First and

Second H.C. (rushing at him) Don't say it! Don't say it !

(Exit Three Happy Characters)

(Enter Jimmie and Ann—they sit at other table. Shopkeeper comes in, serves them coffee and goes off again. As the scene proceeds, the "street" becomes deserted, and the Stallowners lie down in front of their stalls and go to sleep.)

Ann The morning is dreaming of a cool stream
To wash its feet.
And the buildings dream of a lake with swans on it
So that they could see themselves when there was no
wind.
How nice it would be to have a neat cottage
Under trees, and our own garden and fresh milk and
cream.

Jimmie I've got the plans with the Council Stamp.
We can't have a drawbridge, but we may have a ramp.
We can't have one big room, at each corner a door,
But we can have four rooms, and if we like, more.
We can't have a chimney crazy as a cat,
But we can have a hall in which to hang my hat.
We're not allowed to do it cheap
And so economize,
Though all we need is a stove and a pot, and a bed
to sleep
And our kisses and sighs.
All we need is one good room with a big north
window to let in the winter sun.
But the one we'll get will take twenty years before
it's our own.
Come on—let's go shop at some windows.

Man They all say what they say
But their say isn't what it seems.
There will come a day
When they will wake from their dreams.

Ann I'll buy an enormous box of chocolates.

Jimmie I'll buy a big fat cigar.

Ann I'll buy a new dress.

Jimmie I'll buy a sports car.

(Exit Jimmie and Ann. Shopkeeper comes in and tidies up table. Man gets up, looks at Shopkeeper who seems to be strangely affected by the look as he puts the palms of his hands together, as one does when one prays, and bows his head. The Man goes off. The Shopkeeper gazes after him.)

Shopkeeper The Man of God is full without meat.
The Man of God is drunken without wine.
The Man of God is learned without books.
The Man of God is gloriously attended.
The Man of God is a King beneath his ragged
clothes.
The Man of God is a treasure in a ruin.

CURTAIN

(12)

Singing Threshold

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Mary Ashley (a young widow, a farmer)	Married Woman
Old Tom (farm-hand and friend of Mary's)	Spinster
Mr. Trumball (a stock and station agent)	Prostitute
Fred (a farmer, and brother-in-law to Mary)	A young Boy and Girl
Kate (his wife, and Mary's sister)	David and Joan
George and May} (their children)	Two Men
A Tree	Old Men
A Sheep	A Man and a Woman
A Stalk of Wheat	Frank (brother-in-law to Mary)
Bride	Emmie (his wife, and Mary's eldest sister)
Bridegroom	First Commentator
Bride's Father	Second Commentator
Guests	People
Uninvited Guest	Kullervo
Three Entertainers	Sage
Dennis (one of the guests)	Youth
A Man, recumbent	Voice
	Twelve Men
	One Man

ACT I, SCENE I

DROUGHT

A farmhouse kitchen. Although by the calendar it is autumn, it is a hot, still morning. Nothing moves; nothing grows; it is drought. Through the open door at the back of the room can be seen the bare earth.

Mary Ashley, a young widow, is talking to Old Tom, who is that combination of farm hand and trusted friend found in the country; a waratah is speaking with a tussock of dried grass:

Mary Trumball is coming this morning.

Old Tom That's too bad. You weren't able to arrange anything yesterday?

Mary No. Dad's in the same boat. He doesn't know whether he won't have to sell also. He and Mum want me to take Johnnie and go to live with them. He said that if we could pull their place through this year, and if we get a few good seasons again we might buy this place back—that is if I still want to carry on here. Of course they have never liked me keeping on here since Harry went, but they know

how set I have been to pull this place through. But I am going to Sydney. June will put us up for as long as I want. I will be able to get a job, and a place of our own later. I have no heart left to try and carry on here again, even if we did buy it back; and I don't think that would be likely. Old Higgins has had his eye on the place for three years now, like a crow waiting for a sheep to drop. It will be better for Johnnie anyway. He will be able to get a better education and find some job easier than farming.

Old Tom There is no better education for a boy
than the soil which grows things.

Mary *When it grows.*

Old Tom Mrs. Ashley—when you say you cannot carry on,
That's one thing! but do not become bitter.
Even in the city, the soil somewhere
Will be feeding you. You've put up a game fight
Against a brass sky for nearly three years—
A hard enemy for a woman and an old man.

Mary (rebuking him) Tom!

Old Tom A man who has lived right
Is not sorry for himself when he is old.
An old man is a paddock of wheat in December
Ready for harvesting. He has prepared
Bread in his life for himself, and for others.
You have been a sun towards the ripening
Of this harvest; a moon in the still nights
Of my accumulation. Rain has been denied
The lips of the earth, but your sweetness has rained
Refreshment on this old head.

Do not let a cloud
Come between the sun and the moon;
Do not bury your song in the dry earth,
Or let your sweetness turn bitter in your mouth;
Do not die in the greenness of your springs.
Even Harry is not dead ...

Mary Oh! Do not remind me of that brightness,
Of that tall gum tree which was my shade, whose
blossoms
Were the crown of my head. Someone took an axe
And cut down that tree and left me to the mercy
Of the pitiless sky.

Old Tom An axe can fell a tree, but a gun
Cannot kill a man. Yes, it can prematurely
Cut the silken thread which binds him to the woman
He loves; strip the covers from their warm bed,
Leaving her desolate for a night—

Mary There have been seven years of nights without
Comfort of morning. That sun out there
Has burned the earth red: but no sun rose
Between the lonely sheets.

Old Tom Yet I say Harry is not dead,
But lives within the space of the sky you were
And your present earth, to shed more than a comfortable
Warmth on your life, to shoot a light-arrow in the direction
You should travel.

Mary What *is* the direction
Of its flight?

Old Tom The line of your boy to this manhood,
And the path of yourself to your love.

Mary Toward
The fulfilment of the first, I will take Johnnie
To the city. But the path of myself
To love? For an old man who has gathered wisdom
You can talk foolishly. When they cut down
That tree whose branches had sheltered me
From storm and sun, they cut the stream of sap
Which fed the flowers of my eyes
Whose withered petals fell into my heart
And choked its flow, leaving a bare trickle
For my child. Then the mercy of heaven
Also dried up and left the earth as burnt and sere as me.

Old Tom (*stirring himself to break her desolateness*)
Tell me, Mary, did Harry really live in your heart,
Or was he just a comfort for your breast?

Mary You should not have said that!

Old Tom I should.
Well, answer!

Mary Harry was a quiet flame in my breast. Every
Breath I drew fanned it to a greater blaze.
Rather was he my breath on which my soul
Took flight, the sky in which it flew.

Old Tom The sky is still serene but for the clouds
You trail across its expanse. That flame,
That fanning breeze, and that illimitable sky
Death cannot, has not, touched. His, and your love
Is a living field growing your life which
No drought can kill. Only your own refusal

Can retard its growth. Sell the farm,
Since mortgage and debt and drought have won this fight—
But do no forget the cool wells in your veins,
Or the bell-birds' call in the disaster of your breast.

Mary There were good seasons in the beginning:
Love poured on the earth, and the earth answering
With crops. It rained the night Harry and I
Came home after our wedding.
It rained well that first year until men
Blasted the sky with hardness and set loose their war.
Then it seemed that love dried in its springs
And the rains fled leaving the sun to consume
Itself and the earth. It rained the night we came home.
We stood in this doorway watching it. "Rain,"
Harry said, "to water the seed planted by the sun."
"Warm sky of rain!" I answered, "Tomorrow night
There will be flowers already growing out of the
moon."

Old Tom The rain
poured kisses into the mouth of the earth that night.
Her eyes, next morning, were still wet with love,
Her cheeks fine with contentment.
She too was a bride stepping through into
Unknown mornings; rising delicately in her walk.
When Harry came out I had just lit the fire.
He said, "The sky rained many blessings last night, Tom."
I replied, "Even on me." "How was that," he said.
I answered, "My heart was an empty cup
Which it filled, and flowing over drowned me
In peace and sleep. There is a measure, Harry,
Which only old age can fill." Then you came out—

Mary And asked you how much rain we'd had. "Two inches
At least," you said. "Enough to overflow
The tanks and perhaps half fill the gully dam.
I could start on your vegetable garden.
That is, if Harry doesn't want me
Down the paddock." "That would be fine," I answered.
"I have all the seeds."

Old Tom And thanked me—

Mary For your careful feet about the place before
I came, and for your singing hands; for the

Welcome of your eyes which shone from the
windows ·
As we drove home the night before.

Old Tom I told you that I had merely drawn some stave-lines
On the walls on which you would write your song!

Mary Bird of the freshening day,
Sun on the earth's lips
Towards wheat-ears;
Singing fire and kettle, singing chairs and table,
White cloth, and the clustered notes of bread,
What happened that your song was not written
Into the walls and timbers of this house?

*(Such is the way in which Mary says this, such is the
lyric singing in her voice, that Old Tom gets up gruffly)*

Old Tom Blast this morning and its signature of betrayal.
What's one drop of a boy more or less
Added to the sink called a city?
What's one more flower of a woman
To decorate its hard pavements?
Sell the farm! You would die here anyway.
I had better get outside and do something.

(Goes towards the door, turns back)

But do not forget the bird and the flame,
Do not forget the breeze which came
In the night and disturbed the bird in its nest
To lovely singing.

(Goes out)

Mary (gazing after him)

Sheep dog of mobs of sheep; husband of many women;
Father of crops of children; what
Are you doing in this quiet corner of the earth?

(Speaking back in herself to her deep memories)

When you came back to breakfast that first morning, Harry,
You said, "Last night has washed the air and the farm clean.
Washed away the stains of dryness. I, too.
I was like the farm, Mary, dry in limb and leaf,
Brown in the earth of my soul; hungry
For greenness, for the soft rains of your hands."
And what was I but the night, with rains
Beating down deep within me, waiting for the morning
And the sun of your fingers in my hair?

"Sun in my hair, sun on the earth's
Lips," I sang, as I washed the dishes
And tidied the house. "The rains
Have gone back into the springs.
The moon will be clear tonight.
O little flowers of the moon
Write your song into the timbers of this house,
Into the bones and fibres of our love.

My hands
Petals to his eyes;
My hair
Rain on the pillow.

Write your song little flowers in the moon
Into the table and ceiling,
Into the little sinews of our love.

My breath
A whisper on his eyelids;
My breast a cradle for his hands.

Write your song little flowers of sun-seed
in the moon
Into the corners of our house,
Into the deep veins of our love."

April. April the seventeenth.
One month after the anniversary of our wedding.
Tonight, seven years ago, we sat here with a fire.
It rained again that night. You were saying,
"April has stitched March into a green quilt
For the land against the frosts of May.
She has sewn a cover which the fierce winds
Will not be able to rip off. The wheat
Is a loom weaving a fabric of harvest. .
Presently, the ewes will drop lambs,
White as daisies against the green of the earth,
Who will sing to the leaves of the quiet trees;
And a month later, will be jumping
Over the air, and butting their mothers."

You had run into Dad in town that day. They
wanted us
To go over Sunday—go on after church to dinner.
Wanted to know why we hadn't been over since the
wedding.

I said, "Time has been a flood lately, with you and I
In a boat sailing under a blue sky.
But we should moor our boat and step ashore
Sometimes."

"Putting a little of that sky
Into a basket for others?" you smiled, "yes, we must go.
I owe your parents the debt of you. Even
The house which sheltered you, which grew you in love,
I am in debt to. Its lights
Used to welcome me no sooner had I
Turned in from the road and passed the bunch of scrub
By your gate. 'We welcome you,' they used to say.
'We announce you to two blue stars which light our lights.'
Your hair was a song which accompanied me
On the long ride back here."

*(There is a sound of men's voices outside. One of them is
Tom's. Then a knock on the door. Mary goes to door.)*

Mary Mr. Trumball, come in.

(Mr. Trumball, a Stock and Station Agent, enters.)

Mr. Trumball Good morning, Mrs. Ashley. I've brought the papers. They
are all in order; and, I might add, you are getting a very
good price, Mrs. Ashley.

(She does not answer.)

Too bad this drought. Anyway, this is not a life for a woman
alone. I heard you are going to Sydney, to your sister's.
You'll be better off there, both yourself and the boy.

(She does not answer.)

As I was saying, here are the papers—

Mary He was a good farmer. They
Who despoil nature to fatten their indolence,
Who rig prices and corner markets
To harness honest labour into more profit,
Took him from me. Took him for a
War which nobody won or could win—
When there is war right here.

War against a brazen sky
And a hot earth and water locked
Under it, or wasted into the sea
And cities. War against wind
And erosion—sweat in the eyes
For nothing! too salt even to nourish grass.
Tom is right. Harry sowed another seed
In earth which no drought can wither.
He lit a green flame, small

As a lantern's, which I will feed
And burn the brass out of the sky
So that the rains can fall again.

I will not sell!

Trumball What!

Mary First Harry and me and Old Tom, and then—myself, Johnnie and Tom—seven years. After buying our tickets, do you know how much I will have left? Just ten pounds and our clothes. No I will not sell.

Trumball Mrs. Ashley!

Mary I will not sell what he and I started out to make. I will not break faith with his faith in this land.

Trumball How will you carry on? Where will you get the money for your next sowing? to pay wages? to even buy food? And if rain doesn't fall soon, there'll be no sowing this year.

Mary The place is not for sale, but for another generation of farmers. Even if I have to carry water from Harrison's spring two miles down the road. *(Gathering up papers from table.)* Thank you, Mr. Trumball, for your efforts on my behalf. But tell them I, Johnnie and I, are not beaten.

Trumball Do you really mean it? I'll tell them. By the way, I can arrange another loan at a better price than you've been paying.

Mary Thank you, Mr. Trumball.

Trumball Don't thank me, Mrs. Ashley. That Higgins is a grafter anyway. Well—I'd better be getting along. Goodbye, Mrs. Ashley.

Mary Goodbye Mr. Trumball.

(Exit Trumball. Mary leans her back against the door-jamb and closes her eyes, then turning her head looks out over the stricken earth.)

This is a place of offended lands,
Of reduced rivers, of dry fire in flood.
A land of cracked leather of faces,
Of brittle hands, of dead feet
Washed with milk of thistles
And sap of majestic timber.

Cry, plains! Cry, bare hills and silted valleys.
Cry rain of sun, and sun of warm rains!
Cry oil of knees and wrists! Cry milk of fingers.

Cry honey of mouths, and flowers of eyes
To wrap you in new springs and summers.

I nearly forgot our pledged union, Harry,
Our trust, our child. I nearly forgot
Your gentle hands in our love, in the earth;
The love of your eyes in my eyes,
In the crops and cattle. I nearly forgot
My dream in that first dawn when I looked out
Onto the greenness of the morning and our lives,
While you still slept the sleep that my arms
Had rocked you.

Your hair was little streams
On the pillow.
Your voice was a small waterfall
In my breast.
Your arms were two rivers
Which bore me to the sea.

There is enough pent-up love in me
To water many farms, to write many songs
For the little flowers in the moon.

(While she has been speaking, a gentle wind has risen outside, blowing up eddies of dust. A few drops of rain fall.)

Soft wind of rain over the burnt earth.
Soft wind of spirit to the new flame of my life.

(The rain sets in.)

Johnnie! Come in—! No. Don't come in,
Stay in the rain, child.
Lift up your small hands to the rain,
Let it make you green. Let it sting
Your fingers and trickle down your wrists
And arms, over your strong young shoulders and chest.
Let it nourish your legs and grow your feet
Deep into the soil of this land.
Let it make your eyes passionate in tenderness
As were your father's.

O God! This land is a woman—
Teach this child to understand this:
A woman who will yield her very soul
To her husband lover; a woman,
As is every woman, unique in gifts and fruitfulness.

ACT I, SCENE 2

OIL

Another farm house kitchen in a different part of the country, six months later. Here the drought was thinner—a small song of water continued in the creek through the summer and autumn until the sparse winter rains. Finishing breakfast is the farmer, Fred; his wife, Kate (a sister of Mary Ashley); their two children, May 19 years and George 16 years, and Mary Ashley.

Fred (turning off radio) They've struck it this time all right. Oil. Big business. 80% into one pocket, 20% in the other. That's the price we pay for developing the country—80% goes out of the country, 20% stays here. Got to have CAPITAL. CAPITAL must make profit. Profit means per cents. In the meantime we've got our rates, taxes, mortgage, agistment-rents, wages, food, clothes all to be met. Better not stay farming, George—better get into OIL!
We must all pull our weight.
No one can swing on the gate
And keep Industries' wheels turning!
That's the lesson we've learnt, and are still learning.
Yes Sir! Oil. Oil.

Kate (glancing at Mary) Fred!—

Fred Sorry, Mary. Just the morning 'blowing off steam'.
Gets one fit for the day.

Mary That's all right Fred.

George Petrol's goin'ner be cheaper fer ma motorbike.

Kate Let's hope it will be a few pence a gallon cheaper,
to drive the reaper and harvester and plough.

(to herself)

Will oil bring more rain?

Will it grow more grain,

Or ease the pain of the earth?

Will it soften the face of stone?

Smooth the sand in vein and bone of the earth

And reduce the moan of tired muscles?

(Including others)

Yes! If we could use it to dam the rivers and turn
the screws

To make Light, POWER—to tunnel the hills and
bring the precious water inland over wide
acreage.

(Enter a Tree, a Sheep and a Stalk of Wheat)

Tree Will oil soften the earth and feed my roots
and keep my leaves green?

Sheep Will oil seal the pores of the earth
against the winds of erosion?

Stalk of Wheat Will oil grow the stalk tall
and blossom the ear?
When the ear is not filled with golden grain
the child has no pleasure in the sun.

Sheep When the winds sweep the grass from the plain
the child does not skip and run.

Tree When the fruit is withered and small
the child sleeps too much,
And does not answer the call.

(Exit Tree, Sheep and Stalk of Wheat)

George That's all screwy. Cheap petrol for ma motorbike.
Brrr.—

Fred Come on son, we'd better start mowing. I'm sorry about—
everything—Mary. Real sorry. But you're Kate's sister,
and you can stay here as long as you like. Stay here
altogether. Kate would like that. So would I. After all, in
spite of drought and everything, the land is the best place.
What would you do in Sydney anyway, Mary? Well—the
place is yours as much as ours if you think you would like
to stay.

Mary Thank you, Fred.

(Exit Fred and George)

Kate Mowing. The oats not up to your knees. I was looking at it
last night. A ghost crop under the moon. I'll just go and feed
the chickens. You rest quiet, Mary. May will clear up the
dishes.

(Exit Kate)

May Auntie Mary—

Mary Yes May?

May I didn't have a chance to say anything last night when I
came home and found you had arrived. I just wanted to say,
I'm sorry. You *will* stay with us won't you?

Mary No, May. I'm going to Sydney—at least for awhile.

May I understand, Auntie—after Uncle Harry, and now—Johnnie—

Mary Yes, May. You were with Bob last night?

May Yes Auntie. Bob has asked me to marry him.

Mary What have you told him?
May I told him yes.
Mary I'm glad. He's a good boy, and he knows farming.
Oil to your fingers and knees,
Oil on your lovely forehead.
Scent of wattle and gumleaves in your bed.
Oil to your throat and shoulders,
Oil on your lovely tresses,
Honey of orange and yellow box in your kisses.

80%; 20%! There are armies marching—
Not shod with steel of war and exploitation,
But walking with naked careful feet—
Who will invade your fenced territories
And reduce your tall buildings of dreams
To rubble in your mouth, grit on your teeth,
And smoke of dust in your eyes.

Mr.

80%—20%, you are a transitional ·
Necessity. You yourself will turn the turbines
Of our enterprise, bringing new floods
Of prosperity to this land.

Mary and May This land
Ancient and young
Ripened in sun
Mellowed in silence and soft nights,
Dreaming flights of singing
Bringing love,
And the word in the earth
Nurturing birth
And hallowed peacefulness.
Oil and wheat and grape,
Labour in usefulness;
Labour of eyes and hands
Weaving the strands of hope and fruitfulness.

Mary Already the sand-hills are dreaming homesteads.
May Already the plains are preparing wheat and orchards.
Mary Already the rivers are pent and aching
to return their waters to the earth.
May See! The sun is wearing the moon's eyes in his smile.
And the moon will be weaving a golden bridal veil.
Mary I will not be staying in the city long, May. I will be
coming back here sometime.

(They embrace)

ACT II, SCENE 1
THE WEDDING BREAKFAST

The interior of a large room or small hall, one year later. A wedding breakfast is in progress. Many of the guests are already somewhat tipsy. It has just been discovered that one of the guests is uninvited and is approached by the Bride's father.

Bride's Father Excuse me, but I do not remember having invited you—?

Uninvited

Guest You did invite me, although you may not remember. I am invited to all wedding breakfasts—but people usually do not remember. I am a sort of wandering poet. I recite.

First Guest He recites! I say, give him a drink. *(To the Bride's F.)* You should have invited him, George—a man who recites! I used to recite at parties myself once. They were good parties. I used to recite er—let me see—can't remember now what it was.

(To Uninvited G.) Here, what'll you have?

Uninvited G. Thank you, I never drink during working hours.

(General laughter)

Bride I think it is a novelty. Like an old bard at a wedding feast. Bard, have you something suitable for this occasion?

Uninvited G. I have one about Odysseus and Circe. You remember the story of Odysseus' wanderings, and how he came to the island where Circe lives? She had a little pig. A charming piece. It is always popular at wedding breakfasts.

B'groom A little pig? Now if it was about ham sandwiches—!
(Laughter.)

Second G. Doesn't sound right thing to me. Circe, and what's-his-name, and a pig!

Bride (to Bridegroom) Darling—you are always thinking of something to eat. Give me a kiss, and let my bard begin.

Uninvited G. Have I your permission?

Bride Yes, go ahead.

Uninvited G. (walking about) Circe had a little pig, pig, pig.
(Laughter.)

First G. Give him a drink!

Uninvited G. Circe had a little pig, pig, pig,
With a head that was so big, big, big.
How did Circe catch her little pig, pig, pig?
Gave him one year plonk to swig, swig, swig.
Odysseus went down into the garden to dig, dig, dig.
Hermes gave him a flower on a little twig, twig, twig,
Saying, "Put this in your pinky before you swig,
 swig, swig,
Circe's tricks will not be worth a fig, fig, fig!"

(As he finishes his piece, he has arrived by the door. He bows and goes out. There is a silence, broken by a giggle and general movement.)

Bride. Oh—how *amusing*.

Third G. I don't think a girl should be living on an island by herself.

First G. Should've given him a drink.

(Enter 3 Entertainers. Their appearance should suggest very spruced-up hoboes.)

First

Entertainer We are three Entertainers—
We heard there was a wedding,
We'll do the best we can
To entertain the Bride and Groom,
The Guests and the Best Man.

Second Ent. The Best Man, who also ran—
Who wooed the Bride upon the side
With a wink and a drink
And a pass of a glass,
And a squeeze of her hand
And a big bland smile.

Third Ent. Do not mind or be offended—
There is no guile
Or malice in our clowning or our song,
We merely wish to entertain you for awhile
So the nights won't be so short
And the days so long.
So that you'll remember to forget
 all but the moment—
And the bubbles blinking at the glasses lip.

First Ent. How pretty the bride is!

Second Ent. How beautiful the bride is!
How handsome the bridegroom.
Aren't weddings lovely! Huh—

First Ent. Is not the Bride pretty
And the Bridegroom debonair?

The Best Man too is handsome
And the Bridesmaids also fair.

Second Ent. The Bride is beautiful
With her lovely golden hair
And flowing veil
And the jewels she does wear.

Third Ent. The Bridegroom is handsome
With such distinguished air,
His clothes are immaculate
And his necktie chosen with care.

First Ent. Isn't the Bride's father distinguished looking?

Second Ent. Isn't the Bride's mother proud.

Third Ent. The Bridegroom's parents are also happy.

First Ent. One can see that the Bride's father
For business has a flair,
A more sumptuous breakfast
One would not find anywhere.

Second Ent. One can see that the Bride's mother
Made arrangements with all care;
The success of everything
Is equally her share.

First Ent. Aren't weddings lovely! Huh—

Second Ent. Aren't weddings lovely.

First Ent. }
Second Ent. } Huh—
Third Ent. }

(The Three Entertainers finish up their antics in postured attitudes. Clapping and laughter from the Party. The Entertainers take a bow.)

Third Ent. Let's sing of love.

(A curtain is lowered between the Party and Entertainers, who come together in an intimate circle.)

First Ent. Love passed me in the street the other day
With a smile that was a knife wound in my breast—
And since, the years have come and rolled away
And left me sleepless in a hopeless quest.

Second Ent. Love met me in the street the other day
And said, "Remember the years that have come and rolled
away?
Those years have brought this moment to us—don't despair."

Third Ent. Love Stopped me in the street the other day
And said, "Steady old drunken lover, this is not the way

To walk with one whom you have known so long—
Think of my reputation, and what folk will say!"

First Ent. (holding aside a fold in the curtain)

How beautiful is the Bride.

Second Ent. Ssh! The bridegroom has fallen asleep. He has drunk too much. The Bride looks restless and unhappy.

Third Ent. Let us go quietly. It is not good to intrude on sorrow, or disturb one who is asleep.
Love itself makes us sleep, and awakens us when it will;
Love is the only cause of suffering, and the only healer
of pain.

Let us go softly, for the ways of love are soft
And as vagrant as the morning breeze.

Let us seek our loves

and our own pains—

And our own remedies.

(Exit the Three Entertainers. As they go off a slow waltz tune starts. The division curtain rises. The Bride and the Best Man are waltzing like two people in a trance. Some of the Guests have departed, some have fallen asleep. Mary is now seen as one of the Guests, seated apart at a small table. A man, Dennis, is also seated at the table. They are gazing into one another's eyes.)

Dennis When will some honest man let me take you to bed?

Mary Sir!

Dennis I mean let's get married. I love you. ,

Mary We've only just met.

Dennis Yes, well met

At a rotten meeting.

Mary How?

Dennis This place stinks.

Mary Of all things! At a wedding—

Dennis Filled with bed-bugs toting glasses
Braying like a pack of asses.

Mary Why did you come here? Aren't they your friends too?

Dennis Business acquaintances whose ends grew
Along with my beginning. I came here
Looking for you. .

Mary That's absurd. How did you know
I would be here?

(The music stops. The Waltzing Couple embrace, and hurry off.)

Dennis I've been looking for you half a lifetime now.
This is only one of the swarming pools of life
I've stuck my nose into in my search for you.

Mary How complimentary.

Dennis You know what sort of soil roses grow in best—
And lotuses reach up from the mud towards the pure air.
The very fact of you being here at all
Is iniquitous, ridiculous, and a profanity.
You missed your step and found yourself down here,
And the inanity of these faces has not been creased
By even a line of amazement at your beauty.
I would like to take you back where you belong.

Mary You extraordinary man. But I like you.

Dennis Let your liking be the breaking open
Of the flower of love.—May I kiss you?

Mary Yes. *(They kiss.)*

Dennis (sings) Let us away
To the green bed of rushes
To the yellow bed of wheat
To the milk bed of cloud spread by the moon
 over mountain-ash,
Where we will sleep towards the east
And our eyes
Will catch the first beams of the sun
And reflect them through the land;

And our ears will gather
The kookaburra's first notes
And carry them to the sleepers on the plains.
I have been waiting for you for a long time.

ACT II, SCENE 2
THE SEA - THE LOVERS - THE DUEL,
AND BONES AND BREAD

The curtain rises on the Esplanade at Manly. Mary Ashley is standing by the sea-wall gazing out to sea. There is a man lying on his back on the sea-wall. The Esplanade is otherwise deserted. Time: The next morning.

Mary The sea—the sea. How beautiful you are. .. ,
It is strange that I, a farmer's daughter
And a farmer's wife, nurtured in my eyes and heart
On the tallness of trees and the green and gold of wheat,
Should love you so quickly and quietly.
The swell and roll of you awakens an immensity
In my bosom—an immensity of trouble and fulfilment.
Yet my heart is quiet, quiet as the silence
Behind your breaking roar.
*(Enter separately a Married Woman, a Spinster and a
Prostitute who stand somewhat in a group by the sea-wall
and also gaze out to sea.)*

*Married
Woman* The sea is a blue and white quilt over a cradle.

Spinster I see newly shorn sheep on a blue paddock.
I went to a farm once in the spring, and
The place was full of sheep and white lambs
And dandelions.—

Prostitute I see it
As the breast of God carrying the lives of man.
(The other two look at her.)
There is a slight crackle of thin ice in the air—

Married W. On the contrary, I feel the sky has closed down
A few inches. My husband once told me '
He had read in a book that some sage was like the
ocean—

Spinster It is a pity that it can also be cruel.

Married W. Life cannot be always a smiling summer day.

Spinster Of course not.

Married W. But one can always forget
The unpleasant side and ignore certain
Aspects of the landscape. Now my husband
Always says that although it is right

That everyone has freedom and equality,
It is a good thing that a window has a latch
And a door a lock. Because there are some people
Who live by breaking into houses
And taking what does not belong to them.

Spinster A certain amount of isolation—

Married W. A little judgement and discrimination.

Prostitute For cooked, and uncooked joints, gentle refrigeration.

(To herself.)

The sea is a woman with many lovers;
Bears ships and cargoes, even of those
Who do not love her. She sings the sun.

She is a forest of storm; and regards
Amorously the moon. Her breast sighs
Towards her soul. She is a plenitude
Of milk. Salt with anguish; moaning
Continuously for unattainable fulfilment.
God rest the sea ... God rest all us women.

Spinster But surely no woman *has* to live—in a certain way?

Prostitute Go away Virtue! Go away to your square hills
And frozen waterfalls. The smoke of your body
Will not melt them.

The mirror of my breasts
Has shown men themselves: the ugly hated
What they saw, and despised me; the beautiful men
Became my brothers, and went out from me like
singing stars.

But what place have you in the warm earth,
In the hot tear? in the smile
That took a wrong direction across a face
And returned bewildered into the corners
Of the mouth?

Have you forgiven someone
Who bruised your flesh; who sent a flight of arrows
Against the fine instincts of your body?
Has pity ever melted the wax of your face?
Or drawn a fine line around your mouth and your knees?
There is a chastity not mentioned in the books you read.

Spinster Your rebuke is justified. But do not think
That all of me is as pale as my face—
There is a rose beneath the hail of my approach
Striving to open its petals in a song,
Somehow surviving the dead rain of typewriter keys
And the vacuum of corridors and filing systems.

I have felt a sun on my throat, in my knees,
When a child stood smiling before me,
Or a bird pierced and intensified the blue morning.
I have tried to forgive the violence of inanity:
Inertial violence, corroding the pores of the skin,
Rusting the hinges on which swing
The five gates of the body; settling
As blight upon that garden called the heart,
Distorting its brightest flower which blooms as a face
Into grimaces of approval and recommendation.

I have visioned a personal sun
Suddenly striking through the fog of faces,
Which would melt me into warm streams
To unfold that rose in an unending
Pure response.

I refused less—

Not because I am more than those around me,
But because to accept less would have been
To cancel the dream of becoming the more that I am.

Married W. I too had my dream growing out of the mystery
Of the sound of the sea on summer nights
Which promised fulfilment. It gave me
The reality of children whose voices
Answered the lap of waves in my breast.
But now a fresh tide is rising against
The limitation of the daily round of a home.
I would be forgiven my shut door
And the cancelled line of the direction of my heart,
Our sister has told us her dream, and I
The outline of my unfinished tale: what
Is the story of your life which seems to have
Run counter to the instincts of our sex,
And yet has reaped some measure of quietness?

Prostitute The beginning of the tale, a dream,
The same as both of yours. Then a man
Who loved me, and whom I loved. We planned and sowed
A crop which would be our life. Then one night
A storm broke over our world, leaving me destitute
But for the shoot growing within my body,
Which I protected till it emerged
In the living likeness of my husband.
I loved another man—this time quietly,
Not planning landscapes, but content within
The allotment-garden of circumstance.
He left me—led by another course

Which his weak blood prompted. I loved no more
As a woman loves a man—but loved
For my child, with the sort of love called love:
And found that men were lonely, lost
Between purpose and delusion; desiring
From a woman, above all else, forgiveness,
And courage for the next uncertain step.

Spinster The sea is the breast of God carrying the lives of men.

Married W. It is also newly-shorn sheep on a blue paddock.

Prostitute It is also a blue and white quilt over a cradle.

Prostitute } The sea is a woman who regards amorously the
Spinster } moon.

Married W. Her breast sighs towards her own soul.

*(They form a still-group gazing out to sea. A young boy and girl rush on, leap down over the wall and run towards the water, laughing and shouting.)
(Enter David and Joan.)*

Joan How blue is the sea.—And that white sail,
a ribbon of coolness tying the sea and sky together.

Those crowded streets and shops.—People's movements
seem to have taken on the strange uncertainty of puppets,
without the puppeteer's hand,
still moving to a forgotten impulse—
their conversation, recorded words played back.

It is as though time was pressing hotly on itself
some event which life for ages has been preparing
the seed.

David Time is pressed against itself trying to pull
the times out of the clinging mess of outmodedness.

Joan All our plans and dreams—where?
All the other millions of people trying to stare
through purposelessness to purpose.—
Can every Saturday morning be the same,
tame, lame distraction of shopping,
or pricing goods in shop windows we can never buy?

David We ourselves, Joan, are commodities
in the circle of credit which inflation will bust.
And from the mess must emerge our dream
dreamed deep within us, and contained inviolate
against the shift of time by some force
which will also give us the energy to accomplish it.

Joan I'm afraid, David.

David You've grown up, Joan, that's all. Grown from a girl trim in a wide skirt, and eyes dancing along the horizon of my world, into a woman moulding my hollow contours into contained volumes.

This morning, and all the other days, is simply my body without you, sharp in conflicts; blunted with casualness; corroded by its life centring in itself, flowing nowhere.

Something—

I think it is you, but I cannot be sure— is opening new areas of consciousness in me. The blood of my thought is moving more freely, vaguely hinting at new directions of living. Joan—Surely there are other men who are feeling this too.

Joan Of course there are. That is what makes me afraid. Not bodily afraid, but rather breathless— It's too fast for me. There are whole crops of feelings being sown in me which are already pushing up green shoots of a new landscape.

David (quoting) "Consciously or unconsciously, every living creature seeks one thing. In the lower forms of life and in less advanced human beings, the quest is unconscious; in advanced human beings, it is conscious. The object of the quest is called by many names—happiness, peace, freedom, truth, love, perfection, Self-realization, God-realization, union with God. Essentially it is a search for all of these, but in a special way. Everyone has moments of happiness, glimpses of truth, fleeting experiences of union with God; what they want is to make them permanent in the midst of constant change.

It is a natural desire, based fundamentally on a memory, dim or clear as the individual's evolution may be low or high, of his essential unity with God; for every living thing is a partial manifestation of God, conditioned only by its lack of knowledge of its own true nature."

It is a natural desire, based fundamentally on a memory.—That is what is trying to emerge in us, Joan—a *memory* of what we really are. We don't have to discover something *new*, we have to remember something which is very old—as old as the earth—as old as God. Something just as tremendous and just as simple as that. Something as simple as your

eyes, and as complicated as their expression, comrade voyager.

Joan Say that, David.

David Oh, I wrote that a long time ago—last year!

Joan I remember the particular night. Say it again now.

David Not without courage must we adventure, heart-voyager,
for surely as night must lose itself into day,
as surely as each of these waves must disappear again
into the sea,
so must I and you as two ideas, as two
entities of self-resolution and containment
vanish!

Tender voyager, I find
this parting to meet is most difficult;
I find the idea of this self-losing, painful—
as doubtless I did when I was begotten,
and again when I came out from the sheltering of
my mother's body
into the world—that was indeed a voyaging!

Was it not painful, yet did my soul sing
when I drew the first breath. And it was with
difficulty
that I learned to speak my peoples' tongue,
and walk upon their earth. "

Always is the soul a little afraid
venturing on a new attainment, always is the heart
gladly distressed when the moment comes.

Look, how calm is the sea. Look how our ship
cleaves smoothly along. Look, comrade-voyager,
our mast-head has caught the first rays of the sun!

(They embrace and go off.)

(Enter two men talking.)

One Man (to the other)

Did you ever hear the story of Carnegie
and Pierpont Morgan? It is just a story—
it may not be true, but it serves to illustrate
a Chinese saying that it's really quite late—
much later than one thinks. These two men
meet on a health-cruise over drinks: and Morgan said,
"You know, Andrew, that 300,000,000 dollar
deal in which I bought your steel interests? I would
have paid
another one hundred million if you'd held out."

What a clout to a man-of-power
just before the dinner-hour! Did Carnegie holla?
No—just turned white, .
and completely lost his appetite for the rest of the voyage.

(Exit two men.)

Prostitute (turning to Mary)

If the sea's surge echoes its rhythm in your soul,
If its mirrors reflect against your heart,
And the taste of its salt appeases something deep in your
body
Tell us, at this moment, when our separate women's veils
Are washed away and our naked sistership draws us
together
In an almost eternal moment,
Tell us what says the sea to you;
What memory does she stir,
What voyage of love or usefulness
Reveal? What hope
Emergent from the apparent hopelessness of our times?

Married W.

Yes - if you are not betrayed
By men who stand upon chairs and scream
The blood out of their hearts to nourish
Fresh ulcers in their stomachs in a dream
Of a cocktail glass and a girl beside them,
And the craving for power that's ever denied them;
Of men who groan and gasp and grovel
Under the authority of a rapping gavel
To compensate for poverty of spirit
Imprisoned in their bodies' wretched hovel;

Spinster

Then tell us, our sister, what the sea speaks to you.
For man was born to wear God's lovely shape—
Not caper on a chair like a well-trained ape.
Man was made in the image of song.
His body can express the opening of petals;
He can scatter the morning with diamonds,
Making glad the sun on his rising.

Prostitute

He can string pearls for the moon's throat—
He can rain dew on his own spirit.

Mary

One day a ship or a plane will come over this ocean
Bearing the precious cargo of a Man
Whose eyes are pure light, who will solace our hearts
And release our souls on their eternal flight.

Other Three Ai! We dream of a Man of a man
Whose breast is a cradle for the infant joy of our hearts,
Whose glance is the swift messenger of our children's
 assurance,
Whose hand is the carrier of their lives,
And whose brow is the safe sky under which they can
 build their houses,
And towards which they can raise their voices in
 natural joy.

Mary Even such a Man will come.
The foam of these waves is the dream of the whiteness of
 His dress,
The undershot green as they break is His fingers
Of rain in our hearts' dry wilderness,
And their roll is our hearts' break on the white beach of
 His feet.

Other Three Of this Man we dream—How do you know he will come?

Mary How do I know I'm a woman? A woman is a night
Whose breast is a dawn which craves the rising of a sun.
In our husband's embrace we sought this Sun;
In our child's first cry we heard someone announcing Him;
We have seen His light in their eyes.
But something—ourselves—our age-long habit of ourselves
Weighted their young souls and turned the herald-cry
Into weeping, and drew a veil of mourning across their
 vision.
But first there will be trouble, much trouble in our lives,
As the waves of this sea roll and break on the beach,
So will the waves of restlessness and hate in the world
Roll and break on us.

Other Three (together) Ah! We feel and know this too.

Mary Few of us will escape. Yet we can do nothing
To arrest this destruction which our own hearts
 have mounted for our purification.
Then in the grey dawn which succeeds this awful
 night
This Man will rise like a new Sun on the horizon of
 our desolation
And heal and renew, and set afresh our direction.

Married W.

and Prostitute There is a new child

Spinster

There is my first child

Three Together Quickening towards conception in our bodies—we,
The always married women, the eternal
Virgins to awakening.

The sea is our breast
Restless for this eternal lover.

(Enter some Old Men, who sit on benches to one side. Enter a Man and a Woman fiercely in anger.)

Man Your eyes are two knives clattering to the ground.

Woman Your feet are steel-shod, tramping in my flesh.

Man Your throat is a crackle of dry bracken.
Your fingers, that were once murmuring streams
In the night, are harrows through my nerves.—
Why is your greenness withered in its roots?

Woman Who dried up my springs
But the sky of your forehead turned to brass?
Who killed the crop of me promised as your harvest,
But the rains of your eyes turned to fire
And the smoke of your breath on our pillow?

Old Men (mumbling together)

We turn over the stones
of philosophy,
We turn over the bones
of religion
We turn over the bricks
of materialistic science,
We turn over the sticks
which supported our faith.

We turn over the stones, the bones,
The bricks and sticks.—

The sticks
and the bricks
and the bones
and the groans

AND THE STONES.

Woman (continuing)

I was walking one spring afternoon in the bush,
And I saw a gum-tree tall and outspreading,
And I sat down beneath it. And I fell asleep;
And awoke, and looked up and there was only the
bleached bones of its limbs
Strident above me. Where kookaburras had laughed,
A shroud of cockatoos fled screeching into the air.

Man What killed this tree, but a thin band of gold
Placed on your finger at our wedding
Turned to a ring of iron about its trunk
Which strangled the flow of sap to the branches and
 leaves?

One Old Man Some sticks are short, others are long.
Some are like a magician's wand,
Some are just blocks of wood—
Enood, enood, enod, enock;
 enock at the door because 'e was poor.
 'E walked and talked with God.

Another Some stones are soft and some stones are hard,
Some are as big as boulders, and some
 are as small as pebbles.
Bones become dry and powder into dust.
Dust is bone minus lust;
Lust is fire minus love. Dear bone
do you still love?

Man (continuing)
There were nights, after the drying winds
Of a day's work, when this tree, thirsty
For the rain of your lips or the cool water
From the well of your bosom, felt sap of gladness
Rising from its roots towards light in its leaves
Which would have been banners of greenness over
 your head;
But you interpreted this rise of light
As lust only for your body, which you made
A market wherein you hoped to buy from me
The necessities of your indolence.
But the cellophane wrapping
 in which you wrapped your wares
Tidily and hygienically from dust and touch
Was a crackle of warning to my fingers;
And the rubber of your lips too suggestive of prophylactics.

Woman That ring you placed upon my finger
Was only gold-plated. Underneath was
Base metal which had fire in it
Which melted the gold, and burnt me. In revenge
I sewed it carefully into a leather belt
For your waist which you could not even take off at
 nights.

Another (in an attitude of listening)
I thought I heard someone speaking.
But perhaps it was one bone to another
In gentle moan
On long distance telephone.

As one skeleton said to the other skeleton:
It's much colder on moonlight nights now
Than it used to be when we had some
Flesh to fan our ardour.

Another Because he was pore he asked for more—
He asked for bread and only got stones.
He got so thin that wen 'e grin
All you could see was 'is shinin' white bones.

Woman (continuing)

Nights. Night.—When the soul would take flight,
But remains corseted by the body,
Even in dreams. Night—when in infancy
One passed with the ease of light
Into the innocent emptiness of nothing,
Which was immediately beyond the gate
Of one's mother's breast.

In childhood

One still fell from the moment of play
Into bright landscapes which, as one grew older,
Gradually became peopled with the figures
Of one's hopes and ideals, which crystallized
Eventually into one single man
Who one imagined would be a rock and a beacon,
A guide and a companion in this now teeming
night.

All We turn over the stones
 of philosophy,
We turn over the bones
 of religion.
We turn over the bricks
 of materialistic science,
We turn over the sticks
 which supported our faith.
We turn over the stones, the bones,
The bricks and sticks.—
The sticks
 and the bricks
 and the bones
 and the groans
AND THE STONES.

Jan How could I be a rock and a light
When I was only a wave-tossed boat
Seeking anchorage? You
Were to be the harbour of that anchorage,
But storms broke the moorings
And set me adrift again on my own sullen shifting
sea. (*He looks at her.*)

You are Eternity set in a living form of life. You
Are my hope and refuge—if you can forgive me!

Woman I can be your refuge—if you can forgive me.—
But you must be my life. Let the sun of you warm me;
And when that sun shines too hotly for your comfort
Seek my coolness.

*(They embrace in the loneliness of their insoluble separate-
ness, and go off.)*

Another Harvest of dust
 of silver and stone
 trickling through our fingers.
Harvest of crust
 of mouldering bone
 where sweat lingers
In the mildewed veins.

God! We want bread, not bones!
Houses, not bricks! Hands to hold
In our own, not bits of wood!
Kisses of warmed wine to nourish
Our nerves and bring back our blood!

All Ring-barked trees
With no sap in the root,
Caress of breeze
On our withered fruit.

(They lapse into shut silence.)

*(NOTE: Any attempt at "characterization" with the old men
is undesirable. They should all, singly and together, mumble
in a monotone almost indistinguishable from each other.
They represent, not different "characters", but merely facets
of one condition.)*

Prostitute Man, woman; woman, man,
down the ages,

Married W. turn the pages:

Spinster mark the plot of history's story:
not glory
of invasion and intrusion,

Married W. fusion of interests,
torn documents: resigned;
or new blind direction.

Prostitute These
are the surface scattering miseries.
The real issues are deep in the blood:
lamentation of betrayal
between woman, man; man, woman.

Married W. Jubilation of renewal
of man, woman; woman, man—

Spinster Spirit reaching out
recoiling again in doubt
gathering itself again
within its pain,
thrusting forward, trusting
toward Union.

Prostitute Oh, what fools we are—when every hurt,
with which one hurts another, returns to bruise
our own heart; every door slammed
jams the springs in our nerves
against fresh delight: every harsh word
is heard by the most distant stars
and returns as a bolt to murder
the shoots of impulse, and twist the course of our lives.

Together We, the always married women, the eternal virgins
Awaiting our eternal lover.

(Exit separately the Three Women.)

Mary Foam of our lives fringing the beach of Existence,
Enduring for a moment like some fragile pattern of lace,
And dissolving back into the Ocean.—

O God of a Man

Or Man of a God—whenever, whatever you are,
Do not let time pass to be lost in the oblivion of time.
Do not let the voice of streams
Be answered only by the crickets
Under the roots of trees.
Do not let the song of the moon
Sing only to the swans that glide by
On the silver eyes of the river.

O God of our life and our living, of our live and
directions,
Do not let our turning away in time bring on time's
desolation for us.
Do not let your Night come, or let
The nights descend from the hills, and the cry
Search the plains; do not let the dogs of strife

Which we reared to adorn our firesides
Fiercely turn on us and terribly rend us.

This land has waited so long
The touch of the Bridegroom's hand.
Even before we came to this land
Was the song in the earth of the unborn cattle
And the germinating wheat,
And a longing in the mountains for the tramp of
human feet;
In the grasses for the impress of lover's bodies in
the evening,
And in rocks for the mason's hammer that their
forms might rise and sing
To their God in living shapes and a new and
splendid glory;
And the rivers to yield their flood in love and
human story.—

O God, let not the flood of your ancient Word
utterly destroy us.

To man does nature look; and if man looks not to
God
Nature will vomit man like a half-digested sod.

O God of the storm and the flood, of drought and
fire,
Of the mercies and qualities of love and human joy,
You are terrible and gentle—
You will plough the field of the world,
And rain a new kind of wheat-crop in the land.
Dear God, our lives are in your hand.

ACT III, SCENE I
EVENING OVER

A wooded hillside. Time: Near sunset, eighteen months later, Emmie Johnston, Mary's eldest sister, is spreading tea-things on a rug. Her husband, Frank, is sitting on a log by a camp-fire, reading.)

Frank (reading) "And Elohim called the Light, Day,
And the Darkness, Night; then
There was 'west-eve and east-dawn—
Day the first."

West-eve and east-dawn. (*Looks over towards the setting sun.*) This is a good time of the day, Emmie; a good time of the year—and a good place to be in at this time: autumn, and the sun setting over the line of hills. '

Emmie The best, Frank.

Frank The time of black grapes wearing the soft down
of bloom,
of white Muscatels turning faintly brown
with ooze of sweetness. The time
of quietness in the body, and clear mind.
The time of fulfilment with the woman
who has walked carelessly with one in the spring
and sweated uncomplainingly with one through the
summer.

Do you want youth back again?

Emmie Why should I want youth back again
when every day with you is startlingly young?
Yes, we were thistle on a spring wind, once;
then we took root and grew our own life.
Now, in me, this life puts out ever more green shoots
to the sun.

This is the best time of life for those
who love—
when time and love has mellowed them in their love,
smoothing the contours of their lives in rich design,
creasing their features with the kindly brush
of character; deepening their eyes
to pools of reflecting light, hollowing their ears
to pure receptiveness of each other's mood.
For it is not until youth with its frenzy is past
that beauty can bloom; it is not

until the heart has been broken many times
and the debris by time swept away,
that Spirit can live comfortably
and express Itself in quiet freedom of movement.
Age is not cruel, but infinitely beautiful.

Frank

I am only just beginning, Emmie,
to read the messages of your eyes,
to fathom the mystery of your breast.

Sunset—the sky's flower of the day.—
Yet there is a shadow in the sun—
The shadow of the unquiet city:
Of men shut of the sky, of the healing
of grass and leaves, of the scale of the wind
to their ears, of the smell of earth after rain,
and the taste of ripe fruit in the early morning.

We are a people deprived. A city
made desolate by sweat. There is no longer
singing amongst people, only cry in the night.
Fear has gone to bed with lovers:
usury has taken away the vision from men's eyes,
and the gentleness of women. Children
are scavengers amongst the garbage-cans
of intellectualism.

There must be some answer.—
Some answer that will fill more than the honest cry
of a few—
an answer to the general cry of men I work with;
of women one passes in the street:
that will open our ears to the pain of another;
and our eyes to the surprised vision of ourselves.

Emmie

Your eyes are young—with what? With the light
of the truth of your attempted honesty.

Frank

Your ears have always been patient with my trouble,
Emmie. If the small flame of one of us
can light another's life, could not a Man
bearing a Sun in his glance burn up the foolishness
which separates us from each other; consume
the curtain of stupor and habit
which covers our eyes from each other's hearts,
and our own?

Emmie

You mean,
someone, like Christ was in His time,
to walk the plains of this earth, and sow
a new crop of human relationship?

Frank Yes. Someone like a Christ. All down the ages
there have been men arisen, anointed
in knowledge and splendour of God: who healed,
who taught, who answered the general cry,
and aroused us once again to seek our inherent
manhood.
They were golden vessels which poured life
abundantly.
They imparted a creative impulse to their time,
drew the direction, stepped life
to a higher level of consciousness,
geared it to a new rate of energy.
(I read that last bit somewhere.)
Why should not this be such another time,
and that such a Man be already on His way
across and through our world.

Emmie I wish Mary could have come with us.

Frank Yes. It would have been good for her.

Emmie She will never come out into the country with us.
I think she is almost afraid to. It reminds her too
much.

*(They are silent. It is quite dark now except for the light of
the fire. Frank goes over and throws more wood on the fire,
and stands looking down on to it. Presently a dull glow
appears on the horizon, which grows in intensity, spreading
over the sky. It is followed by a low, long, rumbling roar.)*

ACT III, SCENE 2

THE DEATH OF THE CITY

*The later part of the same night. A bed of leaves and ferns has been made
up under the shelter of a big tree. Emmie and Frank are asleep with
a rug over them. Refugees from the city straggle in. Some camp
down. Others wander off again. Silence.*

*Enter Mary and Dennis. Mary is exhausted and sits down on log.
Dennis takes off coat and spreads it.*

Dennis Here, sleep awhile, Mary.

Mary Thank you, Dennis.

(Mary lies down. Dennis sits down on log.)

(Enter First Commentator from wing.)

First Comm. The day began the same as other days:
Doors opened—people took in the milk

and the newspaper. Some, already dressed,
opened the gate and went down the street.
The day was already hot—
This, on the higher ground
of the better residential districts.

In the inner suburbs, where soot and sweat
has stuck the houses together in terraces
like links in immobile chains, the heat
was already crowding. One withdrew
one's flesh from one's clothes in the bus or train,
or suffered the overflow of other flesh around one.

The heat did not penetrate certain hotel-lounges
which gyrated gently within their own
limpid serenity. The decorum
of the chandeliers was left undisturbed;
Neither did the heroic figures on the walls,
pursuing their high adventures,
kneeling at the tips of outstretched fingers,
pouring out their declarations of undying love,
sweat much: the wings of birds of paradise
among the blue ceilings fanned the air deliciously.

The morning wore one. The house-wives had filled
their baskets with the obedient animals and fruits
which had earlier arranged themselves on the stalls.
Girls, who all the week worked in offices and
factories,
had cut with the discretion of their purses
lengths from the materials which wound through
the streets
onto shop counters. Men had gone into pubs
and soaked up a few pots with the blotting-paper
of stomach-linings, and had come out
onto the pavements again and stared aimlessly
in the direction of dinner.

Twelve o'clock ...

One ...

Two ...

(Enter Second Commentator from opposite wing.)

Second Comm. Then the procession began ...

First Comm. *(surprised at interjection)*

Then the procession began. No one
seemed to have gone home. They seemed
suspended in the still vortex of the heat.

Second Comm. Rather one should say, then the processions began,
For it was not one procession, but several,
that seemed to have no actual beginning,
but began of themselves.

First Comm. First
there was a group of little girls
who strewed petals on each side as they walked.
Then there followed the business men and
acrobats—

Second Comm. BIG Business Men.

First Comm. Yes—but business men will do—business men
and acrobats vied with each other
in a whirling contortion of limbs.—
Street-urchins and prelates cried the virtues of the
present.—

Poets laureate and newspaper proprietors,
having exhumed the dust of libraries,
chanted the deeds and glories of the past.—
A clown kept blowing great blasts upon a horn;
and an idiot who had not been told,
chewed his spittle in a paroxysm of delight
for the amusement of the onlookers.

There followed a rabble carrying banners
on which was written in symbols
the story of evolution—the tale of misery and joy;
of magnificent defeats, and returning victories;
crying imprecations and hopes in every tongue of
the earth
which,

Second Comm. carried up by the winds
moaned around the spires of palaces and
cathedrals—
the sad sweet notes in poets' dreams.

First Comm. And burning above the crowd, the sun,
terrible in its implacable shining.

The day continued to develop with the insistency
of a catherine wheel.
The sky was a dome of brass, from which
the proclaiming horses reached down triumphantly.
A table came down the street, and an auctioneer
metamorphosing out the automata of wheels,
took bids for the serrated areas of financiers'
speculations.

Second Comm. The hoardings over shop windows started speaking
in tongues.

First Comm. Barber poles assumed the proportions of gigantic
totems,
and shaven-headed customers
hurried from the open doorways to sign on for
derelict voyages.

Second Comm. Politicians and generals smiled benignly
from amongst the fruit in windows.

First Comm. The acrostic type-writers had formed up
and were waiting for the Lord Mayor complete
with cap and bells, but he was still dressing
for the part.

The cross on the steeple blossomed into flower.
Couples broke from the milling throng,
and embraced ecstatically toward the new hopes
and victories.

Second Comm. Then it was as though the buildings themselves
began to move.

First Comm. Yes, even the buildings seemed to move—to dance—

Second Comm. People stopped in amaze.

Some gathered round with upraised hands
to catch them if they should fall. Others
climbed up to apprehend the flag-poles
which had been passing from building to building
encouraging the scene; and to implore
the blue turrets to at least be reasonable.

First Comm. Reaching the top, they forget their errand,
and with one foot on the parapet, and thumbs hooked
in their waistcoats, they harangued the crowd
with the wordless tears of mutes.

Second Comm. The rings of people supporting the columns
became wild with enthusiasm,
pledging their souls, their all, for the triumphant
missions:

"We will gather our eyes", they cried,
"We will gather our eyes that are strewn
along the sea-shores, and sell them to the jewellers.
Faith needs no eyes, and we march
to new destinies, new glories."

(Pause.)

First Comm. Then the people went home. The day finished,
and the sun set.—One can imagine
a ploughman with his team, the sunset
a halo about their necks and steaming flanks.

(People have gradually come forward to listen.)

Second Comm. What happened then? How did the end start?

*One of the
people*

We must fill in the lyric interlude—
between the going down of that sun,
and the fire of his anger in the flames
which burned our city.

Second Comm. (to another of them)

Tell us what happened in your district
after the last flicker of the day had died,
in the pause between the dying of the day's fire
and the terrible spark which leapt out of its ash
and consumed the night and the bed.

Second One We had dinner and sat about.

I went into the street.
An old man came out of a house
and sat on the stoop and lit his pipe.
He was joined by an old woman.
They were silent, except for: the tenderness
of occasional common-places.
A young couple strolled down the street
in the direction of the park,
in measured tread of ballet-dancers,
their arms interlaced,
each one's vision within the other's eyes.

Third One Night settled down.

For a moment the skyline lightened
like a dream of flowers,
and then all was quiet again.

Fourth One Then it happened. No one knew how.

(They all look at First Commentator.)

First Comm. Then the inconceivable, yet inevitable occurred.

We are so blind! We think the earth will put up
with us for ever.

Or perhaps we don't think at all so long
as the majority of us get what we want;
so long as most of our appetites are satisfied.
Then it seems that the earth will endure us no
longer.

I do not say God, I say the earth,
because it is the earth whom we violate and despoil.

That is what happened tonight.

The pools of blood could not even be dispersed
by sweat which dripped from the corner-stones
of the buildings. The pains of the earth
gathered into brooding silences.

Tiny flames of thought
ringed themselves round the edges of the pools,
eating their way to the centre, where they mounted
in pillars of fire intersecting the arches—
and the city burned.

*One of the
people*

We saw a white swan
rise from the flames,
and circle away over the plains
where the children were dancing.

*(Exit Commentators. People who have come forward, fold
back into the shadows. Silence. Enter Kullervo, coming
forward to footlights, centre, and addressing the audience.)*

Kullervo

This is not new—the violent hand of oneself
turning upon one in the quiet night. Many times
has it happened in the course called history.
My name is Kullervo. I am a character
out of the great Finnish epic, Kalevala, which has
in this time,
been musically commented on and explained by
Sibelius.

I am really a symbol of your own lives: First,
the strife and misery of youth, then unwittingly
I wooed and won to my desire, my sister—
in other words, I married my own blood
instead of seeking to unite with my spirit
(which is the quest which any hero should engage in).
Then I sought oblivion from my crime in war—
confirmation and conclusion of daily agitation and
petty angers;
grasping after prizes which melt in the closed fist. War,
which is our total action to separate us in ourselves.
But violence breeds only disease in the flesh
and rot in the soul; and led me
to the gloom of the forest, and my own sword-point.
But I have heard of One, with eyes of forgiveness,
with touch of release, walking this night of our earth,
sowing this night with a day which will blossom
into a new era of peace. Him I now seek:
to yoke my life to His will—for His yoke is LIGHT.

(Goes off.)

(Enter Sage, coming forward same as Kullervo.)

Sage

My feet know well the pathways of this earth,
the quiet lanes of heart, the highroad of endeavour.
My teacher, who was one of God's own saints,
planted his living word within my heart
and bid me share its harvest with all men,
help lift the load of ignorance, which hangs
like a fog over the city of mind.

Knowledge, he said, knowledge and the true
harmony
of East and West, and all the peoples of the world,
could only be won by men opening their hearts
to the divine music which their own true selves
sing in choruses of abundant joy.

And so I have gone about from place to place,
teaching the principles which would enable men to live
in fullness. Some called me charlatan; some
said I was quite a nice fellow but rather out of date.
Some called me a great Sage, a Healer, a holy man.
None of these I was; but it did not trouble me
that so few understood: my reward
was in fulfilling my beloved teacher's wish.
I go now to meet One who is the saint of saints;
the teacher of teachers, the First One and the last.

To seem him is to see God—for there is no difference
between the Unlimited Being of the whole universe
and the human form, which He, from time to time,
assumes in his compassion for us all.

(Goes off.)

(Enter Youth.)

Youth From the dawn's lips I come,
The dawn of your patient night—
Bringing you news of your ancient home
And its gardens and paths of light.

Not in some sky of heaven
Apart from this lovely earth,
But in the light of a tear-drop riven
By the smile of your pure mirth.

Oil to your hands and knees,
Kiss to your shoulders and eyes,
Song to your throats for their ease—
And the word of your heart's replies.

This is another time
Of the Word and the clod.
And the bell in the heart is a chime
Of the voice of God.

(Exit Youth.)

Voice One by one the little lights
that have been wandering aimlessly among the
marshes

gather themselves, and marching over the hill
pour themselves into the blue abyss
from which will blossom the morning.

Presently the sun will rise
lighting the yellow wheat-ears
on the green stalks of lives, and the dew,
which has washed away the pain from the earth's
eyes,
will magnify the sun,
as the winecups balancing the mountains
nod to each other in joyful salutation.

(Curtain to indicate passage of time.)

ACT IV
THE DAWN

The curtain rises on the same scene. Time: Dawn. Dennis is squatting on his heels tending a fire on which is a billy-can. Mary wakes.

Mary Have you been awake all night, Dennis?

Dennis No, I slept for a bit—then you must have opened your eyes, and something of their light crept under my eyelids, for I looked up and saw the dawn breaking the edge of the sky. Fortunately I shoved a few things in a bag before I called round to pick you up last night. *(Taking her a cup of tea.)* It's hot anyway.

Mary Thank you. *(Sips)* You make good tea. Anyone would think you had been brought up in the country. It's a long time since I smelt wood burning. The smell and the sight of trees and the fire awaken again the earth in my blood. *(Looks around.)* I wonder is there anything left of the city—whether Emmie and Frank—

Dennis I don't think they would have got back before it happened. They usually take their tea with them and get back late.

Mary, will you marry me? I love you, Mary. I have a small farm. It is a good farm. I know you would like it.—Or is Harry—

Mary Harry sleeps in the quiet of my heart.
Harry sleeps; but the qualities which lived in him
Live in me, as they are living in you too, Dennis.
Our bodies are born of the earth, are nourished

By the earth, and return to her: we sleep in death;
And perhaps dream. But the qualities of a man or a
woman

Are of God: and that which was of God in Harry
Awoke that which is of God in me. That
I could trust with you, for you are a man
Possessing the qualities that a man should possess.

I loved Harry with my whole heart and soul.
But that heart and soul have been made older
By time and circumstance, and sweetened by death.
Now love wakes again in me in a clear, quiet song.

I would love your farm. I would make it our farm,
But something is against my lips saying, "Yes",
And their receiving your kiss. Something
which love knows and the great singers have sung.
It is as though we were before the very threshold
Of a doorway set in time. A door
Before which the great singers sang as it opened
Before their astonished eyes.

The destruction

Of the city last night was a blow
From the hammer of God on the heart of man,
And against this door for its opening.

I love you, and there is a singing in my heart,
But will that love and singing reach fulfilment
In our two lives locked away in our own world?
A new old life with you as my husband,
A new old earth to freshly turn
And it yields its old harvest of new life?

Are these people to rebuild their city
With new buildings of new but old design,
And live their new lives in the old pattern
Of eternal want, trying to secure security
And settled happiness before the next destruction
occurs?—

The embrace of pits—smell of hair and blood,
And fingers of hot pain;
The calamity of lips
And the clash of economics in sighs,
And impulse, scaled according to wage-groups,
Gurgling like strangled throats;
The objection of cool silk to hot moist hands;—
The blue opening of sky between two strokes of a bell,
And a tall, white flower growing out of the mouths
Of two people who have tried to be honest.
It is not the love which the singers have sung.

Dennis

Who has not visioned your vision who has stirred
The least bit in his soul's sleep; almost heard
The first note of this singing some new singer
Of tremendous dimension will announce?

I have dreamed and I dream of such a singing
Which will be as the hooves of white horses
Or the horns of black bulls; as a hammer of the sun
Or the anvils of the hills; as crowded lances
Or the unsinging plains; as a moon in the deepest courses
Of the blood, turning the enlightened cells
Into bright mirrors of small pains necessary for our
growing.

I have pondered would such a singer necessarily
have us renounce
Relationships rooted in the very earth of existence?
Deny us all comfort of companionship
During the remaining years or lives of search?

Curtain

Our eyes and stop our ears against eyes' light
And the lovely music of a voice.

Mary

It is not so much what this singer would order or require,
As what would give him happiness—a strange word,
perhaps,

In regard to one who would be a Master of songs and
singing—

But still just that. He would not say,
"This way in which you have wandered millions of years
Is now forbidden you—your eyes
Shut from the flight of eyes, your ears closed to the
speech of love,

Your lips sealed against kisses." But rather,
"A few short years I am with you: listen to my singing:
In it is contained all love speech for which your ear
was stretched,

All loveliness for which your eye has searched,
All honey for which your mouth has thirsted. My song
Is the singing which your lives can be, if you can hear it."

A few short years of prisoned eternity in which the
prisoner

Was divinely free and ensplendored—Soul

Pinioned on the bar lines of notation burning the world
in song.
And if we listened unwrapped of ourselves to his singing,
Even as at any concert where one forgets oneself the
person one is with,
That would be his artist's reward, his compassion's
fulfilment.

Dennis

I am moved beyond brightness by your passion's flight
And close-cradling. Yours is a storm of a love and
a retired weeping !,
Which only a woman who has sung earth and fought
brass for her child
Could know; the love of a woman who could suckle earth.
If, when only dimly suspected, it sang my hands .
In channels of fresh labour, now before its gathered flood
I am powerless.

Mary

Yes, I have fought brass.
And could have grown grass with my eyes
If love in fleeing had not taken my tears with it.
I lean my back against the years which have passed.
They were strong years—which threw up last night,
And brought down this morning. They are a current
of years
Of supporting, a wall of years against return.
Yet it would be sweet, so sweet—to fold myself
To sleep beside you: to wake
With the sun of your eyes above me in the sky of
my certainty.
Dennis, where is your farm? Is it slung
Between hills by the sea like a cradle of children
On the shore of eternity? Or is it
Where the plains level out like an honest man's eyes?
Or is it where mountains keep long the secret of
lover's kisses?
But it would not matter where it was
If I could sleep and wake
Beside you and feel your hands
In the tresses of dreams
And taste the nectarine of your mouth
In the early morning.

But still I would know, for I am like one going
towards death
Who would remember details of the courtesy of
your love.

Dennis A place called Hall's Creek.

Mary Hall's Creek?

Dennis The same farm, Mary—and the same "Old Tom"
again preparing it for your return.
(Hands her letter. She reads.)

Mary Hall's Creek,
Sunday.

Dear Boss,

I am looking forward to the arrival of Mary and
yourself—that is if she has accepted you, which of course
she has. She will get a surprise when she sees the place and
me still on it.

I have carried out all your orders. The place looks fine.
The fencing is finished. The wheat has been sown in the
new paddock I turned over. The house has finished being
painted and looks a picture.

Tom.

Tom. My old friend and teacher, whose eyes
Were blue flowers in the withered grass of his face.

Dennis After our first meeting I knew that you were the
woman or none
I would marry. I did not over-reach myself
In impertinence of thinking, but rather
Bowed myself before the fact of love and considered
What might please you. Higgins had his price.

Mary The old farm.—
We turn in at the gate by the clump of trees
Which is a song of magpies in the early morning.
We go up the drive which is a grey curve in peace
To be greeted by the tap
Which is a silver throat to the garden.
The lintel above the door
Is a nest of birds,
The door itself a flame
Waiting for us to ignite it.

The threshold is a bed of sleeping flowers.
We cross the threshold. We go into the house.
The walls are flags of welcome.

The sitting room is an expanded tear
Lit by a sun.
The bedroom is a flight of steps
To a suspended pulse
In the sigh of three kisses.

Dear God, you make it hard for the flesh of a woman.
You have made our bodies a Golgotha through the
ages
Which supported the cross of two loves—one, for a
man
In your likeness, the other for your own dear Self.
Somewhere—in the saints, perhaps—these two loves
meet.
But I am only a woman with a body being melted.
In your fire.

*(The edge of the sun's disc comes over the line of the hills.
The sun mounts into full view. Coming along the next ridge
is seen a company of twelve men led by One Man who is
dressed in white.)*

CURTAIN

The Bridge

SCENE: *One end of a bridge on a country road. The Old Man is seated on the side of the road. The Young Soldier comes along the road from opposite direction to bridge.*

Young Soldier They'll be here any time now within the next half-hour. You had better get across the bridge, old fellow—the last of our trucks will be pulling away as soon as I get back across myself. We can take you along until we catch up with the rest of the people.

Old Man Why are you over on this side by yourself?

Young Soldier I was sent back to ascertain just how near they were.

Old Man Have all the people got across.

Young Soldier Yes, every soul in the village. Most of the livestock too. Only two or three old cows left behind, and a pen of fowls that somebody forgot, or didn't have a crate for—and I saw a cat. Have you come far?

Old Man A long way.

Young Soldier Other side of the village?

Old Man Way beyond.

Young Soldier Walking?

Old Man Walking. Walking. Walking. One gets tired at my age.

Young Soldier Yes. Can I help you?

Old Man Did you let the fowls out?

Young Soldier Of course.

Old Man Good. They may not be eaten tonight, then. And the cat can look after itself. But the cows—the soldiers come into a village firing everywhere at nothing, just in case anybody is about.

Young Soldier Are you rested enough? We had better get across.

Old Man Don't wait. I will never be rested enough. When you have been on the move for another fifty years, you won't be rested enough either. Don't wait. I will get up again after I have rested some more.

Young Soldier "Some more" will be too late. They'll be here any minute now. Let me help you.

Old Man You are kind.

One day
you will no longer be a soldier bearing arms,
but a fighter on the field of Realization:
crossing the bridges that span the swirling currents
of delusion, by-passing the enemy's outposts
of sense, storming the ridges of his strongholds of
energy,
and plotting your campaign against the capital of
mind.

And one day
you will be an old man of gathered strength
sitting before the bridge of your final crossing,
awaiting the word from the Supreme Commander
to cross.

But you must go now—otherwise you will not live
to be a real warrior.

Young Soldier Old man, your words
are as if I was listening
to human-speech for the first time.
But please let me help you now—the enemy—

Old Man There is nothing to help me about, my son. In five years, or
five days, or five minutes, I will be rested and ready to cross
over that bridge.

Let me assure you that the enemy will not alter the
appointed time one second.

Young Soldier I understand you, and will go. One day it will be as you
say—I will be a real soldier.

(Kneels before the Old Man.)

Old Man Yes, my son, you will be. This little war will not keep itself
ignited much longer. The children will get tired of
quarrelling over their toys and hurting one another. Then
they will go home
and sleep and dream of fairies and brightness,
and spring mornings and summer evenings.

Chorus Men are children who sleep and dream
Of gardens and palaces,
And a quiet stream
Which winds 'neath the trees and solaces
Their hearts.

They dream
Of opening a door to a morning in spring,
Of long summer evenings when they need not go to bed,
Of hot afternoons by the ocean where the sands sing.
And behind closed eyes more dreams from the book
just read;

Or of nights when the tips of the waves are silvered
with moon's gleam,
Or of tender steak, or chicken just cooked to the turn,
And strawberries and bananas, and coffee and cream;
Or of a fresh puzzle, or a new joke
to learn,
Or the speech one spoke
In reply to a toast—
And most
Of all the ability to discern
The profit's flood, or the title's return.
Men are children playing games in the street—
To lose is bitter, to win is sweet.

Old Man Then they wake up and start playing with their toys again;
and think up new ways of hurting one another more.

But remember, beneath all this flows a deep current of
love for truth and God. And this stream constantly breaks
through the crust of folly and flows clearly. And there is
One in the world at the moment, God-sent, called BABA,
who can direct these streams to universal good.

But you must go! Save your life
in order to lose it at His feet.

Young Soldier Give me your holy blessing.

Old Man I will give you a word which will dominate all words—

*(He takes the Soldier's head in his hands and whispers
something into his ear. The Soldier's head sinks low to
the Old Man's knees for a moment, then he springs up,
salutes, laughs, and goes off over the bridge.)*

(Sound of rifle-fire is heard off.

Enter an Enemy Soldier.)

Enemy Soldier Ha! This is better than a cow. *(Takes aim with his rifle at
the Old Man.)*

Old Man What do you mean, "better than a cow"?

Enemy Soldier (pausing in his aim)

Nothing in the village to have a crack at except an old cow.
Everyone gone. But you—you're a man—

Old Man Did you happen to see a cat?

Enemy Soldier A cat! What's—

Old Man That's good. You would probably have had a shot at that too. You might have frightened it. Did you manage to hit the cow?

Enemy Soldier What do you take me for! I won't miss you either—
(*Takes aim again.*) ∴,

Old Man Do you mean that you might have hit the cat if you had shot at it?

Enemy Soldier You've said enough—

Old Man (*raising his hand and speaking in a commanding voice*)
Don't shoot! I am a very important person.

Enemy Soldier Aw—what's the matter with you? Week after week and a man sees nothing to shoot but an old cow, and then he comes across someone of the enemy who tries to make a fool of him. What sort of a war is this? Why do they give a man a gun if he can never use it?

A very important person! Then why are you dressed up in those old clothes.

Chorus He has asked a question
the answer to which he would never understand.
(*The Old Man stands up. His ragged coat has dropped off, and he is resplendently dressed.*)

See! The Sage has stood up
revealing himself in his true attire!
the ragged coat was merely
a symbol of his greatness.

(*To the audience*)

The question is on your minds,
The question which can never be answered—
Who is the Sage?

What is the measure and gauge
By which he measures our hearts and his own?
By what is his vision enhanced
That he finds

The bell of his heart's pure tone?

(*Aside from audience*)

Our words are the cry of our soul—
His are the words of God.
O God! How can we enter the way
His feet have trod?

Old Man (*to Enemy Soldier*)

You can see now that I am not just some old nobody, can't you? But you would hardly believe me if I told you how wealthy I am!

Enemy Soldier Why the old clobber, then?

Old Man I thought I could the more easily escape notice that way.

Enemy Soldier (sarcastically)

But you were too used to driving round in a motorcar and got tired after a few yards, and had to sit down and get caught. That's pretty funny, I would say.

Old Man Your commander might not be very pleased with you if you shot me and he found out who I was. He could get a big exchange price for me. You would get promotion.

Enemy Soldier That's an idea, now. If I took you prisoner, and you were important, I jolly well would get a promotion.

How much are you worth?

Old Man Easily the price of a bale of straw.

Enemy Soldier Come on now—don't be funny—I'm not in the mood for it. How much are you worth?

Old Man As I said. Easily the price of a bale of straw—fresh straw, I mean.

Enemy Soldier All right! You've said it! I knew all along you were trying to make a fool out of me: this is where you get it.
(Raises rifle, as Chorus cover their faces, aims, and fires. Where the Old Man was standing is seen a bale of straw. Other enemy soldiers come on.)

Second E.S. Hey! Look! Harry's gone crazy—shooting at bales of straw!
(They all laugh.)

Enemy Soldier (wildly)

I must be going crazy! There was a man there—an enemy. I said, "This is where I bags one" and fired. And look!—it is a heap of straw!

(Kicks at it. Others try to soothe him.)

Other E.Ss. Come on Harry, before the others finish up all the beer—they forgot to scuttle the schooners!

Come on—this war's enough to give us all nerves.

(They start to go off, except Second Enemy Soldier who has been looking round. He stoops down behind the bale of straw and picks up an old coat.)

Second E.S. Hey! Look here, an old coat.

Enemy Soldier An old coat! I told you there was a man there. He was standing there. I fired at him.

(His mates drag him off. The soldier with the old coat throws it down and hurries after them.)

And walking with the contained vigour of youth and the expressed dignity of age, is seen the figure of the Old Man crossing the bridge.)

Chorus He is going his way,
Leaving behind that which is worth no more
Than a heap of straw,
Or some cotton-waste, or one shoe, or some clay
Compounded of dreams.

In our eyes the world seems real,
But real is beyond what seems—
And one day the dreamers will awake from their dreams
Of life and death,
And find the path to the throne of God in his holy breath.

The Stranger

SCENE: A street, off which is a garden, with a cottage in the back-ground. Time: A bright sunny morning. The Woman is watering the flowers. Enter the Stranger dressed in travel-stained clothes. He stops and looks at her intently. She looks at him, and goes on watering.

Stranger Your heart is a virgin flame on the altar of your beloved;
Your eyes are two candle-flames singing in the night.
Your cheek is a meadow of milk; and your lips
A gateway to eternity.

May your husband's smile
Always be fuel to your heart.
May his head always be a comfort to your breast.

Woman I am unmarried, and I have no beloved. Why do you stop
To speak senseless words to me?

Stranger Your hair is a night in which he hides a kiss.
Your brow is a dream in which your love and his love
Meet beyond the boundaries of fact. Your eyebrows
Are two arches of night which meet above the sky of
your eyes.

Woman Words are coins which have never yet
Bought anyone his dinner, nor paid for a ring
To put on a woman's finger.

If you're going somewhere
You had better be on your way,

Or you'll never get there. If you live round here
Maybe you have some work to do too.

(She returns to her work.)

Stranger I am always going somewhere, but I am always looking for
a place to rest.

Woman Oh, you'd better try the big house up the street. The woman
who lives there, her husband has been dead for two years
now. She may be wanting a new one.

Stranger I passed it. The door was closed, and the blinds were drawn.
Haven't you noticed that all the doors are closed and the
blind drawn in all the houses this morning, and that the
street is deserted? No one, except you, has answered the
sun's knock, and come out to greet the morning.

Woman You are right. What could have happened to everyone?

Stranger They all died in the night. It is the same everywhere I have
been. Closed doors and drawn blinds. Everyone in the world
is dead.

Woman That cannot be. How could all the world die?

Stranger It cannot be, but it is a fact just the same. You are the first
living person I have met in my wandering. Perhaps that is
why you appeared to me to be so beautiful.

Woman Everywhere you have been! But there was no one here dead
yesterday. Yesterday was Market Day, and the street was
full of people.

Stranger That was last year.

Woman You mean I have been asleep for a year? How could that
possibly happen.

Stranger Easily. Sometimes people go to sleep for one night. Some-
times for a whole year, even many years. Sometimes they
go to sleep and never wake up again.
*(A cat comes round the corner, and in the distance a dog
barks.)*

Woman Well the animals still seem to be alive.

Stranger Yes, the animals don't die so easily. They seem to, but when
one dies there is always another one in its place. The
flowers don't even go to sleep. They are always awake and
alive. Only the flowers are immortal. The flowers are the
children of the sun.

Woman You and I are the only two people left in the world, then?

Stranger That is right. May I sit down awhile? And perhaps

you might be good enough to give me something to eat,
before I go on again. I have not eaten for a long while.

Woman Of course, sit down, and I will get you something.
(*He sits down, and the Woman goes into the house.*)

Stranger (singing)
O little children of the sun
Take a message for me to that One
Who is our Father: Tell Him
Now my wandering is done—
Tell Him I have found His all-reflecting light
Singing as two candles in a night
Of pure loveliness; in a virgin breast
As an altar flame pure and bright.

(*Woman comes out with dainty food on a tray.*)

Woman What were you singing?

Stranger It was just my heart talking to itself.
Thank you. This looks delicious.

Woman You said "Before I go on again." Where is there to go
now?

Stranger Nowhere. Wherever I go, I will come back here—to you.

Woman Do you really love me?

Stranger Yes. I have always been looking for you. All my
wanderings were but to find you.

Woman Then do not wander any more.
My heart is a song of welcome to you.
My eyes have been a question which your coming
Has answered. Every morning
I have come out into this little garden
And watered the flowers and whispered to them,
"Today he will come—look your very brightest."
And they
Tossed their laughing heads and said, "Yes, today
he will come."

Stranger Beloved.
(*They embrace and go up into the house.*)

Chorus They met a long time ago.
That is what has drawn his footsteps hither,
That is why she has waited for him.
She went to his room one evening when she knew
he was not there,
And left on his pillow a flower
As simple as a kiss.

He went to her one morning at dawn while she was
still sleeping
And left his love on her lips,
With his kiss he painted his image in her heart.
That was a long time ago—
The living moment of now.

Happy is that woman
Whose lover has visited her in the secret hours
When all the house slept.
Whose face she has not seen,
Whose form she has not known.
But whose kiss remains in her soul.
Yet has she sorrow of the nights,
Sweet restlessness in her sleep
Until he comes again;
Forgetfulness during her duties of the day,
Quick half-glances towards the door or the gate:
And only the flowers understand the messages of
her eyes.

Then comes the day
When he comes down the street
And stops by her gate,
By the gate of her heart,
By the gate of her fasting ear,
And speaks the words already treasured up in her
memory.
And he asks for a little rest
And a morsel of food
(For long has he been on the road.)
And fair is that night
When she takes him into her house,
And he wanders no more.

First Turn It does not take love one moment to cross the six
planes of existence,
But He comes gradually
Because He must carefully unwrap each sleeping
heart
Before each soul can receive His kiss.

Second Turn He comes every moment.
Yet few are ready to receive Him
He comes especially from time to time
To renew the whole world with His presence.

First Turn He is here now.

Second Turn Do not let this be an occasion for regret amongst
any of us.

First Turn Do not let any of us this time have our lamps
unfilled.
Or our lights fused,
Or our hearts closed,
Or our lips sullied with false speech.

Second Turn Or our ears stopped against His golden Word.

Chorus (to audience)

O you women who have waited a long time for this
moment of love,
Be very careful of your love—
Watch every step you take in your heart;
For not yet
has He found
anyone to love Him
as He should be loved.

The Madmen

SCENE: *A bare place. In the background centre is a little hut, in front of which is seated the Saint. The Aspirant is sweeping the ground.*

Aspirant For a whole year I have knelt
My spirit before his holy feet in service,
Watching in his eyes to learn his soul's sweet vision,
Gathered the pearls of his ecstatic tears within my
heart,
And made of them a rosary of God's dear Name.
So my own heart awakes
Through insects' hum,
And distant beating of a drum;
Sometimes it takes
On the song of a bird, or the sound of a flute,
And sometimes the root
Of my joy springs
From vibrant strings—
All melting my life in a flameless fire of love.
(He put down broom and picks up an empty bucket and goes off.)

Chorus We must question him on his return
How he came to such fortune. We would learn
How he won the company of this saint.

It is said, one moment in the company of a saint
Is worth a hundred years of penances and prayers.
It is said that by some mysterious means a saint
 shares
His glory with one who serves sincerely, wipes away
 all taint
Of past from the heart, making it bright
As a mirror so that it reflects the light.
Perhaps this Saint may even be one of the servants
 of BABA.

*(Aspirant comes back with a bucket of water which he sets
down.)*

How did you come to your present envied estate
Of service to such a one?

Aspirant That is a story marvellous in itself.
I will tell you:

 One day I was in the city
On no particular business, walking along
Marvelling at the hurrying, jostling throng,
Half scornful, half with pity,
Noting the desperate weak, and the arrogant strong,
Like ants but with less courtesy,
Or starving people who'd just heard a dinner-gong.

Then two men, madder, by their antics
Than the others, madder than two professors of
 semantics,
Bowed deeply to each other, as if the other'd
Been God.

 Quickly I smothered
Surprise, and followed at a discreet
Distance, thinking, If this be the convention
Of the truly mad, I'll find his retreat,
And by a timely question learn his secret.

I followed him out here. After two or three days,
When he was in the mood, he gave me his blessing
And sent me back to the city to report to him what
 I saw.

I went. The streets were empty of human kind—only
Animals paced and scurried along the streets.
Then I saw that this man and the other were the
 only truly human-beings I had seen.

Now I knew what was meant
By man in the image of God.

Chorus Through the saint we can distinguish
The light from the clod.

Aspirant He is God's regent on earth—
Chorus The source of all joy and true mirth.
Aspirant The father who protects us from harm,
Chorus The mother who gives us birth.
The light is in all men,
Aspirant But the saint gives it reality.
Chorus Without him its reflections beguile and surround us;
Without him the shadows it casts confound us.
Aspirant When the saint is loved and revered
Chorus The affairs of the people flourish.
Aspirant With a single glance he can rouse
A hungry heart;
Chorus and with a word
Establish material prosperity.
Aspirant On the other hand—
Chorus Yes, we know—we remember Surmad:
Aspirant His violent death caused an empire to fall.
Chorus You can insult God if you wish
Aspirant But be careful not to hurt one of His friends.
Chorus The saints are the friends of God—
He looks after His friends.

The Moon

SCENE: *A Moonlit Garden*

Girl How beautiful the moon is tonight.
(Enter Old Man.)
Old Man It is very easy to think the moon is beautiful in a spring
night, and the magic of love in the blood. But who admires
her when the air is thick with frost, and the wind cutting
through one's old coat like a knife?
Youth Who are you?
Old Man My name does not matter. Say: One
Who heard about BABA too late in his life.
One whose purse was empty
When it came to buying a ticket for the banquet,
And the song-recital which followed.

May you both be illumined by the time you grow
old.

May you have the sun of His summer
To warm you in the winter of your life.

Youth For something of that we dare hope. We try
To live according to His teaching.
We are regular in our meditations and devotions.

Old Man Will that be enough?

Youth And our love and our life together—we hope.

Girl And our children—

Youth And what adds up to a home
And the attempted fulfilment of obligations,
And our way made through life without hurt to
others.

Old Man Another pair of dreamers. Show me one
Who has made his way up through life
Without the ladder of other human lives.

Girl Our love then—and our firm belief in the Master.—

Old Man So long as you do not forget His Name in your love.
So long as each of your forms to the other
Does not obscure the picture of His face.
So long as you can clearly remember Him
On your Bridal night; and in each night
Of stretched limbs between clean comfortable sheets;
And when you awake in the morning and the quick
coffee and toast
And the run to the bus and the planned day
Does not make you forget Him;
And the birth of each child
In your eyes is His birth again in the world.

It is not easy.

When there is too much of the moon
in the blood, there may be blood
on the moon, and the sun
may burn on rising.

The moon
is changeable and cold.
It rises too late, or too soon.
It does not warm one's bones when one is old.
The moon is not good.

(Exit Old Man)

Chorus Do not be over-disturbed, but take heed
Somewhat of his words. He came as a warning
That you might have joy instead of mourning
Of the long days before you.

Shall we tell you his story?

He married, as most folks marry,
Full of dreams of companionship, and his seed
Taking root in the soil of a happy home
And growing steadily to become
The joy and support against need
In old age.

Worshipped God in his own way,
Loved his children, supported, protected them
From every wind of the world—never rejected them
For waywardness, strove to lead
Them in the way of God and the laws of men.

Girl And then ?

Chorus Came the day—
We will not go into details—one by one
They grew up and went their own way.

It is not new—
The vanishing dream as the hopes recede.
It is too late to begin over again
To build a new life.

Girl His wife? If she still loved him—

Chorus He lost her too. She died.

Youth He has heard of BABA only recently?

Chorus A year, two years perhaps. He spends his whole time
now in devotion to His Name.

Girl Then it may not be too late.—

Chorus It is never too late
To learn the Name of the Perfect One
But why wait till late
Before the journey is begun?
Do not spend too much time looking at the moon
But seek His sun.

A few prayers, a little meditation is soon done.
A "life well lived" may inflate
The ego more than a life of sin. Meditate
On the sun whenever you look at the moon.
Meditate on the sun whenever you look
At the flowers of your children's eyes.
Without the rain of His blessing the garden dies.

First Turn Without the foundation of His Name
The well-built house will fall into decay.

Second Turn Without the bread of His Name
Hunger will come one day.

First Turn Without the sugar of His Name
Love will become soured and fly away.

(NOTE: *First Turn and Second Turn denotes "movement" of Chorus as against just "straight speaking" and is equivalent to Greek Strophe and Anti-Strophe.*)

Chorus Even then it is not easy. Listen to another story.
(*Enter Young Man.*)

Young Man Thank you for calling me. Perhaps I can throw a little light on this difficult subject.

I also got married. Why, I am still not sure, except that I grew up in a pattern which included marriage.

We had two children, sweet as chestnuts and apples. It was good coming home in the evening—the dinner on, and the wife getting the kids ready for bed. Some talk of the day during our meal, our life and our plans. And some friends to visit us, and to visit.

Nothing of the exquisite stuff of movies and novels—the romance of night-clubs or hovels; just ordinary and solid and satisfactory.

On week-ends, as with many others in my position, built our own house, doing myself what I could, and buying material and specialized labour with a housing loan

I was prepared to pay off over twenty years—confident that the economic fears that haunt so many, would not get me—barring another war

of course. Knew about Avatar and studied His discourses with a group which met every week.

Then came the chance to see Him and I did.

He was kindness itself. One day He told me to meditate that night on His Name. As I sat there in the dark fear came to me.

The warm mornings of His presence and the easy afternoons

thinking about the morning, thinking about my wife and the children, turned into a night of cold fear:

If I gave myself up to this Man I might lose them.—Who knew

what He might ask of me? In my mind
this Man suddenly threatened my whole way of life.

Chorus What was the outcome of this struggle between two
loves?

Young Man Who mentioned the word love? I feared
to lose my *possessions*: the habit
of my children and my wife, and my small
daily round. This Man might break open the cage
of our lives—the cage which I had built
strongly and negligently. They were my birds,
not God's, who fluttered against the bars
and piped small songs.

Yes, I would willingly
work for BABA, but give Him myself
and mine? Ah, that was another matter.

Girl What was the outcome?

Young Man It was not then.
It is only since, that life itself
Has thrown at me every circumstance
To force my hand, and break my heart
In love. Only now do I know
That He is myself; He is
The woman I dared to call mine, and He
Is the children of our union.

You
Will excuse me now ?

(Exit Young Man)

Girl It is going to be difficult—

Youth Yes, it is going to be difficult.

Chorus Depending on
Whether you wish to sleep and dream,
Or awake
To the light of His day.
Sleep is a comfort, sleep in a dear one's arms
Curtained thickly by night against the alarms
And the trials of the day.
Sleep is a dreaming,
And dreaming itself is a sleep teeming
With promises.

In sleep one dreams of fame
And position and wealth,
But one does not dream of His Name.

From sleep one acquires good health
And energy to run the race,
But one never sees His Face.

Do you want sleep and dream
And sunny landscapes which seem
Real? or strive to efface
Your individual selves in His love and by His grace?

(The Youth and Girl are now sitting facing one another, each deep in meditation.)

They have made their choice.
They have accepted the challenge which life has
thrown at them.

Their minds are lost in His Name,
And their hearts are turning into crystal cups for
His love.

First Turn It is not going to be easy for them. \ People
talk glibly about God—but who is God
and where is He to be found?

Second Turn It is not going to be easy:
It is even very difficult to realize the true form of
the Master.—
Certainly
A few prayers, a little reading and meditation,
Trying to do one's duty and live honestly
Will not cut much of the ice
Which surrounds the heart.

First Turn Only fire
Will melt ice—but who,
Unless he be a Prometheus,
Can call down the fire from heaven?

Second Turn And who could endure such burning
Without the cool grace of the Master?

First Turn Think of Kaikobad repeating His Name.
For fourteen years. Now
Suns and moons issue from his speaking.
He has seen a fraction of BABA's real form.

Second Turn Think of Gustaji, twenty-five years silent;
Think of Eruch and Adi and Baidul and Ramjoo
And many others with a life-time of service
To His feet—Have they seen His true form?
We are not saying they have not.
We are only asking the question.

First Turn No, a few prayers and a little meditation
Will not quite do.—A life-time's dedication
May get one on the true path.

Chorus (to audience)
We thank you for your attention,
And say, "Goodnight" to you.

The Quest

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Seeker	Advocate of the Formless
Chorus	Disciples
A Man	Man who has met Baba
Idle Man	An Old Man
Easy Finder	Baba
Illusionist	Baba's Disciple

PROLOGUE

This is the tale of a man who from early youth
Set out to find God's own dear Form and Truth.
His search for beauty is his soul's first quest
Which he finds, and enjoys sweet peace and joy and rest.
Until through his heart's friends and his own soul's voice
He is warned he must leave all for God, and the bitter choice
He chooses; and sets out and wanders the years of his life
Till he loses his life on the battlefield and the strife
Of God's Name which brings not glory, the hero's reward,
But the seed and the bud in his soul of God's Word:
God, who is BABA, the one Ancient One,
And his quest is finished and his real journey begun.

SCENE 1: *Section of interior of a room.*

Seeker It was late afternoon. The sun was behind the trees,
So that here where I sit was in shadow.
There was a footstep outside the open door;
My heart rose to meet it.
She came into the doorway
The dew of love bathed her face,
And her eyes—ah, who can say
What the eyes of a woman in love are like?
They were a single messenger of the one eternal light.
I could not move
I could not go forward to meet her.
But my arms raised themselves towards her,
And she came forward and crouched down by me.
She came forward with the hesitant certain
Movement of water—
Each step an unfolding of her to me,

And an unfolding of me to her—
And she was before me
Like a flower growing out of the earth
With its face upturned to the sky.
And the unfolding infolded in melting.
She stayed only a moment—
A moment which contained eternity
And the unveiling of beauty and the unrolling of joy.
She stayed only a moment—but since,
My room has the fragrance of spring,
And although it is now night
It is lit with the soft light of afternoon.
The light of her soul was in her eyes,
And in that light I am lost.
She is the eternal mother
And the eternal virgin of my love.

(Enter Chorus) ·

Chorus We were attracted by the light and perfume coming
from this room—
But there are no lights on, and there are no flowers
anywhere?

Seeker There was one here, who was the harvest of flowers
And the gathered light of many days.

Chorus Do you wait for her to return?

Seeker Yes. I live for nothing else.
And nothing but the thought of her keeps me living.

Chorus Do you know that she will come again?

Seeker She will come again when it is time –
Whatever time means.
She was here yesterday, or last year,
I do not know. But she will come.

Chorus How can you be certain? Women sometimes—

Seeker Because all my life have I sought her.
As a child, I lived in the country.
I used to go outside at night
And weep to the stars. They
Were reflections of her light.

As I grew up
Music and poetry began to torture me. That
Was merely the outward sound of her movement,
And the outer form of the word of her lips.

When I was still older I started to paint,
Trying to find her, trying to find her.

I asked every woman I saw for news of her.
I asked the old men in their wisdom for direction.
I asked the little children to lend me their inno-
cence.

Many times I thought I had met her,
But the moment always came when I knew it was
not she.

Then one night in my dreams a Woman came to me
and kissed me.

And the fire of light ran through my body and limbs.
And another night a great Sage appeared in my
dreams

And gave me the right directions,
Which I have tried to follow, although
Stumbling, and mostly falling at every step.

Chorus Then you met her?

Seeker After a long time. At first
I did not know it was she.
It only gradually became clear to me
As the veils of her eyes parted,
And the light which I had been seeking
Shone direct from her soul.

Chorus Outside the dawn is breaking. Perhaps
This may be the day when she will come again.

Seeker Perhaps today or in a hundred days or in a hundred
years—
I will wait if necessary through eternity.

(Pause to indicate passage of time.)

Chorus He has sat here now unmoving for a long time.
His mind is lost in his heart
And his heart has melted
Into the form of his beloved.

Our desire is toward man—to love and be loved by:
To protect you in our arms, and be protected by
your hands;

To set bands of love and possession around you,
To surround you by the silver outline of our heart.
To cushion your head when tired upon our breast,
To position ourselves comfortably in life
By the effort of your endeavour. This is part of us:
This part would hold you to your present state
Of vision and faithfulness.

But another part of us
Urges you to go on and find that true haven
For us which we seek. For there is the saying,
"The woman for the man, and the man for God"—
You to lead, and us to plod in the way of your feet,
Comforting you with the comradeship of our soul
undivided and complete.

Chorus Solo I We have heard,

Chorus The ears of our hearts have heard
Of the Word
And the form of God in the world
In the name of BABA.

Solo I We have heard,

Chorus And our souls are stirred
With new hope—
And our hearts are as flags unfurled ,
With the name of BABA.

Chorus We say,
Though our hearts break in the say,

Solo I "Go forth and find Him;

Chorus Bind Him with love
And yourself and ourselves in His Way."

Chorus We dream deep in our souls of this Man
Who will span with the bridge of His love
The vacancies of our lives,
Who will unfold the gold of our deep inherencies,
And release that which strives
From the deep earth of us
Towards the light of our origin.

Already we begin to sense his breath as the fan
Of His wings as eagle, as dove,
And our soul sings with the sale of our lives yet
untold
And the seed of His light in this land,
And the rivers which now die in the sand
Eternally flowing and nourishing the lives to come.

Seeker Why is it that this Name moves my soul,
When I thought I had already reached the Goal?
Someone beyond even the limits of her chaste beauty

Is calling me. What fresh pain is this
That makes a new misery of my hard-won bliss?

Chorus Now he has heard the Name,
Now he has heard the Name of the True One,
His sleep and his peace is gone,
He will never again know rest.
He must leave the beloved he has found in his
breast,
Leave her dear lips and arms—and set out again
On his eternal quest.

Seeker This is the most bitter moment.
Must I never have rest, or the joy of men
In their loved one?

Chorus Rest, no. But all joy if you will.

Seeker How?

Chorus Give her to Him. For He is the Self
Of you both, your Source and your Goal.
Take the white hand that lies in your breast
And with her seek the feet of the Perfect Master,
Give to Him both your poverty and your wealth.

He is fighting desperately.
His heart is breaking.
Be merciful, O God!

Seeker Give! Give! Always am I asked to give.

Chorus It is He in His kindness and love
Has given you such moment of joy
Denied most men both in life and in death—
The joy of your dear one's form in your heart,
Her kiss in your soul, her sigh on your breath.
He gives as a loan what we must eventually return.
He has given us fields and streams,
The grandeur of mountains,
The pleasantness of valleys.
He has set lights in the sky for our guidance,
He has lit lights in our hearts for our joy.
He has given women unto the companionship of men
And men for the comfort of women.

But no one can own
a tree or a mountain
or another soul—
But in due time must return what was loaned.

Seeker BABA – BABA -
You have been the reality behind my soul's dream.
You have been my own longing for myself.
You were the light I saw in her eyes,

The Word which in beauty formed Itself into her lips;
She was the dawn of announcement of your Sun.
BABA - BABA - Always it has been you who I have
been seeking.

Once I was a stone,
But because of my longing to meet you BABA
I became a tree.
Then I had leaves with which to feel your touch
Should you pass my way.

Once I was a tree,
But in my longing to meet you BABA
I became a beast.
Then I had eyes to look at you with love.

Then I became a man
Endowed with speech with which to ask the way to
you;
But because my speech became the agent of my .
wants
I have spent cycles looking for you.

Difficult it is, in a given life,
To even hear the name of a Perfect Master. ,
Having heard His name, and being convinced that
He is that Living One,
A man has wasted his life, has denied the very
attainment
Of manhood, if he has not set out to find Him,
And having found Him, surrendered his life at His
feet.

For a life has no reality, but is a frame
Wherein the soul conducts the quest
For Itself; a sounding board for the Name
Of God, at Whose behest
The soul journeyed in the immensities of journey-
ing to become a man.

It is given to few to be a Shams Tabriz and go straight to
God; most of us have to take the path of Majnun whose love
for Leila brought him to love for God, and to the feet of the
Master. The search for beauty is the first quest of the lover.
But even the utmost beauty is only a reflection of the
Beauty of God Who is the source and spring of all beauty,
but Whom beauty covers. As Jelal-uddin says:

"What is all beauty in the world? The image,
Like quivering boughs reflected in a stream,
Of that eternal Orchard which abides
Unwithered in the hearts of Perfect Men."

To tear the veil of beauty is to tear the very stuff of the
heart, which one hesitates to do; one bows before the image
one has made and says, You, you are perfect.—
Then comes the voice of a friend

and the cry in the soul
To awaken from sleep and dream—
Even sleep of peace and dream of preciousness—
precious as jewels compared with common stones.

Since beauty is so beautiful, how much more beautiful
must God be. BABA—I will seek you if need be to the end
of the world and my life.

(Seeker steps out into street.)

(Enter a man.)

Man Goodmorning, friend.

Seeker I will answer your greeting
And call you "friend" if you can answer my question.

Man What is your question?

Seeker Where will I find Baba?

Man Baba? Who's he?

Seeker A man I am looking for.

Man Never heard of him. Don't think he lives round
these parts.

Sorry—

Seeker Ha! A good start. Don't apologize! BABA - BABA - BABA
(Exit Seeker.)

Man Baba! *(Shrugs and goes off.)*

Chorus How can a man forget the reason
He became a man, and ask, "Who is BABA?"
A tree does not ask, What is sun, what is air?
But grows towards the light, and waves its branches
in joy

When the wind blows. A child does not ask
What is father, who is mother, but turns
In the hurt of its play to their loving arms.
Because of His Name

the rocks dream in the sun.

Because of His Name

the flowers weep in the night.

Because of His Name
the birds wing in endless flight.

Go on, O disturbed one, till you return to your heart.
Find Him for your soul's satisfaction, and for ours.
A hundred you will ask, Where is BABA?
And the voice of their mask will say, BABA? Who is
BABA?
But a few will return
The fire with which you burn
And reply in true tones the Name you repeat,
And link in a chain the steps of your feet.

We will go with you
Counting the years and the hours,
Supporting your weary feet
With our feeble powers.

We will share your thirst and the sun,
And suffer the cold rain, and the pain
Of each disappointment, until you gain
His feet, and His grace is won.

SCENE 2

(Idle Man lying under a tree, by roadside. Enter Seeker.)

Seeker BABA – BABA – BABA – BABA -
Idle Man Have you lost something?
Seeker What?
Idle Man Have you lost something?
Seeker Yes. My inheritance.
Idle Man Your inheritance—that's pretty tough. Someone do you out of it?
Seeker Yes.
Idle Man Bad luck. Couldn't you take him to law?
Seeker Law? A clever thief like this one always works within the law. If he's really clever (like this one was) he can even make law support his crimes. He can even for a time, convince one that he has acted in one's best interest in stealing from one one's rights.
Idle Man Was it much?

Seeker As much as the sum-total of creation's effort. If you took the undivided effort of a long life, and then of a man's son's life, and his son and his son for all the generations since the beginning of man, you would have the amount I lost. (*Sits.*)

Idle Man (rising uneasily) Don't worry about it old man. As long as a man has his health and the world before him—

Seeker What is health and the world to a man who has lost his peace of mind.

Idle Man Get yourself a good job, or start a business of some sort. Work, that's the best thing for a man. Everybody's lost their peace of mind these days, just because they don't want to do some honest work. They're all trying to dodge it—that's the matter with everyone—
Hurrying and scurrying
About like ants. Scrapping
Like dogs for a bone, yapping
Like puppies at a feather pillow.
Must be time for dinner. Don't worry old man—
(*Exit Idle Man*)

Chorus It took not a moment for the Self to lose its peace.
The moment God woke up and asked, "Who am I?"
And answered "a stone", "a cabbage", "a fish" and "a worm"
And rooted in the earth, and stared at the sky,
And basked in the ooze and broke in the storm.
And He said, "I am mighty"; "I am very meek";
"I am a great warrior"; "I turn the other cheek"—
It took not a moment for Him to lose His peace.
What was lost in a moment, will be found
In the moment of a glance, of a word, of a touch,
When "I" deluded meets the conscious "I",
And He upon Himself bestows His grace,
And answers the question, "Who am I", with,
"I am myself".

Seeker BABA - BABA - BABA - BABA - BABA -
(*Enter Easy Finder.*)

Easy Finder Have you lost someone?

Seeker BABA - BABA -

Easy Finder Have you lost someone—someone whose name you cannot forget?

Seeker Not someone I have lost. Someone I have not yet found. I seek the Perfect Master, The Avatar of the age:

The Word which was written on the title page
Of the Book of Life. The Man
Who spanned the span from God to Man to God:
Who woke the stone to singing clod
Of earth, and broke the earth to birth
As a tree, as a beast, as a man,
And broke that man to the adoring dust
Which is saint and mast.

Countless lives He spent
Until was rent the final veil between
Himself and Self. To return
Again and again to ignite and burn
The veils which hang between our eyes and truth.

Easy Finder I understand your doctrine. But why choose a way so wrapped up in illusion? Your Baba may be a "perfect master". There have been many; Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, and a lot more who *said* they were perfect. But to worship such a person; to seek out one if he be living (granted that he is truly attained), and gape at him, is the way of the herd which cannot think for itself. God is everywhere: in everyone, in every stone and leaf. He is not some Person walking about the earth. He is all persons, yet beyond the grasp of all save a few. Open your eyes, and look and see. Drink in the beauties of nature; think of all men as your brothers. All, all is God; and God is All. (*Exit Easy Finder.*)

Solo 1 Chorus A truth, and a lie.—

Chorus Would he see Paramatman in a pig-sty?
In the bullet's wound, and the naked eye
Weeping the soul's desolation? His God
Is an ashamed sun, and an empty sky.

Seeker (rising) BABA - BABA - BABA -

(*Exit Seeker.*)

SCENE 3.

(*Seated on the ground is the Illusionist repeating spells.*)

Illusionist Ah-ha-shi-ginga-bongara-sha-he.
Ah-ha-shi-ginga-bongara-sha-he.

(*Makes gestures.*)

Ah-ha-shi-ginga-bongara-sha-he.
Ah-ha-shi-ginga-bongara-sha-he.

(*Enter Seeker repeating BABA - BABA,*

Ah-ha-shi – What!

Seeker BABA - BABA -
Illusionist What mantra is that?
Seeker The Name of the Blessed One
 Whom I seek.
Illusionist What will he give you if you find him?
 Powers? Fame? Wealth?
Seeker Self-Realization when it pleases Him.
Illusionist You aim high! What is Self-Realization?
 Can you grasp it—will it make music in your hand.
(Rattles money.)
 Can you wear it? *(Plucks a fine coat from bush.)*
 Can you eat it, or drink it?
(Takes a silver cup from limb of tree and drinks.)
 You look as though you could do with a new coat.
(Tosses Seeker the coat.)
 And a good feed. *(Offers food.)*
Hang around here for a while.
 And in return for a few slight services I will teach
 you how to get all these things.
Seeker Thank you but I do not think I could use them.
 I seek to escape from illusion, not create more
 entanglements.
 BABA - BABA -
(Starts to walk on.)
Illusionist (thoughtfully) Self-Realization. Will he give you that?
Seeker When it pleases Him. But why dream again.
 Of that which when dreamt about is only another
 dream.
Illusionist Is it not Self-Realization that you seek?
Seeker I seek only to look upon His face,
 To feel the touch of His hand,
 To hear His voice in my soul.
 O BABA, when will I see your Face?
 When will my heart be stirred
 By your silent Word?
 When will I feel your embrace?
(Illusionist hurries out.)
 O BABA, why have I made this journey from stone
 to tree
 To beast to man, if not to see
 Your Face and touch your Feet?
 A man who has not seen and touched and known,
 Has completed a journey which is incomplete—
 He is less than a beast or a tree or a stone.

SCENE 4

(An open space. The Advocate of the Formless is seated on the ground with a group of disciples before him.

Enter Seeker.)

Advocate of the Formless (teaching) The Self is to be understood as formless, qualitleless, all-pervading—

Seeker (coming forward with joined palms)

Can you, O Guru, tell me where I shall find BABA?

Adv. of Formless Baba, Baba? I have heard that Name—

A Disciple He was the man, sir, that they said was giving darshan to the multitude.

Adv. of Formless Ah, yes. The man who has been saying he is the Ancient One.

Seeker O Guru, you have heard of Him? Where can I find Him?

Adv. of Formless Calm yourself, my son. What is it that someone says he is the Ancient One. That also am I, that you are too. This is a quest that is to be made in solitude, not at the heels of the rabble crying, "A new Avatar!"

One should find some delightful spot near the junction of two rivers, not too far from a village so that one has not a long way to go to beg one's food, and not too near so that one is disturbed by the dust and dogs. One should select a spot not too near an ant-hill, nor too near a rushing torrent. Having found such a spot, one should take one's seat and meditate on the formulæ "Atman is Paramatman, the all-Pervading, the Indivisible, the Formless, One-Without-Second.

Seeker He it is whom I seek, O Guru. He who is not divided in Self and not-self. He who is formed of nothing but Himself. He who is all-pervading even that He pervades my limbs and urges me on to find Him. May I ask you a question?

Adv. of Formless Certainly.

Seeker Have you, sir, realized the Self?

Adv. of Formless I will be honest with you. I have not. Realization of the Self is not easy. Forty years now have I meditated on the Self and strove to conquer my mind. I have attained to peace. Ultimately I will find Self,

Seeker Ultimately! O BABA, how is it that a man who has striven for forty years should be satisfied with peace, when you are in the world to make war! How is it that a man can remain in dreams, when you are here to awaken. BABA - BABA -
(Goes off.)

Chorus

We know the texts by heart. But what is a text
But empty words, unless its truth
Breathes on the breath and sings in the blood—
Unless its flood drowns one in death
And bears one again in re-birth?
There are five highways to God: five roads
Which cut through the jungle of mind and lead
 through the heart's swamps;
But how can one caught fast in a jungle or swamp
Even see one of the paths? And how without a
 perfect Guide
To take one's hand, traverse the frightening dangers
Of that path.

We know all the texts: God is this or that;
God is not this or that. God is God—but we
Are not moved by vague abstraction. We want,
We need, someone to serve, someone to be our
 friend,
Someone to touch and be touched by, to look
And be looked at; someone to love with our love
Which is all we have and know.
The greatest intellect falters, or loses itself
In the mazes of its own creation, but a child's trust
Never lets go of the hand it holds,
And love goes all the way.

SCENE 5

(Seeker is seated by roadside, repeating the Name. Enter Man who has met Baba.)

Man Sweet to my ears is that Name which you call.

Seeker Sweeter to my eyes would be the form of the Name.
I call His Name: I ask everyone I meet,
"Can you give me news of my love whom I love
And have never seen?"

Man You have never met BABA
And yet you repeat His Name? O BABA,
What devotion is this! And a fool like me who has met you,
Has received the blessing of your glance and touch
Forgets your Name. *(To Seeker)* I take the dust of your feet.

Seeker Water for my heart, I need, not dust from my feet.
If you have met Him,
If you have bathed in the lake of His presence,
And drunk a cup of water from His hand
Tell me about Him. Sprinkle me
With some drops of words from your heart-stream.

Chorus The figure is apt. This is the age
Of the "water-carrier". This is the time
When men are even building great dams
To catch the earth-rains.

Man It was in a place
Of much water that I met Him—a place
Called Andhra.

(Chorus begins its dance of flowing water).

Chorus Andhra is water: Godavari, blessed by Rama,
And lines of saints who wandered its wooded banks,
Bathed in its stream, and sent pregnantly
The breath of their spirit upon its waters.

Man For two weeks BABA toured Andhra, and I
Was permitted to accompany Him for the whole tour.
For two weeks, stopping at towns
And remote villages where people had come
Travelling all day by bullock-cart and on foot;
Visiting houses, cottages and huts of business men,
Congressmen, farmers and labourers.

Chorus At Gunter
There were 5,000. At Elure, 12,000 had assembled.
At Tadapalligudem, where Baba celebrated
His birth this time on earth, 20,000
Waited to pass in file before Him
To receive His gift of fruit, and to enjoy
The fireworks at night. Gopalapuram
Mustered 15,000. Korrvu and Rajahmundry
On the banks of the river Godavari, 16,000
Between them. Amalapuram, Razole and Kathapati
Had 5,000 each. And the seaport Kakinada,
12,000 all told.

Man And at each place
God sat down and rolled up his sleeves
To do a job of work. Baskets piled high
With bananas were placed by his side;
And the people, brought into file by ropes
Or the linked hands of his workers, filed by,
Each to receive a fruit from Baba's hands.
And with each gift of fruit, a hidden seed
Of blessing for future fruiting.
And in simple words taught them:
"Those who only see this form of Mine,
Do not see Me. Search in your hearts,
And through your hands' pure work, to find My truth.
And know that in every service served in honesty,

And every act of love where you are not,
I am. I am the Ancient One, Highest of high.
Fortunate are those who serve and love Me."

Chorus Andhra is water bearing upon its surface
Clusters of lotuses called villages,
Where the speech of the people is small waters
Rippling over stones, and where children
Strongly moulded in delicate form, play
As one would imagine the children of God
Should play.

Man The road followed always along the canal banks
Of Godavari water—always beside
These placid singing streams.

Chorus Along this road
We met a man dressed in the rags of this world
Seated before God's throne.

Man Along this road,
A youth, hot with love's fire, his eyes melting
In streams of light, sang in sweet tones his own
Sweet song of light.

Where another danced
For two hours to a small tinkling percussion
Accompaniment.

Chorus Solo 1 Where a young girl,
Delicately as Radha poised in love,
Sighed with her eyes and hands and feet again for
Krishna.

Man And a boy, a mere child in years,
Improvised songs for the Beloved; and
Wept, and harangued us to love God.
I fold my hands before all on this road.

Chorus Solo 2 Andhra-paradiso—
With no fall, and no expulsion from the Garden:
But again with the seal of God's feet upon her earth.

Chorus Solo 3 Australia also when God in one of His
Inexplicable moods of mercy, sets
His white feet upon these golden shores.

Man And everywhere God went, and always
Was the light lit, and the song of light,
Full-throated and rich in pure intensity, arose—
The song of praise of God in human form.
And the hearts of the people were unsealed
To the living waters of God, and the faces of the
children
Unfolded into singing flowers.

(Pause.)

Seeker Wonderful are your words. Once when BABA was Jesus
 He turned water into wine, and intoxicated the wedding
 guests.
 This is almost as remarkable: with a mere description
 Of water, you have allayed my thirst and brought me hope.
 Do you know where He is now, and how I can meet Him?

Man He is everywhere but that place where one said
 "He is there." Only the love of His Name
 Can open the path to His feet.
 Go on friend in His Name till sight of His living
 Form is won,
 Till you lose yourself in His love, and your quest is done.
 (Exit Man.)

Seeker The way of His Name! The way of His Name. The
 way of His Name.
 The way of Kabir, the way of Nanak, Chaitanya,
 Abu Said and the rest.
 The way of the fighters, of the men of peace, who
 broke
 The serried ranks of illusion and silenced the citadels
 of craving
 With an arrow of a word from a Rama's bow,
 With a stone of a word from a David's sling
 With a stroke of a word from a Sigurd's sword,
 Or a keen thrust of a word from Achilles' spear.
 O BABA, when will I meet the merciful sword,
 The kind spear-thrust, the sudden rifle of your
 glance?

I ask and ask and ask. I call in my heart and I ask.
 I ask the stones and the trees and the beasts and the
 dust—
 And all I get is an empty echo
 From the dome of the sky, from the vault of the
 heart, of "BABA!"

The stones dream in their dream;
 The trees wave their branches in joy
 and shake out their leaves and blossoms
 and bear fruits in contentment;
 And the cow with sure instinct
 finds the sweetest pastures:

All other men seem engaged in some work of profit
or advancement,
I alone am without work—a fool on an open road.
Yet I cling to your Name, O Beloved,
as a child to its mother's breast,
as a lover to his sweetheart's waist
with his eyes searching her eyes for the secret.
O dearest Baba, beauty ineffable,
I do not want safety and comfort,
Or the wandering life of a fool,
I seek the storm of words of your eyes,
I seek the sweet silence of your glance,
So that your Word may live in my heart in words
of praise.

BABA, BABA—Where are you? Who are you? What
are you?
You are love—but what is love? What *is* love?
(To Chorus.)
Do you know, can you say "What is love?
Or are you mere shadows of this fool of me—
Fool shadows of a fool following him
While his face is towards some drift or moving shaft
of light,
And when he turns away, rushing to take the lead,
crying,
"This way, this way!"

Can you tell me
What this dream-word in the dream-vocabulary of
dreamers
Means—this softly beguiling word "love"
Which betrays men's manhood and sets them
wandering
Like gypsies without song?

Chorus We are old in experience. Many lives
Have rolled by, millions of lifetimes.
Yet of the subject of love we know nothing.
We know youth, hot and possessive,
We know the tranquil calm of the maturer outlook;
We know the indescribable moment,
The rapture, the miracle of wings, the melting
As a dew-drop in the sun.

First One Behind the curtains of the dawn
Is the blue sky—behind the sky—?

Second One Behind the songs and the laughter,

Third One Behind the sadness and tears,

Fourth One Behind the light-flash of the eyes
and the meeting of lips
and the dream of brow—?

Seeker The fall of Her dress
covering the pathways
Which end in peace. What
will Phcebus Apollo
on arising do about that?

Fifth One What is that?

Seeker I too was speaking of beauty! Beauty is a woman
Called Jemal or Prakriti in the ancient tongues,
Or Hevah, the companion: beauty which is joy to
the heart,
But always covers Truth, which is Love.

Sixth One Love.—Jelaluddin's pen broke when it came to the
word.

Seventh One Hafiz drew back from the drowning.

First One What
Can we do about it—we who are corks on an ocean.

Seeker There are two oceans—one is life, the other
Existence.
We are living in life. Either way is a drowning.

Second One But how can one find the divine ocean of Existence.

Seeker By love.

Third One But that brings us back to where we started.

Seeker Yes, we are back to the position of the planets and
the sun,
Of the nightingale and the rose,
Of possessive youth, and the maturer outlook,
And the mystery and ecstasy, and fall and rise,
And hope and sadness and pain and beauty.—

First Turn There must be a way—

Second Turn There is no way.

First Turn Then it is the end of hope—

Second Turn No, it is the beginning of success.

First Turn Then—?

Second Turn We are always looking for gain,
We are always trying to accomplish. That
Has been our error. There is nothing
To gain or to find, there is only non-finding and
losing—
There is only love.

Seeker Which love—love of life or Existence?

First Turn Life is the turn of the wheel;
Second Turn Existence is by grace.
First Turn Life is the rise and fall of a terrible ocean;
Second Turn Existence is at the feet of the Perfect Master.
First One Now you are speaking of God.
Fourth One God is love.
Fifth One And the love of a Perfect Master
Is the grace and the way to God.
First One It is difficult to find such a One
Who is God, who is Love.
Seeker It is more difficult should you find Him,
For the Conditionless imposes conditions—complete
surrenderance.
One To surrender one's all!—
Chorus All one is not.
It is to surrender life to Existence:
To place one's hand in His, as a child to its father;
To surrender to Him without fear, as one surrenders
To sleep; to bow one's head willingly
As one does by force under a rain of blows;
To give oneself into the custody of the arms of a
loved one,
As an escaped law-breaker gives himself up when he
can walk no further.
First Turn What else can one do?
The turn of the wheel, of the screw
Of a turbine that drives the ship ever on
Over the ocean.
All things combine and conspire
Against all, against one,
And one is at the mercy of all
And oneself.
Scarce has the tale begun
Then the story finished: the actor enters,
Speaks but a sentence, and then the curtain falls.
A tragedy, a comedy, a farce?
He makes his exit bouncing on his—
The audience politely claps, and says, "alas!"
First One Yes—we may as well be funny as serious.
The men of God were ever merry men—
Not for them the gloomy or mysterious,
Or pallid cheeks and lugubrious
Expression. A southward blowing breeze
And a willing mouth was more their idea of
paradise.

Second One To come back to our theme, "of the subject of love".

Third One "We know nothing."

Fourth One There is nothing to know—except

First Chorus Hot youth and calm age,

Second Chorus And the love of the saints for God, and His love for them.

Sixth One Ah, now you're on a different subject! the love
Of the saints—

Chorus It is the same love
As the youth's or the old man's
Or a star's or a bird's. The same love—
But for a different object, that's all.
All lovers turn towards a Beloved—
All lovers burn for proximity and union:
The worldly man for that which seems near but is far;
The saints for that which seems far but is near.
Some are children satisfied with ice-cream and a fable;
Some long for the wine and bread from His immaculate
table.

First Turn Some are a clod,
And others are fire and water;

Second Turn Some are content to plod,
And some take wings to the heart of God.

Chorus Now that Christ-BABA is in the world,
All one has to do is to surrender to Him.

Seeker Yes—if you can find Him!

First Turn There is another way of putting it:
Majnun fell in love with Leila, and was unhappy
when he was separated from her;
Shams Tabriz fell straightway in love with himself
and never looked back.

Second Turn Love maketh invincible,
He who has known for one moment the shelter of
truly loving arms,
Has known the goal of one kiss given and received,
Is a king and a hero, and nothing can ever again
frighten him.
Him even the angels adore, for he has knowledge
and ecstasy.

Chorus Tell out the dance and the rapture,
Tell out the Knowledge and the Bliss,
Tell out the eternal Existence:
Our song is in praise of the Eternal One, AVATAR
MEHER BABA, KI JAI !

Seeker

Words, words, words—yet I say "Amen" to your "Hail".
And although you have not answered my question
"What is love?" the fine-spun pattern of your words
Has at least restored to me the vigour of my dream,
The dream that I seek the True One, of whom
Only the dream is dreaming.

How could you know
What is love, any more than the others tell me,
Where is BABA?
You who are only myself and the shades of tone of
my heart.
Yes. All men turn and burn towards union with some
Beloved.

All men, except the saints, are equally shadows
On the film called life which unwinds before their
own eyes.

Even the glory of the saints is still a dreaming. So
long
As Majnun pined for Leila was he dreaming; only
When he was Leila, did he know. Only
When a Perfect Master acts the saint is the saint's
dance and ecstasy God's.
Only when a Perfect Master, in *His* love, takes our
hand,
Can we be sure we are on the path which leads to Him.

Chorus

Since our own steps have brought us no nearer to
our Goal—
Let us for consolation sake
Revive with our speech, in brief, the sweet story
Of His life and wanderings, as far as His own
recorded speech
And books about Him tell us. Better the second hand
view of others
Than the vista of our own desolation stretched
before us.

Seeker

Yes. While the sun's disc rests on the line of the hills,
Flooding this valley road with its last warmth
And summation of the day's story before time
With the back-cover of night closes the book of the
day,
And men's tired eyes and limbs
Engage in fresh journeys in dream, or seek
God in the unconsciousness of deep sleep,
Let us, as you say—for I fear another sort of night

Will soon descend—praise Him
By the recital of His own deeds: Let our speech be as
flowers
Opening in the warmth of His eternal Sun.
Let us pick up the story from the moment
Of the flight of that singing stone from Maharaj's hand.

Chorus O unkind, kindly stone—O stone from the hand of God
To bring God-the-escaped-from-the-stone of us
Back to us.
O, the gold of its flight, and the gold of its mark,
And the gold of its back-bringing of the Word
To be gold in our hearts!

Go on with the tale:
Of the seven years of His returning, nothing may
be said—
He has written it down Himself for our later years.
Go on from the day when Maharaj said to his
disciples,
"I have given my key to Merwan. Follow, and obey
Him."

Seeker First, the gathering of His disciples—those men
Marked out by the round of time, and God's grace,
To be finished with time, to erase
From their hearts, through perfect service,
Self's delusion of self: His testing them
By admonition, changes of food, fasts,
Changes of habitat bringing in extremes of climate,
Long miles in the dusty roads
Repeating the Name on each breath and each step;
Testing them, smelting the ore of them
So that the gold of them might shine
As satellites to the gold of His sun;
So that each one, cooked of his rawness,
Became a pliant hand or foot or eye or ear
Of God and His work.

Chorus For God comes not into the
world
Nor stays, except for work, except to gear and raise
Energy to a new pitch and true values anew;
To bathe the world and lives with the dew of Love.
And blossom another dozen perfect flowers
Of God-realization.

Solo 1 Tell on the tale.

Seeker Then followed His journeys to find His other
children.
The masts and adepts and saints

In the uttermost parts of the country—thousands
of miles
By trains and bullock-carts and on foot; journeys
Of God in search of God to be uncovered by God;
.Journeys of Love in search of love so that Love
May know itself as love and the heart of love's pain
find ease.

Chorus Without lovers to love
Love were alone. Without the moth and the flame,
And the sowed and the sown, there were no game,
But oneness and sameness the same.

Seeker O BABA, tell on the tale of your lovers—
For no one who hears it but discovers
What the tale of his own story will be.

Chorus Then the building of love's ashrams for those drunk
with love—
Those darlings of God
Who have forgotten the world and themselves in
their love for God;
Who know the places where His feet have trod
On the suns and the stars and beyond.

Seeker The ones who
have found
Their life in His Name, and the end of the round
Of lives; who have lost their eyes and their ears and
their tongues and their speech
In the Name and its sound and furthest reach.
BABA - BABA - BABA -

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Solo 1 God goes to and fro about the earth

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Solo 2 To feed the hungry of heart
to assuage the thirsty of spirit—

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Solo 1 To befriend the friendless, to help the weak—

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Solo 2 To restore the idea of manhood to the strong.

Seeker BABA - BABA -

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Solo 1 To relieve us our burdens of weakness and strength,
To ease the length of our journey
with the light of His compassion.

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Solo 2 To fashion the clay of our lives
into forms of nearer humanity.
To bring resemblance and semblance of Godness
into the inanity of our daily round—

Seeker BABA - BABA - BABA -

Chorus IN THE FORM OF A MAN
God shows Himself as God.

Seeker BABA -

Chorus Empty is the preaching of those who preach a God
not on this earth as a man.
False is the teaching of those who teach that Heaven
can be won by a man as man:
Futile the effort to cross by a bridge builded by
imagination's span.

For Him does the rock dream,
and the rose open its petals in the sun.
For Him did the mountains rise up,
and the rivers wind into the seas.
For Him is the race of the athletes run,
and the racing-driver snicks through the gears,
and the yachtsman crowds sail in the breeze.
For Him is the storm of words and the empty phrase,
and the polished hollow notes of the violins and
trombones.
For Him is the light of the polished heart
and its song in its golden tones.

Seeker BABA - BABA - BABA - BABA -
(Enter Old Man)

Old Man You call on BABA.

Seeker BABA - BABA -

Old Man Ah—that is all that is left to us who are grown old—
To call His Name, and await another time:
To try and span what remains
Of this life and its death and another birth
With His Name, so that next time we may perhaps
Meet Him.

Seeker Another time? Of what are you speaking?

Old Man Surely you know? BABA—has finished His work:
Has re-trued the course of the stars and the spin of
the earth,
And sown the seed in the world again, that seed
Which blossoms as a human lovely Face, and
returned to Himself.

Seeker O BABA—what is this old man saying? He has lost his senses.

Old Man But not my sense. You are shocked. I am a seeker the same as you—but my tale is possibly bitterer than yours.

Seeker What could be bitterer than BABA gone—if He has?

Old Man To one, the circumstances of his life. Your face Shines with the light of His Name in a pure heart. You have not sullied your speech with a life time's lie as I have.

I was a scholar of sorts, a lecturer on Truth!—
 I spent my life telling people about God,
 Without myself bothering to find Him; expounding
 The teaching of the Lord Jesus, but never troubling
 To take one step in His Way.

Then I heard

That the Word which was Him had taken form again
 In BABA—and I believed, and repented the lie of
 my life,
 And sought Him. But it was too late.

When the love-feast was spread I was not there—

Chorus Ai!

Old Man When He sang His divine song, I was absent from the singing—

Chorus Ai!

Old Man When the flood of His Word was released,
 To be thirsty and grimed with a lifetime of sweat.—

Chorus The flood of His Word
in the time of Noah—
 The flood of His Word
in the time of Jesus—
 The flood of His Word in BABA.
 And His breath which stirred
 Pregnantly the waters in the Beginning
 In accord
 With His will to awake and know Himself.
 The flood of His Word
 Is the pain in our hearts
 And the pulse
 Of our blood.

Seeker BABA - BABA -

Old Man Old man with me in equal woe, or worse:
 Mine I've accepted—you have yours to rehearse.
(Exit Old Man)

Seeker

Too late? What lie is this? It cannot be too late.
O BABA. O BABA. You cannot yet have gone! How many
years have passed repeating your beloved Name? How
many lives have I already wasted? And now is this life too
gone?

Have I suddenly
Come down to the vacancies of old age—a crow
Croaking on the bough of a dead gumtree
Gorged with flesh, when I had hoped to wear this
flesh thin
With wanderings and reweave its threads into a net
To catch your love in? Has my search been blind?
You are everywhere—why have I not found you?

I have called in my heart to find you
I have asked everyone if they knew where you were.
Now my asking and calling has ceased,
And there is only silence and night coming on.

(The landscape disappears; there is only desert.)

O BABA I cannot endure another day without your sight.
My eyes see nothing, not even a tree or a stone. Now even
your Name has ceased on my lips. I cannot even think of
you. There is just nothing, nothing. Let the nothingness of
this night obliterate the nothing which is me. ·

Chorus

We have followed you since that first day
When a man in the shape of a man, asked,
"Who is BABA?"

We have followed you
And have tried to comfort your heart, because you
Are the sigh of our soul and its search and its cry
Which your lips for us frame in the Name of BABA.

Now it is night,
Dark night of your soul –
No glimmer of light
To guide your feet to our Goal.

(Chorus sinks down)

Seeker

BABA – BABA - *(With great shout)* BABA! *(falls)*

(Enter Baba with a Disciple)

Disciple

BABA has heard your cry,
The uttermost cry of your soul;
He has guided the steps of your feet in the way to
His heart.

His Name on your lips has been sweet to His ears:
Many a time have I marked the compassion of his eye
And its far-gazing, and almost a sigh
On His world-embracing breath; and He has said softly,
"One of My lovers is on his way to Me."

BABA is here before you. Open your eyes and behold!
The Lord of the worlds is the slave of His lovers.

*(Seeker opens his eyes, and prostrates at Baba's feet.
Baba stoops down and raises his head and embraces
and comforts him.)*

Chorus At last he has found his beloved—
The Perfect One, Avatar, Christ.
And his journey is finished and his life begun
In love till the far-Goal be won.

Second Turn It is not easy to meet God on this earth—
Many have not even heard He is here!

First Turn He does not come that often—
Once every 700 to 1400 years.

Second Turn And between?

First Turn Yes, there are always Masters—
But not with His authority.

Second Turn We have read, "The creation was made for Him—"

First Turn He made it for Himself.
He has said
That once He was asleep,
And He woke up and started singing—
And the whole universe came into being.

Second Turn He used to play marbles with the stars.
Now He plays at fishing for men's hearts.

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