

Break into song!

The complete song lyrics of michael johnson

for Bean

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1981

In 1981, the president was shot
I was feathered and tube socked
Didn't mean a whole lot

Chasing tiffany thuriet
And kickballing
I was digging in the dirt
I didn't shower until I was thirteen
Watching the shooting at a cub scout meeting
You held the gun
Isn't it funny how we rewrite our history
When we've just met the one?

In 1991, I met his band
He was breathy and tuneless
The king of danville
There was an angel behind the keys
And six years later it means nothing to me

All those concerts
Mosh pits, skater shoes
You there in the sun
Isn't it funny how we rewrite our history
when we've just met the one?

Because history is a lie made up by those in love

And it's 2001, and we're together still
Making constellations on a half wet hill
So when you're panicking beneath the sheets
And the water glass topples and the wind makes the blind lines creak
Remember how it was in '86
When in the corner of your eye you saw me
And how much I dug soccer chicks!

All those high school parties, I was there
Keeping you alive
You didn't know it then, but that was me
Making sure you'd catch my eye
1000 years later on the stair

In 1971, I swear I held your hand while I was waiting in line to be born

Words and music by michael johnson
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19th century boy

We have a little box
Instead of a live girl
We put our little notes in,
And sign them: sincerely, the world
Dear you,
I know your life is better
Now that you're no longer

I know I don't have words to blow you away with
But that little look you gave me
Is melting right into my skin

Dear you,
On the writing porch
Can you guess why I'm not sleeping?

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A northwest wind

A northwest wind is blowing in
Stirring the awnings on the houses of sin
Oh yes, I'm afraid this is all there is

It drifts out to the nightclub where the local celebs
Parade out the doorway on a carpet of red
Oh yes, I'm afraid this is all there is

Then it rattles the chains that link the velvet ropes
As the spotlights are swaying and the limos approach
Oh yes, I'm afraid this is all there is

There's a starless sky without a single cloud
Above the tousled hairdos of the keen young crowd
Oh yes, I'm afraid this is all there is

But you don't leave the house tonight
You stay there by the firelight
There's nothing out there for you
Ah you know 'cause you've seen it

Lock the door and draw the blinds
You're not going anywhere tonight
Next to the fire is the only time you can really be yourself

Let the spotlights crawl above the sprawl outside
'cause the shadows will dance on your wall tonight
As you toss another glossy record onto the fire
Yes this is all there is
This is all there is
Yes, this is all there is

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All the kids are out tonight (back home)

I came to this world when a clumsy bird
Dropped me accidentally from the sack in his mouth.
I went into a freefall and hit ground
East of san francisco and a little to the south.
When I landed in a bundle at my parents' door
I expected to have landed on european shores
But clearly the bird must have missed somehow.
Hadn't he meant to drop me in paris?
London? Moscow?
I grew up feeling all the time
Like I was stranded in a land that wasn't really mine.
Still I went to prom, made songs with my friends,
Rolled 20-sided die and
Worshipped r.e.m.

All the kids are out tonight
Sitting on camaros starting fights.
All the kids are out tonight
Sitting on camaros starting fights.
Spending quarters, making out,
Tripping through the strip malls. School is out!
Back home.

Now here I am
In the fatherland
I'm walking through the black woods nobody's hand in my hand.
The skyline down in mainhattan town
Shines beyond the cornfields as the sun is going down.
I mount my bike
And begin to ride
Without a light the path is white with black on either side
My crooked cranks make a clanking sound
As they chink against the chain guard on their way up and around
I cross the highway with its stream of lights
Running underneath me like a marathon of fireflies
The dark trees part
Bringing shadows down
The sky looks like the asphalt on a parking lot in my town.

All the kids are out tonight
Sitting on camaros starting fights.
All the kids are out tonight
Sitting on camaros starting fights.
Getting lost in each other's eyes
Riding flattened boxes down the hills at night.
Back home.

Someday I'll return on a silver bird
I'll make my way through baggage claim and out into a cab.
For now the wrinkled blanket of the taunus hills

Swells with rain,
As my train rolls through fields of daffodils.
Jet trails slice
Through the whitegray sky
The empty seat next to me is full of ghosts and memories.
But all my thoughts
Are far away
Playing kickball in the cul-de-sacs of the old mcusa.

All the kids are out tonight,
Sitting on camaros, starting fights.
All the kids are out tonight,
Sitting on camaros, starting fights.
Forging songs in garages from noise.
Here's to the antics of the girls and boys!
Back home.

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All through the morning

All through the morning
Above fair pleasant town
The budding sun's adorning
His frame with fiery down

And quite without forewarning
before the bakery thick with bread,
A blue jay with a torn wing
Alights on the milkman's head

But meanwhile on the outskirts
Having wept since yester-eve
A widow finds her husband's tie and coat
She slips one over her nightshirt
Slides her arms in the sleeves
Then ties the other loosely 'round her throat

All through the morning
Children fill the school
Lines at the bank are forming
Which makes the banker drool

Ye old sweet shoppe is sporting
A grand window display
Lovers coo on a porch swing
Having snogged the night away

But creeping through her manor
On a stairway leading down
Our widow slips in silence through the door
And trembling with her spanner
She looks furtively around
As she slinks across dew encrusted moor

All through the morning
A band is carrying on
An eager crowd is forming
To hear "the band played on"

At the barber's the freshly shorn sing
"three coins in a fount"
As policemen issue warnings
From high atop their mounts

Now crouching in a hovel
Before a gaping hole
Our widow tosses in the coat and tie
Then taking up her shovel
With her heart as black as coal
She shovels dirt in where her husband softly lies
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All you need is me

I am a pop star
But only in my mind
Scraping dirty nailed on a vertical climb
These are my walls, they're white

I don't have anything
I'm so over posters
I barely ever leave the house
Except to post the mailers
Or to make another telephone pole scream my name

Won't someone lend me another topic of conversation?
Won't someone please just cut my strings?

'Cause all you need is me!

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A lonely boy makes a handsome steed

Well, it's benches and trees
Let's be friends

And I'm back on the train with t
Sliding horizontally into france

A lonely boy makes a handsome steed

He can cook and even breathes
Call the number on your screen
Order now, while supplies last
He even hates tv
He's a ten speed

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As paranoid as I am

Seems I'm always waiting for you
Rib cages, duvets, and orson welles backlit
Stood up straight and rang the crescent moon
Breath stolen breath stolen breath stolen
I need someone as paranoid as I am
It's just after eight o'clock and where are you?

Did you ever just dream about someone's house?
Six blocks away, and still you feel nervous

Meet my mom

She's the front row at a silent movie
I'm the boy with nosebleed seats to the symphony

I found an early 20th century girl
Straight off coke bottle ads and fitzgerald stories
Our story began at chapter eight
If you start in the middle it faster to the ending?

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As I go forth into dreams (so I go forth into merry old england)

When a man drifts off to sleep, he lazes on his pillow
Having fastened all the doors and doused the lights
Then a strand of swaying dreams, silent as a willow
Comes writhing in the wrinkles of the night

As I go forth into dreams
So I go forth into merry old england
As I give my nights up to chance
So I give my nights to the beaches of france

When a man falls in love he thinks of nothing other
Than the lips of his beloved on his cheek
He stays steady by her side, down paths all primrose smothered
Beguiled by her beauty and mystique

As I go forth into love
So I go forth into merry old england
As I give my heart up to romance
So I give my heart to the beaches of france

When a man's about to die he makes peace with his maker
Confessing every trespass, sin and lie
Having proved he is contrite, he then begs the undertaker
For a moment to bid all this world goodbye

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Audrey (squishing butterflies)

I could have danced all night
Cigarettes and butterflies
She'll squish a butterfly on you

I watched you cross the room
Smooth shouldered across the room
Audrey's got nothing on you

You want me to stay, you know I'll stay
You're singing to me
We never get any sleep
I'm all alone you're showering
Ah, ah, steam, steam
She squished another butterfly on me

I have spent nights just watching you paint
Head cocked ever smoking
You call it ugly
But nothing could be, nothing by you
And even when they came down on you
Scratched at your face
You reached for your mace
I want to cup my hands around you

But I could never catch a butterfly

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Before you

NICHOLAS And it's *my* job to feed you, is it; to free you from poverty's fetters?
Do you want to know the real reason I never answered your letters?

GREGORY Tell me.

(Music starts Somewhere Time To Die, pg. ?)

NICHOLAS WITHOUT YOU IN MY LIFE IT'S BEEN PARADISE. PARADISE.
EVERYTHING I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.
NO GREGORY TO FEED OR TO GIVE ADVICE;
PEACEFUL AND GREGORY FREE.

GREGORY You wanted to be rid of me. Why didn't you—

NICHOLAS MY FATHER.

GREGORY Don't drag Dad into this.

NICHOLAS You worshipped him and you didn't even know him.
BEFORE YOU, SAINT QUITE
HIT THE BOTTLE EVERY NIGHT,
HIT MY MOTHER AND I BY DAY.
HE HAD HIS OWN PERVERSE
LITTLE WAY WITH EVERY NURSE.
YES HE TOOK THE LADIES' TEMPERATURES IN MOST PECULIAR WAYS.

IF YOU THINK HE WAS A GOOD SUMERITAN,
LIVING LIFE ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN.
IF YOU THINK HE HAD A HEART MADE OF SOLID GOLD,
WELL, YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW THE MAN.

BEFORE YOU, DOCTOR QUITE
WAS OFTEN OUT ALL NIGHT
MAKING HOUSE CALLS OF A DUBIOUS BRAND.
IF YOU THINK FATHER THERESA
IS RESTING IN PEACE,
WELL, YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW THE MAN.

(Music continues through the following.)

But then out of nowhere one morning, after a bout of heavy drinking nearly licked him,
He spies an article about a poor orphaned boy: a lowly domestic violence victim.

GREGORY You mean, me. Say it. Me!

NICHOLAS NOW WHAT LITTLE HEART HE HAS STARTS BEATING.
AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT NOW IT'S BLEEDING.
AND TO MAKE UP FOR EVERYTHING HE PUT US THROUGH
THE CRAZY OLD MAN ADOPTS YOU. YOU! YOU.

ALL AT ONCE OLD QUITE
CHANGES SPOTS OVER NIGHT,
GIVING YOU THE BOYHOOD I NEVER HAD.
HE READS SOME STORIES, TUCKS YOU IN
PLAYS SOME BALL , LETS YOU WIN,
AND SUDDENLY HE'S SUPER DAD!

GREGORY HE WAS SO MUCH MORE.
YOUR RESENTMENT ISN'T FAIR.
I KNOW THAT YOU WERE THE NEGLECTED SON.
I'VE ALWAYS FELT SO BAD
FOR THE THINGS HE DID,
BUT THE PAST IS THE PAST, JUST FORGIVE HIM AND MOVE ON,

BUT INSTEAD YOU WASTE YOUR EFFORT BLAMING HIM
FOR THE WAY YOUR LIFE TURNED OUT.
YOU SPEND ALL YOUR ENERGY SLAMMING HIM,
WHEN THERE'S REALLY MORE TO HIM THAN THAT.

THOUGH IT MAKES YOU CRINGE
PEOPLE CHANGE,
THEY CAN OVERCOME THEIR PREVIOUS SINS.
HE STARTED DOWN THE PATH TO GOOD,
WHEN HE TOOK IN AN ORPHANED KID
I, FOR ONE, OWE MY LIFE TO THE MAN.

(Music continues through the following:)

NICHOLAS Yes, he treated you as if you grew on his own family tree,
Waited on you hand and foot. Spoiled you and coddled you like a baby.

"STOP THAT RACKET! GREGORY IS TRYING TO SLEEP!"
"WATCH YOUR MOUTH! GREGORY IS GOING TO WEEP!"

GREGORY YOU WERE SO CRUEL TO ME.

NICHOLAS BECAUSE YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE.

GREGORY WE DO WHAT WE CAN TO SURVIVE.

NICHOLAS YOU DID NOTHING! MY FATHER, MY FAMILY KEPT YOU ALIVE.

GREGORY WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE, GIVEN MY CIRCUMSTANCES?

NICHOLAS *(music continues)* CIRCUMSTANCES? EVERYONE HAS CIRCUMSTANCES,
SOME ARE MUCH WORSE OFF AND YET WE OVERCOME. LOOK AT ME:

A LONELY BOY, FATHERED BY DEBAUCHERY AND DRINK.
YET, I TURNED OUT THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK.
I BECAME RESOURCEFUL, CHARMING, INDEPENDENT,
A SELF-SUFFICIENT MAN OF REFINEMENT AND RESPLENDENCE—

(Music continues through the following:)

GREGORY Resplendence? You live off the money you stole from him! Don't make me laugh.
You switched wills on him while he was sick in bed with no relief,
Tricked him into signing. He died having no idea that he'd left you everything.
If you call that resplendence, you're wrong.

NICHOLAS WELL, LISTEN TO YOU,
PURE AS MORNING DEW,
THE VOICE OF REASON, OF GOODNESS, OF RIGHT.
HAD I NOT TRICKED THAT SWINE
HAD I NOT MADE HIM SIGN
SOME NURSE WOULD BE DRINKING HIS MONEY TONIGHT.

YOU SHOULD THANK ME, GODLY GREGORY,
MOST OF THE MONEY WENT TO HELPING YOU.
BUT WHEN I'D HAD IT WITH HOSTING A PARASITE,
I KNEW WHAT I NEEDED TO DO—

GREGORY (*With sudden apprehension*) What? Kill me?

(*Music stops on a tense chord.*)

NICHOLAS Kill you. (*a beat*) Don't be so base. (*laughs*) Killing is too good for you.
I wanted to hurt you. (*Music resumes*) THE ONLY JUSTICE DUE
TO A MAN LIKE YOU,
WHO FLOATS THROUGH LIFE LIKE A BAG ON A BREEZE.
IS TO FORCE YOU TO FEND
FOR YOURSELF. FOR IN THE END
IF THAT DOESN'T KILL YOU, IT'LL BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES.

IT'S BEEN SIX MONTHS SINCE YOU FLEW
FROM YOUR OLD LIFE AND HOW DO I FIND YOU?
NEARLY WASTED AWAY, WAITING FOR ME TO COME
AND SAVE YOU FROM THIS WRETCHED SLUM!

NICHOLAS I KNEW ALL ALONE
OUT HERE ON YOUR OWN
YOU WOULDN'T LAST A SINGLE DAY.
WHY GO THROUGH THE STRESS?
WHEN IT'S FAR LESS OF A MESS
JUST TO LET YOU DIE SLOWLY TRYING TO
MAKE YOUR OWN WAY.

G: NO, YOU'RE WRONG. I'VE MADE IT THIS
FAR ON MY OWN.
I'M STILL HERE, DESPITE HOW MUCH
YOU WANT ME GONE.
I DON'T NEED YOU.
I DON'T NEED YOU.
I DON'T NEED YOU.

(*Music holds another tense chord.*)

NICHOLAS WELL, THEN. GOODBYE. GOODBYE, GREGORY.

(*Music becomes frantic as GREGORY throws himself at NICHOLAS, smashing him up against the low wall.*)

GREGORY (*Music resumes, slower, more plaintive.*) DON'T YOU WALK AWAY.
DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

NICHOLAS

BACK TO MY NEW LIFE.

WHERE AFFABLE AMANDA
WAITS ON A VERANDA
FOR ME TO PLAY POOL BOY TO HER NEGLECTED WIFE.

THERE ATOP THE SOCIALITE LADDER
I HAVE EVERYTHING THAT REALLY MATTERS:
SEX, MONEY, ART, POPULARITY—

GREGORY

YOU USED ME. YOU USED ME!

NICHOLAS

JUST LIKE YOU USED MY FAMILY.

(NICHOLAS clumsily throws GREGORY off and hurls him down to the ground. He makes to kick GREGORY, but GREGORY springs up and lunges at him again. NICHOLAS dodges him and speeds toward the banquet table. GREGORY faces him, seeing red, poised to attack again.)

NICHOLAS

(Pants, visibly rattled, holding one hand out to fend GREGORY off, while behind his back his fingers slowly wrap around a wine bottle. Music becomes soft but tense.)

Take it easy, Gregory, steady, now, steady.
That's it. Don't step any closer to me.
I think it's best that we part ways now. Forever.
You will not contact me again. Ever.
We are no longer brothers. At long last—

(Music stays soft, but grows more intense as NICHOLAS as the sound of chattering becomes audible offstage as the patrons from the gallery begin to come up to the roof for the party.)

The party! Get out of here. Fast!

GREGORY

No. *(shouting)* You shut your mouth.
Let them come. I'm telling them the truth.

NICHOLAS

You will not!

(Music resumes as NICHOLAS swiftly picks up the bottle and swings it at GREGORY'S head. GREGORY dodges as NICHOLAS continues to slash at him while singing the following.)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT
YOU DON'T EXIST
YOU BLEW YOURSELF AND A GALLERY SKY HIGH.
YOU'RE DECEASED, SLAIN, INERT,
PUSHING DAISIES THROUGH THE DIRT.
YOU DARE TO SHOW YOUR FACE AGAIN?
FACE, MEET MY LITTLE FRIEND.
HOLD STILL NOW
I SAID HOLD STILL NOW
TIME TO DIE.

Bickersteth road

Can you blame me
For wanting you to give him a kiss for me
It's your fault,
Or maybe it's england

I don't mind if you go out tonight

After years of inky fingers
Nothing is wasted
Least of all postage

I'll be okay if you go out tonight

I'm a terrible liar
I don't want to impose
But I know sleeping next to you
Is a dream of mine

And when in your robe
You came and woke me
Terrycloth, hot tea
Pull up a blanket
"good morning" is small talk
For "please join me"

This from the boy sleeping upstairs from you
Here's a letter hand delivered
I'll be okay if you go out tonight

This from the boy spinning and dancing
Avoiding your eye
Spilling over
I'll be okay if you go out tonight

And these trains
Sardines at light speed
I'd rather it were you
Rubbing against me
In my first english rain
Sheets of english rain

This from the boy toppling busses
Straightening the river
Changing the weather
Just to bring you home tonight

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Boulevard st.

Then she slips him a note
As he tightens the spokes
On his bike wheel
And squeezing his eyes tight to burn in the numbers
He peddles south down boulevard st.

Past the power lines
And no vacancy signs
By the drive-thru of a dairy queen

He makes a left turn on park
Where the gun shop sign barks
"no minors!" to the criminals and freaks

Parking lots are steaming
As gun metal lamp posts guide innocent cars to the stores
Donut shops are teeming
With after school delinquents
And other such children of divorce

And the loitering laws are ignored
Call the police in

Past the u-store-it his uncle ron waves
He used to own it but those were the seventies
Up on the rooftops girls are sunbathing
Their hair is chestnut their bathing suits are scathing

As the summer drags
The days are flying past
In this world where the girls and the food are fast

Wedding bells are ringing
In the temple of elvis
As drugged out fiances arrive
Business is booming
At the 24 screen cineplex
As patrons emerge and squint their eyes

And the children cross the street against the light
Call the police in

And he pauses at the place
Where she slapped him in the face when she turned thirteen

And he eyes the colored flags at the audi and jag dealers
Yet another dairy queen
He lives at creekside ridge
Where there's no creek or ridge

And the gate man has cops on tv

And the jaded man
At the drive-thru express-o stand
Mixes up his change for a twenty

Everybody's singing
Like tone deaf zombies
At the temple of the nazerene
"who do they think they're fooling?"
As he locks up his bike on the porch
And squeaks open the screen

And the sound of her answering machine fills the night

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Braces

One of my first girlfriends
Had braces and thick glasses
She was not thought of as pretty
Or even anything acceptable
Even though I told my friends I had a girlfriend
I made sure no one saw her

She was 13, I was 16
I'd pick her up in my first car
We would drive around and end up
making out somewhere
Her breath was always unpleasant; she had stuff stuck in her braces
Like she never brushed her teeth

Still I went out of my way to see her
And I once even got jealous
When she told me about an ex-boyfriend
Who had his own apartment
He was 18 and he wanted her to suck his dick once
She told me the story in an "I can do anything to you" tone

Once when her parents were gone
We were sitting alone in her basement
We took our shirts off on the couch
I ran my fingers over her chest
She had nipples no bigger than pimples
We stood up and slow danced to a radio song

Then I picked her up and placed her
On her back on the pool table
While we were staring at each other
She told me something she'd never done before:
"I've never had anyone kiss me upside down."
Then she kicked the cue ball off the table.

Words adapted from a short story by Kevin Sampson
Music by M. Johnson ©2008 Zubsongs, Ltd

Break into song!

Boarding the plane
Get in out of the rain
Throw a scowl at the girl in the back

Suddenly you freeze
As you stow your valise
What's the spectacle out on the tarmac?

Chorus lines of pilots dancing
Wearing their fancy uniforms
All twirling flight attendants
So resplendent
Never ending!

From a trapeze of fire
Above the heads of a choir
An acrobat hangs by his teeth

Juggling plates
By the transom at c gate
A top hatted man a la fosse

A tuba bleats along
In the orchestra there by the runway
Astride a lighted staircase
Feathery showgirls
All in a row! Girls!

You must be dreaming
This is no kind of business trip
As clouds part like shredded paper
Strings of stars shine out through the vapor

Hey! This is your life
Loosen your tie
Break into song once in a while
Hey! Nobody cares
Mess up your hair
Just don't stand there
Break into song!

There's a bubbling whirlpool
Of mermaids and girls
Making synchronized gestures in air

The security guards
As they dance on their cars
They just smile and wave as you stare

Three ushers dressed in fezzes
Beckon to you from the baggage claim
Astounded you turn around
As they enter the plane
Chanting your name

Hey! Refrain ...

You must be dreaming this is
No kind of business trip
Although you never learned to dance or sing
You make like fred astaire on the wing

Hey! Etc ...

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Quodlibet for cool kids

ENTOURAGE WHO IS THIS GALLERY KIDDING?
PASSING THIS CRAP OFF AS ART!
THE SUBTEXT IS OVERBEARING.
HE'S RELIANT ON CLASSICAL TROPES.

HIS LINES ARE TOO CONFINING
A BLATANT NOD TO BACON.
HE'S FULL OF CRUDE ROMANTICISM.
VACUOUS AND EMPTY.

I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY!
HE THROWS THE PAINT HAPHAZZARDLY!
COMPLETE INSCRUTABILITY.
SOMEONE BURN HIS ART DEGREE!

HIS VISUAL MUTATIONS
OF TACTILE SENSATIONS
JUST LACK IMAGINATION.
HE DROWNS IN SELF-INDULGENCE!

CLOSTROPHOBIC HEAPS OF PAINT!
HYPERBOLIC IMAGERY!
WOEFULLY CONVENTIONAL!
DRAB COMPARITATIVELY!

HE'S A SELF-INDULGENT ROMANTIC
WITH AN OBVIOUS LOVE FOR CEZANNE!
HIS DATED CULTURAL VISIONS
ARE ALMOST BUZZINGLY DULL!

TRITE PHYSICAL REPRESENTATION!
CONTRADICTIONALLY REPRESSED!
DEVOID OF ALL HUMANITY,
HE DREDGES UP TIRED IMAGERY!

OPRESSED BY HIS INFLUENCES!
HE PAINTS ALMOST BULLYINGLY!
ABYSS OF CONSUMER CULTURE!
BUT, WAIT! LET'S HEAR FROM TIMOTHY.
OH, WHAT DO YOU THINK TIMOTHY?
YES, WHAT DO YOU THINK TIMOTHY?
TELL US, TIMOTHY, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HM?

Catherine

I'm the best friend you've made here?
You've got a knack for overstatement
'Cause I'm least likely of all your " friend's" lips
To be the ones you will miss

So much pain
Your jacket hangs
Off his body like a sad, awkward piggyback ride
And I muster a smile
All my strength

You're the substance I abuse
Why can't it be the same for you?
'Cause here I am
I'm hot chocolate
Yet you're suspended in steam

And I almost wish you dead
I'm finding breaking bottles fun
I call down at your window
I beg you take me
Badly

Get over it

Words and music by michael johnson
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Come on summer

Why is summer taking so long?
July is like the waiting room
At the end of june
August weighs a ton and nearly crushes you

Wake me up the minute fall arrives
Autumn leaves fall to the ground like dresses on prom night
I remember you:
Stars, too fell that autumn
Like the leaves we caught and
Raked up and slow danced in all afternoon

Sew your dress and press your tuxedo
Wax the rented limousine
(keep the back seat clean)
September's almost here
I hear the school bells ring

Wake me up the minute prom arrives
Filly dresses, flowing tresses, shining emerald eyes
I remember you:
Five foot three in satin
Next to mary atkins
Chasing boys all over the gymnasium

Wake me up the minute fall arrives
Autumn leaves attract romance, while picnics attract flies

Come on, summer...

Words and music by michael johnson
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Crash site

Crinkled up like burnt paper
Shaping orange flames from street lights
The river throws broken glass stars up
From the crash site

Stomachs twisting like fenders
Smashing softly under coats
Wrists and lips twist together
In the moonlight

Free your hands from your gloves
Collapse your white fingers in mine
As we dance, rushing blood
Fingertips fuse into spines

Glances flashing like brake lights
Out of nowhere in the night
No witness as two stumbling victims
Leave the crash site tonight

Words and music by michael johnson
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Danny built his house all spiral

Don't be bitter, danny, oh I know you'll be famous one day
You've been spending all your time on drawings and, noble though that is,
I suppose she just grew tired of you

One day while making dinosaurs from clay with little august
You got bored and caught your carmen with a friend, legs extended,
Out behind the goat pen where you once proposed

And these walls set at right angles, they belie what's going on inside
Danny stands
His voice is strangled
He says "I have a better shape in mind..."

Danny built his house all spiral!

So in the back and up a slope you built your house of matches
While wife and lover moved into the family house, the one you built from scratch one afternoon to celebrate your
honeymoon

Danny you built your coiled castle tall but unassuming
Right next to a stately grove of birch trees and a bubbling spring
And you know
Danny alone is king

While sliding down to breakfast we all marveled at his shelter
"there's no need for stairs" says danny "when you live in a helter skelter"
Well you may be a lover
But you ain't no dancer

Words and music by michael johnson
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Dirty and clean

Um, can I be frank a moment?
Bare bellies are out
Yet she saunters
Wide eyed, vacuous
And I never ever will

Lie lie lie lie

And her "greats!" grate
Speaks in general
She's a greenhouse without pants
Rainy bus stop, getting wetter
Can't believe i, sweaty, did

Slippery and stylish, sheen
She's sweaty, twist, dirty and
Rubbery but unlike swings
She wriggles up dirty, and
Leathery and lipstick stains
She stays for years, dirty and
Slippery and slinky things
She comes for days, dirty and clean
Like a bad dream

Maybe I'll wake up last july
On a rooftop: p and i
Stony washes of green and black
Gently give me my life back

Slippery and stylish, sheen
She's sweaty, twist, dirty and
Leathery and lipstick stains
She stays for years, dirty and
Silvery and slinky things,
She's sweaty twist, dirty and
Leathery and lipstick stains
She comes for days, dirty and clean
Like a bad dream

Words and music by michael johnson
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Dog days

"have you been having terrible dreams about dogs?"
My brother mark asked me.
"cause mom and dad said they might have to send you
To a shrink or something.
So you better knock it off."

This was partially marks's fault anyway,
His roommate's was the dog that bit me
In the leg, elbow and forearm

I shielded myself with their screen door
Until they got home and found me
Lying there with blood
Dripping all over the welcome mat

At the hospital they gave me three shots
Before I left the nurse showed me a cardboard box
Full of plastic toys.

I didn't take any.

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Don't get caught up in your dreams

All at once I saw the white cliffs standing over me
With the channel splashing sea spray in my face
But someone yelled and an end cap fell on aisle 3
And the cleanup stole my whole ten-minute break

Don't get caught up in your dreams my son
There's a world beyond
But this is yours

On the commute I passed an angel on the 42
with a winged horse beneath her sailing by
But when I breathed her name her steed became a subaru
And she mouthed something offensive when I caught her eye

Don't get caught up in your dreams my son
There's a world beyond
But this is yours

That very night the houses crumbled on my cul-de-sac
How their walls were overcome with tumbling vines
When I awoke I stood and my neighborhood was all intact
And I must confess I really didn't mind

Don't get caught up in your dreams my son
There's a world beyond
But this is yours

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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Don't you know there are lonely people in the world?

Hey there, cute girl, with the wild curly hair
Laughing and smooching with your boyfriend over there
Gushing and giggling like a crushed out little girl
Don't you know there are lonely people in the world?

Hey there, beautiful, with the turtleneck on
Rubbing against the boy whose arm you came in on
Your eyes like roses and your lips like crushed pearls
Don't you know there are lonely people in the world?

Don't you know how hard it is to trawl the bars for nights on end?
Don't you know how it sucks to pretend you give a fuck about your married friends?
And don't you think it's a sin
To rub it in?

All you post-coital couples crowding the breakfast joints
With your bed head and your flushed cheeks, yeah I get the point
You're in love you're in love like strawberry swirl
Don't you know there are lonely people in the world?

All you fresh young marrieds with your babies running around
Can't you keep your hands to yourselves when I'm around?
Your cooing and cuddling how it makes me want to hurl
Don't you know there are lonely people in the world?

Do you know how it feels to believe something's real and then come to find out
At the end of the day there is nothing you can say to stop her from walking out
The more your heart is devout, the easier it is to rip out.

Don't you know how hard it is to trawl the bars for nights on end
Don't you know how it sucks to pretend you give a fuck about your married friends?
And don't you think it's a sin
To rub it in?

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Drugs I need

A boy drives a sound wave into a radio
Bursting into red flames in my head
"mushroom ties, kaleidoscope, cheek, half blushed onion"
See, now what's so difficult in that?

A boy wastes his life in front of a big screen
Lazy boy makes a fortune off his ass
I don't care which cliff side, arms stretch, rocks below call
If this one jumps, they all jump en masse

Turn up the volume
Sleeping with girls
Steinways on fire
These are the drugs I need
(caffeine)

A boy stands askance talking down to me
This from "junior", "mr. Fathersdollars"
Another one is wasting precious brain energy
To figure out how many teams wear pants

Being in transit
Running on empty
Speaking in accents
These are the drugs I need
(caffeine)

Words and music by michael johnson
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Egg hunt

When the shot rang out
With excited shouts
My older brother ran ahead of me
With all the other kids
Toward the smoke

The sky it filled with birds
And restless herds
Of rainclouds in the spring
I ran like anything
Toward home

When I got to the house
I stained my mother's blouse
With a steady stream of tears
She held me for years
That day

In the back door came
My brother calling my name
With his superman cape over his shoulder
He looked much older
With his basket of decorated eggs

It was the first time I gave up

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Eight

This lady's slow getting off the number 8
everyone's stupid this early in the day

i punch the clock and the coffin lid comes down on another day
another wasted 8

i must have walked around in circles for a matter of days
i think I've broken the record for just standing in one place
i think I've lost all the feeling in the right side of my brain

It's hard to explain this numbing feeling

And there she goes
Between love and waking up there's the middle 8
I stood and had to wait

Words and music by michael johnson
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Elysian fields (we're dead, we're dead!)

All along the intersections
Phantoms float in all directions
The malls and mowers are mere projections
The grass is gray in these elysian fields

"we're dead! We're dead! We must be dead!"
I see the automatic sliding doors of heaven

Multi-colored flags they beckon
Clouds drift by at 80 miles per second
The window panes make no reflections
As the houses sway in these elysian fields

"we're dead! We're dead! We must be dead!"
"I see the automatic sliding doors of heaven

Past the business parks they're drifting
Like rain through broken clouds they're sifting
With heads held high they haunt the lifts and
Parking lots of these elysian fields

"we're dead! We're dead! We must be dead!"
Where pearly gates should stand there're 7-11s

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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Field trip

All of the kids got back on the bus
To head back to school from sacajewia park
Momma was gone I asked my teacher where she was
She said she didn't know.

Driving up washington street on the bus
I saw smoke billow up from somewhere in my neighborhood
Suddenly I yelled at the driver to stop
As flames came out my bedroom window.

The driver said he wasn't allowed to let me out.
So back at the school, I got a ride to my house
The house was badly burned on the top and on the sides
My momma was standing there watching.

The cause was unknown but I heard someone imply
That mark, my older brother, was home from school smoking pot
We stood outside watching, nobody was hurt
My dad was screaming "fuck the world!"

It seemed like a whole lot of people were watching
The house became wrecked with fire and water
And when they all got bored of it they went back homeward.
Summer's just an hour away!

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

First

When I come to your house should I wear a disguise?
Shall I talk lower than normal? Surprised when you call?
When I talk to your friends, can I tell them I love you?
Should I look at the ground instead of into the light?

Talking to you is like looking into the sun
Please don't go to ireland without kissing me first

When I call on the phone should I ask for her first,
Small talk, and gradually steer the conversation
To questions of you, and how you are?
Can I find out for myself, or would you rather I buy more trench coats?

Change my name, to something like arthur?
Please don't go to ireland without kissing me first

Do you know how this feels?

It's when the sky is pink that I think of you most
Please don't go to ireland without kissing me first

And when you come home, should I talk in whispers to you?
Is us at a piano out of the question?
When you come home will you still roll around with him?
Or drive in his car? How I wish it were mine.

Talking to you is like looking into the sun
Please don't go to ireland without kissing me first.

Words and music by michael johnson
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Flat on her back

Across the border indiana is hazy
A breath of sun on the landscape escapes lazily
A radio is crackling and slowly fades into the hum of the tires
As he drags a trash bag into the well
Watches it fall and scrawls a farewell
And when it splashes down at the bottom, he's single again

A motel six in the sticks the tv is blaring
A shirtless boy, unemployed, gun smoking, is staring
The lady on hbo is moaning but he doesn't know the scramble code
So he closes the blinds and goes for the phone
Dials a 900 number he knows
Climbs on his former girlfriend and lets it all out

That's america: flat on her back
Under a mantle of blood stained parking lots
Above the towers of the land of the free, I mean
You wouldn't believe it
As the smoke is clearing
The stars are disappearing

The man with the shed has a secret friend on the blacktop
He watches her walk and draw with chalk at the bus stop
Somedays he'll come out and give her candy, just to watch her lick a lollypop
Then one day she never comes home
Mommy and step-dad wait by the phone
When they dig her up in his backyard, are we surprised?

How could this have ever happend here?
Here in the land of pizza and beer.
Well "evil" has no standard of living after all

That's america: flat on her back
Under a mantle of blood stained parking lots
Behind the curtain in the land of the free, brother
You wouldn't believe it,
There's a man in a turban
He's driving a suburban

He wants you to pray
As old gory waves
(admit it) anything is possible here

Words and music by michael johnson
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Give up your film career

This lavish life you are living across the sea
Will only leave you lonely
When the house lights rise and the cinemas empty
And your pinups come down from above their beds

So give up your film career
Though I wish you success
I know it's been picking up steam
I can see us in tableau:
You tight to my chest
A boy's gotta dream

So give up your film career
Though I wish you success
And drift back home to me
Like the steam around the station
On the day that I left

Words and music by michael johnson
© 2002 zubsongs, ltd.

God is

These butterflies persist
Late at night I wish
Lay your head
Get room service
Know that I am kissing your picture

Third day in this shirt
It's only getting worse
Skip a rock
Smile at the water
Know that I am teaching myself spanish

Why must time go by,
When I've found god?
And god is the line of your hips
You're with me whalesplash wet

All of these dead-ends
Midday awakenings
Shop a bit
Finish a novel
Know that I am kissing your picture

Words and music by michael johnson
© 1995 zubsongs, ltd.

Handsome models in love

I did another shoot on saturday night
It changed my life for good
I struck some poses and I smiled just right
Like a handsome model should

The lights were bright there was heat on the set
But I was frozen where I stood
I couldn't help it I broke into a sweat
My photographer looked so good

I fell in love
With the man behind the camera
He makes the world look good

We finished shooting and he asked me for a light
That's when I caught his eye
Before I knew it we were out in the night
Sailing under a velvet sky

The lights were bright I felt the heat of the strip
And the leather running smooth on the seat
My hair was sifting through his fingertips
My photographer was smiling at me

Back at the motel we boarded up the door
And we quickly drew the blinds
He put a film in told me "get on the floor
We have positions left to try"

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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High dive

Goin' up up the ladder was the dizzy part

I wanted to turn back, but there were people in the way

I had to jump

So I plugged my nose and dived off to the right

So I wouldn't have to swim so far to get out

I paddled like a dog and all my friends made fun of me

I'd laugh along, being scared for my life

When I got out of the pool

I noticed how white my feet looked

I almost wanted to swim with my socks on.

But I sat in a chair and draped my towel over my legs.

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell

Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd

Hello, love

Look up in the sky
Put your groceries down
Are you stuck in traffic?
Get out and look around
You in the food court
Can you step outside?
You're going to want to see this
It's up in the sky...

A ball of fire
Climbing slowly higher
Tossing up sprinkler halos

High above the kwik mart
It's heating up the business park
Realtors in blazers swelter

It's burning up the freeways
See how they wiggle from far away
Litter glimmers like tiny diamonds

Hello, love!

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, hughes, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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Hiding places

When we were getting our house done enough to move in
Dad asked me if I wanted to pick out a ceiling.
So we went to a home decoration place and I picked one out:
I picked the kind that was divided up into squares.

The square tiles rested on a metal framework like a checkerboard
The metal part was black and the tiles were a bumpy white texture
Like on a globe in Bas relief where you can feel the mountains and stuff like that

After getting my room all set up and living in the house for a year
I realized having this kind of ceiling was weird
It was the kind you usually only see in offices
One night I stood on a chair and pushed on one of the tiles

It moved up and slid over and I could put my hand up there
I felt around and discovered a few feet of space
It was a perfect hiding space for my dirty magazines.

Dad was a snoop and would find them if I'd hid them in my sock drawer
Or underneath my mattress like my brother and my friends
But some years later when I'd moved out for a couple of years
I came back for Thanksgiving and my room was a sewing room for Mom.

I stood on a chair and poked around the ceiling for my stash of magazines.
I stuffed them and a Pee-Chee full of clippings in my suitcase.
After dessert I searched for another hiding spot.

Words adapted from a short story by Kevin Sampson
Music by M. Johnson ©2008 Zubsongs, Ltd

How hard can it be?

AMANDA

You can paint?

NICHOLAS

I trifled with it in college. How hard can it be?

A BIT OF COLOR HERE.
A BIT OF COLOR THERE.
MIX IT ALL TOGETHER.
ALL DEVIL-MAY-CARE.
I MEAN HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
NO, REALLY! HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

A THICK STRIPE HERE.
A SKINNY SQUIGGLE THERE.
A LITTLE GOLD LEAF
ON A BIG RED SQUARE.
I MEAN, HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
I ASK YOU, HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

(NICHOLAS scrutinizes GREGORY'S portrait.)

ALL I HAVE TO DO, MY LOVE, IS PAINT IN A ROUGH
APPROXIMATION OF GREGORY'S STYLE.
OVER THE YEARS I'VE SEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH
STUFF LIKE THIS TO KNOW HE PAINTS LIKE A CHILD.

(Music continues under the following)

AMAZING

Watch what you say about it. I love it. It's mine.

NICHOLAS

(catching himself, backpedaling) Of course. Yes. Fine.
I only meant that he expresses his ideas with such clarity.
It's almost childlike in it's simplicity, it's sincerity.

AMANDA

Hmm—

NICHOLAS

His work has a certain penetrating innocence.
It shouldn't be difficult for me to capture that essence.

AMANDA

I don't think you can pull it off.

NICHOLAS

Don't tell me you've lost your faith in me.
I DRIP A LITTLE HERE
DROP A LITTLE THERE:
SHADOWY SHAPES
COLLIDING IN AIR.
I MEAN HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
LOOK, TRUST ME, HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

A LITTLE DIBBLE HERE
A LITTLE DABBLE THERE
NAME IT "UNTITLED"

OR "STILL LIFE WITH PEAR"
I MEAN HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
COME ON, NOW, HOW HARD, CAN IT BE?

BELIEVE ME, MY DEAR, I'VE SPENT A LIFETIME ACQUAINTING
MYSELF WITH MY BROTHER'S TECHNIQUE.
PASSING MY TRIFLES OFF AS GREGORY'S EARLY PAINTINGS
WILL BE EASY. THEY'LL DIE FOR THEM. THEY'LL FREAK!
THEY'LL FREAK!

A DASH OF COLOR HERE.
A SPLASH OF COLOR THERE.
PUKE ON THE CANVAS,
AND WE'RE ZILLIONAIRES!
I MEAN, HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
ADMIT IT! HOW HARD CAN IT BE?
HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

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I'm cookies for you!

"I don't want to use an old cliché,"
Gasped the chaplain to his strapping protégé,
"but having ducked into this baker's shop
And snuck a piece of pecan drop
I've something to confess, so listen, pray!"

"I'm cookies for you!
Simply speculatus!
Positively peppernutty pfeffernüsse!
We're toffees, we two.
Magical milanos!
Manifestly mandelplaettchen, me and you!"

I'm, cookies for you!
Truly tortelletty!
Unquestionably coconutty macaroons.
We're brownies, to boot!
Lovely ladyfingers!
Quite a pair of quadratinis, me and you!"

"my boy, I know I taught you sin was base
But my entire soul is pining for a taste,
To hike up these sleeves of silk
And dip this biscuit in your milk
Would send my spirit skyward to that holy place!"

"I'm cookies for you!
Passionately pralines!
Decisively divinity: that's me for you.
We're plumb bombs, partout!
Beautifully biscotti
Wholly german honey cookies, through and through!"

I'm cookies for you!
Noticeably nut balls!
Obviously oblaten, oh it's true, it's true!
We're wafers, we two!
Completely cracking crumpets
A perfect pair of cinnamony snickerdoos!

Words & music by michael johnson
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I have forgiven you

GREGORY Nicholas, I'VE BEEN PAINTING
 SO MUCH. IT'S NICE.
 IT'S NOT A CHORE, LIKE BEFORE.
 IT'S NOT A RACE.

 AND WHEN I PAINT.
 I'M GONE. I'M LOST.
 THERE'S NOTHING ON EARTH
 I COULD POSSIBLY WANT.

 IN THOSE ENDLESS MOMENTS.
 I'M NOT TRYING TO GAIN TRACTION.
 EACH PAINTING IS A PAINTING,
 NOT A STEP IN ANY DIRECTION.

 IT USED TO BE LABOR, BUT NOW
 IMAGES COME.
 THEY JUST FLOW.
 WHO KNOWS HOW LONG IT WILL LAST.

*(NICHOLAS, who has been listening the entire time, turns his head
to look at GREGORY.)*

NICHOLAS *(in a weak voice)* Well, well. Listen to you.

GREGORY Nicholas! You're awake. Nurse!

NICHOLAS Shhh! I don't want her to come.
 I want to look at you. *(a beat)* You're not a mess.
 You almost look handsome.
 You're a success.

GREGORY I'm not doing too bad.
 Nicholas, YOU TOLD ME YOUR REASONS
 FOR DOING WHAT YOU DID.
 AND I'VE GOT A DOZEN
 WHY I SHOULD BE MAD,
 BUT I HAVE FORGIVEN YOU
 I HAVE FORGIVEN YOU.

 I SHOULD STAND UP AND LEAVE
 SPIT INSULTS AT YOU,
 BUT I KNOW I COULDN'T HAVE
 DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.
 I'VE FORGIVEN YOU
 I HAVE FORGIVEN—

NICHOLAS YOU KNOW WHEN YOU RHAPSODIZE, GREGORY,
 GET ALL SENTIMENTAL, MY MEMORY
 FLASHES TO THE NIGHT YOU CAME TO LIVE WITH US.

DR. ZHIVAGO MADE SUCH A FUSS.

(Music continues under the following)

NICHOLAS He wanted to make your first night special.
Where was mother again—?

GREGORY She left. She left us.

NICHOLAS Oh, yes. She left. Where did she go?
Somewhere far away. But never mind.
You slept upstairs in my bedroom.
I slept in the unfinished guest room below.
On a hard floor that hadn't seen a broom
Since the dawn of mankind.

GREGORY God. What you must have gone through, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS You sobbed and whimpered the whole night through.
There you were, the luckiest child anywhere,
And you couldn't stop crying. Father was up there.
I could hear his voice, consoling you so intently.
I'd never heard him speak so lovingly, so gently.
Oh, Gregory, How I hate you—

N: HOW I WISH IT WERE YOU IN THIS BODY CAST.
I'D PULL THE PLUG ON YOU SO FAST.
I'VE NEVER FORGIVEN YOU
I'VE NEVER FORGIVEN YOU

GREGORY!
EVERTHING I COULD HAVE HAD WAS GIVEN TO YOU.
AND YOU TOOK IT. YOU TOOK IT WILLINGLY.
ALL I ASK IN RETURN IS THAT YOU HATE ME TOO.
I'VE NEVER FORGIVEN YOU.
I'VE NEVER FORGIVEN YOU.

G: YOU DON'T MEAN THAT.
LET'S FORGET IT.
WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.
NICHOLAS LISTEN, LISTEN.

I NEVER ASKED FOR THAT.
I NEVER WANTED IT.
I DON'T HATE YOU.
YOU'RE MY BROTHER.
I FORGIVE YOU.

I STILL LOVE YOU.

I suppose I'll always be alone

It burns my eyes to see another flint and bone gray sky
Through raindrops carving winding trails on the window of the train
It hurts my heart to heed the darting waiter's doubting eye
"are you sure, dear sir, you'll wait for her, or will you be dining alone again?"

I've been flaked on
Betrayed, conned
Had the brakes put on
Over filet mignon
Still I foot the bill after they've flown
I suppose I'll always be alone

I've been turned down
Slapped around
Run aground
Circus clowned
The wedding bells're indefinitely postponed
I suppose I'll always be alone

So many times kneeling down on one knee
I've proposed with my heart open wide
If at first her answer's yes, what comes next you can guess
Always a bridegroom, never a bride!

So I'll drink my fill
Pay the bill
Scour louisville
For another kill
See, I prefer the fetch to bringing home the bone
I suppose I'll always be alone

Words & music by michael johnson
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I talked to thousands of girls at the pub last night

We were hanging with martin and the night was young so we wandered to an irish pub.
It was good to hear my mother tongue.

An australian girl took my entry fee, she had a very light accent. I asked her if she was from tennessee.
She said, "no."

I talked to thousands of girls at the pub last night.
I was feeling pretty desperate but I passed it off as though I was all right.
But they could tell.
Everybody could tell.

A british beauty with a surly scot took after audrey tatou in *he loves me, he loves me not*.
She loved me not.

I asked two gorgeous americans to tell me their names, they said, "no sprecken zee doitch!" when the waiter came,
though he spoke english to them.
I told him I was canadian.

I talked to thousands of girls at the pub that night I was feeling pretty desperate but I passed it off as though I was all right.
But they could tell.
Everybody could tell.

Some south african girls on the parquet floor started dancing to the *rebel yell*. They wanted more, more, more.
More, more, more.

By the time we left I was feeling annoyed, with each and every beautiful girl it seemed there was a boy.
Looking overjoyed.

I talked to thousands of girls at the pub last night,
But I left like an injured bird at the end of a long flight.
They could tell.
Everybody could tell.

I talked to thousands of girls at the pub that night I was feeling pretty desperate but I passed it off as though I was all right.
But they could tell.
Everybody could tell.

I tried to date the singer in a band

I tried to date
The singer in a band
I turned to jelly when the light caught her hand
Her clothes were homemade:
An avalanche
Snow drifts of lace across her belly of sand

“how do you know it’s love?”
She sang to the air
“how do you know it’s love?”
To all the people standing there
Behind the mic stand white like a dove
We just knew it was

Words and music by michael johnson
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I would've been fine staying home tonight

I would've been fine staying home tonight
But, miracle of miracles, you gave me your number the other day.
Now we're sitting here in this small café
Miracle of miracles you're smiling at me in the candlelight.

Please don't say you've got a fiancé
Or a boyfriend waiting at home
Please don't say you've got a kid on the way
Or that you're doing a semester in rome.

Because I would've been fine staying home tonight
But, miracle of miracles, now you're throwing your head back in a laugh.

(solo)

Please don't say you blew your parents away
Or that you've come from a violent home.
Please don't say there'll ever come a day
When they discover your ex-lover's bones.

Because I would've been fine staying home tonight
But, miracle of miracles, you're touching your napkin to your mouth.

Now we're stepping out having closed the place
Miracle of miracles you're turning toward me with something to say.
You 're taking a break to get over someone else.
You're still not ready to date. You're taking some time to yourself.

I don't know what to say as you walk away
I'm standing on the sidewalk surprised.
I've been looking forward to this date all day.
You're disappearing before my eyes.

I would've been fine staying home tonight.
There's no such thing as miracles here out on this dark road all alone.

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If I was your father

If you were my boy
I'd make you handmade toys
I'd see you every day
I'd tuck you safely away
From this cold, cold world

I'd never push you into the pool
I'd always drive you to school
And when your birthday descends
I'd round up all your friends
And I'd show up on time

And there would be no need for you to be frightened by the thing under the bed
'Cause I'd be there holding my gold plated sword to his snarling, fanged head

My beautiful boy
Your summers would last forever
And you could skin your knees
On the driveway catching bees
And I'd help you build a museum

And when your girlfriends came
You wouldn't be ashamed
To introduce me as "dad"
I'd have 'em laughing so bad
That later you'd score

I'd never get a divorce
You wouldn't have to be forced
To join the military
'Cause you would always be free
To make the right choice

And whatever mistakes you might make go on confess them. I'll be your priest.
And while everyone's yawning at your crayon drawings I'll call the galleries

My beautiful boy
Your life would last forever
You could take your time
Here, take some of mine
Just don't you ever die

I'd even keep a straight face
When you play your demo tape
I'd even lay down a track
And when your room's ransacked
I'd make your sister clean it!

And whatever kind of man tries to stand in your sandbox I'll kick it in his face.
And the hearts of the girls of the world will lie shattered when you walk in the place.

My beautiful boy
My gullible deepak swallower
Please don't ever cry
You're safe now and i
Wouldn't leave you if I was your father

So take your time
Go on, take some of mine
Just don't you ever die
Because I've already lost one
My brother, my son
Take your time

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Il fait calme

While out with *une amie* one night
Beside a gloomy seine
She turned to me with eyes alight
And this was our exchange:

“il fait calme. Il fait calme.
Écrite pour moi un petit chanson.”
She paused by the cool gray river
Her hand on the balustrade

"oui, d'accord. D'accord mon amie.
Je vais composer un chanson d'amitié."
I cautiously moved to kiss her
But she moved her lips away.
She moved her lips away.

“je regrette... tu es sympa,
Mais, je ne pense pas de toi comme ça.”
She turned to the cool gray river
Her hand on the balustrade

"oui, d'accord. D'accord mon amie.
J'ai pensé que peut-être... mais non... je suis...”
But stifling my words abruptly
I ambled back toward the road
Il n'y a pas d'amour heureux.

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In montreal

A message scribbled in red:
“love, by the time you read this letter I'll be gone.”
A lover sprawled on the bed, crushed
With a gift of flowers from the neighbor's lawn

A taxi speeds away and kicks up leaves
Of maple rising in a restless cloud
She's yelling to the janitor
“I'm heading off to canada now!”

And as she's checking her bags in
She spies a family in their sunday best
Sporting american flag pins
The father reverently staring at her chest

She pushes past them on her way to the gate
To join a line that seems to stretch for miles
Of hippies and professors
Fashionable dressers
And homophiles

We'll have it all in montreal
Get on the plane there's no time to explain
Let the others balk and say we're insane
But we've only the world to gain after all
In montreal

As the earth falls away beneath
She gets to chatting with a lithe young man
Sown on his bag is a maple leaf
His unpublished novel in his other hand

He stands up suddenly and leads the cabin
In a chorus of the marsellaise
As starlight hits the plane and then
Sparkles in canadian air space

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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It started at the arcade

We were hanging out
In the mall at midnight
Jimmy bought us a case of bartles & james

Stack your quarters up
We'll be here all night
Jimmy's brother works at galaxy of games

It started at the arcade
Now the revolution's on
We won't hold back until your housing tracts are gone
The revolution's on!

Me I'm lighting up
My warrior needs food badly
But the sound of sirens has me spinning round

Behind the window glass
Kids are running madly
Underneath a smoky blaze of popping sounds

It started at the arcade
Now the revolution's on
We won't hold back until these cul-de-sacs are gone
The revolution's on!

We go running past
The coppers multiplying
Jimmy barely made it out of there alive

Jimmy's brother's last
Pig batons are flying
The coppers close in just before he takes a dive

It started at the arcade
Now jimmy's brother's gone
They stole his youth with the use of 13 inch batons
The revolution's on!

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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It's good to see you, muse

GREGORY I'VE SPENT SIX MONTHS LYING BALLED UP ON THE FLOOR
SINCE I GAVE YOU UP, NOW HERE YOU ARE,
TELL ME I'M FORGIVEN.
AFTER SIX MONTHS SHAKING OFF EVERY PANG OF INSPIRATION,
YOU'RE BESIDE ME AGAIN.
AND I'M FINALLY LIVING.
AND IT'S GOOD.
OH, IT'S GOOD.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MUSE.
I CAN SEE YOU WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES
YOU'RE BACK TO SEE ME THROUGH.
IT'S TRUE, THEN, WHAT EVERYONE SAYS:
WE FIND YOU RIGHT WHEN WE STOP LOOKING
SPEAK TO YOU WHEN WE'RE NOT SPEAKING
RACE TOWARD YOU WHEN WE'RE STUCK IN GEAR.
SUCH A SWEET SURPRISE.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MUSE.

(Music continues as OTTO comes in, carrying a large canvas, some brushes, and a bucket of white paint.)

OTTO Here it is, my friend. It's huge, right?

GREGORY Wow. Yeah, here let me help you.

(The two of them get the canvas over to the upstage wall.)

OTTO Look at it. It's shit. So you can have it. It's a nice big canvas for you.
And, because I'm such a nice person
I brought you a bucket of white paint. Use it
To paint over this monstrosity. Do me that favor?

GREGORY I will. Thanks again.

OTTO No problem. Listen, when you finish, come join us at the pub.
Leave your flat. You're a cool guy. You don't have to be such a loner.

GREGORY Thanks, I might do that. Just give me a minute.

OTTO Sure, sure. I'll see you then, Newman. Happy painting.

GREGORY See you.

(OTTO exits.)

(GREGORY begins to cover the canvas with white paint as he sings.)

AFTER SIX MONTHS CIRCLING BLOCKS ON ENDLESS WALKS

TALKING TO NO ONE, I SEE TWO SETS OF TRACKS
ON THE BEACH BEHIND ME.
AFTER SIX MONTHS SCOURING JOURNALS FOR MY NAME
IN VAIN AND GIVING UP: HERE YOU COME.
PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME.
IT FEELS GOOD
SO GOOD.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MUSE
WITHOUT YOU MY LIFE HAS BEEN DRY.
I WONDER WHAT WE'LL DO.
I TRUST YOU TO SHOW ME THE WAY.
SO FAR I'VE BEEN JUST SURVIVING,
SCRAPING BY, BARELY LIVING
NOW I FEEL MYSELF EVOLVING.
CHANGE WILL COME SLOW, GOD KNOWS,
BUT IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MUSE.

SAVE ME FROM THIS FILTHY CITY.
FREE ME FROM THIS FILTHY BODY.
GIVE ME STRENGTH TO FILL THIS CANVAS UP
DON'T LET ME STOP.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MUSE.
I'M OPEN TO WHAT YOU HAVE IN STORE.
CAN YOU GIVE ME JUST A CLUE?
WHAT COLORS WILL WE PULL OUT OF THIN AIR?
ORANGE SKIES OVER FIELDS OF YELLOW?
PURPLE WATER, REDDISH DEW?
GRAYISH LANDSCAPES, GREEN IN WINTER'S THAW?
THE TENDER BLUE OF ROSE.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MUSE.

La la la la

It started in a sharl's out in emeryville
I was meeting a girl
Under a shooting star
With my mastercard

Burning in my pocket is a picture of you
As she approaches the booth
I just smile and stands
Cup her face in my hands

Don't cry
You're never going to see him again
And why would you want to after what he did

La la la la ...

Then she smiles
As we're driving away
Even the sailboats form a grin in the bay
And the motel is shining like a big glass diamond
As we're pulling in

Accidently
En route to their floor
I touch her fingers
Holding the elevator door

And her skin of course feels nothing like yours but it'll do

Overjoyed
But looking slightly detached
I slip the key in
And the lock is unlatched
So I motions for this blonde girl that I'm with to enter first
Like a gentleman

La la la la ...

Painted seashells
On the wall above the bed
And a mermaid with her lips smeared red
Under a bedspread of wine there's a foam rubber lining and crispy linens

Then it's over
And I'm tightening my belt
I should be smiling, but something I've never felt
Comes creeping inside me like hot cyanide
Or was I dreaming?

La la la la

It started at a sharl's out in emeryville
I was meeting a girl
For a magical night
It was the end of my life

Words and music by michael johnson
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Звездочка (little star)

don't talk
the bridge is a whistler
unorangegray blurry and misted

i don't like much of what you sound like now
i called in I called in
bus gray morning out

hang your little star on my head
i don't care what they say I'm not better off dead than red

it's light now
brake pads are hissing
climbing on
wine smile is missing

i don't like much about waking up now
i called out I called out
Nothing
blue gray towel

Heaven, is this heaven?

Words and music by michael johnson
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Long island city love song

I know you know my face
I saw you see me at the h&m
Just one look and you were gone
Into the autumn

I know you fell in love
I saw you press your nose
Ever closer to the window
To see what brand of chinos I had on

It's no joke
It's pashmina
Come closer
Cop a feel

And when you broke the glass
I knew I had you
You set off alarms,
Took off my necklace and my shawl
But, baby, that's not all

I wonder where you are now
If you could only see me standing here:
Yet another h&m,
Another autumn

Words and music by michael johnson
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Lord, how I dread the weekend

Monday all the birds take their places.
On branches buttered by the rising sun.
Tuesday I'm up early with a smile on my face:
The day's begun!

But, oh, lord, how I dread the weekend
How I wish it would never come.
Lord, how I dread the weekend
Here it comes, here it comes
Here the loneliness comes.

Wednesday pretty gray clouds cover up the sunrise
I feel the cool sweet raindrops on my face.
Thursday throws out yellow light as the breaking sun
Takes his rightful place.

But, oh, lord, how I dread the weekend
How I wish it would never come.
Lord, how I dread the weekend
Here it comes, here it comes
Here the loneliness comes.

Friday I say farewell to the children's faces.
I waste away adrift in the saturday sun.
I haunt the bars and sit alone in all the same places
'Til monday comes.

Oh, lord, how I dread the weekend
How I wish it would never come.
Lord, how I dread the weekend
Here it comes, here it comes
Here the emptiness comes.
Here it comes, here it comes
Here the loneliness comes.
Here it comes here it comes
Here it comes

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Ma maison voyageuse

Tous les garçons et toutes les filles
De la ville d'amiens
Aiment aller chez moi
Pour voir ma belle maison
Avec ses murs de verre d'ivoire
Ma maison voyageuse

Elle ressemble à une groutte
De pudding à la vanille
Et chaque saison
Ma maison retourne
De l'étranger avec classe
Ma maison voyageuse

Quand au printemps il y a du vent
Et les fleurs couvrent la terre
Elle glisse sur les champs
À l'aide des voiles
Comme un bateau sur une mer verte
Ma maison voyageuse

En été quand il fait beau
Il n'y a pas de nuages dans le ciel
Mais elle vole au-dessus
À l'aide des grandes ailes (a led de granzelle)
Comme un oiseau neigeux (cum un wazo nezhu)
Ma maison voyageuse

En automne quand il pleut
Sur les feuilles mortes (phooey)
Ma maison flotte
Comme un aéroglisseur
Sur les champs marrons et mouillés
Ma maison voyageuse

En hiver quand il fait froid
Et les champs sont congelés
Ma maison descend
Des collines grises
À l'aide des skis argentés (arzhonte)
Ma maison voyageuse

Chaque saison je choisis
Un garçon et une fille
Pour voler ici et là
Et pour voir le monde entier (onteeay)
Veux-tu faire un voyage avec nous
Dans ma maison voyageuse?

Tous les garçons et toutes les filles

De la ville d'amiens
Aiment aller chez moi
Pour voir ma belle maison
Et ses fenêtres de verre coloré
Ma maison voyageuse

Words & music by michael johnson
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Maybe the moon knows something

So you looked at the moon from your room one night
And you noticed it breaking up
Maybe the moon knows something
Up in its orbit crumbling
So you pick up the phone and call her up

What do you find when she answers the line
But a guilty stammering
She says it's over this time
So much for the solar system
Saturn casts away its rings

Neptune stands himself upright
And jupiter pokes out his red eye
He can sympathize
'cause breakin' up feels like crumbling skies

Now you're alone and the clubs are your home
From six pm 'til two
Another bar another bad time
But then venus and mars align
You're looking at her she's looking at you

She's got a star on the back of her sweater that's red
Like a glass of pabst she goes to your head
But maybe the moon knows something
Up in its orbit mumbling
And before it was born the relationship's dead

Venus puts her clothes back on
And mercury dives into the sun
Just like anyone
He knows romance is no fun
It's no fun

So cursing orion, screaming and crying
You climb to the highest cliff
Then as if you'd sprouted wings
You dive out into the evening
But instead of falling your body lifts

The next thing you know your whole body's aglow
As the world falls away
Like a teenage space station
You take your place among the constellations
Now you're taking a sip from the milky way

Words and music by michael johnson
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Mayfair

Darren and I snuck across the street
To the back of the mayfair market
Stacks of *playboys* and *penthouses* at our feet
Badly stashed there behind the garbage

We discovered naked ladies
In the back of the dinken brothers' truck
They gave us pictures from their hard-core magazines
I was confused by the ones where the couples would...

Darren and I snuck across the street
And one day in the mayfair market
I talked him into stealing a magazine
From the racks at the back of the market

On the way out it slid out of his pant-leg
I got away in the nick of time
Moments later darren's mom and dad arrived
Followed by lights and the sound of a siren's whine.

I was afraid they were talking about me.

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Meet me later in the file room

Please don't say you're paranoid
Remember how we started out:
In the blue light, struggle
Lug your shit down twenty flights
In the middle of the night

And you want this so badly
Don't give up

Navigating the stairwell
Lips wet, strauss, kiss
Middle of your break
I don't love these buildings more
My legs honestly are not tired

And you both want this so badly
Don't give up

Meet me later in the file room
I forgive you for the music you like
I only want to see you
Once more before I leave

And I want you so badly
Don't give up

Words and music by michael johnson
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Midwestfall

Tall faux poet earring boys
Entrepreneurs who make noise
They're no match for me and you

you lying piles in of plaid
fresh from evenings had addressing letters to the other side of the booth

and the midwest falls on us
who knew it could be like this?

You lying indescribably
Within inches of me
Skinny and warm
I can picture the rice

Hopscotch fifty blocks
Who knew it could be like this?

I touch
You breathe
You absolutely kill me
You are a star
Wishing on a necklace

At musée de mécanique
Suburbs fall and oceans leak
Seems that all I really was doing
Was waiting for you

Words are scattering in folds of flannel buried
I know exactly where I'm ending up

Even waiting for the bus
As the morning falls on us

Wishing on a necklace only understates the obvious

Words and music by michael johnson
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Miracle of miracles

Miracles never happened to me
I didn't believe in all that much
In fact I'd've laid
Down the bottle straight away
If ever I had seen a burning bush

And if my walking stick should turn into a snake
"cut me off and ban me from the bar!"
I'd've poured out my pint and pinched myself
Even if my hair should part

I'd've checked into a padded hotel room
Before you'd ever have convinced me
I didn't believe in miracles
They never happened to me

I used to be a non-believer
Until that day I'll not forget
That miracle of miracles
Baby was the day we met

Words and music by michael johnson
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Miss haze

Maybe I'm jealous
Of windows and bridges
They get to be walked all over
And looked through by you

And the days will be longer than the stains on my duvet

Salty chested
Starlit gestures
Sweet cushions
Moistened days
Won't be honeycolored haze
Haze

Wait 'til I get you in red light
All alone
Upward inching knees, bold
Sticky limbs and warm weight
Wet mouth
O!

And you drift back:
Warm milk, slow
My lo

Maybe I'm jealous
Of windows and bridges
They get to be walked all over
And looked through by you

But I want to

Words and music by michael johnson
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My new york

I don't care about the brooklyn bridge
It's just a hunk of steel and tar
And I wouldn't care about that empire state building
Even if it scraped the skies of mars
Can't even see our names written in the stars
That old flatiron blocks my view
For some it's the rainbow room
For some it's the park, but, baby,
My new york is you

I don't care about the guggenheim
And moma? I don't give a frick!
And greenwich village with its singles scene
Night after night the same old shtick

I'd rather take the "a" train north up to the heights
Or zoom down to pier 42
And as our lips meet lady liberty drifts by
My torch burns bright for nobody but you, dear

Baby, you're hanging in my gallery
I'll take you with onions & kraut
Or even strolling down the bowery
Ordering in or stepping out
They can press their noses to the windows on 5th avenue
But, baby, my new york is you

Tell my mamma I'm in heaven, and I'm not passing through
'Cause, baby, my new york is you

My new york is you

Words and music by michael johnson
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My new york is you

NORA *(kisses his cheek suddenly)* Let's get out of here.

GREGORY Alright. Where?

NORA I don't care. As long as, well...
NEW YORK! NEW YORK HAS EVERYTHING.
FOR ROMANCE YOU CAN'T BEAT IT.
BUT NOW THAT I'VE FOUND YOU—
WELL, WE CAN DO WITHOUT IT.
I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ENCHANTED ONCE
BY THE LIGHT SHOW ON TIMES SQUARE,
BUT NEXT TO YOU THOSE FLASHY LIGHTS
SEEM DIMMER THAN BEFORE.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE.
IT'S JUST A HUNK OF STEEL AND TAR.
AND I WOULDN'T CARE ABOUT THAT EMPIRE STATE BUILDING
EVEN IF IT SCRAPED THE SKIES OF JUPITER.
COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT THE COPACABANA.
DOES ANYONE STILL LISTEN TO MANILOW?
FOR SOME IT'S THE RAINBOW ROOM,
FOR SOME IT'S THE PARK,
BUT MY NEW YORK IS YOU.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE GUGGENHEIM.
AND MOMA? I DON'T GIVE A FRICK!
AND GREENWICH VILLAGE WITH ITS SINGLES SCENE:
SAME OLD MEAT MARKET EVERY WEEK.
I'D RATHER ZOOM UP ON THE "A" TRAIN TO THE HEIGHTS,
OR SAIL TO STATEN ISLAND NICE AND SLOW.
AND AS OUR LIPS MEET LADY LIBERTY DRIFTS BY.
MY TORCH BURNS BRIGHT FOR NOBODY BUT YOU.

GREGORY HONEY, YOU'RE HANGING IN MY GALLERY.

NORA I'LL TAKE YOU WITH ONIONS & KRAUT.

GREGORY OR EVEN STROLLING DOWN THE BOWERY.

NORA NIGHT AND DAY, DAY, DAY, DAY AND NIGHT.
LET THEM PRESS THEIR NOSE TO SOME 5th AVENUE WINDOW.
MY NEW YORK IS YOU.

GREGORY COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. NO MATTER WHERE WE GO,
MY NEW YORK IS YOU.

BOTH MY NEW YORK IS YOU.

Never again

GREGORY

BROTHERS AND FATHERS
FATHERS AND MOTHERS
WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO A MAN IN THE END?
THEY'RE ONLY PEOPLE,
PEOPLE WHO GRAPPLE,
STRUGGLE AND SUFFER WITH TENUOUS BONDS.
LIKE ALL HUMANKIND.

FATHER, I LET YOU ENSLAVE ME.
I KNEW YOU NEEDED SOMEONE TO ADORE.
I HOPED, BY LETTING YOU LOVE ME,
I COULD RECOVER,
AND THEN DELIVER
YOU FROM YOUR OLD LIFE OF PAIN.
NEVER AGAIN.

SUCH PAIN AND DISCHORD.
IN ONE LITTLE F-WORD.
LET IT ALL FLOAT UP AND OUT OF MY SOUL.
THEY'RE ONLY HUMAN.
I USED TO BE ONE.
NOW I'VE GOT WINGS AND I SWEAR I'M GONNA SAIL.
NEVER TO FALL.

BROTHER, I LET YOU ABUSE ME
I KNEW YOU NEEDED SOMEONE TO ABUSE.
I HOPED, BY LETTING YOU TEASE ME,
THAT YOU'D FEEL BETTER
ABOUT YOUR FATHER,
SO I LET YOU WIN.
NEVER AGAIN.

I HAVE NO PAST, I HAVE NO FAMILY.
IT'S MY BLOOD ALONE IN THESE VEINS.
I'M A GENELOGICAL ANOMALY.
I HAVE NO BROTHER
I HAVE NO FATHER
FORGIVE ME, MOTHER
BUT NEVER AGAIN!
I'M MY OWN MAN.

Nicknames

My friend matthew and i
Had recently decided that our parents needed nicknames
Secret nicknames

My mother was fuzz
'Cause she had a white old lady afro just like *the golden girls*
Tv's *the golden girls*

My father was pudlow
Although he was scrawny he was prone to occasional outbursts
Trying to act all authoritative

Matthew's mother was art
'Cause she started making a big fuss about taking up painting once
But she never painted once

Matthew's father was garno
Simply 'cause it rhymed with the name of a dorky-looking offensive lineman
Seattle's john yarno

Matthew told me once
That his father's fingers often curled up when it was cold outside
We called that "doing the garno"

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd

No, no, this will never do!

When a man is fairly wealthy
And relatively healthy
You liberals want to tell him what to do
How dare you sit down at my table
And expound your leftist fables
No no no this will never do!

I'm a decorated veteran
I met the fates and bettered them
Upon the bloody fields of waterloo
Until you defend the fort
I will not hear it from your sort
I say no no this will never do!

To look at me's to see a man
Whom god himself designed by hand
All vim and vigor, breadth and ballyhoo
Whereas one can find no flattery
In this your liberal tattery!
No no this will never do!

I scrape your talk of labor
And of sharing with thy neighbor
Off the bottom of my new designer shoes
Your socialistic platitudes
Have not a lick of gratitude
No no this will never do!

Forgive me, friar,
But he's a liar
And i, for one, have no desire
To listen to him censure and poo poo
The task of those who're without sin
Is to cast our stones at the likes of him
And say no no no this will never do

No no this will never do!

Words & music by michael johnson
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Oh, james

I'll be breakfasting alone, james
Turn off the bloody gramophone, james
Leave the curtains drawn if it's all the same
I'm lying here alone, yes I know, james

Who was that girl I brought home? Oh, james!
Only the daughter of lord whatshisname
We started out dancing, ended up kissing
Now I've woken up to find her missing

I thought I had her I don't understand
We held hands
She made plans
Somewhere deep in my heart a spark was lit
I admit it, james

She must have left while I was sleeping
Slipped out the door silently creeping
Without so much as a "thanks for the evening"
I'd've settled for a mere "I'm leaving"

I thought I had her I don't understand
We played bacchus & pan
On the divan
I thought this love could end up infinite
I admit it, james

What was she playing at? I don't like games
You know these women, james, they're all the same
Whatever it was, it was one dirty trick
Hey, what's that on your neck, james? Is it lipstick?!

Words and music by michael johnson
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Olive green

Here in my cocoon
Pictures hanging in the room
I know you are floating somewhere nearby me
Hardly feels like you are dead
Got a film strip in my head
But home movies won't bring you back to me

Olive green
You can see the city
I will watch it with you soon

Though they tried to frame your face
Well, it just looks out of place
'Cause no amount of gilding is as beautiful as you
Well I miss even our fights
She's done the house up in whites
I hope it doesn't hide you when you haunt me

Though the stone is cold
Well the trees are fresh
But the flowers are plastic

Here in my cocoon
You are hanging in the room somewhere nearby me

Words and music by michael johnson
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One of those nights

It was just one of those nights
Silk curtains parted and you slipped into the light
Ooo my senses swelled my body filled with delight
It was just one of those nights

Not a soul was in sight
Just you and me and a box of delight
Ooo the sun came out and just for once in my life
This dark forest filled with light

How many losers tried to slip in my back door?
I was flat on the floor, but you I can't ignore

Words and music by michael johnson
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Once

GREGORY ONCE YOU PUT YOUR ARM AROUND
ME WHEN I GOT STUNG ONE SUMMER.

(NORA comes into the spotlight and slips her hand into GREGORY'S).

NORA ONCE YOU HELPED ME FIND
MY WAY WHEN I WAS LOST IN PARIS.

(CHARLES appears in an office under a spotlight upstage right.)

CHARLES YOU KEPT THE PATRONS LAUGHING.

(TIMOTHY and AMANDA appear together at the top of the stairs to her apartment upstage left.)

AMANDA YOU HAD A WAY WITH WORDS.

TIMOTHY YOU WERE THE LIFE
OF THE PARTY EVERY TIME.

GREGORY I FEEL NO LONGING,
I FEEL NO PAIN.
ONLY FORGIVENESS,
NEW LIFE, NORA'S HAND.
I'LL NEVER FORGET
WHAT YOU HELPED ME TO LEARN:
LET GO AND MAKE YOUR OWN WAY

NORA ONCE YOU STOP SEARCHING, YOU'LL FIND...

CHARLES PICK YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU FALL...

AMANDA ONCE YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO TRUST...

TIMOTHY ONCE YOU HAVE TASTED SUCCESS...

ALL YOU'LL BECOME A BUTTERFLY.

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Only mildly

I'm sadder than I've ever been
you were such a star back then
What's the point of having friends
If you can't write a check to them

Is that the way you think?
I'm not surprised
Only mildly

I'm sadder than I've ever been
I hurled your shoes all over for christ's sake
Who's that boy with his piece of wood
Dreaming again? Well that's no good
No one's gonna pay you to dream
But it pays to dream, unfortunately

So, skinny boy
Star back then
Now you're not worth wishing on

I'm sadder than I've ever been
Boy you really did some damage to me
You made a dent in your best friend
Or should I say potential best friend

So, skinny boy
Star back then
Hope you can smell that shit you're shoveling

Words and music by michael johnson
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Opening night medley

SCENE 3 – Night on the floor of the warehouse where GREGORY, OTTO, MIKEY, JULIE and GAZLAY live. Curtain rises to the music of Opening Night Medley: Intro, pg.? JULIE stands in front of a GROUP of PATRONS. NORA is among them. The windows are no longer boarded up and all of Brooklyn sparkles through the tall floor to ceiling windows. Other than the weak light from the city outside, the stage is almost dark. As the music ends, the lights suddenly come up with a clanking noise like a breaker flipping. Everyone gasps and applauds. On the stage right wall are painted the words "The Blue Rose Gallery: Grand Opening". JULIE begins to sing.

JULIE THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT TONIGHT.
MY NAME IS JULIE. I'M YOUR HOST.
GET READY FOR A LOVELY EVENING.
TAKE OFF YOUR COAT. ENJOY THE VIEW.
KNOW THAT THERE'S PLENTY MORE TO SEE.
COME JOIN ME FOR A LITTLE TOUR.
THAT'S RIGHT, FOLKS, RIGHT THIS WAY.
RIGHT THIS WAY. FOLLOW ME.

(Music segues into Promenade I, pg. ?, during which JULIE and the GROUP, head downstage and begin walking in place as a big white wall slides into place behind them. By the end of Promenade I, the large white wall representing MIKEY'S studio has slid into place behind the GROUP, who are standing way downstage. On the wall hangs an enormous painting of a black man's head behind a chain link fence. MIKEY is leaning proudly against the wall stage left. GAZLAY stands next to him holding a roll of red stickers. Music segues into In The White Man's Zoo,, pg. ?)

MIKEY I'VE GOT A STORY TO TELL YOU
ABOUT GROWING UP WHITE IN BED STUY.
ONCE ON THE PLAYGROUND, I PICKED A FIGHT WITH
THREE BLACK BOYS TWICE MY SIZE.
WE WERE WAILING AWAY, IT WAS BLOODY.
'TIL THE COPS CAME AND BROKE IT UP.
THEY HAULED THE BLACK BOYS OFF IN A SQUAD CAR
LEAVING ME ON THE CORNER WITH A WARNING.
THAT WAS MY FIRST TASTE OF WHITE PRIVILEGE,
IN THE LAND OF THE FREE, YET GUILTY.
WHERE THE HOME OF THE BRAVE
IS A NICE LITTLE CAGE
IN THE ZOO.
IN THE ZOO.
IN THE WHITE MAN'S ZOO.

(When MIKEY finishes his song, the GROUP starts mildly applauding. GAZLAY flits around talking to them, carrying a roll of little red stickers, but he doesn't stick any to the wall. JULIE and the GROUP start walking again. Music segues into Promenade II, pg. ?, as they begin walking. A couple of them stay behind to talk with MIKEY. OTTO's wall, which is painted bright pink, slides into place this time. On his wall are hung large paintings of familiar cereal box cartoon characters in lewd poses with various bits of raw meat pierced with rusty nails. Music segues into America, Thank You For Nothing, pg.?)

OTTO ONCE WHEN I WAS WALKING DOWN IN WILLIAMSBURG

I CAME ACROSS A PUERTO-RICAN FRIEND.
 I ASKED HIM HOW WAS BUSINESS,
 HE SAID, "OTTO, OH, OTTO, IT'S DEAD!
 MY TAQUERIA, SHE IS CLOSING.
 THE LANDLORD WENT AND KICKED US OUT.
 SO SOME LILY WHITE RICH LITTLE FASHION SLAVE BITCH
 COULD OPEN AN EXPENSIVE BOUTIQUE."
 HE SAID, "AMERICA THANK YOU FOR NOTHING!
 SEE WHAT'S BECOME OF YOUR AMERICAN DREAM:
 IT'S A NIGHTMARE WHERE AMERICANS TAKE EVERYTHING
 AND THE REST OF THE WORLD GETS REAMED."

(When OTTO finishes his song, the GROUP bursts into slightly more enthusiastic applause. GAZLAY flits around talking to them, again carrying his roll of little red stickers, but he doesn't stick any to the wall. A greater number of PATRONS stay behind to chat with OTTO as JULIE and the rest of the GROUP start walking again. Music segues into Medley: Promenade III, pg. ?, as they begin walking. As Promenade III ends, the set settles into place to reveal GREGORY'S wall. On his wall are huge canvases painted with abstract images of a tall house on fire, a white rosebush, a boy flying through the air, and a screaming woman. GREGORY is standing at the wall, stage left. GAZLAY comes in, but GREGORY waves him away. Music segues into Colors, Lines, pg. ?)

GREGORY A FALLING BOY IN A YELLOW SKY
 OVER FIELDS OF ORANGE,
 HIS SCREAMING WHITE MOUTHED
 MOTHER CRUMBLING
 RAVAGED BY GREEN FLAMES.
 THAT'S THE WAY MY DREAM GOES.
 BURNING IN MY EYELIDS
 EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES.
 BUT I FEEL NO LONGING,
 I FEEL NO PAIN.
 JUST VIOLENT COLOR
 AND SENSUOUS LINE.
 FORMS THAT FLOAT
 LIKE BALLOONS IN THE SUN.
 HERE IS MY PAST. HERE'S MY VOICE.
 HERE'S WHAT I NEED TO EXPRESS.

(When GREGORY finishes his song, the GROUP stands speechless. They are all incredibly moved by the paintings in front of them. Each member of the GROUP goes to a painting, and GAZLAY and JULIE walk around to talk to each of them. They each place red stickers on the walls. The patrons go shake hands and noisily chat with GREGORY. GREGORY drifts upstage, looking at the red stickers and contemplating his paintings. The PATRONS, JULIE, and OTTO leave as the Closing Promenade music fades out. NORA stays behind and approaches GREGORY.)

Orange county revisited

Welcome back, love
To the united states
Have you been away so long
In the undertow?

Do you know what I mean
By the promise of borders?
Does the pink of la startle you?

'Cause I've been wondering where you
Get all your balls from
I've been dying to meet the man you went hung(a)ry with

And I've been calling all the numbers that you gave me
Hoping that the palm trees haven't swallowed you

Did I write you enough, if at all?
All I did was fail
And it's been two years
But candles linger on
In the undertow

Words and music by michael johnson
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Physical

"flip me some shit boy,
Flip me some shit."
After the soccer game
We all headed back
To the locker room.
I'd accidentally
Kicked farrel in the knee.
Not very hard,
But two of his friends ran beside him
As he taunted me

"you think you're safe
In the showers boy?
I wouldn't want to see you slip."
His friends smiled then he
Tried to trip me.
Once inside he leaned
Against my locker
And said to me:
"I don't think
You've got any friends in here,
Do ya?"

"nobody'd give a shit
If I flushed your
Fucking head down the john?"
They'd prob'ly just laugh."
What frightened me most about that
Was how he said it slowly
And calmy
As if he was only
Discussing the options
On the lunch menu.

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd

Pound coins

I was thinking about how good it felt
Forced to guzzle whiskey
Dodging clouds of smoke
Telling dodgy jokes

I was thinking about how heavy
The duffels of cheap wine were
All the dancers drowning
It's chilly on the boat

Na na na na....

I was thinking about pound coins
Spending them on cider
Peeling back the labels
Watching your big eyes

I walked alone to the nightclub
And looking 'round
I saw the trees on parade
I walked alone to the nightclub
I saw the flaming trees on parade

I was standing in the shower
Parting broken curtains
Riding the red buses
Are we getting in too late?

I walked alone to the nightclub
I walked alone
I saw the trees on parade
I walked alone
Mispronouncing all the funny names

I got drenched in dover

Words and music by michael johnson
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Rebuilding

Spoken: This is how I learned what monotony means

Instead of using the money
From the insurance company
To hire rebuilders for the house
My father decided to "save some money"
By doing the job himself

But dad hadn't bargained
That it would take him
Much longer to get it done
So for four years we lived in an apartment
Too small and ugly for anyone

Matt or mark or i
Would take turns helping
our father do different things
Like smashing down walls
With sledgehammers
And sorting through the ashen remains

*Spoken: Those things were fun. But then came the boring stuff,
Like measuring and insulating.*

Our big job then,
As dad's assistant,
Was to keep the tape the measure in place
Or just to hold the flashlight
When the long afternoon
Turned to night

We'd do this
For hours each day
And when it seemed like we might not be needed.
We'd say "dad, can go play over at darren's?"
And he'd say
Spoken: "no, I might need you to hold the flashlight."

Between my brothers and i
Each morning became
A game of who could leave the house the fastest
"say matt, I mean mark, I mean kevin
Spoken: Don't go planning anything
I might need your help over at the house."

The whole rebuilding process
Was slower
Than anybody thought it would be
"help" became the most painful word

To hear for my brothers and me.

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Records

If you want a radio single then this is all you've gotta do
Take a black paper circle and stick on a label with glue
If you've got a pair of scissors or a hole puncher will do
Cut a little hole in the middle and slip some string right through

And when you have hung it above your little head
You can pretend you're billy rivers and knock the audience dead!

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Rue lane

Ever day he slaves to save rue lane in galloway
Potholes filled with gravel milled from pearls
He hacks the brambles back way out of harm's way
And clips the budding tips of whipporwills

He slams his hammer down upon the oak roots
Whose sweeping tendrils creep up through the mud
And stamping on the ground with tattered old boots
He smooths the rocky road with mighty thuds

'Twas on the blackest night in late october
His lover's car came ripping down rue lane
Her driver, true to form, being far from sober
Plowed the car head first into a passing train

Now as he weeps he sweeps the twigs and fig leaves
That gather up and scatter in the lane
He's making sure the road is clear of debris
For nightly when his lass floats past on old rue lane

Words and music by michael johnson
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Run run run, annie, run!

Annie went around the track
She'll never come back to the stadium (2x)

The bleachers were loaded
And how they exploded when
When she broke the tape

But she kept on running
How it stunned them
When she made her escape

1000 iron soldiers in black
Spilled out on the track in the stadium
The government was on the attack
Yelling "annie, get back to the stadium!"

How the sirens howled
As the spotlights prowled
Through the city of lights

They sent out dozens of ships
But she gave them the slip in the night

Run run run, annie, run!

All the other prisoners laughed
As they endlessly lapped 'round the stadium
Cheering annie as they collapsed
And the laser beams flashed round the stadium

How the bleachers were bloodied
By the heaps of muddy bodies strewn about

But they all died happy knowing
Annie alone made it out

Run run run annie run!

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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Secret notebook

When I started to accumulate too many dirty magazines
To possibly hide in my suitcase, I had to devise a new plan
So I started cutting out all the pictures in the magazines
Only the ones that turned me on a great deal

I was 15 and it took me some time
Possibly a weekend or more
But when it came to *Playboy* and *Penthouse*
It was easier
They were mostly articles

When it was done I had a garbage bag of disregarded pages
I tossed them away in a dumpster three blocks down
I put all the salvaged clippings in a brand new Pee-Chee folder
Then put it all back in my ceiling now they were easier to look at

I didn't have spread three magazines
Across my bedspread anymore
Still I collected many more magazines
Whenever I could steal them
From the corner grocery store

I had to start another Pee-Chee when I tired of the old photos
Like a drug I needed harder stronger, more dangerous forms of porn
A few years later Ted Bundy mentioned having this same problem
Many people believed he was trying to blame porn for his sick crimes

But I couldn't help but wonder
If I was a bad person myself
So I relegated Pee-Chee number one
To a light blue suitcase
In the basement

When my father found the secret stash a few months later
I claimed not to know whose they were.

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Silhouette

Matt and I saw a spaceship
We watched it creep across the sky.
From the weak porch light we traced the faint blip
Safe in our sleeping bags outside.
We talked of ufos and bigfoot
Until we closed our eyes.
Soon my dreams were interrupted
And I awoke sometime in the middle of the night.

I raised my head to look around me
Roughly twenty yards away
Stood a silhouette looking down at me
By the garbage cans in the alleyway
I just froze staring at that shadow
Who seemed to be watching as we lay
Wondering who else had seen our spaceship,
We called the radio station the very next day.

Then we talked all through the morning
But I never mentioned my shadow man
Ten years later matt confessed to me
He'd never slept outside again.

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Siren song of the construction yard

Children listen to me
I'm calling from the land beyond your street
A dusty realm of planks,
Cement, bent fences
And granddaddies

Come you spartan warriors, soldiers, and knights
Clash upon my fields in dirt clod fights
Claim my naked frames of nails and drywall
To be your kingdoms

Don't listen to your mother
She never cared
She never understood a word you said
She wanted you dead the day that you was born
But she never got her way

Calling all you soldiers, ninjas and thieves
All you pirate captains, men of the sea
Come sail upon my waves of tarp and plywood
Or drown in my weeds

Don't listen to your teachers
They never cared
They'll tell you one and one and one is three
But I've got the answers that you really need
Waving in the dusty breeze

Children rise from your sleep
Grab your water cannons and follow me
Into a land where you can truly be
Who you want to be

Don't listen to your preacher
His heads in the clouds
He'll tell you stories that you wouldn't believe
But I've got more stories under naked eaves
Than he'll ever have up his sleeve

Children listen to me
You won't need your homework where you'll be
In a land where everybody's lazy
And everything is free

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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So it goes

So it goes
Those boys are laughing in advance
I'm sitting here atop the stair
Over the heads and through the railing shines your mouth
Won't you take me with you, dear?

So it goes
Those paintings are flat
I know exactly how they feel
Flatly I'll be left singing, wall-less, out of tune
If you don't take me with you, dear.

The summer flowers will never bloom
I'll while the hours broken in two
Both my halves will harmonize in blue
I'll sit and worry
You will be swinging from a star
Won't you take me with you, dear?

The roller coasters will stretch for miles
Brighton beach will arc her sands into a smile
Central park will be safe after dark
I wouldn't worry
We won't be sighing from afar
If you just take me with you, dear.

Wish upon a star
But make it quick, my dear
Summer's almost here to take you home.

I wouldn't worry
We will be swinging from a star
If you just take me with you, dear.

Words and music by michael johnson
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Something special

(The music stops as ENTOURAGE hold a tense chord on "Hmm". TIMOTHY considers his notebook. He rips out the page he's been scribbling on, crumples it, and speaks.)

TIMOTHY *(to his ENTOURAGE)* I like it.

(Music stops, ENTOURAGE lets loose cries of agreement. They ad-lib things like "Oh, yes, I love it too." and "Brilliant.")

But, *(ENTOURAGE resumes the tense chord on "Ooo".)* let's be honest.
Artists like Gregory Quite
Never come out of their shells.
An artist sells himself.
Gregory Quite, on the other hand,
Seems resigned to exist in a world
Where nobody cares if he exists.
I can't do a feature on him.
If he doesn't care about his art,
why should anyone else?

(ENTOURAGE'S chord resolves. They sing "Ooo" on the new chord while looking at TIMOTHY and hanging on his every word.)

GREGORY QUITE WILL NEVER BE SUCCESSFUL
HE'LL NEVER SELL A PAINTING, NOT IN THIS LIFE AT LEAST.
HE'S THE KIND OF ARTIST WHO WILL NEVER BE SUCCESSFUL.
NOT UNTIL WELL AFTER HE'S DECEASED.

(The music swells in crescendo as TIMOTHY exits with his ENTOURAGE following close behind, chattering in agreement. Right after TIMOTHY and his ENTOURAGE leave, NICHOLAS appears at the top of the stairs.)

NICHOLAS *(spreading his arms and smiling wide to greet his guests, walking slowly down the stairs)* Welcome!

COMPANY WELCOME!

NICHOLAS Welcome!

COMPANY WELCOME!

NICHOLAS Welcome!

COMPANY WELCOME!

NICHOLAS WELCOME! TONIGHT WE'RE SHOWING SOMETHING SPECIAL.
AN ENERGY IS BUZZING THROUGH THE GALLERY
WELCOME, MY FRIENDS, TONIGHT IS VERY SPECIAL.
SPECIAL AS I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE!

HAVE SOME STRAWBERRIES, OR SPARKLING WINE.
COOKIES, CRACKERS, CHEESE.
THE CAVIAR WILL SIMPLY MAKE YOU SWOON.
THOSE GORGEOUS GRAPES ARE JUST DIVINE,
BUT WATCH OUT FOR THE SEEDS
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME OF COURSE
IF MY VOICE SOUNDS HOARSE,
BUT I'VE BEEN SHOUTING ALL AFTERNOON

ABOUT TONIGHT! TONIGHT YOU'RE IN FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL:
THE WORK OF MY ADOPTIVE BROTHER GREGORY.
POOR BOY'S BEEN SLAVING OVER SOMETHING SPECIAL,
SOMETHING THAT I KNOW YOU'LL WANT TO SEE.

GATHER 'ROUND AND WITNESS HISTORY.
WHY HE'S STILL OBSCURE'S A MYSTERY.
SO STEP RIGHT UP AND BUY ONE.
THE SHRIMP IS SCRUMPTIOUS, TRY ONE!

COMPANY THEY'RE SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL, INDEED.

PATRON 1 (*approaching NICHOLAS*) Nicholas, your *adoptive* brother's paintings are exquisite.

NICHOLAS What can I say? The cultivation of beauty runs in our family.
Do you doubt it? Take a look at me:

(*The guests swirl around NICHOLAS as they sing.*)

BOYS HE BUYS HIS SUITS AT NORDI'S.

GIRLS HIS SHIRTS HE BUYS AT SAK'S.

NICHOLAS THE SALESGIRLS THINK IT'S SPORTING
WHEN I SCRUTINIZE THEIR RACKS.
THEY'RE ALWAYS UP FOR WRANGLING
BEFORE GETTING IN THE SACK.
YES, THE BEST POSTURE FOR BARGAINING
IS LYING ON YOUR BACK.

GIRLS HE ALWAYS SHOWS UP TARDY
TO A FASHIONABLE PARTY,

BOYS SO AS TO SHOW THE HOSTESS
WHO IS BOSS.

NICHOLAS WHEN FINALLY I ARRIVE
THE DYING SHINDIG COMES ALIVE.
AND WHILE I ENTHRALL HER GUESTS
SHE GETS MORE AND MORE DISTRESSED,
'TIL THE HARPY LEAVES
THE PARTY TO ME
AND GOES OUT TO GET SAUCED.

BUT YOU SOMETIMES SEE

A PART OF ME
THAT'S GENTLE AND REFINED
A NIGHT OUT AT THE SYMPHONY
HELPS ME TO UNWIND.
I DEVOUR GREAT THICK NOVELS,
I DRINK UP HEADY PLAYS
OF COURSE I HAUNT THE GALLERIES,
AND NOT JUST ON FIRST THURSDAYS.

GIRLS ALL THE SPA GIRLS FIGHT FOR HIM
WHEN HE GOES IN FOR A RUB.

BOYS ALL THE BOUNCERS BOW TO HIM
WHEN HE PULLS UP TO THE CLUB.

NICHOLAS RISING FROM MY SILVER CAR, I'M QUITE A SIGHT TO SEE
... OH, BUT PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, MY FRIENDS
PLEASE, TAKE IT EASY, FRIENDS
PLEASE, THAT'S ENOUGH ABOUT ME!

YOU'RE HERE TONIGHT BECAUSE WE'RE SHOWING SOMETHING SPECIAL:
THE ATMOSPHERE IS FRAUGHT WITH ELECTRICITY
YOU LUCKY SOULS ARE IN FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL—

*(Suddenly the scene moves in slow motion as PATRONS begin to drift off the stage.
NICHOLAS wanders among them, protesting and motioning for them to stay..
Finally, NICHOLAS is alone onstage. Donwcast, he ascends the stairs.)*

AH, YES TONIGHT, TONIGHT COULD HAVE BEEN SOMETHING SPECIAL
IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY ADOPTIVE BROTHER'S MEDIOCRITY
I COULD REALLY HAVE MADE THIS EVENING SOMETHING SPECIAL
AS IT IS IT'S ONLY A DREAM.

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Something special (reprise)

BOTH WELCOME! TONIGHT WE'RE SHOWING SOMETHING SPECIAL.
THE ATMOSPHERE IS FRAUGHT WITH ELECTRICITY.
YOU LUCKY SOULS ARE IN FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL.
SPECIAL AS WE'RE SURE YOU'LL AGREE.

NICHOLAS WE'VE GOT CHILLED OYSTER COCKTAIL,
BRUSCHETTA WITH A WHITE PUREÉ.

AMANDA WE KNOW YOU'LL LOVE WHAT GREGORY HAS DONE.

NICHOLAS DO ENJOY THE CRAB CAKES.

AMANDA ANY QUESTIONS? ASK AWAY.

NICHOLAS I'LL BE DAMNED IF THESE LOX
DON'T KNOCK OFF YOUR SOCKS.

AMANDA ENJOY THE ART. HAVE FUN!

BOTH SO GLAD YOU CAME, MY FRIENDS, IT'S SOMETHING SPECIAL.
TO SEE THE PARAGONS OF OUR COMMUNITY.
GATHERED HERE TOGETHER IN THE FLESH,
I'LL BET YOU REALLY LOVE WHAT YOU SEE!

(Music continues as AMANDA joins the crowd downstage and NICHOLAS begins a conversation with a young couple.)

NICHOLAS Why, Melody, *(kissing her hand)* so good of you to come.

PATRON 1 Irene. I was sorry to hear about Gregory's tragedy.

NICHOLAS That's kind of you, Ilene. Yes, Gregory meant the world to me.

PATRON 1 He was a gifted artist.

NICHOLAS Do you think so?

PATRON 1 Oh, yes. We've just purchased that painting
Over there. It's so beautiful, I can't tell you.

NICHOLAS I'm so pleased. And I know if Gregory were here he'd be thrilled. Ta, ta!

MY FRIENDS, YOU'VE MADE THIS EVENING SOMETHING SPECIAL.
I KNOW MY LATE ADOPTIVE BROTHER GREGORY,
WOULD SEE YOUR SMILING FACES AND FEEL REALLY SPECIAL.
IF ONLY HE COULD BE HERE TO SEE.

(Music continues. Another PATRON appears on NICHOLAS'S left and engages him in conversation.)

PATRON 3 Nicholas, I must have that painting over there, on the left.

NICHOLAS Ah, yes, "Solitude". That's a beauty.
I can't let you take it from me.

PATRON 3 I'm telling you I have to have it. How much is it?

NICHOLAS Well, my partner Amanda is the one to talk to.
She's floating around here somewhere. Shall I get her for you?

PATRON 3 Yes, please do. That would be excellent.

NICHOLAS Stay here and I'll go and flag her down. Sit, sit.
Try the stuffed mushrooms, they're exquisite.

(En route to AMANDA, NICHOLAS buzzes around the party, in his element, addressing various guests.)

DO ENJOY A DEVEILED EGG,
OR A CRABMEAT CANAPÉ.
THAT BROACH YOU HAVE ON, DARLING, IS FIRST CLASS.
THAT DRESS, MY DEAR, IS FLATTERING.
HEY, DOC, HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
THAT TIE IS BLARING!
TRY THE HERRING
IT'LL KNOCK YOU ON YOUR ASS.

YES, FRIENDS, TONIGHT WE'RE SHOWING SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL.
WE'RE SO GLAD YOU MADE IT TO THE GALLERY
DRINK UP, MY FRIENDS! TONIGHT IS SOMETHING SPECIAL.
SPECIAL AS I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE!

Spirits

Willie, todd, my brother and i
With a buzz of our lips could be a good or a bad guy
In my pajamas I saved the day
For the pretty girls, anyway

The unbeatable brain hold was a power of matt's
You couldn't tell I was moving I could run so fast
We needed female sidekicks, but the girls wouldn't play
Not the pretty ones, anyway

Spirits!
We're going to help you through the night
Spirits!
'Til mom and dad come up the drive
Spirits!
We're gonna make it alright tonight

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Stayin' in (and playin' a tune)

Shall I skip the party tonight?
And raise my glass to the world outside?
Here's to all the socialites and all their social lies
I'm staying in and playing a tune

Shall I screen the calls from all my lady friends?
And raise my glass to passing on love again?
I get all the love I need from these old dead german men
I'm staying in and playing a tune

Words and music by michael johnson
© 2001 zubsongs, ltd.

Stereo

With a pillow on the floor and a speaker on each side of my head
Instead of headphones

The cars' candy-o was the best for this kind of listening
Whenever I stayed home

That's how I got better
Listening to records
On the stereo

I hated school. I faked being sick many times
Just to be with my stereo

Fleetwood mac was good for this kind of listening
Whenever I stayed home

Or my brother's george carlin
When my parents were gone

No cool stereo tricks on that record though

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Success!

(NORA doesn't wait for one, she throws open the doors. Music starts, Success!, pg. ?, as a flood of PATRONS come parading into the gallery. They cheer and chatter as they crowd inside, tossing their coats, hats, and handbags into the ASSISTANT'S arms. Some of them head straight to the paintings, others head to the bar, still others spark up enthusiastic conversations. Leading the parade is TIMOTHY in a Castro hat, beard, aviator sunglasses, neck scarf, T-shirt, and blazer, tight, pegged jeans with wallet chain, and Vans. His ENTOURAGE follows closely behind him, as always dressed the same.)

TIMOTHY AREN'T JAIR NEWMAN'S PAINTINGS SOMETHING, THOUGH?

COMPANY OH YES, OH YES, OH YES!

TIMOTHY AND ISN'T CHARLES' GALLERY THE NEW PLACE TO GO?

COMPANY THE BEST, THE BEST, THE BEST!

TIMOTHY IF YOU EVER DOUBTED CHARLES' REBOUNDING

COMPANY CONFESS! CONFESS! CONFESS!

TIMOTHY 'CAUSE ALL IN ALL YOU MUST AGREE THIS OPENING'S

COMPANY A SUCCESS! A SUCCESS! A SUCCESS!

CHARLES Timothy! How good of you to come.

TIMOTHY *(They shake hands as if meeting for the first time.)* I wouldn't miss it, Charles.
Congratulations. This Jair Newman person is amazing.
And your new gallery is already the center of the world.

CHARLES No thanks to you.

TIMOTHY I call them like I see them, Charles.

(He winks as CHARLES, laughing, turns to chat with some PATRONS. TIMOTHY talks with his ENTOURAGE. While this is happening, NORA is sitting at the bar chatting with a MYSTERIOUS MAN with a thick beard. He's wearing a hat and dark sunglasses. They seem to be getting along very well.)

NORA DOESN'T JAIR NEWMAN HAVE A GENTLE TOUCH?

COMPANY A CARESS! CARESS! CARESS!

NORA HIS LINES ARE THICK AND SENSUOUS, HIS COLORS RICH.

COMPANY NOTHING LESS! NOTHING LESS! NOTHING LESS!

NORA MOM, I KNOW THAT IF YOU WERE ALIVE TODAY,

COMPANY MAY YOU REST! MAY YOU REST! MAY YOU REST!

NORA YOU'D SAY, "CONGRATULATIONS, HONEY, HE'S A MARVELLOUS BOY."

COMPANY HE'S A SUCCESS! A SUCCESS! A SUCCESS!

(Just then, AMANDA rushes in. She pauses and gives her coat to the obviously overburdened ASSISTANT, scanning the scene. TIMOTHY sees her.)

TIMOTHY *(warm)* Amanda? I didn't expect to see you again.

AMANDA *(looking around, astonished)* Timothy! Wow. What's going on here? What is all this? I've never heard of this, how do you say it? Jair—

TIMOTHY Newman. His mother was Turkish and his father was a Jew. No one's ever heard of him. *(conspiratorially)* As soon as I found him, I talked Charles into taking a risk on him. Can you believe it? This gallery opening is his first show on the West Coast.

AMANDA Impressive. What a warm reception.

TIMOTHY *(winking)* I guess word travels fast. Have a crab cake?

AMANDA *(smiling, standing next to him)* I'd love one.

T & A RAISE YOUR GLASSES!
THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT.
RAISE YOUR GLASSES,
THE FUTURE'S TONIGHT. TONIGHT!

CHARLES DOESN'T JAIR NEWMAN HAVE A SPECIAL GIFT?

COMPANY HE'S BLESSED! HE'S BLESSED! HE'S BLESSED!

CHARLES HOW QUICKLY HE'S BECOME A MASTER OF HIS CRAFT.

COMPANY WE'RE IMPRESSED! WE'RE IMPRESSED! WE'RE IMPRESSED!

CHARLES AFTER THAT ORDEAL WITH MY LAST GALLERY

COMPANY WHAT A MESS! WHAT A MESS! WHAT A MESS!

CHARLES I THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR HELPING THIS TO BE

COMPANY A SUCCESS, A SUCCESS, A SUC—

Symphony no. 1

Taste of london in my mouth
Fur capped
Skipping in the downpour
I never wanted more
And I don't know what I'm friends with you for

Spread armed angels in the grass
Salisbury tasting and a bus pass
I never want to ask
And I don't care what you take me for

Sunlight falls so hard
And you don't know why at all

Words and music by michael johnson
© 1995 zubsongs, ltd.

The bachelor at the fair

Right this way, folks!
Step up to the stage, folks!
Don't be shy
The carnival is here! Feast your eyes
On the faces,
Exhibits, and races.
Not to mention the rides.
What a setting for a budding groom and bride!
But hold the phone!
Who's that standing by the tilt-a-whirl?
He's all alone.
Is there a more peculiar freak anywhere
Than the bachelor at the fair?

Holding his head down,
He enters the fairgrounds.
He stops at a food stand
Checks out the band, and
Averting his gaze
From the couples on the midway,
(they're looking so proud)
He wonders aloud
Why he's the only boy
Without a girl for whom to win
A great stuffed toy;
Ah, but the solitude's enough of a bear
For the bachelor at the fair.

From the merry-go-round
Come the coupling sounds
Of his amorous peers.
Our bachelor blocks his ears.
When a girl in a green blouse
There by the funhouse
Catches his eye,
But looks away the moment her guy
Slides into sight,
Takes her hand, and whisks her away
Into the night.
This as the couples to coo in midair
Above the bachelor at the fair.

The sky grows dark
As he heads to the car park.
He stops at a stall
Where he sees they're selling alcohol.
A "cheers!" and a clink;
And all the couples set to drinking.
He orders a tall one.

After he's all done
He watches from his stool.
All the couples laugh and chatter away.
And keeping his cool
He pantomimes a toast in air,
Here's to the bachelor at the fair!

But hold the phone.
Does any of this ring a bell?
He's not alone.
Come on, admit it, you've all been there!
You've been the bachelor at the fair.

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The ballad of gregory quite

GREGORY FOR TWENTY ODD YEARS THE ART WORLD SUFFERED A DROUGHT,
THEN ALONG CAME MY GUEST ON THE PROGRAM TONIGHT:
A MAN WHOSE LIFE STORY WE ALL KNOW BY ROTE,
PLEASE WELCOME GREGORY, GREGORY QUITE.

MR. QUITE, TAKE US BACK TO THAT TERRIBLE TIME
BEFORE YOU WERE WEALTHY, A HOUSEHOLD NAME
THAT TIME WHEN YOU WERE FEELING SO DESTITUTE
YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BE GREGORY, GREGORY QUITE?

WELL, NOT LONG AFTER OUR FATHER DIED
MY BROTHER MANAGED TO GET MY WORK DISPLAYED
WELL, OF COURSE NO ONE CAME. I'D EXPECTED THAT.
THE WORLD WASN'T READY FOR GREGORY QUITE.

I'D HAD DOZENS OF SHOWS SINCE I QUIT COLLEGE, AND BEFORE.
NO ONE CAME TO THOSE EITHER AND I LEARNED NOT TO CARE,
BUT SOMEHOW AFTER THIS ONE I FELT MY HEART DEFLATE.
IT WAS THE END OF GREGORY, GREGORY QUITE.

SO I CUT OFF ALL TIES AND I WANDERED IN SHAME
THROUGH WET, EMPTY STREETS, NO FRIEND, NO HOME.
FOR THREE WEEKS I DRIFTED LIKE A GHOST, PROSTRATE
THE SHADOW OF GREGORY, GREGORY QUITE.

THEN ONE NIGHT I MANAGED TO GET HOLD OF A GUN.
A VOICE INSIDE ME SAID "GO, AS FAST AS YOU CAN!
STICK IT IN YOUR MOUTH AND ELIMINATE
THIS PATHETIC GREGORY, GREGORY QUITE.

BUT SOMETHING ABOUT SEEING MY WORK ON THE WALL
LIFTED ME OUT OF THAT SPIRALING HELL
I THOUGHT, "WHY DOESN'T EVERY ART LOVER FROM HERE TO THE TATE
KNOW ABOUT GREGORY, GREGORY QUITE?"

AND ALTHOUGH I WAS BRUSHED OFF, PASSED OVER, IGNORED
BY EVERYONE IN PORTLAND, I STOOD AND I STARED
AND I FELT MY MOTHER'S TOUCH FROM ABOVE
TELLING ME TO LIVE, AND I WANTED TO LIVE, I WANTED TO—

The blue rose gallery, inc.

GREGORY *(Pulling a sagging board off the window)* We don't have to leave.

(Music starts: The Blue Rose Gallery, Inc., pg.)

MIKEY No? Why the hell not, Newman?

GREGORY We could open a gallery.

MIKEY This God forsaken dump? A gallery? What, a cockroach gallery?

GREGORY REPAINT THE WALLS.
TEAR UP THE FLOOR.

MIKEY SAY WHAT?

GREGORY SPACKLE THE HOLES.
PUT WINDOWS THERE,
SO TALL THAT YOU CAN SEE FOREVER.

JULIE I THINK HE'S ON TO SOMETHING.

GREGORY HARDWOOD, CEMENT,
OR STEEL AND GLASS.

GAZLAY WHAT THE—?

GREGORY TRACK LIGHTS AND PLANTS;
UPDATE THE PLACE.
WE'LL GIVE EACH FLAT A WHOLE MAKEOVER.

OTTO IT'S SO SIMPLE.

GREGORY ARTISTS CREATE THEIR OWN OPPORTUNITIES.
ARTISTS, THEY SAY, ARE DREAMERS.

MIKEY US? OPEN UP OUR OWN FREAKIN' GALLERY?
YOU REALLY ARE A DREAMER.

OTTO COME ON, MIKEY.

JULIE CAN'T YOU SEE IT?

JULIE, OTTO CAN'T YOU SEE IT?

(They dance around MIKEY as they sing.)

JULIE, OTTO KNOCK OUT A WALL.
REPLACE THE LIGHTS.

GREGORY THAT'S IT!

JULIE I'LL COVER IT.
 I ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING AN ARTIST,
 BUT I NEVER HAD THE TALENT.
 YOU'VE GOT THE TALENT, I'VE GOT THE MONEY.
 WE MAKE THE PERFECT TEAM.

MIKEY HEY, SHE'S ALL RIGHT.

GREGORY LET'S HERE IT FOR JULIE!

ALL JULIE!

GAZLAY I KNOW SOME GUYS WHO'LL DO THE JOB.

THE OTHERS GAZLAY!

GAZLAY I'M PRETTY GOOD WITH TOOLS MYSELF.

MIKEY A TOOL WHO'S GOOD WITH TOOLS? HOW FITTING.

GAZLAY LAY OFF, MIKEY.

ALL ARTISTS CREATE THEIR OWN OPPORTUNITIES.
 WE'LL OPEN UP OUR OWN LITTLE GALLERY NOW.

GREGORY NOW ALL WE NEED'S A CATCHY NAME.

THE OTHERS Hmm.

MIKEY I GOT IT: "TANK"

JULIE NO WAY. TOO PUNCHY.

OTTO HOW 'BOUT "DIE ZERSTÖREN GALERIE"?

ALL TOO GERMAN.

JULIE HOW 'BOUT "THE BLACKBIRD?"

MIKEY BRIDS ARE OUT!

ALL WHAT FOR?

MIKEY NO WOODLAND CREATURES. NO CUTE BIRDIES.
 PERCHED ON FLAT AND LEAFLESS BRANCHES.
 IN A WINTER LANDSCAPE.

OTTO "EYEFUL"

MIKEY TOO CHIC.

GAZLAY "THE LIFE"

JULIE TOO PRETENTIOUS.

GAZLAY	"THE RAW OYSTER"
MIKEY	WAY TOO CRYPTIC.
OTTO	"TRACTOR"
GAZLAY	TOO HIP.
JULIE	"THE PONY CLUB"
MIKEY	TRENDY!
JULIE	"THE SHOW AND TELL"
OTHERS	TOO CHILDISH.
GREGORY	"THE BLUE ROSE"
OTHERS	THE BLUE ROSE? THE BLUE ROSE!
ALL	REPAINT THE WALLS. TEAR UP THE FLOOR. PATCH UP THE HOLES. PUT WINDOWS THERE SO TALL THAT YOU CAN SEE FOREVER. FOREVER!
JULIE, GREG.	ARTISTS CREATE THEIR OWN OPPORTUNITIES. WE FOUND OUR CHANCE LET'S TAKE IT. SO SAY HELLO TO OUR LITTLE COMPANY: BLUE ROSE, INCORPORATED.
ALL	COMING SOON: IT'S THE BLUE ROSE GALLERY, BLUE ROSE GALLERY, BLUE ROSE GALLERY, INC.

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The devil in miss morgan

A strip of flypaper hangs from the ceiling
And waits for a fly to come buzzing around
That's what it's like for a girl like christina
She smiles and the guys come buzzing around

It's so easy for christina
To get off with a guy
But she doesn't want him to mean it
She's got the devil in her eyes

You met her in class in the dead of winter
After six weeks of staring at the back of her head
She set down her glasses and like that you were into her
Then she sent you an email with the go ahead

It was so easy for christina
She just opened her eyes
You felt a bridge open between you
Built of skin, sinew and lies

You spent an afternoon finding shapes in the ceiling
As she played with the button on the fly of her pants
Shared a george michael tune and a cup of darjeeling:
That's when she told you she was moving to france

In six months time your christina
Will be up in the sky
She doesn't want you to mean it
You're just one of the guys

You can be her bed buddy
If you're one of the steeds that she chooses
But remember
In the game of bed buddies
The player with feelings loses

On the champs elysees she'll be "the girl from america"
Sniffing the flowers and steaming up the seine
While you spend your days just wandering hysterical
Wondering what happened to the girl of your dreams

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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The garden party

A friendly match with lady anne di lessa
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
Finds esterhazy in his summer best, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes

He's skilled with a bird his serve is effortless, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
What've you got under your summer dress? "oh
Guess, oh guess, oh guess!"

Says the russian general to the baroness, oh
Yes oh yes "I tire of chess," oh
"is there another game, general, you might suggest?", "oh
Oh yes oh yes oh yes"

A most unique charade partners lady tess, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
With a well-set-up young man from inverness, oh
Oh yes oh yes oh yes

Sir egbert bellows that he's had success, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
The guests all gather in the study to witness
Yes oh yes oh yes

There every visitor is most impressed, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
By a queer contraption, perched upon the desk, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes

But in the sudden darkness that surrounds the guests, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
A latch is fastened and a lever depressed, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes

It's horrifying to describe what's next, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes oh yes oh
The butler scrubbed for months to clean up the mess, oh
Yes oh yes oh yes

Words & music by michael johnson
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The girl I will marry

The girl I will marry is a scorio.
She's got a voice like feist and lips like brigitte bardot.
With cheeks like cate blanchett, eyes like zooey deshanel.
She's got the milfy "come hither" look of kim cattrall.

All my friends will envy me.
They'll pat me on the back and tell me I'm lucky.
They'll plot my death secretly.
They'll take a look at their own wives and wish they were free.
When they see
The girl I will marry.

She's evangeline lilly but with straight red hair
She's kind of keira knightly with a grace kelly flair
She's scarlet johannson with a little weight on.
She's charlotte gainsbourg and kristin dunst rolled into one.

All my friends will boil and fume.
Even as they toast to the bride and groom
Their wives'll think "slut!" my friends: "va voom!"
Her beauty will threaten everyone in the room,
Except me.
The girl I will marry.

Oh, my family who wondered why I waited so long
Will take one look at the girl I will marry and see that they were wrong
When they teased me and scolded me,
Cajoled me and told me I'd never settle down.
They will see I was only waiting
For the right girl to come around.
And look at me now!

she's got a sigh like jane birkin in "je t'aime moi non plus"
She's emma watson on the day that she turns 22.
She's veronika lake mixed with olivia wilde.
Take gwyneth paltrow but give her audrey hepburn's smile.

She's natassja kinski mixed with emily blunt
She's got france gall's figure and sasha grey's cunt
She's natalie portman in kate winslett's skin
She's elizabeth mitchell bred with emilie de ravin.
She's nicole kidman...

The girl I will marry is out there somewhere.
I'll collide with her someday, find her slipper on the stair.
For now I'll attend another wedding tonight.
By all means, friends, flirt and laugh with your wives.
(your beautiful wives.)

The girl of my dreams

Last night after we broke up
And I left for the last time
I stopped in a grocery to see
If I might find the girl of my dreams
Maybe weighing some tangerines
But it seems she is still just a dream, so

Who will the girl of my dreams be?
When will this old dream come true?
Who will the girl of my dreams be if she isn't you?
Will I bump into her shopping,
Or at a concert? I hope
She's the one looking on when I stifle a yawn
During the adagio

Is she the one pouring coffee
Down at the corner cafe
Will she shush me at the library
Reading radiguet?
Will she be kicking my seat at the movies
I hope my dreams all come true

When after our break up
I meet her and wake up
From this dream of you

Words and music by michael johnson
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The lady from riems

She's at your door: a six foot fleur de lis
She's the lady from riems
And you know what that means

Every homme
From pontoise to marseilles
Sees her chalet
Every day in his dreams

Quarante franc
A glass of blanc
And a soft "bon soir"

"q'avait vous dit?"
"q'avait vous dit?"
"amusez vous bien!"

She'll take your hand
At first au contre couer
But she's on the floor
Before you've opened the door

What's that you say?
You cannot pay?
A plus tard!
Je suis desolé!

Eau de vis!
Fluer de lis!
All hail the lady from riems!

On the square in montpellier
She's gracious and demure
But off the set, tête a tête
She's the belle du jour

Que plaisir! Que peu de mésange!
Que fille! Que fête!
Maintenant, s'il vous plait!

Words and music by michael johnson
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The lion and the rat

CHARLES You haven't sold anything.
 You put those red stickers up
 To make me think you'd sold something.

NICHOLAS Not you, Charles, the customers. Psychology is not your subject.
 I was employing the response facilitation effect.

CHARLES The what? What's that?

NICHOLAS It's psych 101. Look,
 As Bandura says
 Well, you've no head for books
 Allow me to paraphrase:

 YOUR HESITANT PATRON, AFTER HAVING SEEN
 THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS DEEMED
 A PAINTING WORTHY OF A BIT OF MONEY
 MAKES POCKET TO DOLLAR AS HIVE IS TO HONEY.

CHARLES So it's a fancy term for "Lie to the customer."

NICHOLAS It's a cutthroat game, this business we love.
 You've got to man up, Charles. Take off your gloves.

CHARLES MAN UP? ME?
 I BUILT THIS PLACE FROM NOTHING!
 BUT YOU, YOU'RE JUST A LIAR.

NICHOLAS CHARLES, MUST WE START
 THIS LITTLE HEART-TO-HEART
 WITH NAME-CALLING?
 IT'S APPALLING.
 WHEN EVERYTHING I DO
 I DO FOR YOU, CHARLES

CHARLES THIS FANCY CHAMPAGNE?

NICHOLAS IT'S KNOWN AS KRUG BRUT, CHARLES.
 I TOIL ALL DAY LONG
 TO KEEP US KEEPING ON, CHARLES.

CHARLES THIS GIANT BLOCK OF ICE?

NICHOLAS IT'S A SCULPTURE OF A SWAN, CHARLES.
 COME ON, CHARLES!
 LET THINGS GO A LITTLE LESS THAN WELL
 AND BURSTING OPEN GO THE GATES OF HELL.
 YOU LORD AROUND LIKE AN INJURED LION ROARING!

CHARLES WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

NICHOLAS IF FROM TIME TO TIME THE RAT SEES FIT
TO BEND THE TRUTH A BIT,

CHARLES A BIT?

NICHOLAS WELL, HE'S JUSTIFIED
IF A LITTLE WHITE LIE
IS WHAT IT TAKES TO SOOTHE HIS FLUSTERED KING.

CHARLES YOU DO THIS ALL FOR ME?

NICHOLAS ALL FOR YOU, OF COURSE.

CHARLES WHY'S THIS CHEESE SO HARD?

NICHOLAS Charles, THAT'S FIORE SARDO.

CHARLES HOW DID YOU PAY FOR THIS?

NICHOLAS WITH YOUR CREDIT CARD.

CHARLES What?

NICHOLAS FORGET ABOUT THE DEBT,
ONE PAINTING SELLS, WE'RE SET!

CHARLES BUT YOU HAVEN'T SOLD ONE.

NICHOLAS Correction ... HAVEN'T SOLD ONE *YET*.

CHARLES THAT'S IT! ENOUGH!

NICHOLAS CALM DOWN, CHARLES.

CHARLES I'M NOT BUYING A WORD OF IT
YOU THINK YOU HAVE THEM FOOLED WITH THIS
"RESPONSE WHATEVER CRAP."

NICHOLAS RESPONSE FACILITA—

CHARLES ALL FOR ME?
IT'S ALL FOR YOU!
I DON'T CARE!
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A LIAR!

NICHOLAS EASY, CHARLES! THE SHRIMP'S FANTASTIC.

CHARLES YOU FLAMER, YOU!

NICHOLAS NOW, CHARLES, THAT'S—

CHARLES THE WAY YOU PRANCE AROUND HERE!

NICHOLAS CHARLES!

CHARLES I COULD ALMOST STAND IT WHEN
YOU WERE JUST MY DELIVERY BOY
THE CLIENTS SORT OF THOUGHT YOU WERE CHARMING

NICHOLAS NATURALLY.

CHARLES THEN I MADE YOU CURATOR
AND BUSINESS WENT TO HELL!

NICHOLAS:
NOW THERE'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG,
CHARLES!
WHEN YOU HIRED ME ON, CHARLES,
THIS "BUSINESS" WAS A MESS.
EVERY LAW OF DÉCOR YOU TRANSGRESSED.
NOT JUST A BIRD, A SWAN!
MY RED DESIGNER SOFAS REPLACED YOUR
CONCRETE SLABS.
I SPLASHED IN COLOR, GOD HOW IT WAS DRAB.
ALL THE WHILE WHERE WAS CHARLES THE
FIRST?
HE WAS PACING WITH HIS TEETH CLENCHED
AND A BULGING VEIN IN HIS FOREHEAD FIT TO
BURST!

AFTER WHEATHERING YOUR STORMS
OF BOAST AND BOMBAST
FOR WHOM DID THE HIPSTERS SWOON
WHEN I BREEZED IN AT LAST?
WHO HAD ALL THE ICE QUEENS
IN BUDDY HOLLY GLASSES
MELTING IN THEIR HIP HUGGERS
LIKE OOZING MOLLASSES?
I GAVE AND GAVE!
IT'S THANKS TO ME
YOUR ITTY BITTY
GALLERY WAS SAVED!

LET IT BURN, FINE WITH ME
PUT IT OUT OF IT'S MISERY!

CHARLES:
I CAN'T AFFORD
YOUR OVERBLOWN SELF IMAGE.
YOU THREW AWAY MY MONEY
ON A BIRD MADE OUT OF ICE?
I GAVE YOU CARTE BLANCHE AND NOW,
JESUS! A SWAN!
AND WHO GAVE YOU PERMISSION
TO BUY THESE UGLY BAR STOOLS?
IT'S THE ART THEY COME TO LOOK AT,
NOT THE FURNITURE.
GALLERIES SHOULD BE UNDERSTATED.

HOW DARE YOU!
YOU CAN'T TALK TO ME LIKE THAT IN MY
OWN PLACE.
I BUILT THIS PLACE WITHOUT YOU.
I RAN IT BY MYSELF.
THEN YOU CAME
WITH ALL YOUR LOFTY PROMISES,
TALKING AND TALKING
THROUGH BOTH SIDES OF YOUR MOUTH.

SAVED?! IT'S THANKS TO YOU
THIS GALLERY IS GOING DOWN IN FLAMES!

THAT'S IT, THAT'S IT! YOU'RE FIRED!

The minister's cat (don't stand in the wind)

(intro)

Я бежал за неё, кошка моя,
Мылая кошка моя.
До ворот далеко, кошка моя.
Мылая кошка моя

Волны жёлтых флагах, осень тиха
Мылая кошка моя.
Развесила на вязах, кошка моя
Мылая кошка моя.

(inst)

«уидёшь, я умру» крикнул я.
Мылая кошка моя.
«не стой на ветру» ответила она.
Мылая кошка моя.

Её лодка поплыла, кошка моя,
Мылая кошка моя.
Ах, с ней ты была, кошка моя.
Мылая кошка моя.

Words & music by michael johnson
Adapted from a poem by a. Akhmatova
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The otter and the caterpillar

GREGORY IS THIS ALL?
 MY LEGACY?
 IS THIS WHAT THEY'LL
 REMEMBER?
 LETTERS HERE SPELL
 "GREGORY".
 IT'S SO SURREAL.
 IS THAT ME?

NO. I GAVE
THAT LIFE AWAY.
NOW I HAVE
TO MOVE ON.
LEARN TO LIVE
DIFFERENTLY.
LEARN TO RISE ABOVE
THE OLD ME.

BE SOMEONE NEW.
BUT HOW?
WHO AM I NOW?

(NORA approaches GREGORY.)

NORA ARE YOU LOST?

GREGORY WHAT? NO, I'M JUST—

NORA WHAT DO YOU THINK?

GREGORY HONESTLY?

NORA YES, OF COURSE.

GREGORY I THINK THEY'RE JUNK.

NORA JUNK? PLEASE, GO ON I'M INTRIGUED.

GREGORY THEY'RE SELF-INDULGENT.
 THEY'RE OVERWROUGHT.
 THE PAINT IS HEAVY,
 BUT THERE'S NO WEIGHT.
 THE COLOR'S MUDDY.
 THE FORMS ARE FLAT.
 HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO VOICE
 FEELINGS HE NEEDS TO EXPRESS.

NORA (*playful*) Tell me what you really think.

GREGORY (*shy*) I will. Thanks.

NORA PEOPLE HERE ALL
 DISAGREE.
 LOOK HOW WELL
 THEY'RE SELLING.
 HE'S ON A ROLL.

GREGORY BUT HE'S A SHAM.
 HIS ONLY APPEAL
 IS HE'S DEAD.

NORA WE'RE ALL DYING.
 EVERY DAY.
 ARE YOU GOING
 TO BUY ONE?

GREGORY AM I BEING—?

NORA IT'S A JOKE.

GREGORY SINCE WE'RE REVIEWING
 HIM, TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK.

NORA I SEE LONGING,
 AND I SEE PAIN
 IN THE VIOLENT COLOR
 AND SENSUOUS LINE.
 THE FORMS JUST FLOAT
 LIKE BALLOONS IN THE SUN.
 TOO BAD HE HAD TO DIE YOUNG.
 THESE PAINTINGS PROMISE GREAT THINGS.

NORA SUCH POTENTIAL,
 IT'S REALLY SAD.
 I'D LOVE TO KNOW
 WHAT WENT ON IN HIS HEAD.
 HE GAVE THIS GIFT TO THE WORLD
 AND DIED
 NOT KNOWING WHAT HE
 DESTROYED:
 A LARVA WHO'S STILL ON THE WAY
 TO BECOMING A BUTTERFLY.

GREGORY PROMISE? WELL,
 THAT'S ALL HE HAD.
 A STEAMING PILE
 OF UNFULFILLED
 POTENTIAL.
 YOU CAN'T LIVE
 YOUR WHOLE
 LIFE INSIDE
 A SHELL.
 GOT TO BREAK FREE,
 GOT TO SAIL
 THROUGH THE AIR
 AND LET FALL
 THE CUCCOON YOU DESTROYED.

 WHEN YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN WAY.
 YOU'LL BECOME A BUTTERFLY.

The perfect love

Hey 'sup in the chat room?
Any ladies wanna get off press 69
For a good time
You can find me on aol
Im me

(melody)

Hey star69gurl.
This is wellhungstd32
How do you do?
You're pretty fine girl.
Though all I know of you is a font
I want you.

All of my objections fade
The minute you log in and say
You want me
Semicolon parenthesis.

Lmfao girl,
What's your asl? How do you spell pougkipsie?
Me? I'm up in glendale
It's a smooth sail,
Why don't you come out and meet me?

'cause real life is nothing, dear
Compared to what we're doing in here
Don't stop please!
Semicolon parenthesis

Ooo we've got the perfect love
And we don't even have to touch
Type to me your fantasy
I'll make it real you'll see you'll see you'll see
Ooo we've got the perfect love

As long as you swear you're 24
Get on your knees yeah on all fours
And show me
Semi colon parenthesis

Words and music by michael johnson
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The piano lesson

One two three four
Relax your shoulders watch the score
Keep your head held high your arms and fingers light

Sit up straight on the edge of the bench
Don't shift your weight or let your fingers clench

Whole half quarter eighth
Give each note it's rightful length
Let the phrases sing the chords should ring not bite

Try the right hand lines alone
Slowly and with the metronome

With these words her
Hand of gossamer
Lightly touched my wrist
Oh the way she lightly touched my wrist

Brahms chopin shumann liszt
At the ends of phrases raise your wrist
Change the pedal with every note of the melody

Try the right hand lines alone
Slowly and with the metronome

With these words she
Slowly turned to me
And quietly lowered her eyes
Oh the way she quietly lowered her eyes

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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The stilts

My first apartment was at the Stilts
The cheapest housing in the Tri-Cities
in uptown Richland
I only lived there for three short months
With three other guys who had decided to move out
Just as I was moving in

The one thing I remember about the Stilts
Was that it used be an Army barracks
A lot of fresh-out-of-high-school kids lived there
And there were always parties

Though I only lived there for sixty days
I remember a few memorable nights
la la la la la
At the time I was trying to exact revenge
On the ghost of a girl who took my virginity
When she dumped me for an ex- it scarred me for life

I was guilty of using bodies
As I recorded sound-bites in my brain
"you're such a cute nice guy"
I played them back in my head to validate my actions
And to make myself feel good
I took advantage of anyone
As weak as me

Then I lived in a trailer park
Before moving to Spokane
where I lived next to a staple factory
A year later in Seattle
I lived in a mess of an old house
and slept in a closet

I met a girl there who always played
Cat Stevens in the morning
She made coffee on a stove
I started to cry at anything
This became my girlfriend initiation:
We'd get to know each other
Sleep with each other
Then I would turn into a crybaby.

Words adapted from a short story by kevin sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

There's a wondrous place below us

It's true, my friends, this life's not long
A little love, a little song
Is all you'll have to show
For eighty years of go go go

But while the righteous wait in line
For harp's lament and angel's whine
You sinners walk this way
Descend into an endless soiree

There's a wondrous place below us!
Full of connoisseurs who'd sooner lust than love
There're smiles on every face below us
It's more rowdy than the cloudy dowdy world above

There's a wondrous place below us!
More lusty than that musty attic of god's
The damned all embrace below us!
Be they pontius pilots, judases, or bad king herods

We've seas of fiery pits
Thick with writhing hips and tits
You can nibble the ladies' bits
All night and day, oh

(piano solo)

There's a wondrous place below us!
You'll find no idle hands among our fold
Girdles all unlace below us!
Admission is one sin, come in! We don't need gold

Here nobody's a prude
Rather, everybody's nude
And the ladies are never rude
But love to play, so

Come, condemned, follow me
T'where satyrs sing sweet melodies
And ladies stooped on bended knee
Do anything but pray!

Words & music by michael johnson
© 2006 zubsongs, ltd.

These sorts of dreams

Dresser top diving
Ripping up playboys
Breathless and dustily we dirt clod fight
Dad's digging trenches on your front lines
All stooped over under the milky way tonight

So much for high school
You smoked it away
While I slept through ten hours of detention a day
Reading the odd letter
In your frozen hand
The sergeant is too narrow and the hallways are bland

Wasting a whole winter
Two weekends at a time
Fighting for freedom so I could work full time

So much for college
So much for anything
I couldn't decide and you couldn't sing

So park in the garage and turn the car on suck the toxins in
I know, trust me, I know you have had these sorts of dreams
Hang the five day waiting list, you'll get one and you'll use it
But don't ever imagine these illusions are real

Her lips are all puckered but you won't condescend to fuck her
There's another more dysfunctional one in the hall
I'm not much better
Leaving the odd sweater standing alone on the umpteenth front porch

None of my best friends amounted to anything
I couldn't play alone and they couldn't sing

Put your head into the noose and kick the stepladder from underneath
Ibuprophen tastes much better twenty at a time
I know, trust me, I know you have entertained the odd notion
Don't ever imagine you're alone and these illusions are real
Because suicide is painless

Everybody drink the kool-ade
Down another box of tacks
Throw yourselves in hogtied bundles helpless to the railroad tracks
Dive off multi-storied buildings
Smash upon the rocks below
Everybody soak in bloody bathtubs
Let it flow!

Words and music by michael johnson
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They allowed me one carry on

Well the fdr is snaking along
I reach for my luggage but they allowed me one carry on
And tic-tac taxis and tunnels that yawn
There's a tightening in my chest again

It's so humid it's like walking in a mouth
That sings salsa music so loud you can't sleep and those aren't rain clouds
As I make my way down bedford headed south
There's a tightening in my chest again

Bridge spires shrug like the shoulders of the town
Rooftops and long drops and elevators down
Six hundred foot supermodels smirk at you from downtown
There's a tightening in my chest again

There's a crackle in the air as an intercom sounds
"please stow all your luggage and keep you seatbelts fastened down
In another twenty minutes, folks, we'll be on the ground."
There's a tightening in my chest again

Words and music by michael johnson
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They'll eat up anything he does

NICHOLAS They would, and they will! You think people buy art because it's good?

AMANDA Yes, I do.

NICHOLAS You would.

YET EVERYONE ON PLANET EARTH
ASCERTAINS A PAINTING'S WORTH
BY LOOKING IN THE CORNER FOR A NAME.
THERE'S NO CAP TO WHAT THEY'LL PAY
FOR A PAINTING, DRAWING, SKETCH, EVEN ASH TRAY
BY AN ARTIST OF CELEBRITY AND FAME.
AND IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW,
GREGORY HAS BOTH. ERGO:

THEY'LL EAT UP ANYTHING HE DOES.
I PROMISE YOU THEY'LL LOVE HIS EARLY WORK.
SHOULD IT FAIL TO GENERATE A BUZZ.
WE'LL PRODUCE A SKETCHBOOK, FOR WHICH THEY'LL GO BERSERK.

THEY'LL EAT UP ANYTHING HE DOES.
SHOULD THEY SNUB THAT LITTLE SKETCHBOOK, GOD FORBID,
HIS NAPKIN DOODLES, THEN, WILL GIVE THEM PAUSE.
WELCOME BOYS, TO SOUTHEY'S LET'S START WITH A HANDSOME BID.

GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE,
SOLD! AT AN ASTRONOMICAL PRICE
TO THE STUNNER IN THE BACK, MY SALOMÉ.

(The music continues as NICHOLAS engages a reluctant AMANDA in a sexy dance.)

THEY'LL EAT UP ANYTHING HE DOES.
SHOULD THE NAPKIN DOODLES FAIL TO MAKE A SPLASH,
HIS CHILDHOOD DRAWINGS WILL, BECAUSE
CHILDRENS' ART CAN ALWAYS PART A FOOL AND HIS CASH.

IF THAT DOESN'T SELL, WE'VE GOT OTHER THINGS AS WELL:
HAIRCUT SNIPPINGS, TOENAIL CLIPPINGS— THE BEAUTY OF IT IS,
THEY'LL EAT IT UP BECAUSE IT'S HIS.

YOU SEE, WHAT MAN WANTS MORE THAN QUALITY
IS THE FAINTEST TASTE OF CELEBRITY.
AND FOR THAT, MY LOVE, YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE
HOW MUCH A MAN WILL PAY.

This modern man

Gone are the days when the movies were magical
I looked up at the stars they were cut out and folded into skyscrapers
I remember the worlds rendered, upended, shadowless, deep
Trudging slowly over shallow carpet through a half-century
On I trudge on down through adam smith's wet dream
I woke up from a sweet hallucination measuring 10x23

And its me and kandinsky wondering if you're at all ashamed
We're the ones with the warhols and the kerosene
There's a fat man in the corner lecturing about some black slab
While my heart and my mind fight to the death

Mondrian paint me a boxing ring
My fists are bleeding my fingers ache to the bone
And the lines you see after 1943
May they all melt into naked figures and be pretty

And its me and kandinsky wondering if you're at all ashamed
We're the ones with the warhols and the kerosene
Buildings may fall and bridges may crack but brushstrokes they just bend
While my heart and my mind fight to the death

This modern man

Words and music by michael johnson
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Thoughts from a bench in the hauptwache

How can there be so many people and no one for me?

How can there be so many people?

Makes you feel like just a number

Running in the human race.

You feel like just a number

Running in last place.

In the galleries, the shops and cathedrals is there no one for me?

How can there be so many people?

Under the trees, the cranes and the steeples is there no one for me?

How can there be so many people?

But you've snubbed so many in my time

You've turned so many down

To think if you'd only picked one

She'd still be around.

Into the sea of trenchcoats and collars they pour through the streets.

How can there be so many people?

On like a stream of scrambling beetles they flow past me.

How can there be so many people?

Makes you feel like just a pin prick,

A miniscule speck of dust.

One of any number of grains of sand

Crawling on the earth's crust.

How can there be so many people and no one for me?

How can there be so many people?

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Time

Midnight, 1987
Dangling our legs off your front porch
I've been on your driveway since 11
Waiting for word that your parents divorced

Time will heal me

Down foothill boulevard they all spill out
Like swans and penguins you can hear them shouting
I'm tossing wine labels into the creek
Like feathers in a pillow fight they scatter

Deep in the abandoned winery shane swoboda sprained his wrist
This is where dead birds are buried
Here is where we used to kiss

You don't know what you've got 'til you grow up
Hallways haunt me like ghosts haunt hallways
Abandoned fields where our many teams played
But I couldn't see them from under the bleachers
And only you know why

At 23 you have no hope for children
And 27 your hopes are dwindling still
But the boy in the world with even one absent father
Is an argument for the morning after pill

Words and music by michael johnson
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To be single

Molly and rick are always bickering
There's no end to the battle of natalie and ken
Lanie has klaus chained to the house
And dinner at jacks always ends with linda never coming back

Dudley and kris kiss in public
While you're trying to speak
Ryan's always groping monique
In the middle of the street
It's hardly discreet!
And sometimes they prance with their hands down the pockets of each other's pants

Ah, how it's nice to be single
I can do whatever I choose
I've got nothing to lose
Nothing to prove to anyone!

Meryl sees dave as a veritable slave
She's got a man on the side
And tammy's always two-timing clyde
Who's emily's beau
Which everyone knows
Except for the host at the grotto who's also had him out of his clothes

But oh
Sometimes at night
I turn off the light
And turn to my right
Someone to talk to would be nice

A hand to hold
A hug when it's cold
Or go for a stroll
But the minute I find someone I like
I want to be single again

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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Tomorrow never lives forever

Agent to chief

I'm flying over the super villain's home;
His former palace of steel and marble
Deep in a dead volcano

I landed at the peak

Legions of ninjas I battled all alone
I left the villain lying on a bloody roulette wheel
Dead in his own casino

This while money penny sleeps

Safe on our sofa on charing cross road
Her body cradled in the feathers of angels
Wondering when I'm coming home

And chief I mean to tell you

I'm not going to do this anymore
I'm hanging up my walther and heading to the altar
Isn't that what we're fighting for?

No amount of danger

No world domination no brink of war
No terrorist plunder will tear us asunder
We'll be together forevermore

Villain to agent

The bait was set and the trap was sprung
You fell for my cheap ploy
I hired a decoy
To take my place as the wheel spun

The minute you landed

The legions of ninjas you battled all alone
Were merely distractions
As more of my factions
Set off to destroy your happy home

And what did they find there,

Helpless in sleep like a baby doe?
But your one and only
She was sure looking lonely
They brought her gagged to my bungalow

She's the one thing you desire

It's a pity you're retired

This just in!

There's a battle raging
Villain and agent are
In full swing

In a fight to recover
The lover who clings for dear life
Will she survive?
Stay tuned to channel 5...

Music by ballman, georgis, ham, hughes, johnson, lyrics by johnson
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Troubled girl

Whenever I went to the park to shoot baskets I noticed a girl
Sitting on the porch of a house across the street.
I thought she was really cute but couldn't tell how old she was.
She looked like Elizabeth Shue from Karate Kid.

That was my favorite movie. I'd seen it in the theater 6 times.
I liked the scene where she wears a tight sweater and they go to the amusement park.

She started to come over to the courtside benches when I'd show up.
I was nervous as I talked to her.
She told me she lived with her cousin because in Chicago her parents were killed.
Nothing ever happened between us. Not even a kiss.

She gave me Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" for Christmas. (I never listened to it.)
We drifted apart that winter because it was too cold for basketball.

Five years later when I was in my 20s I lived in a different town.
I'd visit my parents for the holidays and one time she called.
I met her in the Mayfair parking lot and we sat in my car.
The steering wheel seemed enormous as she confessed.

She'd told me lies back then about her family.
She said although she was married now she always loved me.

I almost wanted to kiss her but I was nervous again.
She said her husband beat her up sometimes and she had a baby boy.
She told me her boy's name was Kevin and I got to thinking about
How long she would have to live with that.

Words adapted from a short story by Kevin Sampson
Music by M. Johnson ©2008 Zubsongs, Ltd

Up on the orange moon

Just now I heard the rattling of a van, misha
The shadow lady told me of your plan
I'll go, but you should know it's all in vain
I've never been more sane
And the moonlight'll always find me

Where darkness seeps in corners
And crawls upon musty walls
Where shadows creep like mourners
Up and down empty halls
Where no candlelight can keep out the night
Threatening my padded room
When darkness blinds me, there you'll find me: up on the orange moon

Where silver frosted mountains
Rise to the velvet sky
So powdered sugar fountains
Sparkle in gemini
There my slice of paradise
Hovers above the gloom
If you dare confine me there you'll find me: up on the orange moon

No bars, misha, can bind me
When evening kills the light
With twinkling stars behind me
I'll be riding the back of the night

Words & music by michael johnson
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Vegas remains

I had a harrison ford sighting
He was shooting up dolls in the middle of the flamingo
I said, "give this place twenty years, maybe more.
Ridley scott will use this as the set of his sequel."
I can't help but think that she's disappointed
Am I a better writer than a conversationalist?

I know we're really just eight pages a month

Sometimes she'd look at me through thick glasses
Sometimes she'd smile but she'd still be looking at the ground
The sun goes down and up again
Through the grating on the footbridge
I can't help but wonder while we're arm in arm
If I collapsed right here would you carry me upstairs?

I can't help but wonder how places like this come to exist
Does the world in general need another dead child star or illusionist
For that matter another pair of star-crossed pen pals?

So with the blue neon leaking in on my head
My brain echoing something your sister said
I lay back sweat drenched and have blinky-light nightmares
We've got to part ways, but vegas remains here

Words and music by michael johnson
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Venezuela (hating trains)

There's a whaleback
I'm standing arms up
London will be where they bury me
And I'll look at you from underground

There's a whaleback
I'm standing on it
Venezuela will be the death of me
Though it's purple on the map

Lately I've been hating trains
Because they take me away from you

There's a whale back
We're riding on it
Passing notebook paper
On an umpteenth river
Frightened in the bushes dancing
Venezuela will be the death of me
And it's purple on the map

That's the story of my life

Venezuela will be the death of me

Words and music by michael johnson
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Vibrator

Dad gave me a vibrator once
To give to mother for a birthday present
Later they kept in a drawer by the bed
Soon they were sleeping in separate beds

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

Viva portland

Sucking on olives and driving up north
Breaking through ice right through to the ocean floor
Smashing snow cakes on a dying lake
Ten story houses have us praying for earth quakes
If you said that we could be dead
I could spend nights in rigermortis just kissing your head
I'd take that over hipsters and warehouses anytime

Taking in pictures by men from spain
Slipping in backwards on a subway train
while the city we came from wants to be new york
This one is seething and coughing up sports fans
Oh I've never been so in love
The muse is broken I gave her a shove
Because a new muse flies with me homeward every time

Oh what a time we had
Other drivers driving you mad
And as the last hours of '97 die away in the night
I'll be sucking on olives and other parts of you in the night

Taking in views at four dollars a coke
Overusing some of your father's jokes
The green of the lake sailing out into space
Makes the willamette look like a shoelace
And if you said that we could jump ship
I could spend nights under water with you at my hip
I'd take that over hipsters and warehouses anytime
I'd take that over cheap art and basement parties anytime
I'd take that over rags that give you three stars
Anytime

Words and music by michael johnson
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Want somebody who doesn't want you and you'll die a little every day

I was drawn and quartered in dusseldorf
I was beheaded in berlin
I faced the firing squad in florence
I was laid to rest in lintz

I was poisoned in polermo
I was skinned alive in split
I was shot down in st. Petersburg
I got the rack in reykjavik

I was axed in amsterdam
Boiled in oil in bucharest
I was crucified in cape town
I had my brains bashed in in brest

I was gored in glasgow
I caught the plague in prague
I was lit on fire in london
I was crushed in qaortoq

No matter where I wander
You have the power to stop my breath
Every time you cross my mind
I die another death

I can't escape the black-eyed dog
However far I run away
Want somebody who doesn't want you
And you'll die a little every day

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Washington street

I imagine washington street
All our dirty clothes piled in the empty street

All the cars go by in my dream
Smash our dresser drawers dash our dishes to the concrete

"if this house ain't cleaned,
I'm throwing everything out in the street!"
Ooo daddy please!

My elder siblings all got free
Except my brother before me with the grass-stained knees

They disappeared like mythical beings
Leaving daddy's loafer tapping on our tv

Somewhere in the world
Even my retarded sister is living like a free girl
Ooo daddy please

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

We did it

AMANDA NICHOLAS.

NICHOLAS YES?

AMANDA ALL OF THE PAINTINGS ARE SPOKEN FOR.

NICHOLAS YOU'RE KIDDING.

AMANDA THEY PRACTICALLY WALKED THEMSELVES OUT THE DOOR.

NICHOLAS YOU'RE AMAZING. I KNEW YOU COULD—

AMANDA I HAD A LITTLE HELP.

BOTH WE DID GOOD!

NICHOLAS NOW I SAY WE CLOSE THE PLACE.

AMANDA WHY SO SOON? WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU GOT UP YOUR SLEEVE?

NICHOLAS I'LL TELL YOU THE MINUTE I GET YOU UNLACED
THAT IS, AS SOON AS THESE PEOPLE LEAVE.

(AMANDA quickly begins herding people out.)

AMANDA EVERYONE! WE'RE CALLING IT AN EARLY NIGHT.

NICHOLAS THANK YOU FOR HONORING THE MEMORY OF GREGORY QUITE.

(The patrons begin to file out of the gallery. Some of them pat NICHOLAS on the back and others provide words of condolence. AMANDA drifts among them giving thanks and ushering them out. When they're all gone, NICHOLAS and AMANDA embrace..)

NICHOLAS WE DID IT.
WE DID IT.
I KNEW WE
COULD DO IT.

BOTH WE DID IT.
WE DID IT.
WE SOLD OUT.
THERE'S NO DOUBT
OUR LIVES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME
NOW GREGORY'S A HOUSEHOLD NAME.

NICHOLAS WE CARRIED
THE DAY, LOVE.

AMANDA WE BLEW THEM
AWAY, LOVE.

NICHOLAS WE KICKED ASS.

AMANDA AND THEN WE TOOK NAMES.

NICHOLAS WE HOLD ALL THE MARBLES.

AMANDA YOU'RE BOGART.

NICHOLAS YOU'RE GARBO.

BOTH WE'RE SIMPLY THE CRÉME DE LA CRÉME.
OUR LIVES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME
NOW GREGORY'S A HOUSEHOLD NAME.

NICHOLAS I MADE IT.
I'M A-LIST.
I'M IN NOW.
THE IN CROWD.
THEY BOUGHT IT.
I SURE KNOCKED THEM DEAD.
AND WITH MY
ACCOMPLICE
IT'S "MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED",
THOUGH SHE FOUGHT IT.
IT'S FULL STEAM AHEAD.

LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME
NOW GREGORY'S A HOUSEHOLD
NAME
WE DID IT.
WE DID IT.

THIS CALLS FOR CELEBRATIONS
OF A PARTICULAR KIND.

LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.
WE DID IT!

AMANDA ISN'T HE CHARMING?
WALKING SO TALL?
ISN'T HE SELFLESS?
DISARMING?
SO ON THE BALL?
HE'S A MAN.
HE'S A MAN LIKE NO OTHER.

HE DID IT
ALL FOR HIS BROTHER.
CONGRATULATIONS.
THIS CALLS FOR CELEBRATIONS.

WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?

LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.
WE DID IT!

We should be friends

AMANDA ISN'T HE CHARMING?
 HUNKY AND TALL?
 COOL AND DISARMING.
 AREN'T THEY ALL?
 HE'S A MAN.
 LIKE ALL OTHER MEN
 HE ONLY WANTS ME
 SO HE CAN FLAUNT ME,
 WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS.

GIRLS ALL OVER TOWN,
SURROUND HIM,
AND HOUND HIM.
NOT ME.
IF HE THINKS I'LL JOIN THE THRONG,
PLAY ALONG
WELL HE'S WRONG:
I'M NOT THAT EASY.

STILL, HE SEEMS NICE ENOUGH.
SEXY, SINCERE.
HIS KISSES ARE KIND OF ROUGH
HIS EYES BLUE AND CLEAR.
YET, HE'S A MAN,
LIKE OTHERS I'VE KNOWN.
HE CAN BE TRUSTED
ONLY AS FAR
AS HE CAN BE THROWN.

LET HIM FILL MY GLASS,
KISS MY ASS,
MAKE A PASS,
AND THINK HE HAS ME.
I WON'T JOIN THE HERD,
BE SOME ABSURD
LITTLE BIRD
IN HIS MENAGERIE.
NOT ME.

(The door buzzer interrupts the music. AMANDA, smiling, looks at the clock, stands up and rushes to the front door. She presses a button on the intercom.)

AMANDA Nicholas?

NICHOLAS *(chiming in over the intercom)* That's me.

...

NICHOLAS You're kind. *(composing himself)* Speaking of words, do you know
I ran into Timothy O'Keefe in the lobby just now?

AMANDA *(looking at the painting)* Yes. All right.

NICHOLAS Wonderful! I'm off. We'll meet up another night
To discuss the details.

(He kisses her hand in a grand gesture.)

Don't spend the rest of the evening feeling guilty.

AMANDA (*staring at the painting, looking glum*) I won't.

NICHOLAS Clearly.

AMANDA *(she sits on the sofa, still looking at the painting)* Goodnight.

NICHOLAS Sleep tight!

(NICHOLAS exits.)

AMANDA

ISN'T HE CHARMING?
STYLISH AND TALL.
WITTY, DISARMING.
SO ON THE BALL.
HE'S A MAN
UNLIKE OTHER MEN.
HE HAS REAL PASSION.
HE FOLLOWS FASHION.
WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS.

HE WANTS NOTHING LESS
THAN HIS LATE BROTHER'S SUCCESS
I THINK THAT'S LOVELY.
A MAN THAT KIND
SELFLESS, REFINED
IS SO HARD TO FIND
AND SO I INTEND
TO BE HIS FRIEND.
YES, WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS.

Wet

It was halftime at the stadium
When dad and I walked down to the bathroom
We were held up by a long, long, long, long line at the six-man trough
Dad and I went side by side, him watching as my pants fell to my ankles
Yes he watched as I dropped my pants all the way down to my ankles

Later in the hot dog line my daddy explained to me
You don't have to pull your pants all the way down to pee

He told me how my zipper comes down
Said that's where your peter comes out
That's when I stopped wetting my bed at night

Words adapted by M Johnson from a short story by K Sampsell
Music by m johnson ©2008 zubsongs, ltd.

What girl wants a man who's always waiting for the bus?

What girl wants a man who's always waiting for the bus?
It's hard to look debonair with the rain in your thinning hair.
Fixing my eyes on the horizon,
In search of the yellow marquee.
Weary, weather beaten, and wizened,
I'm stuck here
Waiting for the 40
To carry me homeward.
What girl wants a man like me?

What girl wants a man who forgets his umbrella
On a wet night like tonight with no bus in sight,
Locking eyes with a girl in the window
Of a small black peugeot passing by?
She turns to the driver, her beau.
Together,
They each wear one earpiece
From a pair of ear bud headphones.
I wonder what kind of music she likes.

If there's such a girl in the world please introduce me.
We could stand here looking odd
Like two p's in "ipod"
Fixing our eyes on the horizon.
Here comes the yellow marquee.
With fingers entwined we could wait here
Together.
Bus lumbers up to us,
Sliding its doors open,
We could snuggle in the old people seats.
What girl wants a man like me?

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What was she doing on the shore that night?

Staring at the summer triangle
Forgetting the names of all the funny shapes
Laying back connecting diamonds
Out on the beach like all the other apes

Tracing faces with her fingers
Following comet tails with her eyes
Humming songs though she's no singer
Letting her hands glide across her thighs

When the moon dies down behind a cloud,
Spilling black ink into space,
The waves crash down on her chaise lounge
And wash her away from this place

What a waste

Lie back
With gentle fingers
Lie back
And use both hands

Words and music by michael johnson
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What were the chances?

Candles lit up the old ball
Like swarms of junebugs in flight
But they couldn't outshine
That lady of mine
Last night

Scandles flitted like snowballs
When we embraced for the waltz
"the governor's daughter
Here with a pauper!"
But she didn't heed their base assaults

What were the chances
That this enchantress
Would fix me with her glances
I'm just as poor as dirt
Still we flirt
She says she loves me so!

What were the chances?
Who could have planned this?!
How funny romance is!
My princess doesn't wince
Though her wretched prince
Has the net worth of a toad!

What were the chances?
That this enchantress
Would be mine to dance with?
I'm up to here in debt
Yet juliette
Says I'm her romeo!

What were the chances?
She preens and prances
Despite my finances
Thank cupid it was me
She chanced to see
After he shot his bow.

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Your end will be your beginning

GREGORY I thought you were going for a drink.

NICHOLAS Well, so I was. But then, pulling up to the curb in my expensive silver car,
Gearing up for another saucy night with the girls at the bar,
I thought of you: bursting in here so full of passion, so resilient.
At first I thought you were pathetic. But now I think you're brilliant.

(Music starts Your End Will Be Your Beginning, pg.)

GREGORY What do you mean, brilliant?

NICHOLAS Just what I said!
GENIUSES LIKE YOU
SELDOM EVER DO
GARNER FAME AND FORTUNE WHILE ALIVE.
YOUR PEERS THINK YOU A PAIN
'CAUSE YOU GO AGAINST THE GRAIN.
IT'S A WONDER THAT YOU EVEN CAN SURVIVE.

YES, A GIFTED TYPE LIKE YOU
WILL NEVER BE WELL TO DO
YOU'LL STAY OBSCURE UNTIL YOUR FINAL BREATH.
BUT WHEN YOU BITE THE DUST, GIVE THANKS!
FOR YOU'LL JOIN THE SWOLLEN RANKS
OF THE PAINTERS WHO GET FAMOUS AFTER DEATH.

GREGORY What are you talking about?

NICHOLAS I know it sounds cliché,
But behold: exhibit A:
OLD VAN GOGH,
SHOT HIMSELF, YOU KNOW
CUTTING SHORT A PITIFUL CAREER.
HE SOLD ONE WORK,
BRIBED A POSTAL CLERK
AND SENT SOME LUCKY TART PART OF HIS EAR.
RAVING MAD
THE MASOCHIST WAS GLAD
TO GIVE UP ART AND GO OFF LOONY BINNING.
NOW THE MOMA IS HIS HOME AWAY FROM HEAVEN
YES, HIS END WAS HIS BEGINNING.

GREGORY Oh, come on. That's a tired stereotype.

NICHOLAS Stereotypes are grounded in reality.
To wit, exhibit B:
PAUL GAUGUIN
WHAT A SELFISH MAN.
HE LEFT HIS WIFE AND KID FOR PARADISE.

DOWN AND OUT,
HE SOON FOUND OUT
THE SOUTH PACIFIC WASN'T VERY NICE.
HAD HE TAKEN A CLASS
INSTEAD OF CHASING NATIVE ASS
HE MIGHT HAVE STOPPED HIS MEAGER FAN BASE THINNING.
NOW HIS YELLOW CHRIST IS TWICE THE PRICE, THANK
HEAVEN.
FOR, HIS END WAS HIS BEGINNING.

(Music continues through the following, shifting to the minor key.)

NICHOLAS It all reminds me of that exhibit we saw in Poland,
When we were backpacking through Europe. Do you remember?

GREGORY Yes. A bunch of paintings by an orphaned Jewish girl. So?

NICHOLAS So? Such an incredible story. That little girl went through Hell.
After the Nazis killed her family, she was smuggled
To safety by a pastor, one Fritz Friedrich, who struggled
To keep her alive. Well,
FRITZ AND HIS WIFE,
FRIGHTENED FOR HER LIFE,
HID HER WHERE THE NAZIS WOULDN'T LOOK.
BY WEAK CANDLE LIGHT
SHE LABORED DAY AND NIGHT
MAKING LITTLE PAINTINGS IN A BOOK.
THEY CAUGHT FRITZ,
SHIPPED THEM ALL TO AUSCHWITZ,
BUT THE BOOK WAS HIDDEN IN AN UNDERPINNING .
NOW THE PAINTINGS SELL FOR MORE THAN THE COST OF THE
WAR.
YES, HER END WAS HER BEGINNING.

(Music continues through the following, shifting back to major.)

GREGORY Good for her. I still don't see what this has to do with me.

NICHOLAS Both artists, both martyrs, both orphans.

GREGORY Well, Nazis didn't exactly kill my family.

NICHOLAS No, little *adoptive* brother, but you had it rough.

GREGORY I survived.

NICHOLAS (*darkly*) True. Now let me tell you how you're going to die—

(Music stops abruptly on a tense chord.)

GREGORY Wait. What?—

NICHOLAS You want to die, don't you? You came here tonight to kill yourself.

GREGORY I changed my mind.

NICHOLAS Good! Now listen to me. Don't make another sound.
I'm about to tell you how to get your career off the ground.

GREGORY How?

NICHOLAS You're going to commit suicide, Gregory—

GREGORY But I just told you—

NICHOLAS *(hissing)* I'm not finished!

(Music resumes.)

GREGORY Go on.

NICHOLAS YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THESE PICTURES DOWN,
AND PILE THEM ON THE GROUND
MAKE A LITTLE PIRE HERE ON THE FLOOR.
TURN THE OVEN ON ANDWAIT
AS THE GAS FUMES PERMEATE,
THEN THROW AWAY YOUR KEY AND BAR THE DOOR.

ONCE YOU'VE SET THE SCENE
DOUSE YOURSELF WITH GASOLINE
AND, LITTLE BROTHER, HERE'S THE CRUX OF IT:
JUST LIE DOWN ON THE PILE, CATCH
YOUR BREATH, LIGHT A MATCH,
AND BLOW YOURSELF AND EVERYTHING ELSE IN HERE TO BITS!

(Music resumes through the following.)

(laughing merrily) Of course, none of this will be real.
You won't really be dead. You'll be laying low at my place for a while.
Oh, I can see it now. We'll have such a lovely funeral.

GREGORY You want to stage a funeral?

NICHOLAS Stage a funeral, yes. How clever you are.
Soon after, you'll purchase a beat up old used car.

GREGORY What for?

NICHOLAS So you can relocate. To the Big City.

GREGORY You want me to fake my own suicide and drive to the Big City?

NICHOLAS That's right.

GREGORY Why?

NICHOLAS To get you noticed!
ONCE THEY LEARN

HOW THE GALLERY BURNED,
AND OF YOUR MALAPROPOS DEMISE;
HOW YOU LIVED ADRIFT,
DESPITE ENORMOUS GIFTS,
DOLLAR SIGNS WILL FLASH IN THEIR EYES.
ONCE THEY FIND
THE WORKS YOU LEFT BEHIND,
WATCH THEIR WILD WEEPING TURN TO GRINNING
WHILE YOUR HEAD'S IN THE SAND, YOU'LL BE IN DEMAND
AND YOUR END WILL BE YOUR BEGINNING.

GREGORY But how will I live if I'm dead?

NICHOLAS LIKE A KING!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING
LEAVE YOUR PAST BEHIND YOU AND FORGET IT
I'LL ADMINISTRATE
THE SALE OF YOUR ESTATE
AND SEND YOUR CUT THE MINUTE THAT I GET IT

GREGORY But Amanda, I was thinking—

NICHOLAS FORGET THAT TART
THE HARPY BROKE YOUR HEART!
SHE'LL FEEL THE LOSS THE MOMENT THAT YOU'RE WINNING
AS SHE READS ABOUT YOUR WEALTH IN EVERY JOURNAL ON
THE SHELF.
YOUR END WILL BE YOUR BEGINNING!

Come on!
YOU WANT FAME?
LIGHTS AROUND YOUR NAME?
DROP THE CURTAIN, BOY AND TAKE A BOW!
YOU'LL RISE WHEN YOU FALL.
TAKE YOUR CURTAIN CALL.
BRING OUT THE FAT LADY NOW.
SING A SWAN SONG.
YOU'VE RUN THE BASES FOR TOO LONG.
THE GAME IS OVER; IT'S THE FINAL INNING.
LEAVE THIS CRUEL, CRUEL WORLD, LIKE THAT LITTLE JEWISH
GIRL.
LIKE, HOGARTH, TURNER, THOMSON,
Cut your losses and move on, son!
LIKE EAKINS AND EL GRECO LET YOUR VOICE FOR EONS
ECHO.
TAKE THE "F" AND "A" - FROM FAMOUS AND PUT "P-O-S-T-U"—
Whew!

STOP LIVING LIKE A SHLEP
TAKE THAT EXTRA STEP
YOUR END WILL BE
HAPPY AND FREE.
YOUR END WILL BE
BETWEEN YOU AND ME.
YOUR END WILL BE YOUR BEGINNING!

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Yours

"bury me deep in the sand,"
Say the shopping carts rusting on the east river
Longing for a quiet death

Here is my hand
Trace my lifeline with your finger
Until we collapse in the sand
We all have a plan
What's yours?

Write me a screenplay
Design me a tattoo of skylines and tell them
I won't be in today
For I've gone to fall on my face
To hail me some taxis
And to scatter roller-bladers all over the place
We all have a plan
What's yours?

Yes, I've gone to fall on my face
To eat watermelon on the steps of the dakota
And to lay on our stomachs killing saturdays
This is my plan
What's yours?

Here is my hand
Where's yours?

You are my plan
What's yours?

Words and music by michael johnson
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