

“FROM BED TO VERSE”

POEMS & LYRICS

by

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POEMS

**ON SEEING A YOUNG PERUVIAN
WITH A HOME-MADE FLUTE IN
“THE FAMILY OF MAN” EXHIBIT
AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

**There is music in this slender piece of reed.
Listen . . .**

**There is music in the sand beneath my feet.
Listen . . .**

**There is music in my heartbeat.
Music in my laughter.
Music in my silence.
Yes, even in my silence.
Listen . . .**

**There is music in a baby being born.
Listen . . .**

**There is music in an old man dying.
Listen . . .**

**There is music all around us.
Music all around us.**

All we have to do is listen.

**MOTHER NATURE DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN
ABOUT THE DYING**

**Mother Nature doesn't give a damn about the dying.
Her business is birth.
Observe the falling of a sparrow?
Hardly.
Sparrow? Sparrow?
What species is that?
Which phyla?
A bird, yes?
Some sort of bird?**

**A war comes along.
Twenty thousand American soldiers dead.
Half a million Vietnamese.
Let's see.
Soldiers? Humans?
What species is that?
Which phyla?**

**Mother Nature doesn't give a damn about the dying.
She lies in labor,
Strapped upon the table.
Her rumbling, fulsome belly
Teeming with ten million
Eager creatures
Waiting for their turn.**

CREEKS

**There is a canyon,
And beneath it,
Down the slope,
A stream.
It's not, as they say,
"Blue as the Aegean"
Or again: "A happy, gurgling brook."
For this is a stream
In a land of little water.
And it has to fight to stay alive.
Beginning in obscurity
And moving as God wills,
It goes on to the Colorado
Or the Red
Or dies, un-noticed,
Except by buzzards
And the always thirsty sun.**

**So let's make a little fiddle tune,
And sing it to the creeks.
To the Jim Ned,
And to Hordes Creek,
And to the Lehigh Valley Junction,
And to me, who used to leap from the pecan trees, naked,
And to Grandpa Willie, who knew where the catfish were,
And to the Baptist preachers who practiced total immersion
In the brown and dusty waters with a
GLORY HALLELUJAH!**

MY GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS

**My grandmother's hands are strong
And big of bone
And gentle to the touch.**

She uses them to hold back Death.

ODE TO THE MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT CLUB OF COLEMAN, TEXAS

**Miss Molly Harris
At the spinet
Sings songs
Of sylvan scenes
While fat club women
With chubby elbows
Dip their spoons
In chili beans.**

THREE POEMS FROM BASIC TRAINING

(Camp Roberts, California 1951)

TO PFC BOB (BUDDY) BARLOW

(In the Elizabethan mode)

**The flies, they love thy essence.
They swarm about thy head.
They find repose upon thy nose,
Their home so warm and red.
Thou rogue, thou naughty varlet,
Most odoriferous of men.
Many a nostril may those flies see
Ere finding such warmth again.**

HELLO, PAIN

**Hello, Pain.
Welcome back again.
I thought that you'd forgot.
But I see that punctually
You've returned to the same old spot.
Shall we take a turn together?
Shall I writhe and twist and shout?
If you stay away next time,
What will I think about?**

HERE'S TO AL

**Here's to Al, Cro-Magnon buddy,
Survivor of the ice,
Whose low-set brow and minute brain
Trouble not with "nice" & "vice."
Let's lift 'em up! Let's drink 'em down!
And remember: "Might makes right."
But could you, Al, move two centuries back?
You're standing in my light.**

SHE MADE ME A WREATH OF FLOWERS

**She made me a wreath of flowers
And tied it around my head.
I was the god Dionysus.
At least, that's what she said.
And though I was pale and underweight
And slightly myopic, too.
There, for that magic moment,
I knew that it was true.
And so we took off all our clothes
And sat on the kitchen floor
And drank cheap wine from plastic cups
Until we could drink no more.
And she was Aphrodite.
And I was some ancient satyr.
And we danced around without our clothes.
And then later,
Ah, yes - later!**

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

**St. Patrick's Day isn't green and sweet.
At least, in New York City.
It comes this way a grimy gray
while winds that show no pity
Are hurled like knives down avenues,
Slashing poor Irish lasses,
Turning their pale white faces blue,
Goose pimpling their asses.**

**The pipers pipe; the drummers drum.
The cardinals and Catholics come.
The mayors march, the gays protest.
The majorettes, who are not dressed
For leaping in the snow and sleet,
Have little green pom-poms on their feet.**

**I've watched it once; I've watched it twice.
And I think twice will quite suffice.
So "Erin Go Bragh" and wear the green.
But for God's sake, change it to May 17.**

THE GLEN SPEECH
FROM “THE FANTASTICKS”
(Set to harp music by Harvey Schmidt)

You wonder how these things begin.

Well, this begins with a glen.

It begins with a season which,

For want of a better word,

We might as well call - September.

(MUSIC)

It begins with a forest where the woodchucks woo,

And leaves wax green,

And vines entwine like lovers; try to see it.

Not with your eyes, for they are wise,

But see it with your ears:

The cool green breathing of the leaves.

And hear it with the inside of your hand:

The soundless sound of shadows flicking light.

Celebrate sensation.

Recall that secret place.

You've been there, you remember:

That special place where once - just once -

In your crowded sunlit lifetime,

You hid away in shadows from the tyranny of Time.

That spot beside the clover

Where someone's hand held your hand.

And love was sweeter than the berries,

Or the honey,

Or the stinging taste of mint

It is September -

Before a rainfall -

A perfect time to be in love.

IF I HAD SERVANTS

If I had servants,
I wouldn't go to the dump.
If I had servants,
I wouldn't wash my socks.
I wouldn't look for specials.
I wouldn't clip the coupons.
I wouldn't load and unload the cart.

In the morning
I'd have a cup of coffee
Brewed by somebody else.
I'd munch an English Muffin
Already toasted and spread with jam.
I'd read the morning paper,
Placed neatly beside my plate.
And after breakfast,
I'd walk away from the table -
Just leave the dishes behind.

If I had servants,
I'd go to my desk
And work there, unrelenting.
I'd dictate letters
I'd let my personal assistant sort the mail.
I would get more work done.
There's no question about that.
I'd probably make more money -
Enlarge my oeuvre.

But I would miss it, I think -
All the distractions
And the mess.
And the thing is:
I would be somebody
Other than who I am.

THE EARLY BIRD

**They say that the early bird gets the worm
And I guess that means a lot.
But you just have to look at it the other way
And the early worm gets got.**

MY TWO CATS AND I

**My two cats and I
In the evening watch the sky.
What do I see? What do they see?
And do we see the same?
And do I see any better (or worse)
Because I give each thing a name?**

THERE IS A BUSY, BUMBLING BEE

**There is a busy, bumbling bee
Outside my window in a tree.
He goes about his business
At a hectic, hurried pace,
But behind him he leaves Summer
With her belly full of grace.**

**Which teaches us a secret
As strange as it is true:
It's not always how you do it,
But sometimes what you do.**

I TOOK LOVE LIGHTLY WHEN IT CAME

I took love lightly when it came.
I delighted in its soft, wet flame.
I soothed myself with its caress;
My senses were delirious with pleasure.
And if, by chance, she also made me wise,
Revealing new things to my eyes,
I thought: Why not?
It is the inevitable by-product,
And why not.
I took love lightly when it came.

She went away that summer
To Mexico
To paint.
And she wrote,
And said that she was ill,
And I wrote,
And said I'm so sorry
That you're ill.
And then I made a joke, on paper,
To try to cheer her up.
Meanwhile, another man she knew
Purchased a ticket and he flew
To join her - to assist her,
To return her back to health.
And I'm assuming that he was successful,
For when I saw her - later -
She seemed healthy
And she wore a ring ,
Confirming what I'd heard.

**I stopped abruptly going to museums.
My life is full of little changes,
Similar to that:
I do not walk in Riverside Park.
I do not look for children's chalk marks
On the sidewalks.
(Small things, really. Small things.)**

**I've given up trying to see
As she could see,
With hands and ears,
Or listen with my eyes.
I've returned my senses
To their proper in-turned spot,
And doing so, forgot,
Not all perhaps, but quite a lot
Of all the things she taught me.**

**I don't drink more, but more alone.
I spend more time upon the phone.
I don't buy gifts,
Except at Christmas,
When it is more or less the thing.
I do not wait impatiently for Spring.**

SOMETIMES I PRAY

Sometimes I pray.

At night.

Always at night.

Just before I leave this world

And go to someplace else.

Why do I do it?

I don't know.

Once, of course, there was great comfort

In the divine family.

The God Father

The Perfect (unstained) Mother.

The panoply of saints

All waiting with open arms,

Like a family reunion

In Texas.

That is gone now.

In its place

We have - what?

Tiny molecules

And the Great Crab Nebula.

The Chaos Theory

(Which I myself reject)

And whatever comfort we can get

From Science.

But then there are moments,

Unexpected moments,

When I suddenly realize

That, in spite of everything,

There is, beyond my comprehension,

Form.

**And I know,
As sure as I know anything,
That I am part of it.
And that my whispered prayers
In the darkness
(To the darkness)
Put me somehow,
Secretly, personally,
In touch with this great mystery.
And I thank God
(Not necessarily in capital letters)
That I am able to pray.**

**A POEM FOR TERESA
ON HER 65TH BIRTHDAY**

**So here's to Teresa,
Whom I will call Sue,
Because rhyming Teresa
Is too hard to do.**

**She comes twice a week,
And more if I'm lucky,
To look in the frig
And throw out the yucky.**

**She pulls out the pretzels,
Starts the Veal Scallopini,
Then hands me the olive
For my dry martini.**

**As dinner progress,
If we're feeling posh,
We both drink a toast
To our old buddy, Josh.**

**Wow, this is perfection.
What more could there be?
Let's watch Jeopardy
On the kitchen TV.**

**Now some men love Venus,
And some Mona Lisa.
But as for me, Boys,
I'll stick with Teresa.
(Look, I found a rhyme.)**

THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

(A poem for Galileo's birthday)

**It's nice to be the center of the universe.
You're in the middle,
The absolute center,
And everything revolves around you.
Children are the center of the universe.
At least, in our culture they are.
They cry.
Somebody picks them up.
They smile.
Everybody's happy.**

**Men used to be the center of the universe.
Their wives fixed breakfast.
There was a martini waiting
When they got home from work.
If they were worried, their wives said:
"Oh, Honey, it's alright."
(Sort of like children, when you think about it.)**

**What made Galileo look inside that telescope
Night after night?
What made him deduce,
Seeing the moons of Jupiter,
That the earth revolved around the sun
And not the other way around?**

**It's nice to be the center of the universe,
But growing up means learning that
You're not.**

**Two El Gallo speeches
from “The Fantasticks”**

(# 1)

**Their moon was cardboard, fragile.
It was very apt to fray.
And what was last night scenic
May seem cynic by today.
The play’s not done.
Oh, no - not quite.
For life never ends in the moonlit night.
And despite what pretty poets say,
The night is only half the day.**

**So we would like to truly finish
What was foolishly begun.
For the story is not ended
And the play is never done
Until we’ve all of us been burned a bit
And burnished by - the sun!
(He reverses the cardboard moon.
On the other side is the sun.)**

(# 2)

**There is a curious paradox
That no one can explain.
Who understands the secret
Of the reaping of the grain?**

El Gallo (cont.)

**Who understands why Spring is born
Out of Winter's laboring pain,
Or why we all must die a bit
Before we grow again.**

**I do not know the answer.
I merely know it's true.
I hurt them for that reason.
And myself a little bit, too.**

MARYA

**I will sing you.
I will spread you
Like the seeds of trees
Across both time and space.**

**People yet unborn will love you.
People yet unborn will “know” you.
People yet unborn will taste, as I taste,
The tongue-soft rolling sweetness of your mouth.
Will touch, as I touch,
The satin smoothness of your stomach:
Will run their tongues along the tiny crater
Of your navel and lean their foreheads
On your belly and feel the tiny crown
Of perspiration.**

**People yet unborn will enter you.
People yet unborn will see your eyes change,
See the pupils swell out,
Blacker than the stones one sees on beaches.
People yet unborn will feel the earth shake,
The end and the beginning.
All in this tiny circle: You!
When you are old, you will be young.
When you are dead, you will be alive.
When you are vanished, you will exist.**

**I will sing you.
I will spread you
Like the seeds of trees
Across both time and space.**

JUST ABOVE AUSTRALIA

**Just above Australia
There's a fascinating place
With many a prominent person
And many a famous face.
Saints are there, and sinners, too.
Aristocrat and parvenue.
Oscar losers, Oscar winners.
The man who invented TV dinners.
People who climbed up mountain peaks.
People who published security leaks.
The woman who swam the English Channel
And the one who anchored a TV panel.
All side by side, as if arrayed
And decked out for a great parade.
They show up there to start each day
And then they swiftly fade away.
While I, midst tasting toast and tea,
Check my iPad just to see
If one of them is me.**

The New York Times Obituary is listed online just above Australia

LYRICS

ROUND AND ROUND (THE COSMIC DANCE)

from "Harold & Maude"

Composer: Joseph Thalken

Maude

**Nightly, brightly, in the sky,
Wheels of fire go spinning by.
Giant spiral nebulae,
Spinning round and round.
Round and round and round and round,
And round and round and round!**

**Look inside some microscope.
What seems solid isn't, nope.
In each tiny isotope,
Other worlds abound.
And they're spinning,
Always spinning,
Round and round and round!**

**Births and deaths and births again!
Joy! Despair! Romance!
In and out the circles spin.
It's the Cosmic Dance!**

**See the lovers bending low.
See the seed beneath the snow.
Out of darkness, life can grow.
This is what I've found.
We are in a Cosmic Dance,
Spinning round and round!**

Maude (cont.)

In and out!

And up and down!

And round and round and round!

Get yourself some drums today.

Find yourself some pipes to play.

“Carpe Diem” as they say.

Make a joyful sound.

Come and join the Cosmic Dance

Spinning round and round!

In and out!

And up and down!

And round and round and round!

THREE SONGS ABOUT MAGIC

from "La Tempesta"

Composer: Andrew Gerle

Prosspero

I draw a magic circle in the sand.

Like this. (Music)

I touch the circle and it turns to light.

Like this. (Music)

It's filled with possibility.

A journey of discovery.

But only if we both believe

That this can be true.

For the secret of the magic lies,

Not just in the magician,

But also - inside - you.

(Sings)

I ask you now,

On this bare stage,

To create an enormous storm.

I ask you now,

When I speak of lightning,

That you see it slice the night.

One or two passing shadows

Must you turn into a fleet.

And then, when the storm is over,

I ask for you to come with me

And, spirit-like, to fly through time

Back to the island which was/is mine.

And most of all, I ask you now

To take this empty circle

And fill it full of life.

Like this!

Miranda

**I do not care for magic.
Magic makes me sad.
As if the things you conjure up
Surpass the things you had.**

**I don't believe in omens
Or wishing on a star.
I much prefer to place my faith
In things the way they are.
I do not care for magic.**

**Some people think a rabbit that
Emerges from a fancy hat
Is something quite miraculous to see.
A rabbit that is sitting still
Beside a meadow or a hill
Seems miraculous to me.**

**I do not care for kerchiefs
That turn into a dove.
I don't believe in magic,
But I do believe in love.**

**You touch me
And I am changed inside.
I do believe in love.**

Prospero

These magic powers that I possess -
Where do they come from?

I can only guess.

They come from somewhere deep inside,
Some subterranean stream.

They're down there always
Moving slowly

Like some mysterious dream.

Sometimes as bright as sunlight.

Sometimes as black as coal.

They are the manifestations
Of my soul.

(MUSIC changes as his wife appears,
a translucent image, dancing.)

I lift my staff and ghosts appear.

The dead come back to life.

My wife - I can see my wife.

She's dancing, spinning, smiling,

Just as she did in life.

How beautiful . . .

How sad . . .

(He lifts his staff and she disappears.)

I have no magic crystal balls

Except these orbs, my eyes.

No wand except this wooden stick.

The rest inside me lies.

And when I make magic, as even now,

I am diminished, brought down somehow.

My body drained and out of breath.

My thoughts turned dark,

To death . . . To death . . .

These magic powers that I possess -

They cannot bring me happiness.

TWO SONGS ABOUT SEX

from “The Game Of Love”

Composer: Jacques Offenbach

Illona

**Isn't that a wonderful tune? That's where I kill my
lover with a letter opener. Then I cut him up in small
pieces and I mail him out - parcel post. Then, when
I'm brought before the judge, I sing:**

I fell in love when I was just a virgin.

He was a surgeon.

I was his nurse.

He said his need for relief

Was really urgent.

So he seduced me

And then to make it worse,

I overheard him

Planning to desert me.

It really hurt me

To be overthrown.

I raged and stormed.

Then I performed

An operation of my own!

Love conquers all!

Love conquers all!

Love conquers all!

At least, that's what they say.

Love conquers all.!

Love conquers all!

It conquered him that day!

Illona (cont..)

**I later fell for a dramatic poet.
How could I know it
Would be a curse?
Because the moment
My love was overflowing,
He'd jump right up
And he's go from bed to verse.
One day I found him
With another woman.
And as they lay there,
Shamelessly undressed,
I grabbed his pen,
I stabbed him, then
I scratched these words
Across his chest!**

**Love conquers all!
Love conquers all!
Love conquers all!
At least, that's what they say.
Love conquers all!
Love conquers all!
It conquered him that day!**

**I've been referred to
As the new Medea.
A strange idea.
But then again,**

Illona (cont.)

**They say revenge is
The sweetest panacea.
And I have often
Revenged myself on men.
So if you dare
To love me and desert me,
Though it would hurt me,
Still I guarantee -
If you deceive,
I will relieve
You of your masculinity!**

**Love conquers all!
Love conquers all!
Love conquers all!
At least, that's what they say.
Love conquers all!
Love conquers all!
It will conquer you
Some day!**

Baron Diebel

Don't look at me like that. As if I were some sort of monster. If you'd seen some of the things I've seen, you'd know - I'm a very moral man. I'm even what you might call - prim.

(Sings)

I don't do things with chains and whips.

And I don't dress up In ladies' slippers.

I absolutely just refuse

To indulge myself with boots and shoes.

Never wear leather undergarments.

Never play with the beasts of prey.

And yet -

I have a little weakness.

In spite of all my meekness,

One tiny little weakness.

Two young ladies.

Ooh-la-la!

I just adore

A menage-a-trois!

**For oh, the things that a man can do
When every vice is multiplied by two.
It makes you feel like a sheik or shah
When you're the center of your own
Menage-a-trois!**

I don't care much for groups of four.

Any more than that I just deplore.

My mother always said to me:

"Little one, be satisfied with three."

Baron Diebel (cont.)

**That is why I have such an aversion
To anything in the least perverse.**

And yet -

**I have a little weakness,
In spite of all my meekness,
One tiny little weakness.**

Two young ladies.

Ooh-la-la!

I just adore

A menage-a-trois!

**For oh, the joys that you can incur
When your infatuation is triangular.
And oh, the pleasures you can produce
When you're the bottom of the right
Hypotenuse!**

SIX SONGS ABOUT AGING AND DEATH

#1

**From “Colette Collage”
composer: Harvey Schmidt**

Colette

**While rising with the lark at break of dawn,
Before you put your daily war-paint on,
Disheveled and slipshod
Beneath the old facade,
On looking in the mirror,
Do you whisper:
“Oh my God!”?**

**You ladies who are verging on your prime,
And also those who’ve been there quite some time,
Don’t weep and tear your hair.
Don’t sink into despair.
I’ve come to teach the secrets of
Cosmetical repair.**

**Learn to decorate the human face!
Learn to emphasize each saving grace!
Learn to transform what you are
With a charming little jar
Of ointment,
By appointment.**

Colette (cont.)

If you underline those squinty eyes,
You can make them seem like twice their size.
Add a touch of blush and then,
You'll almost feel like forty-one again!
Come on, girls, let's all begin
To decorate the human - - -

Suppose your nose is somewhat Romanesque.
When youthful it was merely picturesque.
At forty-five or so, it starts to grow and grow
Until it looks like something
From a Punch and Judy show.

When both those little dimples that you prize
Have turned to prunes before your very eyes,
Don't weaken and give in.
Just lift that withered chin.
I've come with my emollients
To make you young again!

Learn to decorate the human face.
Raise it up above the commonplace.
Like a Michelangelo,
You can mold your features so
Each section
Is perfection.

If your skin has sagged for years and years,
You can tie it up behind your ears.
Smooth it with volcanic goo,
Then rub in lots of queen bee jelly, too.
People will not know it's you.

Colette (cont.)

**And don't forget massages
Where the décolletage is.**

**Don't hesitate!
It's not too late!
To decorate
The human face!**

Come on, Girls. It's never too late!

2

From "Celebration"
Composer: Harvey Schmidt

Mr. Rich

You should have seen me - what I was! I was Father
Time's sweet darling golden little boy!

Once upon a time
Not so long ago,
I was quite a boy.
A Romeo.

Once upon a beach
In my underwear,
All the ladies used to
Stop and stare.

Hair upon my head.
Hair upon my chest.
Everyone I met
Was so impressed.

Hair upon my chin.
Hair upon my brow.
Why am I so damned
Un-hairy now?

Mr. Rich (cont.)

**Where did it go-oh-oh?
Those little locks of mine.
Those teeth that used to shine.
Where is it at-at-at?
Those Shirley Temple dimples
And that baby fat.
Where has it gone-on-on?
That smile so debonair.
That slender derriere.**

**Oh, where can it be?
Where can it be?
I can't believe
This beast I see
Is really me.
I'm twenty-three.**

**Once upon a moon
In the month of May
I chased every dame
That came my way.**

**Once upon a couch
Or in a canoe,
Oh, the naughty things
I used to do.**

**Oh, what a line I had! What daring! What results! My
little nursery maid. The scout master's wife. That was
a merit badge alright! The house mother at my
fraternity. The girl's hockey team from Bennington,
Vermont. Those Siamese Twins from far away Peru!**

Mr. Rich (cont.)

**Where did it go-oh-oh?
That fabulous parade
Of maidens that I made.
Where did it pass-ass-ass?
Those many scenes of tender splendor
In the grass.
Where did it fly-ai-ai?
Those endless one night stands.
Those ever ready glands.**

**Oh, where can it be?
Oh, where can it be?
Who could believe I'd live to see
Senility reach out for me?**

**Life's a masquerade.
A crazy game we play.
Neath the painted face
We waste away.
On and on it goes
Til the curtains close.**

**Ten minutes ago I was only a kid.
I was kiddin' around with the gals.
Ten minutes ago I was John Barrymore.
But now look at me, covered with jowls.
I don't know what happened.
I looked in the glass,
But instead of me, what did it show?
Some horrible, faded out, balding old fart.
So now there's one thing I must know.**

Mr. Rich (cont.)

Where did it go?

Where in the hell

Did the whole thing go?

Go - go - go - go!

Where in the hell did it go?

(Sobbing operatically)

Ah, Dio!

(Falls to the floor.)

3

from "Colette Collage"

Colette

Growing older has a way of being cosy,
Like a coat you've worn until it's nice and warm.
Growing older is a port you can sail to
When you have weathered the storm.

Growing older has its little compensations.
You no longer need to wear the old disguise.
Growing older is the day when you wake up
And discover you're wise.

What a lovely surprise.

4

from "Colette Collage"

Colette

I stay awake when it's late at night.
I light the fire and I try to write.
But then your face comes into view.
The room is filled with you.

My tiny bed seems to be so wide.
So I pretend that you're by my side.
I close my eyes and when I do,
The room is filled with you.

How can it not be true?
The room is filled with you.

Sometimes I'm touched by the strangest thing.
Some simple song that you used to sing.
Some special scent, some shade of blue.
The room is filled with you.

Inside your desk just the other day,
I found a list safely saved away.
A list of things you meant to do.
The room was filled with you.

No matter what I do,
The room is filled with you.

5

From "The Bone Room"
Composer: Harvey Schmidt

George Snot

No simple little coffin made of pine.
No "schlep" 'em to the graveyard, no-sir-ee.
For now when you are finished, you recline
In an open vault for everyone to see.

I can see you lying there.
Someone musta shampooed your hair.
Isn't that a wonderful way to die!
(It ought to make you happy!)

All dolled up and lookin' cute,
Stuffed into your new Sunday suit.
Isn't that a wonderful way to die!

What perfection!
Your complexion's
Glowing!
That mortician's
Some magician.
Truly, you do look better!

Mouth all sewed up in a smile.
Face made up in the latest style.
Isn't that a wonderful way to die!

George Snot (cont.)

**Satin mattress, special bed.
Quilted coverlet underhead.
Isn't that a wonderful way to die!
(It really costs a fortune!)**

**Fancy casket, made of brass.
French Provencal.
Well, kiss my ass.
Isn't that a wonderful way to die!**

**People weeping, fluids keeping
You fresh.
View that body, nothing shoddy.
See how they covered up the sutures!
Perfumed powder by Chanel,
So folks won't notice that ugly smell.
Isn't that a wonderful way to die!**

**Ride that big, black Cadillac!
People wonder who's in the back!
Cause you got a wonderful way to -
Say farewell. What a wonderful way to -
Wave bye-bye. What a wonderful way to -
Die!
Oh, yeah!**

6

from "Harold & Maude"

Maude

We're like birds
Who are perched
On the limbs of a tree.
When the time is right,
We simply fly away.
Then other birds come
And take our places,
But they won't stay.

We come, we go.
It was always so.
And so it will always be.
We're like a flock of birds
Moving endlessly.
But listen to me.
I want you to know
The most important thing.

Before the time
When we must fly away,
We have the chance to sing.

Don't miss the chance to sing.

FIVE “VARIATIONS”

“Green Christmas”

I’m dreaming of a green Christmas
Just like the ones I never knew.
With the palm trees swaying
And steel bands playing.
The sky a bright cerulean blue.

I’m dreaming of a green Christmas,
Stretched out upon some sandy beach.
With the sea waves lapping
As I lay napping,
A Pina Colata within reach.

I’m dreaming of a green Christmas.
Someplace that’s peaceful and serene.
May your stocks reap profits obscene.
And may all your Christmases be green.

“That’s A Moray

**If you go for a dive
And there’s something alive,
That’s a Moray.**

**If you stare in surprise
At two bright, beady eyes,
That’s a Moray.**

**So I want to warn you, signore.
They’re said to be quite predatory.
If you reach out your hand,
You’ll be sorry.**

**Because that’s
A Moray!**

“I Enjoy Being A Goy”

**I attended the finest prep schools
Where there never was heard an “oy.”
Those choosy who you accept schools.
I enjoy being a goy.**

**I was raised in a gated compound,
Far removed from the hoi-polloi.
Where those crude parvenus are not found.
I enjoy being a goy.**

**My wife is a graduate of Vassar.
Her dad has a seat on the Exchange.
He had to pull strings so they would pass her,
But if you’re rich that’s easy to arrange.**

**I look just like Tyrone Power.
And my wife looks like Myrna Loy.
To mis-quote from Schopenhauer:
I enjoy being a goy.**

**My life is an elixir
In my penthouse
With my shiksa
Gazing down upon the minions
I employ!**

**I enjoy -
Being a goy!**

“The Perfect Time”

**(Based on a ballad we wrote for Robert Goulet
to sing in “The Fantasticks” 30th Anniversary tour)**

**This is the perfect time to milk the cows.
The perfect time to reach out to each udder.
This is the perfect day to feed them oats and hay,
Or maybe skim the cream and churn some butter.**

**This the perfect time to slop the pigs,
To pour your stinky garbage in the gutter.
It’s nasty, Heaven knows,
And if it overflows,
This is the perfect time
To hold your nose.**

“Sweet Alice Brown Brest”
(To the tune of “Alice Blue Gown”)

I remember sweet Alice Brown Brest
When we all used to frolic, undressed.
To the sauna we’d go
After rolling in snow,
Our hearts all a-flutter,
Our skin all a-glow.

Now Time, like my prime, passes by.
And if I took a sauna, I’d die.
Still in memories I see
The physiognomy
Of sweet little Alice Brown Brest.

FINALE

from “The Bone Room”

**Won't you buy a little postal card
Depicting animals no longer here?
We've a dandy little dinosaur
You may assemble for a souvenir.
Starting with a single cell, or if
You feel you care for something more complex,
Won't you buy a little postal card
Depicting pictures of Tyrannis Rex?**

**Once there were dinosaurs
Mightier than you.
Until those dinosaurs
Died of the flu.**

**Won't you buy a little postal card
Depicting sources of the river Nile?
We've a handy little kit equipped
With an Egyptian crypt you may defile.
We've a frieze of Nefertiti's knees,
Or if you feel you're just a wee bit shy,
Won't you buy a little postal card
Depicting pictures of sarcophagi?**

**Once there were deities
Up and down the Nile,
Until those deities
Went out of style.**

**Won't you buy a little postal card
Depicting Indians at work and play?
We have racks and racks of artifacts
To bring back memories of yesterday.
Silver pins and fancy moccasins
That you may purchase for a modest fee.
Won't you buy a little postal card
Depicting recent aboriginee?**

**Once there were Indians.
Now they are gone.
We killed those Indians.
Time marches on.**

**Time . . .
Marches . . .
On . . .**