

BLACK BOBIN

One Act

for

One Man

by

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PROPERTY OF:

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SCENE: This is an elegant interior, a private room in an expensive villa, and the style may be as antique as desired. There is a couch, a table and a comfortable short-backed rounded armchair. Upstage actor's left the MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS are set. There is a BOX containing JAN BOBIN's various props---baubles, masks, phallic noses etc. This box is marked POWDER FOR PUFFS.

Early secular music OVER.

For the audience-introit, lively early secular music.

JAN BOBIN enters from actor's right, doing a mediaeval-type dance to the VO music, while THE MUSICIAN strolls in from the left, going straight to his instruments. JAN BOBIN is dressed in pantaloons and a loose collarless blouse with the sleeves cut untidily short above the wrists, with a V-neck.

THE MUSICIAN adopts the rhythm and melody of the VO music, until he has taken it over.

FADE music.

JAN BOBIN atrolls over to THE MUSICIAN and stands gazing down at him as he goes into some virtuoso playing. He then goes to the sideboard and mixes himself a whisky-and-soda, returning to watch THE MUSICIAN again.

The melody changes into THE JAN BOBIN THEME SONG, and BOBIN begins singing.

SONG:

Jan Bobin! Jan Bobin!  
he's bobbin' along  
bobbin' and weavin'  
and singin' a song  
he's bobbin' and weavin'  
his way along  
the slippery road  
the slippery road!

The song is interrupted by a huge crash of thunder and there is a momentary blackout. JAN BOBIN jumps in alarm.

CRASH OF THUNDER OVER, and BLACK-OUT followed by flashing LIGHTNING EFFECT and continuous THUNDER.

THE MUSICIAN continues playing unconcernedly.

BOBIN (to THE MUSICIAN) That's not real thunder! And look at the lights---

THE MUSICIAN makes no reply, nor does he lift his eyes from his instrument.

As the lights change to a brief STROBE effect from off-right, spilling on to the scene, a BEAUTIFULLY PLUMED BIRD (dead) falls plumb in front of BOBIN and is picked up by a spot. He stares at it, picks it up by the neck and shows it drooping to THE MUSICIAN.

MASKED STROBE EFFECT FROM STAGE RIGHT, as PLUMED BIRD falls centre stage under spot, exploding into a red flare.

BOBIN: Look at this! (gazing up at the flies)

The thunder, the strobe lightning die and the scene is normal again. BOBIN takes the bird and places it on a silver platter on the sideboard, then covers it with the silver hood. THE MUSICIAN is now playing only a soft bass rhythm.

CUT STROBE LIGHTING and THUNDER OVER, as normal lighting fades quickly back.

BOBIN (to THE MUSICIAN) He always has to cover a storm with extra lighting! Have you ever heard of such a guy? And this bird? It's ridiculous! (Listens gingerly to the footsteps as they fade again)

SLOW FOOTSTEPS OVER

He addresses the audience.

BOBIN: Of course there is a storm outside. He switches the lights off in a real storm. And puts fake lightning and fake thunder on. One of the richest men in the western hemisphere is afraid of storms (giving this to THE MUSICIAN as well) It reminds me of a guy I heard about four hundred years ago. Guy by the name of Philip Visconti. He used to throw himself on his bed in a storm and make his courtiers crowd round him so he couldn't see the lightning. The duke of Milan! One of his relatives used to eat dogs---unlike you who eat pigs and sheep. (With an irritated look at THE MUSICIAN because of his lack of response) All this was around 1<sup>st</sup> 30. I didn't get born until the century after. (With guarded glances off, left and right, before he resumes) He doesn't like me doing this. One of the richest men in the western hemisphere has ways of making himself felt (rubbing his backside). In hate and love he expresses himself there. Look at him (THE MUSICIAN). That's why he's so thin, he has to play all the time to cover my voice. Once I slipped out of the show without telling him and he didn't stop playing for three whole days. (Standing and gazing at THE MUSICIAN quietly, as he runs through a fast virtuoso piece) Then he fell asleep on the job. I was doing the same in another part of the house.

THE MUSICIAN plays lower, just a rhythm. BOBIN sits in the armchair with his drink, addressing the audience confidentially.

You see, I know who I was in another life. I remember the name. Every detail. If I tell you the name you can look it up in your history books. It was Jan Bobin. I was Charles V's court-jester, in the 1500s.

He again studies THE MUSICIAN in silence, then gives the audience a shrugging look.

(Still gazing at THE MUSICIAN as he speaks almost to himself) He's heard it so many

times he doesn't believe it. Which is ridiculous. The truth can't get soiled by repetition. (To THE MUSICIAN) Can it?

THE MUSICIAN makes a nod to himself. BOBIN strolls up to him, looking down at his instrument as he plays.

(Defiantly, with a glance at the audience) He doesn't even laugh! I was Charles V's fool right through from when he was the duke of Burgundy to when he was Holy Roman Emperor to when he died in a monastery in Spain. And I lived to see his son Philip 11 make a mess of the world.

There is danger of him getting angry.

(To THE MUSICIAN) Did you hear that? Charles V, my boss, borrowed money at 50% interest--- to bribe the German princes---I'm talking about Charles V---duke of Burgundy, king of Spain and elected Holy Roman emperor! And he had a son called Philip 11. And a hell of a lot you care!

A certain panic seems to seize BOBIN. He looks off, left and right, and now gives his speech more to the audience.

I've got to be quick about this. The guy I work for now (pointing off), he's no king, but I'm telling you he's a quean! He's the reason I've got piles. I had to have an operation, they laid me on my stomach--- though not nearly as many times as he did! As fast as he screws me from behind I screw a girl in front, which in psychology is called compensation. I'm still the fool I was four hundred years ago, giving the girls pleasure, getting pain from the men! Four hundred years ago, just like today, the girls got a raw deal---they

Slow footsteps  
OVER.

Girl's giggles  
OVER.

only got real love from fools like  
me!

They sewed me up in hospital. (Doing an absurd walk with sewn-up effect behind, then repeating it in front of THE MUSICIAN, who takes no notice) Never have anything from behind if you can help it. The lower orifices in the male are designed to give not take. The upper orifices, such as the mouth, nose and ear-trumpets, are designed to take not give. Don't get it reversed. For instance the upper orifices take in information about the surrounding universe, through the ears, the eyes, the taste-buds. But don't expect intelligent information from the lower orifices. You may not like goulasch anyway.

He strolls to the right  
and peers off carefully.

He runs a yacht, moors it                      Slow footsteps  
at Cannes harbour. He                      OVER.  
owns three houses. He  
doesn't really have a nation-  
ality. No rich man does.  
He started off a mixture of  
British and Swiss. We lived  
in London once but he said  
living on an offshore American  
island didn't please him.

(Addressing the audience fully) Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you something: in my heart of hearts, as an American, I would consider it perfectly valid to line up a hundred or even a thousand of you and have you shot to save one American life. And the same goes for any Americans present too!

British! Winston Churchill wasn't an Englishman. They were always in each other's clothes--- Roosevelt, Churchill, Dorothy Parker! It was a mess! And as for Yalta---I'll come to that later.

(Indicating the man off again) I keep him in fits of laughter. Know why a fool jokes? Because he wants to be laughed at!                      Footsteps OVER.

That's why God threw this dark skin over me, in my second and I hope last incarnation as a fool. Jan, he said, Jan (deep South), I'm gonna make you a fool again, all you need is a dark skin this time, everybody'll recognise you.

Don't I have a court like before, I says?

No Jan, He says, where I'm sendin' you there ain't no courts, excep' courts o' law, and don't let me find you in one o' them, He says, because once you git inside one o' them with a dark skin over your bones, it's more than even I can do to git you out! Just bum around, He says, you'll keep 'em laughin' wherever you go---Jan Bobin with a dark skin, He says, why every rich man'll want to have you!

How do you mean 'have me' I asks Him.

But by this time He's strolling away with that Divine Chuckle of His!

So here I am, Jan Bobin, Charles V's clown, back again, with a dark skin thrown over me! It's funny, us blacks don't fit any place much! We don't even like each other too much! Now the last time I met a militant black he wanted to beat me up. Scared the goulasch out of me! He didn't like the Jan Bobin inside of me---the tears and the laughter and the 'excess of heart', as some Spanish mystic said to me once. It didn't fit his military programmes! I ran away. He must have thought I was a coward. I think so myself. That's why I try to keep people laughing. Like I did all those Burgundians and krauts and Spaniards under good old Charlie.

Know what they said about Charlie when he was a kid? 'A Hapsburg moron'. His eyes looked as if they'd been stuck on (THE MUSICIAN making mime faces behind, as he plays), his mouth hung open and he had a job chewing and digesting because his jaw was all funny. He was as pale as most of your cheeks, and like them he stammered a lot. (Imitates stammering and farting noises:) He had Spanish, French, Burgundian, Plantaganet, Flemish and Portuguese blood in

his veins, with a drop (making a dropping noise) of Jewish and Arab as well.

I was with him more or less night and day from the time he was made duke of Burgundy at the age of fifteen. (Glancing round again, left and right) I've got to hurry about this! There was a ceremony in Brussels when he was made duke and he and his knights ate so much they had to miss Vespers afterwards. They had a good screw instead. Charlie loved his women. His first criticism of Spain was that they frowned on sex. But he learned to like it, and ended a monk, like all men. He had a whole crowd of advisers and tutors round him because everybody knew he'd be a king or emperor one day. A Venetian slob described him as an idiot surrounded by a corrupt council. That's the sort of thing they used to write in despatches. Charlie loved women and fun and prayer, followed by women.

He stops and looks at THE MUSICIAN, to see if he's taking any of this in. He doesn't seem to be.

(To the audience) OK, so how do I know all this if I wasn't Jan Bobin? I can hardly read, so how else would I know it? I grew up in an orphanage in Maine dammit! I got my education in the movies! I used to play hooky and go from one movie to the next, three, four shows a day, I never saw daylight, I was the film-bug of all time!

Twentieth Century  
Fox fanfare or the  
MGM lion's roar.

I call him the Powder Puff (indicating the rich man off). Slow footsteps He powders it! It's ridicul- OVER. ous! But he does. He comes to a film with me most nights of the week. Time lies heavy on his hands, because a rich man's a poor man, know that? Just about his only real pleasure is screwing me because

I hate it. Can you imagine that?  
I squeeze up my face and he can feel it (screwing up his face, being jerked from behind). All the muscles in my body are squeezed up like that. Not every day. About three times every other day.

Question: why don't I push off?  
(walking up and down brightly and enthusiastically) Answer: because I like the money, I like the girls, I like the Porsche, I like the dinners, I like the bed, I like the breakfast in bed, I like the girls with the breakfast in bed, I like the travel, I like the yacht, I like the casino, I like the private Lear jet, I like the girls!

And I like him. That's a real fool, huh? He's behind me in everything I do after all! (Imitating him) 'You enjoy having it with those girls? You don't! You can't! I can see you don't! It's as plain as day you're a deeply suppressed faggot, like all the other black men I know! It's only shame makes you hide it! You're ashamed of having it with me, that's all! But, believe me, like all the white men I know, you're a roaring pouf!

Slow footsteps  
OVER.

Well, you can't argue with that. Particularly if you're not face to face at the time.

Lion's roar,  
followed by 'pouf!'  
OVER.

I'll tell you where the fairies were queueing up for each other at the street corners---Rome in her decline, Constantinople in her decline, Alexandria in her decline, Venice in her decline, and Earl's Court in her heyday!

VO 1: Coleherne!  
VO 2: Move along please!  
VO 3: I love being moved along!

(As he talks he sets about looking for the limp phallic nose in his box) In the so-called Theban desert behind Alexandria---I got this from the Spanish mystic---this was just about 1500 years ago---I don't mean he told me 1500 years ago, I mean he was telling me about 1500 years ago---when he told me it was 1100 years ago, and so what he was telling me about was 1100 years ago from the time he told me---anyway, he told me the monks in the Theban desert were so gay that when the barbarians came they turned their backs! They didn't even run away! Well, you can't fight like that can you?

Have you ever reasoned out why in a city full of convents and monasteries like Assisi there are about a hundred orphanages? Take your time! Work it out! (Taking the limp phallic nose out of the box) In the decline of Venice as a great sea-borne republic a guy called Gozzi said that all the men were women, the women men, and both monkeys. Men are certainly dikes nowadays, I mean the ones who sleep with each other of course.

It won't be long now (looking round).  
The lights are going out (troubled, strange).

I mean all over Europe.

Not to disappoint the ladies (he puts the phallic nose on).

He sneezes, lifting the nose up into an erect position.

Excuse me! I'm allergic to the dead! (Trembling, cringing) Can't you smell it? The dust! It's frightening (backing upstage)---the number of dead piling up every day---it ought to be stopped! Neither hygienic nor just. I mean, every day, every hour!

The Powder Puff took me to see Macbeth once. Five words stuck in my mind---whence is that knocking? Well might I have asked! The whole town was doing it!

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The sound of knocking  
startles him.

(looking straight ahead) Who is it?

VO: I am your  
father's ghost!

What do you want? Anyway that's another  
play!

VO: Cut it off!

Must I?

BOBIN looks in his box and  
takes out a pair of tailor's  
scissors.

VO: Yes! All the  
Martini people  
are getting  
syphilis!

BOBIN poises the scissors to  
cut the nasal phallus off.

Why should I? (Making the nose swing with  
his finger) It's out of service anyway.  
I hope dad's gone (looking round). 'Your  
father's ghost!' He died of drink in Harlem.  
I thought I smelled good bourbon for a  
moment!

He tries to drink his  
whisky but the nose flops  
into the glass, he lifts  
it and drinks rather un-  
successfully.

Oh! (taking the nose off with annoyance and  
flinging it back into the box) And now  
(suddenly taking an erect nasal phallus out  
of the box) not to disappoint the men!

He puts the erect nasal  
phallus on, butting his  
head towards the audience  
like a stag.

(Confronting the audience confidentially)  
Did you hear about the girl who can feel  
colours through her fingers? Well I can  
feel sex through my nose. A guy said to

me once about a girl we knew she's so beautiful she blows your mind! I said she blows my nose! He didn't understand. People don't understand on the whole because teachers don't let 'em. Teachers corrupt people into the sedentary attitude, which encourages masturbation, which drives you crazy.

(Trying to get THE MUSICIAN to laugh with the erect nose, but THE MUSICIAN presents a face of astonishing gloom) Just what I told you, he keeps on playing. I ought to have my own lyrics on this show. But nobody wants to be a composer anymore--- not since Ken Russell started making pictures. (Glances off right) If I get too funny, especially about respected contemporaries, and top people like film directors---he doesn't mind about politicians and kings and queans and all that---he comes in and stops the show and slaps my cheeks--- I don't mean the cheeks of my face either.

(Studying the audience, then looking round the scene) This is happening in my room, in a huge house in Montecarlo, and nobody can hear you laugh---I mean, this isn't real---but he can hear the laughter in my imagination if it gets too loud. He's (THE MUSICIAN) real. The show's real. But you're not. You think you are. I've called you up in my mind. It's my way of relaxing, it's better than acid, having a show in my room with nobody watching except him (THE MUSICIAN), and he doesn't.

Yes, apparently I can so persuade myself that I am giving a show that I can call up people in front of me!

He eats chocoalates,  
feeding one to THE MUSICIAN.  
He gives a 'Look at the guy!'  
shrug to the audience.

(With another look off right) Consider that man's life. He opens his eyes to a huge tray of breakfast---three piping hot savoury dishes from which he can choose. He hasn't worked for it.

Slow footsteps  
OVER.

Not two hours later he's sipping a glass of gin, and after that slicing up the corpse of some pig, heffer or lamb. In the evening another corpse, and more gin, wine, port. Now all this feeding without the sweat of toil excites and inflames two areas only, the imagination in close connivance with the balls.

He doesn't even play tennis or swim or ski like other greedy faggots. So it's almost never limp.

Now the fool is in the image of his master (indicating the erect phallus). And don't think you're any different. Whatever you do, whoever you may be, you are the devoted servants of a rich man somewhere. You may never have seen him, but lick his arse you certainly do. And the bigger your head, the bigger your kiss. It's what the pope once called a real arse-feast, just after he'd been visiting a monastery on the Aventine Hill in Rome. He had to run for it. As a man of power---here lies the moral of the story, and especially if you're pope and probably therefore a banker---as a man of power you should never show the face of your arse to poorer men than you, because they want to kiss it. If there are something like two thousand monks standing in front of you and trying to get behind you, it's even worse. Imagine the panic.

A papal blessing and echoing crowds OVER.

Sounds of running footsteps, gasping breath OVER:  
VO: Pope, pope, let me have a kiss of your arse!  
VO: The pope's nose, I must have the pope's nose!  
VO: Pâpa, pâpa, Vostro culo!  
VO: Un baccetto per piacere, un baccetto al culo!

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That's the only extant recording of the event, from the BBC archives. Jesuit ordinands are allowed to hear it from time to time, as the winter evenings draw in.

Look at all the great fools whose name began with B. There was Bobo in Spain. There was Buhlul in Baghdad at the time of Haroun al Raschid. After he died his name passed into Arabic as another word for idiot. Then, going even further into the arse-end of history, there was Bucco, the Roman fool.

All beginning with B. And Bucco means 'a hole'.

He stops THE MUSICIAN playing.

Here's a thought:

We work to pass the time

the time that remains

or we cease to work  
so as not to lose  
the time that remains

THE MUSICIAN resumes playing. BOBIN strolls over to him.

(Addressing THE MUSICIAN) There are among our friends here tonight both hard workers and what the French called, at least when I was Jan Bobin, flaneurs or layabouts. They are sitting cheek to cheek out there. Each with his philosophy of how to employ the last hours of survival. (To the audience) Actually you died already. That's why you allow the dead to address you. Everything you experience, everything you hope, can be reduced to a thought in the head. Therefore you too are in an excellent position to make it all up! I invent you, and you give me the illusion that I'm actually playing in a live show. My God, if I really was I'd certainly be nervous! I wouldn't have the balls! In front of real people! But in front of ghosts, why that's OK...

The famous Punch appeared in my time, when I was Jan Bobin. He was called pulcinello which means (makes the sound of a chicken)

and it happened near Naples. He was dressed like some crazy peasant in the district who used to wear a loose blouse and pantaloons (looking down at his own clothes in silence). And he had a half-mask over his face (touches his phallic nose with the same silent wonder---almost shock).

(Almost to himself, in a slight voice, trailing off) Thought and number and time...

Every German prince had his fool in my time. There was a fool called Hegel, but he wasn't such a fool as the Hegel who believed in progress.

(Once more stops THE MUSICIAN playing)

Here's a fact:

when thought disintegrates                   (tinkling sounds,  
money becomes the government               giggling OVER)

brass wits and golden foolery

He stares at the audience.

THE MUSICIAN plays again.

How can you kill two hundred million Americans simultaneously? and give them state funerals?

State funeral music OVER,  
with support rhythm from  
THE MUSICIAN.

(reciting to time)  
thought and number and time  
children of order, mothers of crime,  
when shall we three meet again---  
in thunder, lightning or in rain?

Yes, I called my king Charlie.  
Like Henry V111's fool used  
to call him Harry. They  
used to spend hours rhyming  
together, Harry the English  
king and Will Somers his  
clown. Henry V111 would say

MUSIC OVER OUT.

Within yon tower

Within yon tower  
There is a flower  
That hath my heart

And Will Somers would have to come up with  
an answer straight off. This is what he  
said:

She puts such power  
Behind my tower  
It maketh me fart.

They had a lot of fun. But Cardinal Wolsey,  
whose skirts had to be double-pleated to make  
more room, especially when he stammered a lot,  
didn't like it. In fact he hated old Will  
Somers, and one day he joined in the rhyming.  
He said

A rod in the school  
And a whip for the fool  
Are always in season.

And Will gave it right back:

A halter and a rope  
For him that would be pope  
Against all right and reason.

They say Wolsey sat there biting his lip.  
You see how we fools get to the heart of the  
matter?

But there were some nasty fools in my time  
too, especially in Germany and France, Italy,  
Spain, England, Holland, Poland, Switzerland,  
Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czecho-  
slovakia and Russia. America wasn't there  
yet.

One fool called Conrady Pocher in Germany  
got famous as a wit by hanging a boy on a  
tree because he had scabs all over him!

Ribald laughter OVER, with  
Ach Gott! and Ich lache mich  
tod!

The Count Palatine took him on as his jester  
right away.

The Elector of Saxony spotted Klaus Naar  
when he was out hunting. He watched him  
wringing the necks of his father's geese

to save them from drowning---as a joke of course. He laughed so much he took him to court, much to the father's relief.

The most famous court-fool of my time was the one I hated most. A Frenchman called Brusquet. Now Brusquet was a scheming sack of goulasch, not a real fool at all. He started off as a doctor and he killed so many people even the other doctors got embarrassed. You don't hear of that happening nowadays do you?---I mean them getting embarrassed? Philip 11, Charlie's son, loved him when he came to Spain once. No wonder, considering the kind of fool he had---all he could do was sing old Spanish songs in a cracked voice (going into a hideous Spanish routine with THE MUSICIAN).

Brusquet used to play practical jokes with Marshall Strozzi at the French court---they mutilated animals for fun. That put me right against him. Hanging boys on trees, throttling geese, twisting the limbs off animals---a nice lot of colleagues I had! Never trust a man who doesn't love animals.

At least you only mutilate animals after they're dead---unless you're growing them for food of course, which is necessary. Or making experiments on them in laboratories. Which is necessary.

THE MUSICIAN is silent. They both stare at the audience for some time.

THE MUSICIAN resumes playing.

Chicot was another French clown, nicer than Brusquet but a military man. Now a fool shouldn't get involved in anything serious. Fools should be like you. Watching and waiting.

(Suddenly a prosecuting counsellor) Undeniably you eat your brothers and sisters! 'This filthy witness!' said Macbeth's old lady when she took a look at her hands with blood all over them.

SONG:

Christmas is over  
the geese are dead  
presents have been given  
and uncles fed

carols still lovely  
are no longer heard  
and death was done  
to many a bird

(mediaeval carol  
OVER)

(screeching of  
birds OVER)

chickens were throttled  
turkeys were split  
geese knocked out  
and wild ducks hit

(sounds of throttl-  
ing, splitting,  
thumping OVER)

Christmas is over  
we had a fine time  
our fingers are itching  
from a future crime

we live like lords  
we give the best  
but more than a bird  
has died in its nest

crackers were pulled  
the port was passed  
suddenly a voice  
said it couldn't last

the birds all lay  
sizzling in fat  
while crop and beak  
were kept for the cat

tea and sandwiches  
at half-past ten  
we'll have to make life  
all over again

take wing like the birds  
build us a nest  
be alive again  
to unearthly request

we can't accept  
these meals from the past  
but change the scenery  
alter the cast

(in a soft voice, almost to himself, as  
he casts his eyes from one side to another  
among the audience)

Troy is now a tribal chamber  
roof of gold floor of amber...

(looking round at the moonlight spreading  
on the scene)

and with how sad steps the moon is climbing!  
I shall not intimidate softly or otherwise  
your certain knot of peace  
nor cause my desolation  
to become how ever so softly your distress

nor shall I make my bargains drive  
how ever so lightly  
on your silver head

nor strike my hours  
of how ever so deep a darkness  
on your light

and I shall not uncover in all my paths  
how ever so thick  
one thorn for you  
and shall not halt how ever so soft  
your silver tread!

The moonlight fades.

You smile at all this but if extra-sensory  
perception isn't true how is it I always  
know when my wife is licking one of the cooks?  
She's a kitchen-maid on the holiday-side as  
we say in this house, she works the 'hot'  
villas in Greece and southern Italy while I  
work the 'cold' ones in London, St Moritz  
and Montecarlo.

So I only see her summers. My winter nights  
are therefore a kind of extra-sensory sex-  
shop. Experiments have been carried out  
in Denver, Colorado, to verify all this.  
I was surrounded by a six-foot wall of  
concrete---together with Uri Geller of  
coure---while she was isolated on Crete behind  
a metal sheath resistant to electro-magnetic  
waves, to establish a) that I did not bring  
her into being mentally to fill my sex-shop  
and b) she was not doing with the filthy  
Latvian cook only what I had thoughtographically  
induced her to do.

Notice I'm in a constant state of mental  
desire (touching the nasal phallus). This

is because survival is out of the question. When flies drink arsenic in numbers they mate quickly before they die. This is a battlefield and the eleventh hour. So much knocking in the last sixty minutes!

He suddenly tears off his nasal phallus and goes to the sideboard where he lifts the cover of the silver platter and takes the bird in his hands. He begins gorging himself on it.

A beautiful song-bird is heard OVER.

His jaws are covered with dark blood. His eyes flash towards the audience. He then throws the flesh behind him and it lands with a nasty plop OVER.

SONG: a staccato hot-beat rhythm.

Make me a raw red steak  
and then I can feel my roots  
stretch downwards to my boots  
into the raw red earth  
where I had my birth  
where I had my birth!

(extravagant  
bloodthirsty  
writhing)

as long as someone willing  
does the necessary killing  
and I do not hear the screams  
or suffer the frightened eyes  
that make me recognise  
the murders for my sake  
the murders for my sake!

(screams of  
animals in  
abattoirs  
OVER)

A bass-rhythm survives as  
BOBIN advances towards the  
audience.

Now come on be reasonable! I have to eat!  
I have to have my protein! I have to have it!  
A piece of rump from you! and you! and you!  
A leg of man! Cooperate (screaming at the  
top of his voice)! Cooperate in my survival  
animals!

Don't you realise (wiping his mouth on his  
cloak) your body's an illusion? Why so

much worry about what parts of it  
you lose?

He throws his cloak away  
contemptuously.

Here's a physics lesson. You're made up  
of atoms right? Now an atom means something  
indivisible---a-tom, 'non-cuttable'. I know  
all this from a Spanish mystic who tried to  
teach me Greek. He got so impatient with me  
he came down the well of the stairs without  
using the staircase. They gave him a pauper's  
funeral.

An enormous explosion OVER.  
He jumps with hilarious  
alarm.

That's an atom being split, because we now  
know it isn't indivisible. The first public  
lecture on this subject was with President  
Truman in the chair: Hiroshima 1945. His  
audience burned to hear him!

Now an atom is like a little planetary system,  
a crowd of electrons orbiting round a centre.  
This centre is as far from these orbiting  
electrons as a pea in the centre of a sports  
stadium would be.

Thus you are mostly air, since atoms are all  
you are composed of. If you were squeezed  
really hard so that all the air came out some-  
thing like the size of a speck of dust would  
be the result. (Sneezes) Excuse me, the  
allergy again!

In other words you are the stuff that dreams  
are made of, like Hamlet always said you were.  
You are dead. That is, the body-part. It's  
been proven. You are held together by electro-  
magnetic waves, thermonuclear energy and sex-  
shops.

All this body-business came  
in for the first time when  
I was Jan Bobin: I mean the  
idea that we are our own  
bodies! Naturally dissect-  
ion of corpses started in a  
big way too. Instead of  
starting with the energy  
medicine started with the

Sawing, OVER.

dead body. No wonder it took 'em two thousand years to get to acupuncture! But the age I lived in then was nearly as ignorant as the one I live in now.

VO: He started talking about Chinese needles--- sticking them in the skin and all that. I just laughed in his face and said, 'Really? I can see a lot of chinks in that theory!'

In my time as Jan Bobin the first population censuses were taken, statistics came into being, and logarithms. Arabic numerals replaced Roman ones to make calculation faster. From now on EVERYTHING was calculated. And life became a bore. Bankers started ruling us instead of real men.

Let me put this as simply as possible--- because all of you have been to school and had the progress-propaganda pushed down your throats without the facts.

When I was Jan Bobin paper-money took over.

Instead of you giving me a flock of sheep for my daughter, or rather my mother, because she's for sale too, you give me paper money, that is to say a token that will buy me the equivalent of a flock of sheep, and the other guy the equivalent of a mother. So everybody says to himself, what shall I get myself? A mother, a flock of sheep or some records from the sex-shop? And that sum of money is entered in a little book. The ghost-society begins. The Christian becomes a zombie worked by forces he doesn't understand! He loses the power of bold action, like carrying a mother to market and coming back with a flock of sheep.

SONG: rollicking, saucy.

Take, take my daughter  
for a leg of that lamb---  
or perhaps a glass of porter  
with a slice or two of ham!

As for my mother  
you can have her for a song---  
since the day she conceived me  
she's been doing me wrong!

2 1

You could have had my father  
before he died of drink  
but what you could have used him for  
I shudder to think!

A flock of sheep is better  
than my family combined---  
but perhaps we'll do a barter  
since your daughter looks so kind!

What's that you're saying sir?  
We shall have to wait  
until she's grown to seventeen  
and old enough to date?

And meanwhile you'll give me money  
or write it down in a note  
that your daughter one year later  
will go for the price of a goat?

But what does a piece of paper  
exactly represent  
when I'm asking for your daughter's hand---  
you must be rather bent!

He told me about the paper  
and the meaning of its words---  
that day I left the market  
without my usual herds!

I never went to town again  
I never left my house---  
I just exchanged my paper notes  
and lived like a lazy louse!

Oh paper paper paper!  
What a world of strife---  
either we use it on the backside  
or pay it to buy a wife!

Charlie paid out God knows what in bribes  
and interest on loans to be Holy Roman  
Emperor. Ring a bell?

'Jan', he said to me once, 'the banks have  
screwed me'.

Who were the biggest bankers? The Medici  
of Florence. How many Medici popes were  
there after 1513? No fewer than four!  
Work it out for yourself!

At least 60 bankers from all over Europe  
used to meet together four times a year,

at places like Piacenza fair. I'm talking now of the 1570s. They sat and manipulated the exchange rates, and the rest of the world didn't know what was going on in their own purses! It was the Genoese bankers who thought it all up. They drained Europe of gold--- they sucked the markets dry of cash, I mean gold and silver, so paper was about the only thing left, special paper with a promise written all over it and a guarantee behind it. When a Genoese banker issued a note it was OK. And gradually, as the gold piled up in his coffers, he forced everybody else to do the same. The old-fashioned bankers like the Fuggers accused the Genoese of having mehr papier als baargeld, which for the benefit of any Germans present means 'more paper than cash'. The Genoese bankers despised cash. They despised trade. They called it work for beggars and paupers! Money started living a separate existence from goods, from work, from human beings! Can you imagine anything so crazy?

Philip 11 of Spain, Charlie's son, owed twelve million ducats to one Antwerp banker by the name of Tucker. They were all doing it to finance their wars. Mary of Burgundy, Charlie's grandmother, broke the Medici bank at Bruges.

The idea was that you paid the money back when you'd won your war. But you didn't always win. England, France and Spain all defaulted on their Antwerp loans.

In other words life started to be a real mess when I was Jan Bobin. And here I am again in an even bigger one.

It's such a mess I have a nazi aunt. She's an evangelist from Düsseldorf, a real sauer kraut.

When I told her to stop eating her brothers and sisters on all fours she said, 'Leider das Eiweiss...' etc

For the benefit of any Germans in the audience here's a translation: 'We are obliged to eat our brothers and sisters! Sufficient protein for the human system is only present in soya beans and we cannot eat soya beans all day!' (With mounting ferocity) 'So we must have our salami, frankfurters, smoked ham slices,

pork cutlets nicely fried (screaming now),  
 spare ribs, beef tongues and delicious flanks  
 of horses, pedigree dogs and arses of Jews!

When I said, 'But I thought the F hrer was a  
 vegetarian', she said, 'Damn the F hrer!  
 Why did he let 6 million Jews go to waste?'

SONG:

I had a leg of Jew once  
 I had some braised Sephardic! (A little dance)

the foetor judaicus  
 or smell of the Jews  
 was judged by the Nazis  
 like savoury stews  
 like savoury stews!

Horns and beard and claws  
 and the tail of a goat,  
 a Jew and a devil  
 are in the same boat  
 are in the same boat! (grotesque dance)

oh for a nice Jew cutlet  
 oh for a fat Jew rump  
 or a red tartar with pepper  
 from concentration camp  
 from concentration camp!

I could have eaten my fill  
 at Dachau or Terezin  
 and the rest I could have packed  
 in a finely-labelled tin  
 in a finely-labelled tin!

I had a leg of Jew once  
 I had some braised Sephardic! (mad dance)

Did you know that Christopher Columbus got  
 the money for his first trip to the United  
 States from the Jewish financiers round king  
 Ferdinand of Spain? Did you know that  
 Columbus himself was a Jew, or did the school-  
 propaganda keep that from you too?

Now king Ferdinand of Spain was Charlie's  
 grandfather, on Charlie's mother's side.  
 Ferdinand married his daughter Juana to  
 the Hapsburg Archduke Philip, son of the Holy  
 Roman emperor Maximilian, originator of the  
 Maxi overcoat.

Philip and Juna were Charlie's mother and  
 father---and the reason why he got the

Spanish throne without working for it.

You can read all about this in the sex-shops. It's the same whether you do it or they do it--- sons and daughters result from it just the same.

Definition of irony: Christopher Columbus set sail for the United States on the day the Jews were expelled from Spain. 1492 was the year. Look it up in the sex-shops! It takes a fool to explain these things!

The Jews were mostly drowned at sea, or starved in Naples or died of the yellow fever. For being the best brains Spain had---apart from the Arabs, who were expelled too!

Did you know that the Jews and Arabs had such high State positions in Spain because the Spanish dukes looked on politics and finance and administration as dirty work? Only bishopricks, ambassadorricks and military generalricks were clean enough for them.

Even king Ferdinand had a lot of Jewish blood. That's why he wanted to be a 100% Spaniard! Every Spaniard was a mixture. Jews and Arabs and Spaniards had been swopping religions and wives for centuries! Now the Church was scared that if they all started screwing each other too much you wouldn't be able to tell a goy from a wog from a yid, and with the Turks (who were wogs) fucking about all over the Mediterranean you couldn't take chances.

Therefore the first doctrine of pure race appeared in my time. Sorry Adolph! Everything was set for the mess you're in today.

To show you weren't a Jew in Spain you had to eat pork. One devout Christian was burned at the stake because he happened not to like it! If you cut the fat away from your pork and left it on the side of your plate you might get a visit from the Inquisition. That was worse than the CIA! All this sounds absurd because it's coming from a fool but it's the truth.

It can all be read about in the sex shops.

The reason why the pig has been so successful in Christian civilisation is that its flesh is closest in taste to that of the human being. Cannibalism became dogma under the first Visigoth popes.

St Simeon the Stylite who sat on a column for forty years is said to have had worms eating his legs but actually he was eating them himself. The emperor, I mean the one in Constantinople, treasured his advice so much that he asked him to start at the toes instead of the head so that it would take a few years. Look at Henry K today--he's eating his toes too! Notice they never give you a shot of his feet!

There's no need to plead ignorance of all this in the era of mass education. The right hand is nowadays early mobilised--- to write, to paint self-expression pictures of the shit-and-drip school, and to masturbate. These three birthrights of education having been accomplished, the pupil is now ready to watch programmes on the box, and, if he has the energy to follow up what he has learned and doesn't smoke too much shit, he can go out and committ a crime.

I'll explain all this later, though a simple visit to your local sex-shop would clear it all up.

By the time Philip, Charlie's son, became king there were no Jews or Arabs left in Spain, just a pure state of Christianity, with pork being eaten and none of the fat being cut away, and some human steaks frying from time to time on the street corner. Believing in God when I was Jan Bobin was risky! (To THE MUSICIAN) Ever hear of the alumbrados? (A slow nod, without looking up from his instrument) Otherwise known as the illuminists? (A slow nod again) He's one of them, that's why he knows! He was in the nick. He had a long time to meditate. The alumbrados used to have ecstasies! They were so full of love they had ecstasies!

SONG: soft, yearning, high-pitched.

I'm running away!  
to another day!

another kind of space  
I'm tired of keeping pace  
with this march of the dead  
I'll fly away instead  
from all this crime  
to where there's no space or time  
and no more competition  
but another kind of mission---

just to s-h-i-n-e  
just to s-h-i-n-e!  
just to s-e-e  
just to s-e-e!  
just to kn-o-w  
just to kn-o-w!  
just to b-e  
just to b-e!

and no more competition  
just to b-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!

Charlie used to have ecstasies. He would sit and go off while he was praying. Just love of God! And then when he looked at you his eyes had a great smile in them, even for a fool like me! I had ecstasies sometimes, but only after he was dead, and when it was dangerous. A lot of Jews were alumbrados, you see. Philip's son Don Carlos had ecstasies, he was privately strangled. From the Church's point of view you couldn't have people getting something straight from God instead of going through the priests. In Philip's time there was the first Index of banned books. Even the Bible in Spanish was forbidden! It had to be in priest-Latin so only they could understand it!

The palace guards caught me staring at the moon one night in the grounds of the Escorial palace. They thought I was having an ecstasy until they realised, standing upwind of me, that I was having a shit.

I'm not a fool for nothing.

SONG: a brief reflective echo of the previous song, as if talking to himself.

I'm running away  
to another kind of day!

no more competition  
no more crime!

(Then, speaking in a strangely matter-of-fact voice, quiet, rather awed, with the Running Away meoldy still playing)

Mary came to my door

I love you she said  
looking at my head

are you my mother I asked her

no she replied  
I am the one who died

but surely I said  
it was not you who died  
but the one with thorns round his head

I am the one who mothered him she said  
and also the one who fled  
I am the one who gave him that kiss  
and took him down from the bitter cross

and you my son were the one who bled she said

SONG:

The one who bled!  
and the one who fled!  
the one who gave him that kiss  
and took him down from the bitter cross!

The one who died  
and the one who replied  
to the judge when he said  
there's a crime on your head!

The one who died  
and was pierced in the side,  
and the one who bled  
with thorns round his head!

The one who denied  
that he knew him and lied,  
the one who got paid  
for a lie that he laid!

the one who is all of them  
the one who is all  
the one born in Bethlehem  
and the one who will fall!

The one who shines out  
the one in the fire  
the one full of doubt  
and the one who's for hire!

One!  
There's only one!  
There's only o-n-e!

Seneca, the famous Latin writer who powdered  
it, once said, 'When I want to look at a fool  
all I have to do is look in the mirror'.  
(Gazing at the audience) I guess you all  
feel the same.

The word idiot comes from idiotes, which is

Greek for 'private person'---so my Spanish mystic told me before he came downstairs too quick.

A fool is about the only private person there is. Most of you are leading public lives and looking for the private guy. You expect to find him in bed with the girl but he ain't.

Who is the host  
who floods your rooms with light  
and in your morning ablutions  
secures your happiness?

who lies down by lovers  
and rises with the dead?

SONG:

And if he's lost returns!

can never be lost---!  
can never be lost!

He'll never let me go!  
Because he's the host!  
It's his house!  
It shines with his light!  
That's why it's so bright!

He'll never let me go  
because I'm his guest!  
Never let me want  
because he's my host!

(almost shouted)

It's his house!  
It shines with his light!  
That's why it's so bright!

God said to me, Another reason why I's givin' you a black skin, so as you won't be able to join their crime-club even if you want to. First they won't want you and second you'll remember your mammy and your daddy and your kid brothers and all the things they bin done to!

Now I don't have anv kid brothers.

This may sound funny to Christian pig-eaters but I was in the soul of Jonathan Jackson at the moment the police shot him dead outside

the San Rafael Court house near San Francisco on August 7th 1970. He was a kid-brother. He hero-worshipped his older brother George, who was two years later shot in the back in San Quentin prison, for being a black man.

Now the kid-brother was led by his hero-love for George to great anger and ultimately violence. George had been given 'one year to life' at the age of eighteen for driving the car while a black friend stoles 70 dollars from a gas station. 'One year to life' meant, for a black fool, life. That was back in 1960.

For ten years older brother George was shifted from Soledad prison to San Quentin and back again, from solitary confinement to 'minimum security' and back again.

His friend who stole the 70 dollars was released after three years. Not George. He spoke his thoughts. In June 1967 his knee-cap was broken by prison guards while another Black prisoner was being beaten up. All this is written down in the sex shops for all to see. I know we're Christians but a little compassion should come into our hearts sometimes. It does into the animal-heart, if they're not been eaten by you already or been experimented on and have their guts, wombs or brains lying about at the other end of the room.

On January 13 1970 a new exercise-yard was opened on 'O' Wing of Soledad, and the white prisoners got into a fight with the black prisoners. It was all rigged of course, since the prison guards knew who the anti-blacks were among the white prisoners and could have kept them away from the militant black cats if they'd wanted to.

Anyway, a crack marksman in the watch-turret shot three Shots OVER. of the blacks dead. One was left to bleed to death---a few yards from the prison hospital.

SONG: a brief snatch, spftly, to himself.

I have no fear  
while my beloved is near  
while he's watching me!

A local Grand Jury testified within three days that the shooting was 'justifiable homicide'. No Black witness was called.

Then a white guard was found dying on George Jackson's wing. Five blacks were sent into solitary confinement. They were the militants, among them George. With two others he was accused of murder.

Jonathan Jackson aged 17 walked into the court house while a San Quentin prisoner was giving evidence. He called out 'All right everybody this is it!' and took a collapsible carbine out of a bag, together with a few smaller guns, which he handed out to three black prisoners. They took the judge, the district attorney and three women jurors hostage. They marched them out of court to a van. When the van moved off some prison guards opened fire. Jonathan and the judge and two of the prisoners were killed.

Shots OVER

I felt it happen to me. I felt the bullets in my back, at the precise moment. I felt his child's anger, and the absurdity of his act. This was what older brother George called 'black tilting at white windmills'.

Repeat shots OVER

You see, George Jackson was the last black man. After him, we're giving up black skins, on a kind of compact basis---that the others give up white skins. Millions of people are handing in their skins everywhere.

People get tired of being just bodies. We have so much electrical energy inside us, holding all this electricitt together, this extraordinary energy that can move things and even change black into white and can make new bodies, so where's the worry about skins? We're moving on to new psychokinetic areas!

This is the argument that got my arse kicked by the black militant.

This (touching the erect phallus) is going to solve the black-white problem. The result is going to be a lot of chocolate.

George Jackson said to his lawyer about the prison guards at Soledad, 'Fay', he said, 'Fay, most of these men are Klu Klux Klan types. The rest are so stupid they shouldn't be allowed to run their own bath. A responsible state government would have found a means of weeding out most of the savage types that are drawn to gunslinger job jobs long ago! How did all these pigs get through? You may as well give a baboon a gun and set him loose on us! It's the same here as on the streets out there! Who has loosed this thing on an already suffering people? The Reagans, Nixons, the men who have, who own. Investigate them!'

Of course I did. But I had to have an office, a secretary, and somehow I had to buy the time to do it all---I mean, this is the work of months! And finally some good people did come forward who wanted to help me and had the money to do it. They were friends of Reagan and Nixon.

Reagan and Nixon were quite honest about it. They said they welcomed a chance of clearing their names. Which shows they can't have had much on their consciences doesn't it?

VO (NIXON): I am no crook!

SONG:

The pigs are the moneymen  
the moneymen are pigs!

(Speaks)

How much money have you got? A thousand dollars? It don't qualify mister! Ten thousand? Hardly! A hundred thousand? Getting warmer. A coupla million? Show me a coupla million grand---

(Resumes song, this time black minister preaching, stamping foot)

Show me a coupla million gr-a-n-d  
I'll give you right now a hidden h-a-n-d  
in the elected government of the l-a-n-d

With a coupla million grand you'll f-i-n-d  
plenty of men who'll be unk-i-n-d  
you look 'em in the eyes and see they're bl-i-n-d

With a coupla million in the b-a-n-k-s  
you'll have pigs enough to fill the r-a-n-k-s  
of a dozen armies with street-roaving t-a-n-k-s

to shoot at the people if they run a-m-o-k  
 if the banks run out and there isn't a b-u-c-k  
 and death's the only place they can look for l-u-c-k!

Pigs and moneymen  
 they have small eyes! (high-itched squealing  
 voice)

moneymen and pigs  
 they don't listen to our sighs  
 don't listen to our s-i-g-h-s!

Now ladies and gentlemaniacs you see me before  
 you tonight by courtesy of the Cemetery News,  
 Gay Books and other male organs of the Thomson  
 Press. We are grateful to the board under the  
 chairmanship of Her Majesty Lord Mountbatten.  
 If any of the members of the board are present  
 and would like theirs powdered, they can step  
 behind afterwards.

I tell you, ever since banking caught hold  
 they've been turning the world upside down.  
 Before I was born, I mean as Jan Bobin,  
 Florence used to be governed by bankers!  
 Imagine that! No wonder there was chaos!  
 Hardly a month went by without a revolution  
 or a financial crash or a war or unemployment  
 or a change in the constitution. As for the  
 government, the more it changed the more it  
 was the same one, because the Medici family  
 rigged the elections anyway. The Medici were  
 democratic people. They didn't have handles  
 to their names or put on airs. They went  
 about the streets like anybody else, and they  
 stepped off the pavement for older men. Just  
 like the Kennedys.

Families like the Medici came up when the  
 Church started allowing interest to be charged  
 on loans. Then everything became interest.  
 It was like a dog chasing its own tail. It  
 never made it. It was always ten percent  
 behind. On everything you made that extra  
 ten percent had to be allowed for. It went  
 into the pockets of a minority---for no work  
 done, no goods, no trade. So society couldn't  
 be balanced however hard it tried. Production  
 and consumption could never get together. It  
 made war necessary. You wanted to expand to  
 cover the gap---and you borrowed to make war,  
 you paid more interest in order to pay interest.  
War became written into Christian civilisation  
like the wrinkles in an old man's head! The  
 10% is only another for war. War on other  
 people. For your own pocket. People you don't  
 know or see. Christianity is another name

for war machine. War on the people, war on the beasts, the plants, the air, the seas, the future, the heart! Christianity's another name for madness! For crisis and upheaval and loving it! Calling cancer and murder vitality! And all that started in Florence! Florence in my time was the image of the future world! Where the bankers ruled, with chaos as their guarantor! And now at the very top of the mountain of madness, Florence's last monstrous child, lies America, at the very peak, where it's cold and the air is heady, and there's no vegetation.

He pants, exhausted, as after a wild party-speech.

No vegetation.

He hangs his head, panting. THE MUSICIAN too is silent, gazing at the audience.

When Charlie was 17 and I was still a young fool, a kraut called Martin Luther pinned up some completely incomprehensible theses on the door of Wittenberg cathedral where the powder-vendors used to hang about. The gist of these theses, so Charlie told me, was that the Catholic Church stank, and that a certain Dominican friar Tetzel should stop rattling his alms box all over Germany and pouring the proceeds into Roman coffers to be spent on blue films.

There was a big argument in front of my Charlie between his catholics and Luther's protestants which went on for days. Charlie said to me over a late-night club-sandwich in his hotel room after one day's conference, 'I can't understand what the hell these guys are talking about!'

Luckily I could. It was about consubstantiation, which means that Christ is present at communion when the wafer is fed to the faithful and the vintage wine is drunk by the priest. That was what the kraut Martin Luther believed in. Charlie and the Catholic Church believed in transubstantiation which means you're actually eating Christ's flesh when you take the wafer, and the priest, characteristically enough, is drinking His blood. This is just what I said before. Cannibalism. Now if you try and start a new civilisation eating flesh and drinking blood at the altar you're in trouble.

You create a civilisation of gluttons. I know by just how much you overfeed yourselves. You may think I'm the only person here tonight with this (the erect phallus) on my nose but you've all got them, according to your sex. I can see them. I can say exactly who over-eats and who doesn't. Most of sexual appetite is due to the body not knowing what to do with all this combusive material in a sitting civilisation. It sends up a kind of steam that heats the middle area and is another reason for pleated skirts.

Towards the end of my life a massive amount of political silver was spent by Philip 11--- Charlie was dead by then. It went to finance spies, murders, fake revolutions. CIA? He spent two and a half million kilosworth in the Netherlands, which he wanted as his own, minus its Lutherans and Anabaptists. Eight hundred thousand kilosworth in Italy and eighty-two thousand kilosworth in Germany. This all came from America, so history hasn't changed in this respect.

If you spread a lot of political silver about people can concentrate on this (touching the erect phallus). Like you're doing.

Sex-liberation follows the political silver. It's the best insurance-policy against revolution, that's why. The first guy to say fuck on television, the first to stand nude on a stage; they thought they were blazing a great new trail. It meant that war could go on elsewhere---the rest of the world was safely talking about its genitals.

When the political silver started trickling to the blacks, and black overeating and oversitting started, the black revolution stopped, and it became safe for Eldridge Cleaver to return to the United States. Now the black protest is like the first fuck on television. You get paid for it.

You think the blacks got problems? What about the Anabaptists in my day? Most of them were roasted until their fat sizzled and the spectators got back their appetites for their evening pig-dinner.

Know what?---they disagreed with the Catholics on one little point. Don't throw water over a baby and call him baptised, they said. Wait

till he can talk and let him recite a simple declaration of faith in Christ.

Harmless enough. So why did they sizzle and get their heads chopped off? Not because of that! Not because they believed in love! They believed in shared property and non-violence! They were a popular movement! They grew with every bank crisis in Antwerp---with inflation---with unemployment! That's why they had to sizzle!

Beginning to figure?

No wonder they set up their headquarters in Münster, Germany. Prices were steadier.

All this was about 1530, when Charlie and I were in our thirties too. You could always tell what age you were from the year it was.

Everybody started making war on Münster---the Catholics, the Lutherans, Pelagians, Solifidians, Erastians, Ultraquists, Synergists, Anti-nomianists---there were quite a lot of sects in those days! Now there's only one kind (miming the word 'sex').

The Anabaptists called a state of emergency. Wouldn't you? They elected a new leader called John of Leyden.

John knew that God was on his side (ever hear that before?) so he left all the earthworks to Him. The emergency got more so. John of Leyden had sixteen wives---as I said to Charlie in front of some bishops, 'That's sixteen reasons why I believe in Anabaptism'.

One of these wives was rude to John so he cut off her head on the spot and then stamped on her body in front of all the others. As a demonstration of non-violence and shared property it was impeccable.

You see, Anabaptism started in Europe's most warlike state, Switzerland, where you fought other people's wars them, at a price, and spent the money at home. Don't talk to me about peaceful Switzerland. The brute and the banker live cheek to cheek, and I don't mean the cheek of the face. Yodelling OVER

Poor John of Leyden was tortured to death when the other non-violent Christians got hold of him. His followers were slowly scorched to death. One by one. We don't do things like that nowadays. This is the Ascent of Man after all. We scorch in thousands at a time. At Nagasaki their skins hung from their hands.

Silence. THE MUSICIAN does not play. He simply gazes down, hands limp on the guitar.

Thought and number and time  
children of order, mothers of crime,  
when shall we three meet again---  
in thunder lightning or in rain?

Still the silence.

Down by pleasant Tempe's shore  
no skins were found to fit any more...

For a few more beats,  
silence. Then THE  
MUSICIAN takes up a slow,  
soft, hardly heard rhythm  
once more, elegaic, sorrow-  
ing, plucked very lightly.

Yes, mine was the century of the sack of Rome and the sack of Florence. That meant, as my Spanish mystic said before he stepped down the well of the stairs, that meant the sack of our hearts. There was no more passion after that.

The women came off bad. They always did. Sometimes I think only fools and fairies really love women! Not that all women in my time were angels. But as the Christian male behaved like a dog, it naturally gave rise to the bitch...

I believe women started angels though. They were nearly always angels to me. And I never had a hard word for them. Not for women. Fools and women understand each other. Far from being the missing rib of mankind, they're its very heart!

SONG:

Women, women! (a lightly scored play on this one word, to floating and rapid guitar-play)

The Arab, Greek and Israel woman was degraded. So those worlds fell. The Indian world never did, the Indian world where the woman is divine! That's what my Spanish mystic told me before he went down three floors in a matter of seconds and some centuries before the invention of the lift---but he was a forward-looking man.

When Rome and Florence fell, the Spaniards took over. Very austere. No more painting and singing. They weren't bad people. They were just the most devout Christians. They were very moral. Now morality's a whore. She slept with Philip 11, Napoleon, Hitler. And now she has a permanent bed at the White House. Cosy huh?

You've got to recognise the barbarians in all this. That's where we came from and that's where we're going! I refer to the Franks, who used to bury their enemies and sometimes their close friends alive. I refer to the Goths and the Visigoths and the Huns.

Now seven or eight centuries after Christ, when the Roman empire was a mess, the monks started trying to cool them off. They were very clever about it, the monks. They said to themselves these guys believe in rewards and if they don't get the rewards they believe in revenge. So we'll give 'em heaven as the rewards and hell as the revenge---revenge for them if they don't behave and revenge for their enemies if they do. And we'll put the whole thing after death so as they're never quite sure how they stand until they're just about to kick off.

What could Christ do about that?

It worked. But the monks lost out. For them it was a temporary patch-up compromise just while the barbarians cooled their pants off. But we barbarians held 'em to it! We're still on top today aren't we? And the monks are down in the goulasch. So?

Choirs 'AMEN' OVER.

As George Jackson said, 'Good people don't like to cut throats. This unnatural arrangement allows the sediment to remain on the top while the cream rests on the bottom'.

But that's how it goes in the Ascent of Man.  
We're going higher so fast we can't get up  
off our knees!

That's more or less what God said to me  
when he threw this black skin around me.  
'Jan Bobin', he said, 'it'll stop you ever  
thinking they've got a civilisation down  
there'.

How about this? Between 1521 and 1550 my  
Charlie published 11 edicts against people  
having their own ideas about God. At  
least 50,000 people had their heads chopped  
off, were burned or buried alive, or hung.  
Of course nowadays we do things better.  
Between 1921 and 1950 over one hundred million  
people were buried alive in debris, burned  
alive by napalm---bombed, blasted, machine-  
gunned, drowned, tortured or starved to death  
just for being there! They didn't even  
disagree with anybody! But that's the Ascent  
of Man!

SONG:

It's the Ascent of Man  
the Ascent of Man!

(speaking like a liftboy)  
Going up!

(song resumed)

The Ascent of Man  
is an Hegelian plan!  
At first it was theory  
all German and beery  
but it fast became fact  
and today it's hardly tact  
to deny it  
to defy it---  
the Ascent of Man!

(speaks)  
Going up!

We've been going up downwards  
since the year dot  
with the full-time assistance  
of a German Herr Gott  
a German Herr Gott!

And we're still going up  
though it's dark for a bit---  
we should soon reach the top  
of the bottomless pit  
the bottomless pit!

(speaks)  
Going up! Up to the basement!

The further up we run  
in this eternal race  
the less we see the sun  
or the moon's lovely face!

The Ascent of Man  
is an Hegelian plan  
at first all beery  
a mere German theory  
but it fast became true  
and now everything new  
seems to fit it---  
you must admit it!

We may be a tough lot  
and have more wars  
than Hottentots or Aztecs  
or Victorian Boers

but one thing's certain  
that we're better equipped  
and can travel faster  
than when troops were shipped!

Our wounds may be deadly  
but surgery's there  
to heal the burns  
and replace the hair  
replace the hair!

(speaks)  
Going down! Down to the roof garden!

And as for the animals  
we've proved this at least  
that we're nearer to God  
than the reptile or beast  
the reptile or beast!

That's why He gave us  
the earth as our own  
to do what we liked with  
and turn it to stone!

Herr Gott being German  
made us pure thinkers  
to plot our great future  
while behaving like stinkers!

It is surely Herr Gott  
 who helps us a lot  
 to think ourselves higher  
 as we build the last pyre  
 to burn ourselves on  
 to burn ourselves on!

The Ascent of Man  
 was a well-thought-out plan  
 based on Kant and Descartes  
 to clean up the world  
 with a good human fart  
 its speed determined  
 by computer and chart  
 computer and chart!

(speaks)  
 Going up!

The Ascent of Man  
 the Ascent of Man!  
 We've been going up downwards  
 since the year dot  
 with the full-time assistance  
 of a German Herr Gott  
 a German Herr Gott!

And that brings me back  
 to Yalta. (With mock  
 poise) Yalta! The year  
 is 1945, the month February  
 and the place Yalta, on the  
 Black Sea, where the leaders  
 of Great Britain, Russia and  
 the United States are to meet  
 in order to kick the world  
 around. Can't you see it?  
 Special pleats have been sewn  
 into all the skirts! The  
 Japanese navy has been crushed at the Battle  
 of Leyte Gulf in the interests of Sony cassette  
 recorders and Seiko watches. General Macarthur  
 is egging on his faggot-ridden battalions to  
 victory in the Philippines, where the boys are  
 good and don't have to be sewn up afterwards.  
 The British will soon be behind the teenage  
 population of Rangoon, even the girls. As for  
 the famous krauts, they have tried a counter-  
 attack in the Ardennes and been compelled to  
 turn arse-about-face and put it back int their  
 trousers. Hitler is firmly going mad and  
 wishing he hadn't shot Rhoeme for getting his  
 orifices mixed up. The Russian armies are  
 within raping distance of Berlin. And the  
 pope has already announced, in a famous  
 declaration from the balcony of St PETERS,

Sound of Second  
 World War type planes  
 OVER.

'This war is nothing but a sex-feast!'  
So it was time to call a conference on the  
Black Sea.

Can you see the picture?  
They touch down at Sevastopol  
airport, hundreds of allied  
visitors. (Hand on heart)  
The American President to  
sleep at the Palace of Livadia,  
winter residence of Tsar  
Nicholas 11. The maids who will  
serve him have black dresses and  
white aprons, and special micro-  
phonic finger-traps in case he  
tries to pinch them. The  
President's daughter, Mrs  
Boettiger, has her hair cut on  
board HMS Franconia which bobs  
up and down at its moorings in  
the Black Sea as officers and men  
meet again in each other's bunks  
after the privations of the long  
voyage from Southampton.  
General Macarthur stays in the  
Tsarina's bedroom, Admiral King  
in her boudoir, which results in  
an unprecedented mix-up with  
clothes. The president has the  
Tsar's own quarters, where his  
pleated skirts are confused with  
those of Mrs Roosevelt. What a  
mess! Troy, Rome, Byzantium,  
Venice---Yalta!

Welcoming  
military bands  
OVER

Heavy male love-  
breathing OVER

Luckily The Last Tango in Paris hadn't been  
shot yet, so there was plenty of butter.

That was a funny war. It took some working  
out who was fighting who. The capitalists  
were fighting the nazis who were fighting  
the communists who were fighting the capitalists.

The idea that Hitler committed suicide is  
crazy! How could hundreds of millions of  
people committ suicide simultaneously?

I used to talk to Charlie  
in this enigmatic way. The  
krauts hated it. They told  
him to throw me down the privy,  
which was a 60-foot drop. At  
that time you sat on a hole  
on the top floor and could see  
down into the courtyard.  
Goulasch travelled in those days.

Whistle-plouac-  
ucch! OVER

OK life was bad when I was Jan Bobin, but today!---Jesus!---there's no more foolin' today! We're right in the goulasch---and not even air-bubbles! Given the choice between being Jan Bobin then and Black Bobin now I'd say give me old Jan every time, give me 100 years ago and I'll take the risk of early death by plague or religious conviction! Sure life was uncomfortable sometimes! Take the journey we did from Flushing to Spain when Charlie was made king of Spain at the age of 17.

Forty ships full of Burgundian knights! Two pictures on the king's topmast and one on the mainsail with Charlie's motto plus outre which means 'push on and keep it well powdered'.

Of course a storm comes up in the Bay of Biscay and blows all the pictures off. We abandon ship and the Spanish fishermen take us for pirates and pass the warning inland. We fight off a local army and the Burgundians keep shouting 'Spain! It is your king!' in Flemish!

Savage country, yes! but by God we were healthy! Our skins were as tough as hide, we laughed and sang and prayed and felt God's sun and rain on our faces. There was a plague on---no horses were available. The inhabitants with hair half-way down their backs and nothing on above the waist. September and stifling hot! A 150-mile walk across the Asturian mountains.

We get to Tordesillas footsore and angry. Charlie's mother Juana lives in a castle there, in a darkened room. She's crazy and none of the Hapsburg family want her shooting her mouth off, which like all women she could do. She once went for her maid with a pair of scissors. 'You've been screwing my husband!' she said, and cut her throat. But people loved her. They believed in her kind of behaviour. It was sincere, whereas if someone cut your throat today it would probably be hypocritical.

Sincerity was important in the matter of throats! OK, the Spaniards were conquistadors and carried the image of the Virgin Mary across the waters and slit your throat if you didn't cross yourself when you saw it, but at least there was the hope of things getting better. And now? Here I am back again 100 years later and it seems to me things

are just about 100 times worse! So there's 100 times less hope.

Those Burgindian knights were certainly crazy. The way they jousted to show off to the Spaniards! But you could feel life coming through your skin---it was your own---it's difficult to say what I mean. I jousted once. I missed my opponent as he was galloping past and ran my weapon through a tin of chippolatis that was to go with Charlie's sauerkraut for that night's dinner. From that time on he had a Diet of Worms.

Well, so do you.

(Backing up from the audience in a strange way as he did before)

At first we thought the Spaniards were just crazy church-cats in love with war. Then the spell started to work. There was something special about Spain. It was in the air. You felt God lived there, in the dried-up bare hills, in the warm breeze at night, and the chanting from the monasteries. It made me feel good, because I was a fool, and it made Charlie feel good because he was a king, which is another version of the fool.

But fighting for God is dangerous. I saw more anger, cruelty and pointless revenge than I thought the human breast could contain. And how the women cried when they lost their men. Or their babies. It always comes down on the women.

(Going to the gramophone) I'll play you a record from 1552. It's the oldest 78 in existence. A Spanish officer named Mancio Sierras de Lequizano is addressing his king Philip 11, who can be heard rolling a joint in the background. He's talking about the Incas in Peru, as the Spaniards found 'em and as they left 'em! It didn't make the top 10!

'His Catholic Majesty must know that we found these countries in such a condition that there were no thieves, no vicious men, no idlers, no adulterous or evil-living women. We were a very small band of Spaniards when we undertook this conquest, and I desire his Catholic Majesty

This VO against a scratchy background: atmosphere of quiet study, deep quiet, with pauses.

to understand why I draft this account. It is to unburden my conscience and to acknowledge my fault. For we have changed these natives, who had so much wisdom and committed so few crimes, so few excesses and extravagances, so that the possessor of 10,000 gold and silver pesos could leave his door open, and by fixing a broom to a small piece of wood across the door, show that he was away or absent. This sign, conforming with custom, was enough to prevent anyone from entering and taking anything away. Also they despised us when they saw amongst us thieves and men who incited their wives and daughters to sin'.

Sometimes I feel sorry for myself. There's this zombie (THE MUSICIAN) wandering around the house all day, shooting up horse or whatever it is, or maybe he was just born that way, but (gazing across at him) he's like an angel when he plays, he can be as drunk as a fiddler's bitch but when he gets into that guitar, at whatever hour of the night, he grows as intelligent and tender as one of Krishna's maidens. He goes to God inside him, and asks for no one to do his evil work for him. That's all his function is, to play, and play he does, all the time.

SONG:

Oh wicked man!  
 Oh wicked Christian!  
 what have you done  
 to the shining heart  
 what have you done to the joy,  
 what have you done to the tender earth  
 to destroy it like a toy?

Oh wicked man!  
 Oh wicked Christian!  
 No wonder you have no God any more---  
 you never let him right inside  
 you thought he was yours to further your ends  
 and to bolster up your pride  
 to bolster up your pride!

Oh wicked man!  
 oh wicked Christian!

'How long', asked the Spanish mystic who demonstrated the lift four centuries before it was invented, 'how long do you think it takes to turn a barbarian into a civilised man?'

I said, 'I'd be a fool to try and answer that'.

'Let me tell you', he said. 'Not even by the year 2000 will Christian civilisation even have suggested itself!'

'Aren't you afraid of your genitals being pulled off for saying that, or at least your eyes gouged out, or your body pulled in four different directions by horses?' I asked him.

'Don't worry,' he said, 'I eat pork'.

'I'm relieved to hear you say it!' I said.

It was just a pity he tried to teach me Greek and missed the staircase.

SONG:

Barbarian!  
Barbarian!

Grab what you can  
gold woman or man  
and sit on it  
as hard as you can  
cause fighting's all  
you were ever taught  
it's in all your wishes  
and plans and thought!

Barbarian!  
Barbarian!

The world's yours to conquer  
and even God's space  
so keep on flying  
to stay in the race!  
There's an enemy everywhere  
man of the tribe  
the sea and the sky  
and the beasts seem to jibe  
they'll spit in your face  
unless you split theirs  
so get in first  
and show them who dares  
destroy the serpent  
the birds on the wing  
because unlike you  
they don't feel a thing!

Barbarian!  
Barbarian!

I'm not going to say what I learned as Jan Bobin. Most people aren't ready for it yet. This is what I learned. The devil is the

face of God. If you don't squint at that face but keep on looking, if you make yourself go on looking---it takes all your strength and much more to do it, and you've got to be alone like poor Jan Bobin to do it, without a soul as his friend, and every laugh followed by a kick---if you keep on looking you can see it's only a mask, a trick of the light, an illusion, and there's no devil there, you've been looking into the face of your own illusion, there's only the face of sin passing like the unsubstantial rainbow across the light of the sky, and the light is all there is, all there is!

SONG:

The light!  
The light!  
It's his house!  
It shines with his light!  
That's why it's so bright! etc

Jan Bobin was the only guy to survive as a human being in all that bunch, the Burgundians, the Spanish, the kraut princes. Except for old Charlie maybe. But I thought of him and me as two sides of the same coin.

I lived to be a very old man, and towards the end of the century---I'm talking of the 1500s---I heard people talking about the end of the world like they talk about it now. They were right then and they're right now. The end of the world takes time. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day. But we'll get there! We'll make it!

So there's the whole picture---bankers, inflation, poverty, unemployment, rigged riots, paid assassinations, bankruptcies, crazy religious persecutions, terrorism, and war war war.

That's how I used to talk when I was a very old man, sitting outside the walls of the monastery at Juste, where old Charlie died. Nobody listened to me.

SONG:

I'm going away  
to another kind of day! etc

A storm is heard in the distance. BOBIN stops singing abruptly and looks

round. He is trembling,  
cowed. The storm comes  
nearer. The lights begin  
to fade.

THE MUSICIAN

THE MUSICIAN stops playing,  
looks round too.

Slow measured footsteps OVER.

They come nearer.

BOBIN creeps towards the couch.  
THE MUSICIAN creeps off.

BOBIN is crouched at the  
sofa, his face tensed up,  
waiting for his master.

The footsteps come closer.

BOBIN begins lowering his  
trousers, trembling, making  
frantic crying noises under  
his breath.

(in an idiot's voice)  
It's good to know it's a different world today,  
and that all I've been telling about is just  
history. Of course it didn't really happen!  
Only today's real! I mean, we're real.  
People then weren't real. Of course they  
weren't! They were---well---funny. And---  
well---funny. Not real. Only we are real.  
They were funny because they weren't real.  
It must have felt very funny. Not being real.  
It's different, being real, whereas then wasn't---  
well---serious. We're serious, because we're  
real---not funny---it must have been---well---  
like being in fancy dress---like dressing up---  
a Cecil B. de Mille film---it's different being  
real---we're real---it's serious, not like  
dressing up and talking all funny---it's  
different--- (whimpering to himself).

The footsteps cease.

Blackout.

BOBIN and THE MUSICIAN stand  
close together downstage for  
the curtain number.

SONG:

Jan Bobin! Jan Bobin!  
he's bobbin' along  
bobbin' and weavin'  
and singin' a song

he's bobbin' and weavin'  
his way along  
the slippery road  
the slippery road!