



Black Robin
one act - one man



BLACK BOBIN

One Act

for

One Man

by

MAURICE ROWDON

PROPERTY OF:

PORTSLADE PRODUCTIONS
5 Tamworth Street
London
SW 6
Tel: 01.385.4003

He opens with the quiet
 exposition that he is a reincarnation
 of Bobin. God chose to throw
 this dark shadow over me...
 (he is black).

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 dress-
 ed in pantaloons and a loose collar-
 less blouse with the sleeves cut un-
 tidily 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 MUSIC-
 IAN 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 1430. 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 at Cannes harbour. He owns three houses. He doesn't really have a nationality. 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.

Slow footsteps
OVER.

(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

9

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
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!

10

(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 1000 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 stopped 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!

//

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: Pàpa, pàpa, Vostro culo!
VO: Un baccetto per piacere, un baccetto al culo!

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

17

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)

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

(screeching of
 birds OVER)

(sounds of throt-
 tling, 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 butif 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
abbatoirs
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-cutable'. 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!

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 Führer was a
vegetarian', she said, 'Damn the Führer!
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 Juana 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-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 Tetzl 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 combustive 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 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)

2

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!

43

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 II. 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 400 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 oultre 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 400 years later and it seems to me things

are just about '00 times worse! So
there's '00 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 some-
thing 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 Robin! Jan Robin!
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!