

Takin' It To
The Emack's

Sam Bayer
with
David Troen-Krasnow

Live!

at Emack and Bolio's



- Roslindale Daily Tattler

I'm Not a Modest Man
Not Quite Spring
The Handyman's Waltz
Your Side of the Bed
When the Empire Falls
Do You Believe In Me
You Gotta Mumble If You Wanna
Sing the Blues

I'm Not a Modest Man

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At the tender age of zero, I found the
stage was made for me
I had amnios and ultrasounds for advance
publicity
"A smash!" proclaimed the critics, "A
daring tour de force"
I'd like to thank my mother, of course

I sang for every supper, danced for my
dessert
At twelve I staged a one-man show and
nearly lost my shirt
I learned a useful lesson I'd exploit as I'd
mature
There's no problem notoriety can't cure

The sweetest sound I've ever known
Is when the horn I'm blowing is my own
I'm supposed to say I'm lucky
Just part of God's great plan
Yes, modesty demands it
But I'm not a modest man

I've got a sign that blares my talents in
mile-high letters roughly hewn
Astronauts have told me they can see it
from the moon
I've got ads in all the papers, hawkers on
the street
And aliens that plow my name in wheat

The sweetest sound I've ever known
Is when the horn I'm blowing is my own
I'm supposed to say I'm lucky
Just part of God's great plan
Yes, modesty demands it
But I'm not a modest man

You offer me your hand, I shake it
You give me your name, I take it
You praise me to the skies, and I fake it

Cuz I've heard it all before
They say I pushed them to a higher calling
They say "Be still my beating heart, I'm
falling"
They say they find my shamelessness
appalling
Well, at least I'm two for three,
Gonna shoot for three for four

There's a special place in hell for all the
faceless pious masters
For the countless gracious geniuses
whose moment never came
They waited for their praises with their
hands politely folded
And they shuffled off this coil without a
headline to their name
Andy Warhol was a prophet, but he set his
sights too low
My fifteen minutes should have ended
several years ago
And even at the end I'll have the spotlight
that I crave
We'll sell tickets to my funeral and put
neon on my grave

The sweetest sound I've ever known
Is when the horn I'm blowing is my own
I'm supposed to say I'm lucky
Just part of God's great plan
Yes, modesty demands it
But I'm not a modest man



Not Quite Spring

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I stumbled over the leaves we'd forgotten
The soggy mess of an unkempt fall
I tossed them skyward, waiting for a
warmer breeze to take them
But it couldn't take them all
Damp with ice and slush they fell
Spattered the mailbox and the telephone
pole
It's a doubtful balm to soothe the sting
Of this not quite winter, not quite spring

At dusk I asked the sun to reconsider
At dawn I asked the moon to yield some
ground
I pried the day apart with the force of my
persuasion
And it seemed to make a difference
But no one stopped to thank me, no one
shook my hand
No one tucked a dollar in my brandy glass
The silence of the masses is deafening
In this not quite winter, not quite spring

Freezing raindrops turn to snow
A bitter tale of progress lost
Back and forth the entrails go
One god sated, another crossed

I've a simple game the gloom can play
Where I close my eyes and count to ten
He'll run and hide, and I'll slip away
It's not a matter of weather, it's a matter of
when

This battle of wills will only lead to trouble
Mother Nature whispered as the drizzle
swirled
Your victories today are just losses saved
for later
I've got all the time in the world
But still I curse the darkness, still I raise
my sword
Still I light my fires to melt the snow

You've got to stand for something
In this not quite winter, not quite spring

It's not a matter of weather
It's a matter of when



The Handyman's Waltz

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The sink was backing up
I didn't wanna call the plumber
So I turned on the wet vac
And shoved it down the drain
I managed to dodge the hairball it
 dislodged
And it unflushed the toilet
And I inhaled some methane
And it sucked up some sewage
But it worked just the same

Three parts McGyver
One part Magoo
The world is my toolbox, it's true
I've managed to solve all the problems I've
 found
With whatever's been lying around

The window's stuck again
The butter didn't fix it
And I came across some fireworks
And a match to light a flame
I was worried 'bout the glass but I was
 sure we'd have to blast
And it dislodged the caulking
And it singed all the curtains
And I punctured an eardrum
But it worked just the same

Three parts McGyver
One part Magoo
The world is my toolbox, it's true
I've managed to solve all the problems I've
 found
With whatever's been lying around

Paint the house with a hairbrush
Pick your teeth with an airbrush
Use a penknife for outpatient surgery
Trim the lawn, shim the door
Clip your toenails and more

With the gadgets that breed
In the silverware drawer

"Your car is leaking oil"
Says my idiot mechanic
"Timing belt and alternator
Pay me now or pay me later"
But when the body gets a nick, a little
 spackle does the trick
And I duct-taped the seatbelts
And it starts with a paperclip
And it grinds and it smokes and it's the
 butt of cruel jokes
And it used to be a hardtop
But it runs just the same

Three parts McGyver
One part Magoo
The world is my toolbox, it's true
I've managed to solve all the problems I've
 found
With whatever's been lying around
Yes, I've managed to solve all the
 problems I've found
With whatever's been lying -
Spilled milk, no sense crying -
Mop it up with whatever's
Been lying around



Your Side of the Bed

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The natives sure are friendly
On your side of the bed
They recreate seductive scenes
From glossy travel magazines
And they giggle when I greet them
And I don't know what they've said
But the natives sure are friendly
On your side of the bed

I can't predict the weather
On your side of the bed
The clouds are huge but fleeting
And the sun shines when it's sleeting
I should have dressed in layers
But I wore my shorts instead
I can't predict the weather
On your side of the bed

When I return I'll have outlandish tales to
tell
Of those graceful native maidens and the
baskets that they sell
And the quizzes they administer along the
sandy shore
And how they snicker when I ask to see
the score

I don't understand the language
On your side of the bed
It's never spoken, only cooed
And it's all in the subjunctive mood
And "Why don't you just speak English"
Is the wrong thing to have said
I don't understand the language
On your side of the bed

The signs are next to useless
On your side of the bed
They're obscured at intersections
And they point in odd directions
I was on my way to paradise

And wound up here instead
The signs are next to useless
On your side of the bed

When I return I'll have outlandish tales to
tell
But they'll mostly serve to document how I
don't travel well
How I'll lose my native breakfast on the
gently rolling seas
Or contract a rare indigenous disease

I was detained at immigration
On your side of the bed
They probed my suspect sympathies
And all the usual cavities
The room was dim, the lights were bright
Lord knows what I said
I was detained at immigration
On your side of the bed

There are diplomatic tensions
On your side of the bed
If I want to be your sweetie
I'm gonna have to sign this treaty
I set out with dreams of conquest
And I wound up here instead
In this diplomatic brouhaha
On your side of the bed

When I return I'll have outlandish tales to
tell
How I repeated words I can't pronounce
and don't know how to spell
I no longer doubt that fools rush in where
angels fear to tread
I'm still not sure what happened
On your side of the bed



When the Empire Falls

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They say a lobster boiled slowly
Never knows he's dying
It lacks that certain sense of urgency
Living the high life
Strutting safe inside its shell
King of the shallows
Taking whatever the sea has to give
Just a bit too stupid to live

When the empire falls it will be whittled by
degrees
Pecked by sparrows and stung by bees
Most of us lounging behind these walls
Will go right on sleeping when the empire
falls

It was a lovely suit of armor
With heralds at the breastplate
And a scabbard at its side
But then you wore it to too many parties
And you left it in the rain
Forgot what it was made for
Taking whatever the steel had to give
Just a bit too stupid to live

When the empire falls it will be cut off at
the knees
Softened by the sun and scattered on the
breeze
When that knock on the door comes and
destiny calls
We'll be honor-bound to answer when the
empire falls

Nero fiddled while Rome was aflame
And now even the Visigoths have their
own video game
Glued to our sofas like a planet to a sun
We've got five hundred channels
And the revolution's on every goddamned
one

Well, this boxer's lost a step or two
But he still packs a hefty uppercut
And he'll hit you and hurt you where it
counts
And he's got a nasty temper
But his memory is shot
And his attention is starting to wander
Taking whatever the ring had to give
Just a bit too stupid to live

When the empire falls it will be whittled by
degrees
Pecked by sparrows and stung by bees
Most of us lounging behind these walls
Will go right on sleeping

When the empire falls it will be cut off at
the knees
Softened by the sun and scattered on the
breeze
When that knock on the door comes and
destiny calls
We'll go right on sleeping when the
empire
Falls

They say a lobster boiled slowly
Never knows he's dying



Do You Believe In Me

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I was born in the paper
A fourteen year old crack whore with a
baby on my hip
And another on the way
The latest symbol of suburban paranoia
and urban decay
But they say she torched her reputation
And I was a figment of her imagination
And if you think it's hard to hear you're
counterfeit
You don't know the half of it

Do you believe
Do you believe in me
Do you believe in me

I was born in a briefing
An ungrateful welfare queen
Cruising in her Cadillac with her ill-gotten
gains
Stealing food from the mouths of the
hardworking farmers on the American
plains
But I was bad, bad information
Just a partisan misrepresentation
And if you think it's hard to hear you're
bullshit
You don't know the half of it

Do you believe
Do you believe in me
Do you believe in me

And each day I learn things that amaze
me still
Like how cigarettes won't kill you, but
marijuana will
And the way the stars control our destiny
And those aliens from Roswell and their
obsession with gynecology

It's noon on a Sunday
And Elvis and I have a brunch date with
the second gunman from the Kennedy
assassination
And afterward we're all going to the
ballgame with the guys who discovered
cold fusion
And the sun is high, and I'm feeling clever
Cuz I've got this hunch we're gonna live
forever
And if you think a lie don't know when to
quit
You don't know the half of it

Do you believe
Do you believe in me
Do you believe
Do you believe in me
Do you believe
Do you believe in me
Do you believe in me

Didja read that story in the paper about
the woman who put her
baby in the microwave? What the hell is
this world coming to?



You Gotta Mumble If You Wanna Sing the Blues

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My baby took my dog and left
I was feeling bitter and bereft
My step had lost its normal jaunty bounce
And to document this wrong
I packed a mournful son
With every verdict that I wanted to
pronounce

But when I poured my pain and rage
Out across the local stage
I received but a smattering of applause
And as I cried into my beer
I heard a voice say "Lookee here,
Sure, you blew it, but I think I know the
cause"

Kinda lumpy, bloodshot nose
Too much whiskey, I suppose
I didn't think he'd have advice that I could
use
But he said "Word are a distraction
From the listener's satisfaction
You gotta mumble if you wanna sing the
blues

You gotta lose it in your larynx, and jam it
in your jowls
Masticate your consonants and gargle all
your vowels
Just pretend you're drunk and toothless,
that's the sound of
well-paid dues
You gotta mumble if you wanna sing the
blues"

Well, my jaw 'bout hit the floor
He said "That's good, but I need more
Think of Dugan - Duncan - Dylan, that's the
one."

He pulled a stool out from the bar
And took my capo and guitar
And said, "Sonny, lemme show you how
it's done"

(Mumbled verse)

You might be singing it in Kazakh, or Farsi,
or Malay
Nobody cares about the melody, don't
matter what you say
Just treat poor enunciation the way the
faithful treat their pews
And you'll mumble every time you sing the
blues

And as the room burst into cheers, he
staggered up and bowed
Gave me my guitar and disappeared into
the crowd
But he left with the a gift that I'd be foolish
to refuse
You gotta mumble if you wanna sing the
blues

So now I swallow every word
Not comprehended, only heard
And you can see the patrons nodding as
the slip into my shoes
You won't believe how well it works
Till you see the tears it jerks
That's why I (mumble)

