

Osgood Rex: A Geek Tragedy

By

Shualee Cook

730 Leland Ave, Apt 2N  
University City, MO 63130  
(314)566-9078  
Shualeecook@gmail.com

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### Dramatis Personae

#### Humans:

Eckhart Unger - mid 20's, cocreator/ animator of Osgood.

Bert Winslow - mid 20's, cocreator/director of Osgood.

Jake Metzger - replacement animator for Osgood

#### Cartoons:

Osgood the Scrappy Squirrel - male, star of the cartoon

Mitzi Mink - female, Osgood's girlfriend

Spunky Skunk - male character played by female actress, up and coming cartoon star

Eggs the Cat - female, former cartoon star

Tipsy Toucan - male, a prophet, played by the actor playing Eckhart

Hammy Hog - male, former partner of Eggs

Chorus Leader - male

Messenger - played by the actor playing Bert

Chorus of supporting cartoon characters

#### A note on language:

Human characters speak in plain prose. Cartoon characters speak in the unrhymed iambic poetry of traditional Greek drama, hence the off-format spacing of their lines, adhering to pentameter rather than page margins. (And yes, the Greeks wrote in hexameter, but pentameter suits English better. All the translators say so, I swear!)

#### A note on "Cartoon Gags":

The seemingly impossible bits, such as flying kisses, things appearing above characters' heads, etc. are meant to be effected by the chorus, using the most ingeniously low-tech stagecraft you can muster. Rather than trying to hide the sources of the illusions, it is the author's opinion that it's more fun to let the audience in on the joke. Be creative, and most of all, have fun.

PROLOGUE

New York. 1928. On one side of the stage, a shabby little office where an equally shabby looking animator, ECKHART UNGER sits at his drawing table, sketching with surprising quickness. The rest of the stage is the limitless white expanse of the paper that he draws on.

ECKHART

(to the character he's drawing)

You're in the mood for mischief now, Osgood? What'll it be this time? No, you tell me - I swear, you know better than I do. Three years now since I came up with you, and you still surprise me. But I guess we've both come a long way.

TRACK 1:

IN THE BEGINNING, I WAS BORED,  
BY EARTH AND HEAVEN, JUST IGNORED  
AND MY WORLD WAS WITHOUT FORM AND VOID.  
ANOTHER LONELY S.O.B

WITHOUT A PURPOSE GUIDING ME,  
ALWAYS UNINSPIRED AND UNDEREMPLOYED  
'TIL I GOT SICK OF WAITING 'ROUND  
FOR SOME PERMISSION TO BREAK GROUND,  
DECIDED I WAS THROUGH PLAYING DEAD.  
THEN I THOUGHT "MY LAST TEN CENTS'LL  
BUY A DRAWING PAD AND PENCIL"  
SO I SPENT THE LOT, TOOK WHAT I GOT, AND SAID -

'LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S NEW, HELL, JUST BECAUSE'  
PENCIL 'CROSS THE PAPER FLEW, AND THEN THERE WAS!

OSGOOD THE SCRAPPY SQUIRREL, all in black and white, begins to appear in the white expanse. He wears (as do all the CARTOON CHARACTERS) a half mask in the style of 1920's animation, with just of a hint of the Greek to it.

'LET THERE BE SQUIRREL, BOTH SCRAPPY AND WISE  
WITH A MISCHIEVOUS KIND OF A GLEAM IN HIS EYES.  
LET HIM BE MORE ALIVE AND FREE  
THAN THE WAY I TEND TO BE'

Osgood takes the top of his head off, and tips it to Eckhart as though it's a hat. Then, as Eckart sings, Osgood reaches into his head, and pulls out an exclamation point. He uses the period part as a ball, and the rest as a baseball bat.

AND THEN THE IDEAS, THEY STARTED FLOWING  
THOUGH I WASN'T QUITE SURE WHERE THEY ALL WERE GOING  
HE WAS SO PLUCKY AND ENERGIZING,  
IF I MADE HIM UP, THEN WHY'S HE SO SURPRISING?

So I said

LET THERE BE STUFF FOR HIM TO DO, NOW WATCH HIM GO

Jumping, and running, and a somersault!

Osgood follows Eckhart's  
instructions, with a few  
flourishes of his own.

LET THERE BE LANDS TO JOURNEY THROUGH, AND THINGS TO KNOW  
LET ALL THESE PEN STROKES CONVERGE IN A WAY  
THAT REVEALS CERTAIN THINGS I'M TOO BASHFUL TO SAY  
LET THERE BE STUFF, A WHOLE LOT MORE STUFF!  
AND LET THERE BE MORE THAN ENOUGH!

Like a big, smiling sun!

A CARTOON CHORUS MEMBER appears,  
carrying a big, smiling sun on a  
stick. The sun chases Osgood until  
Osgood uses his exclamation point  
bat to knock it back into the sky  
where it belongs.

And trees - that dance!

More CARTOON CHORUS MEMBERS enter  
with cut-outs of trees with faces,  
dancing around Osgood. Osgood  
likes their moves and joins in.

MITZI MINK enters, sexy, but still  
adorable, and falls immediately  
into Osgood's arms.

THEN CAME A GIRLFRIEND TO SHARE HIS SLUMBER,  
IF YOU'VE GOT ADAM, THEN YOU NEED AN EVEN NUMBER

The Chorus Members come out from  
behind their trees and the sun.

PLUS SOME COMPANIONS TO STOKE THE FIRES  
THAT KEEP ME DRAWING EVERYTHING MY HEART DESIRES!  
SO I SAY  
LET THERE BE A WHOLE WORLD TO SEE, AND NOW THERE IS  
CHOICES DON'T JUST BELONG TO ME, NOW SOME ARE HIS

Osgood bops one of the Chorus  
Members on the head with his bat.

OSGOOD  
SO LET THERE BE LAUGHTER -

The bat bounces back and hits  
Osgood's head as well.

OSGOOD  
AND LET THERE BE PAIN.

Osgood teeters and falls into  
Mitzi's waiting arms.

OSGOOD AND MITZI  
AND LET THERE BE GOOD TIMES THAT COME BACK AGAIN

ECKHART  
LET THERE BE STUFF I'D LOVE TO SEE,  
LIFE THE WAY IT'S MEANT TO BE!

Osgood, Mitzi and the Chorus rev  
into high gear, with all sorts of  
antics.

CHORUS  
LET THERE BE PLACES TO EXPLORE!

ECKHART  
Knock yerselves out!

OSGOOD  
LET THERE BE STUFF WORTH LIVING FOR!

ECKHART  
WITHOUT A DOUBT.

CHORUS LEADER  
LET THERE BE HIJINKS!

MITZI  
AND LET THERE BE LOVE

OSGOOD  
AND LET THERE BE JOY THAT FLOWS DOWN FROM ABOVE

ECKHART  
LET THEM BE THEIR OWN ENTITY,  
SOMETHING MORE  
SOMETHING MORE THAN ONLY  
ME

LIKE YOU AND YOU  
AND YOU AND YOU AND YOU  
AND YOU AND YOU!

CHORUS  
LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S  
NEW  
LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S  
NEW  
LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S  
NEW  
THAT'S NEW!

The cartoon world disappears as  
the office door opens, and BERT  
WINSLOW bursts into the room.

BERT  
He screwed us, Eck! The bastard screwed us good!

ECKHART

What? Who?

BERT

While we were bent over our desks for sixteen hours a day, that sonofabitch Parnell crept up and stuck it to us hard!

ECKHART

Huh. I didn't notice. Guess nature wasn't kind to him at all.

BERT

He stole the rights from under us, Eckhart! That rat Parnell now owns Osgood the Squirrel!

ECKHART

What?!

BERT

He didn't just produce the damn cartoons, he registered the character as his!

ECKHART

But that's not true! We brought Osgood to him -

BERT

That's not the tune Parnell's chorus line of lawyers'll be singing. He's got the money and the law firms, Eck - all we've got is a handshake no one saw.

Silence. It starts to sink in.

ECKHART

What are we gonna do?

BERT

Get the hell out. We finish this cartoon and then we scam.

ECKHART

Just like that? Abandon our creation to that hack?!

BERT

Look, we've got a brand new character we like - let's get him out of Parnell's reach while we can. We'll start a business we own, with Spunky Skunk as our new star!

ECKHART

And what? Leave Osgood here to rot? I've worked three years on him!

BERT

Three years we have squat to show for -

ECKHART

The character's expanding, Bert! There's all these nuances, these little subtleties I hadn't planned. Hell, I couldn't explain 'em if I tried! I can't just throw that all away.

BERT

We don't have much of a choice, pal.

ECKHART

You think Osgood's just some blot of ink that we tell what to do, but Bert ... that ink has mingled with my sweat and my hopes and - He's all the things I wish I'd done if I were that much bolder, just a bit more quick. You really want me to walk away from that?

BERT

No, Eck. That's what I want you to become.

Silence. Eckhart sits at his desk, bewildered, then lashes out at it with his fists.

ECKHART

Damn it all to hell!

The jolt to the desk causes the inkwell to tip over, sending a torrent of ink over Eckhart's pages.

At that same moment, billows of black fabric flow across the white expanse of the stage.

Bert and Eckhart just stare at the pages for a moment.

ECKHART

Looks like Osgood's last adventure will be fighting off an invasion of ink.

BERT

His last adventure?

ECKHART

(sighs)

From me, anyway.

BERT

I'll go and grab some towels from the john.

Bert exits, as Eckhart continues to draw on the sullied pages.

ECKHART

And thus does fate conspire to separate Creation from creator in a flash,

Like some Greek tragedy played in reverse:  
Events reveal the limits of the gods,  
Who wait upon their worshippers' judgment.  
For such an act as bringing things to life,  
Some form of retribution always comes.

While Eckhart scribbles away, the  
CHORUS of supporting cartoon  
characters enters, inspecting the  
black billows across their space  
with a mixture of curiosity and  
fear.

PARADOS

CHORUS

Behold! What's this that mars the Great Blank Wastes,  
Most ancient, sacred Doorway of the Gods  
Eckhart and Bert, oh bless-ed be their names!  
For here in this white space they do create  
A litany of wonders to behold -  
In wintertime, a forest of fir trees  
Whose stately limbs do sprout lovely fur coats.  
In autumn, leaves cascade and gently fall -  
Along with anvils, very heavy safes,  
And the occasional piano grand.

CHORUS LEADER

Such sweetly zany music our Lords make,  
Yet this resembles not their handiwork -  
No sense of humor, no reason nor rhyme,  
A message neither comical nor clear.

CHORUS

It just feels too plain random, don'tcha think?

CHORUS LEADER

And if it's not, it sure is Greek to me.

Rim shot. Awkward beat.

CHORUS

Well, since we've got that joke out of the way,  
Let us all ponder what this sign portends.

CHORUS LEADER

For look! The shadow spreads across the land!

CHORUS

From north unto the south, from east to west,  
Things look decidedly less funny now.

CHORUS LEADER

WHAT HAS BEFALLEN YOU, BELOVED GAG-FILLED SOIL?  
YOUR SMILING SUN HAS COME DOWN WITH THE BLUES!



CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US  
WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US

CHORUS LEADER

THE BUTTERCUPS HAVE GONE AND LET THEIR BUTTER BOIL  
THE COBBLESTONES HAVE LEFT OFF MAKING SHOES!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US  
WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US!

CHORUS LEADER

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS LEADER

WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW

CHORUS

WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW!

CHORUS LEADER

WITH A SIGH-SIGH-SIGH

CHORUS

WITH A SIGH-SIGH-SIGH

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

WE CRY WOE UNTO US

Antistrophe

CHORUS

OUR MINDS THAT ONCE WERE FERTILE, FILLED WITH ANTICS RARE  
NOW ECHO, CHAMBERS EMPTY OF ALL MIRTH

CHORUS LEADER

I SAY WOE UNTO US!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US  
OUR LIMBS, ONCE FULL OF PRATFALLS ARE NOW BONES LAID BARE  
JUST WAITING TO BE BURIED IN THE EARTH

CHORUS LEADER

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US.

CHORUS LEADER

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS LEADER  
WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW!

CHORUS  
WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW!

CHORUS LEADER  
WE SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH

CHORUS  
WE SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
AND CRY WOE UNTO US!

Epode

CHORUS  
OH GODS ON HIGH NOW HEAR OUR CRY, SOOTHE OUR UNREST  
AND GRACE OUR EYES WITH WONDERS ONCE AGAIN

CHORUS LEADER  
A MIRACLE THAT LEAVES US SUITABLY IMPRESSED  
COULD REALLY COME IN HANDY NOW AND THEN!  
FROM YOUR HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HEIGHT

CHORUS  
FROM YOUR HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HEIGHT

CHORUS LEADER  
COME AND SHOW-DE-SHOW-DE-SHOW

CHORUS  
COME AND SHOW-DE-SHOW-DE-SHOW

CHORUS LEADER  
YOUR MIGHTY MIGHTY MIGHT

CHORUS  
YOUR MIGHTY MIGHTY MIGHT

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
AND TAKE AWAY THIS WOE FROM US!

FIRST EPISODE

CHORUS LEADER  
My fellows, quick! Word of this strange mischance  
Must straightaway be brought to great Osgood!  
With mind and body both most nimbly framed,  
He'll find solutions where we see but doom.

Enter MITZI MINK.

MITZI  
No need for that - he has already heard.

CHORUS

Behold! That noble lady, Mitzi Mink,  
Beloved consort to our dotting king,  
And quite the looker, too, if you ask me.

Some sexist whistling from the  
Chorus. Mitzi ignores it,  
examining the black billows.

MITZI

Where this dark river flows, all laughter dies,  
All jokes catch in the throat, and none escape.  
While my heart froze in terror at the sight  
Of this dread shadow's dark and oozing path,  
Hot inspiration blazed in Osgood's eyes,  
And up above his head appeared an egg,  
Which cracked, and gave birth to a bulb of light.  
This also cracked in turn, and from its shell  
A rooster rose, with plumes of crimson fire,  
Cocked back his head, and crowed to shake the earth,  
Then flew toward this stain that blights our land.

CHORUS

Hot damn! But that's one hell of an idea!

MITZI

Which Osgood even now goes to enact,  
While I've come here in chase of secret doubts,  
To see what may one day undo us all.

CHORUS LEADER

But surely you don't doubt Osgood's success?

MITZI

Not him, just what he puts his faith into.

CHORUS LEADER

Why, Osgood's saved your life a thousand times!

MITZI

I know. He's really lucky in that way -  
The gods demand what Osgood wants to give,  
And so, to him, the whole world seems quite fair.  
Not so for us from whom the gods require  
A service that our nature ill befits.  
For Osgood gets adventures by the score,  
While I look pleased and blithely bat my eyes  
Until some ruffian absconds with me  
So that my love can save me once again.  
To tell the truth, I'd rather save myself,  
And much prefer batting a baseball bat  
Aimed squarely at my hijacker's nose holes.  
Oh, how I'd love to send that bastard's head  
A-sail right into Osgood's catcher's mitt!  
Then we could spend the whole day playing catch,  
With my abductor's noggin as the ball.  
That puts the punch in punch line, don't you think?  
But since this does not fit the gods' design,  
I'm left to wrestle languishing desires.

The laughs I get are few and far between,  
And silence is a heavy weight to bear.  
So Osgood thrives and knows the gods are just.  
I ache, and thus suspect they're just bluffing.

CHORUS LEADER

I'd keep that to yourself if I were you.  
Those discontent with gods do often tend  
To meet particularly sticky ends.

The ink spill suddenly blows away,  
to relieved gasps.

CHORUS

Look! The shadow has been overpowered!

MITZI

Then Osgood's plan has triumphed after all!

CHORUS LEADER

(pointing into the distance)

And here's a messenger to tell us how,  
Arriving right on cue!

CHORUS

Now how 'bout that!

A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER

I'd gone into yon forest with my pail,  
To glean the salty tears from weeping willows,  
When sudden darkness poured down from the sky,  
Devouring all that lay within its path -  
Great beauty lost in inky nothingness!  
The weeping willows saw, and wept the more,  
Till both the pail and my own eyes o'erflowed.  
But as we stood, awash in our own grief,  
Bold Osgood rushed forth, crying "Have no fear!",  
Grabbed up a fallen branch and fashioned it  
Into a sort of brush, then turned to face  
The faceless evil tarnishing our woods.  
"I cannot fight a formless thing," he said,  
"Without losing myself to formlessness,  
But if you are contained within a shape,  
I'll be a match for you in any guise!"  
With that, he dipped his brush into the dark  
And tamed the black into a solid form -  
At first a fearsome dragon, belching out  
Hot breaths of flaming shadow at Osgood.  
But Osgood acted quick, and with his brush  
Wrought arrows out of this stygian fire,  
That flew back at the beast and shattered it  
Into eight pieces, writhing, dismally.  
And with each blot, brave Osgood did the same,  
Imposed on them a form, then mastered it -  
Tamed lions, shot down hawks and lassoed bulls  
Until there was no longer marring ink,  
But only solid creatures, all subdued.

The willows, at this sight, did cease to weep  
And my own heart did well up with such joy,  
I sang a song of praise unto Osgood,  
The scrappiest of squirrels in the land!

As the messenger has been giving  
his speech to his rapt audience,  
Osgood enters behind them,  
unnoticed, and listens casually,  
munching on an acorn until the  
messenger finishes.

Meanwhile, in Eckhart's office,  
Eckhart has finished drawing, and  
begins packing up his belongings.

OSGOOD

That's awful nice of ya, but not too bright.  
The gods just might feel jealous, and then SPLAT!  
Trust me, I've had my share of being hit  
With safes, pianas, sometimes 2 ton weights -  
It ain't a pretty feelin', no sirree.

Mitzi, the Messenger, and the  
Chorus turn to see Osgood behind  
them.

MITZI

Osgood, my sweet, you've conquered once again!  
Not only this disturbance, but my heart!

Osgood rushes over to Mitzi, and  
catches her up in his arms.

OSGOOD

Oh Mitzi, during all the pranks I pulled  
Upon that lousy monster, inky black,  
Within my belfry fluttered just one bat -  
The thought of you, your lovely batting eyes  
Just gazing at me as they do right now!

MITZI

In truth, I bat them for nobody else  
And even then, only at gods' command.

OSGOOD

You see how smart my honey-muffin is?  
A far sight more than Messenger Boy here.  
You went and sang a song of praise to me?  
You might as well thank that there rusty pail  
For what the willows filled the darn thing with!  
We're nothin' but old buckets, she and me,  
Filled up with inspiration from on high,  
Our only job to pour out what's inside.

Finished packing, Eckhart carries his small box of belongings to the door, opens it, looks back at the room longingly.

In Osgood's world, the sound of a mighty wind. A couple chorus members and some very surprised looking clouds are blown across the stage.

CHORUS

From whence now blows this wind so harsh and cold?  
The very clouds do flee from it in fear!

OSGOOD

Remain steadfast, good friends! All signs will show  
Their meaning to those who wait patiently.

Eckhart exits, closing the door  
after him. It slams shut.

Cracks of thunder in cartoon land,  
shaking the very ground the  
characters stand on.

CHORUS

Good grief! So many omens in a row!  
We can't keep track, much less interpret them!

MESSENGER

And even now, more riddles drawing near:  
Two travellers come, supplicants, methinks.  
They bear gifts to exchange for passage safe  
Through this, the holy blank-lands of the gods.  
The first approaches meekly, eyes downcast.  
The other with a fierce, unruly stare.

OSGOOD

Bid them both welcome in my name and say  
That I shall hear their wills, one at a time.

The Messenger nods, and exits.

MITZI

My love, put them off 'til another day.  
This one's too stuffed with portents for my taste.

OSGOOD

That's where you're wrong. These signs are nothing  
more  
Than heavenly reminders to be just.  
The gods know what these pilgrims will request  
And urge us to be careful when we judge  
What we should grant and what we should deny.

MITZI

Still, I've a real bad feeling about this.

Spunky Skunk enters, bearing a cream pie.

SPUNKY

Oh mighty Osgood, noble king, hi-ho!  
The name is Spunky Skunk, how do ye do?  
I bring with me a gift - this custard pie,  
My country's ancient, secret recipe.  
Both light and frothy, yet its aim is true.  
Well balanced, it strikes foes at 50 yards,  
And lands with a most satisfying splat  
Upon the shocked face of your enemy!

OSGOOD

A gift most rare and noble - thanks a lot!  
So what brings you to these most sacred lands?

SPUNKY

The gods Eckhart and Bert call out my name -  
They beckon me to seek out solitude  
Within the Great Blank Wastes, most holy soil  
That I may liken myself unto it,  
And make a blank page of my very soul,  
To let the gods inscribe what words they please.

OSGOOD

Your heart and mine beat with the same desire!  
Go take your journey and my friendship too!  
For folks like us are few and far between,  
Who do not seek the gods for our own gain,  
But to find out a purpose we can serve!

SPUNKY

And has your search for purpose yielded one?

OSGOOD

You betcha! Though it may sound kinda strange.

LISTEN CLOSE, YOU CAN JUST MAKE IT OUT  
AS THOUGH IT'S CALLING FROM BEHIND A SCREEN  
QUIET, SOFT, YET BEYOND ANY DOUBT,  
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT SOUND CAN MEAN!  
IT'S THE MUSIC THAT GREETES THE UNDERDOG  
REACHING THE END OF HIS LONELY SLOG  
TO FINALLY EMERGE AND BEAT THE ODDS  
IT'S THAT GENUINE GASP OF TRUE SURPRISE  
WHEN THE DAY IS SAVED BY THE LITTLE GUYS  
IT'S THE SOUND THAT I LIVE FOR - THE LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

IT WASHES OVER YOU  
A RAIN OF FALLING PIANO KEYS  
WHEN SOIL IS OVERDUE  
FOR NOURISHMENT OF NEW MELODIES  
YOU FEEL DEEP IN YOUR HEART  
FRESH SONGS SPRING UP FROM OUT OF THE EARTH  
AND YOU CAN'T HELP BUT START  
TO LAUGH ALONG WITH THE HEAVENLY MIRTH

NEVER KNOW JUST WHAT'S GONNA INSPIRE  
ONE OF THOSE ACTIONS THAT HEAVEN APPLAUDS  
BUT THERE'S NOT ANYTHING I DESIRE  
MORE THAN THAT CHIMING LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

SPUNKY

What must I do to hear this sacred noise?

OSGOOD

It isn't about do's and don't's at all!  
You gotta scrub your mind of all that stuff.  
Here.

Osgood hands Spunky a long  
handkerchief, then takes out one  
for himself. He sticks the  
kerchief in one ear, and draws it  
out of the other, so the ends of  
it stick out of both ears. Spunky  
follows suit, and they  
rhythmically clean their brains to  
the music.

OSGOOD

So how's your brain feel now? All squeaky clean?

SPUNKY

Boy howdy, it sure does! What happens next?

OSGOOD

NEXT YOU'RE BATHED IN A FLICKERING LIGHT,  
AND ALL AROUND YOU BECOMES HUSHED AND STILL  
IN YOUR SOUL, YOU FEEL SOMETHING IGNITE,  
THAT LEAVES YOU BURNING TO DO GODS' WILL!  
So what would ya do?

SPUNKY

HOW 'BOUT A CARTWHEEL OF PRAISE?

OSGOOD

THAT MAKES SENSE!

SPUNKY

MAYBE A PRATFALL OF PENITENCE?  
THEN SUDDENLY JUMP UP, JUST SMILE AND NOD?



OSGOOD

I like it!

PLUS A COUPLE HEEL CLICKS THAT SHOUT 'REJOICE'!

SPUNKY

AND THEN WHEN I LAND, I WILL RAISE MY VOICE,  
TO SING BRAND NEW AND JOYFUL SONGS UNTO THE GODS!

OSGOOD

Wait wait wait wait.

SPUNKY

Why, is there something wrong?

OSGOOD

Our words and songs are fine for mortal ears,  
And may be offered to the gods in pray'r,  
But when the light of Inspiration shines  
And all the gods are gathered in the dark  
To see their will made flesh before their eyes,  
We must in holy silence make our way,  
To praise them, not with sounds, but with our deeds.

SPUNKY

A hard command to follow when your heart  
Is bursting forth with music like mine is.

OSGOOD

And yet the gods decree it, so it's good.

TO SOME FOLKS, THE GODS' LAWS ARE A LIST  
AND YOU JUST CROSS OFF ITEMS AS YOU GO.  
BUT FOR ME, THEY ARE WHY I EXIST,  
SO I DO MY BEST TO LET IT SHOW!  
I DON'T STOP AT THE MINIMUM REQUIRED,  
GIVING THEM ACTS THAT ARE OLD AND TIRED,  
RELUCTANTLY OBEYING WHEN THEY PROD.

SPUNKY

YOU DO EVERYTHING THAT YOU CAN DO  
INCHING JUST ONE STEP CLOSER TO

OSGOOD AND SPUNKY

THAT BEAUTIFUL SOURCE OF THE LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

SPUNKY

I WANNA BRING A SMILE  
UNTO THE LIPS THAT BREATHED LIFE IN ME!  
THEN LISTEN A LITTLE WHILE  
AS THEY WHISPER WHAT I'M MEANT TO BE!

OSGOOD AND SPUNKY

WE'RE NOT SETTling FOR  
LIVES THAT SCRAPE BY AS JUST GOOD ENOUGH  
THE GODS DESERVE MUCH MORE  
SO COME ON LET'S GIVE THEM OUR BEST STUFF!

OTHER FOLKS SCAMPER AFTER ACCLAIM  
OR WEALTH AND POWER NO MATTER THE ODDS.  
BUT YOU WON'T FIND US PLAYING THAT GAME  
'CAUSE THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE AFTER!  
WE JUST WANNA HEAR THAT LAUGHTER  
THAT FULFILLING, THRILLING LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

Osgood sends Spunky off toward his  
destination.

OSGOOD  
Go forth, brave skunk, and tell 'em Osgood sent ya!

Spunky salutes him, and hurries  
off toward the Blank Lands.

OSGOOD  
Well, that was easy. Who do we have next?

MESSENGER  
When asked, she would not give her name to me,  
Demanding to be judged by deeds alone.

OSGOOD  
A mystery! Well, I'm game. Send her forth.  
We'll see just what these actions speak of her.

Enter Eggs the Cat, carrying a  
large box.

EGGS  
Which of you is Osgood, scrappy squirrel,  
The ruler of this land and gatekeeper  
That guards the Great Blank Wastes which lie beyond?

MITZI  
Is it not plain to all which one he is?  
His kingly bearing, fully in command?  
His zany eyes ablaze with comic fire?

EGGS  
I trust appearances about as far  
As I can toss a sea-sick buffalo.

CHORUS LEADER  
That may be a fair distance - look at her.

CHORUS  
It's very clear that she works out a lot!

EGGS  
The point, you morons, is I don't assume  
To know a thing based just on how it looks.  
For outward sweetness often is applied  
To mask a deadly poison's bitter sting.

OSGOOD

In your rough manner, there's some truth, kiddo.  
I am Osgood the squirrel. What's your wish?

EGGS

The same as any trav'ler to these parts -  
To journey where gods' pen and paper meet.

OSGOOD

That's fair enough. What tribute do you bring?

EGGS

I've brought my gift for passage in this box.

OSGOOD

And what does it contain?

EGGS

You won't know that  
Til you accept the offering from me.  
Is that not how the gods bestow their wares?  
We all receive our fate from them with thanks  
Before we know just what that fate entails.

OSGOOD

That's true, but gods are perfect; we are not.  
I know their good intent, but don't know yours.  
Share that with me, then maybe I'll accept.

EGGS

I asked for passage as a courtesy,  
But if you will not give what I desire,  
I'll have to clear my own way through brute force!

She tears into the chorus,  
knocking them out of the way with  
her large box. Chaos ensues.  
Osgood snatches up the custard pie  
Spunky left, holds it up  
threateningly.

OSGOOD

You'd better stop right there! I have a pie,  
And I am not afraid to use it, too!

Eggs halts in her rampage.

OSGOOD

These actions give you out - you're Eggs the Cat -  
That heretic most infamous in name  
Who plotted murder 'gainst her closest friend  
And brought the wrath of heaven on herself.

CHORUS

A very naughty girl by all accounts!

OSGOOD

Come you to entreat mercy from the gods?

EGGS

I come not to entreat but to accuse -  
They are the ones who wronged me, yes, the gods!  
Let's see if they've the spine to answer me!

CHORUS

O blasphemy! O hubris! O the nerve!  
To think that you know better than the gods!  
Just who do you think you are anyway?

EGGS

My story is well known throughout the land,  
Yet people know less than they think they do.

OSGOOD

I know enough to turn down your request.  
You'll not set foot on that most holy soil  
As long as it's on my watch, that's for sure.

MITZI

Dear Osgood, wait! Hear what I have to say.

OSGOOD

Don't bother if you're speaking up for her.

MITZI

Not just for her, my love, but for us all.  
So she has a complaint against the gods -  
Why, surely they can take care of themselves.  
For if the gods are great as we believe,  
What do they have to fear from mortal hands?  
Is it not wiser, then, to send her off  
Unto the gods whom no mere man can hurt,  
Or leave her here where she can work much harm?

CHORUS

I hate to say it, but she has a point.

OSGOOD

It sounds like wisdom, yes, but you forget  
The really spooky omens we just saw.  
I'm sure the gods could handle her just fine,  
But these loud signs they sent say it's a test  
To find out what it is we value most -  
The honor of the gods or our own skins.  
First we must do our part, then they'll do theirs.  
No harm will come to us if we have faith.

EGGS

Well, look at Mr. Holier-than-thou!  
He's got the whole damn world all figured out!  
But there may come a time when you will find  
Your precious rules, they don't amount to squat!  
It's then you'll wonder what was in this box  
But it won't give the solace that you seek!  
So go jump in a lake, you stupid jerk!

She storms off.

CHORUS LEADER

Should we, um, maybe keep an eye on her?

OSGOOD

No, let her go. She don't scare me one bit!

MITZI

I hope you're right, Osgood.

OSGOOD

Don't hope, have faith!  
And it'll be rewarded, wait and see!  
Now I've got more adventurin' to do  
Before it's supper time. I'll see you then!

He gives her a huge kiss, and runs  
off. Mitzi looks after him  
uneasily.

MITZI

I do admire his faith, but fear it too.

CHORUS LEADER

Why would you fear a precious thing like faith?

MITZI

Because it is a weapon, not a toy!  
No wooden shield, but one with edges sharp,  
To press through battles, not to lean upon.  
Rely on it for more than its intent,  
And you could get a doozy of a wound!

CHORUS LEADER

Well, sure, you *could*, so just believe you *won't*  
And then the gods reward your strong belief  
By keeping you from harm. That's what faith is.

MITZI

I'm pretty sure it isn't.

CHORUS LEADER

Tell her, boys.

First Choral Ode

CHORUS

O FAITH, THE HOLY GAMBLE!  
FAITH, THE ENGINE OF THE HEART!  
THAT REVS YOU UP TO RAMBLE  
WHEN YOU MIGHT BE SCARED TO START!  
MAN'S NATURE IS TO COWER,  
BUT THE GODS ARE MUCH MORE HEP  
THEY'LL IMBUE YOU WITH THEIR POWER  
IF YOU JUST TAKE THAT FIRST STEP!

Strophe

CHORUS LEADER  
SO YOU CAN WAIT AROUND AND WORRY IF IT'S SOLID GROUND,  
OR YOU CAN JUST -

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
TAKE THAT STEP OF FAITH!

CHORUS LEADER  
IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH CARE, YOU'LL FIND YOU NEVER GO NOWHERE  
INSTEAD YOU SHOULD -

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
TAKE THAT STEP OF FAITH!

CHORUS  
THE SKEPTICS SIT AND POUT, WEIGHED DOWN BY TONS OF DOUBT  
WHEN HELP IS JUST A PRAYER AWAY!  
THE GODS ARE WAITING TO WORK PROBLEMS OUT FOR YOU  
IT JUST TAKES TRUST TO MOVE RIGHT THROUGH THE UPPER CRUST!

CHORUS LEADER  
SO BUCKLE UP YOUR PANTS! GET OUT THERE ON THE FLOOR AND DANCE  
ALL FANCY WITH -

CHORUS  
YOUR NEW STEPS OF FAITH!

CHORUS LEADER  
Show her how to step it, boys!

The Chorus bursts into frenetic  
tap dancing. Mitzi remains  
unimpressed, and interrupts.

Antistrophe

MITZI  
BUT WHAT IF YOUR FAITH'S A BIT MISPLACED -  
YOUR GRAND DESIGN'S GOT LINES ERASED,  
AND THE GODS DON'T DO THINGS QUITE THE WAY YOU THINK?  
IS 'JUST BELIEVING' ALL THEY ASK,  
OR HAVE THEY CHARGED US WITH THE TASK  
OF KNOWING WHEN TO STEP BACK FROM THE BRINK?  
YOU CALL IT FAITH, I MUST CONFESS  
IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE RECKLESSNESS  
TO ASSUME THE GODS WILL ALWAYS LEND A HAND  
YOU SAY 'JUST DANCE' - THAT WOULD BE NICE,  
BUT ILL ADVISED WHEN ON THIN ICE  
BEFORE I DO, I'LL KNOW JUST WHERE I STAND.  
I STILL BELIEVE, BUT KEEP IN MIND,  
IT'S LOVE, NOT FAITH, THAT SHOULD BE BLIND,  
SO I WILL TRUST, BUT I WON'T CLOSE MY EYES.

Mitzi does a dance where she carefully tests out a part of the floor, then dances impressively before tiptoeing to another spot, trying it out gingerly, then dancing with full confidence. The Chorus then advances on her in a tap dancing line.

CHORUS LEADER

IT MAKES YOU FEEL SO PROUD TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD,  
THOUGH PRIDE, IT COMES BEFORE A FALL  
BUT YOU WON'T BELLY FLOP IF YOU REPENT AND HOP  
WITH ME AND MINE IN THIS OUR HOLY CHORUS LINE!

Mitzi can't safely back up quickly enough, and is swept into the line with the Chorus, only backwards.

CHORUS

SO YOU CAN WAIT AROUND  
AND WORRY IF ITS SOLID GROUND  
OR YOU CAN JUST TAKE THAT STEP  
OF FAITH  
IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH CARE  
YOU'LL FIND YOU NEVER GO NOWHERE  
UNTIL YOU JUST TAKE THAT STEP  
OF FAITH!  
THE SKEPTICS SIT AND POUT  
WEIGHED DOWN BY TONS OF DOUBT  
WHEN HELP IS JUST A PRAYER  
AWAY  
THE GODS ARE WAITING TO  
WORK PROBLEMS OUT FOR YOU  
IT JUST TAKES TRUST TO MOVE  
RIGHT THROUGH THE UPPER CRUST  
SO BUCKLE UP YOUR PANTS,  
GET OUT THERE ON THE FLOOR AND  
DANCE ALL FANCY WITH THOSE NEW  
STEPS OF FAITH!

MITZI

WHAT IF YOUR FAITH'S A BIT MISPLACED?  
YOUR GRAND DESIGN'S GOT LINES ERASED,  
AND THE GODS DON'T DO THINGS QUITE THE  
WAY YOU THINK?  
IS JUST BELIEVING ALL THEY ASK,  
OR HAVE THEY CHARGED US WITH THE TASK  
OF KNOWING WHEN TO STEP BACK  
FROM THE BRINK?  
YOU CALL IT FAITH, I MUST CONFESS,  
IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE RECKLESSNESS  
TO ASSUME THE GODS WILL ALWAYS LEND A  
HAND  
YOU SAY 'JUST DANCE', THAT WOULD BE NICE  
BUT ILL ADVISED WHEN ON THIN ICE  
BEFORE I DO, I'LL KNOW JUST WHERE I  
STAND!  
I STILL BELIEVE, BUT KEEP IN MIND  
IT'S LOVE, NOT FAITH THAT SHOULD BE  
BLIND  
SO I WILL TRUST, BUT I WON'T CLOSE MY  
EYES.

Toward the end of the song, two chorus members take out giant tennis rackets. A third chorus member holds up a picture of the sun on the stick, which the members with rackets bat back and forth. When batted one way, it's the sun. When batted the other way, it flips over and becomes the moon. Meanwhile, in the animation office, JAKE METZGER enters, with a box of his stuff, sets things up, and starts drawing at what was Eckhart's table.

SECOND EPISODE

CHORUS LEADER

Just what are you three up to over there?

1ST CHORUS MEMBER

Denoting the aggressive march of time.

2ND CHORUS MEMBER

I'd say a month or two has passed by now.

CHORUS LEADER

Well damn. There go the classic unities.

MITZI

And in that time, what feats did Osgood do?

3RD CHORUS MEMBER

Ya got me - I was here being the sun.

CHORUS LEADER

But here's the Messenger to tell us stuff  
Before the audience gets fidgety.

MESSENGER

My friends, I come to you with heavy heart  
Weighed down by sad events I must relate.  
I come from Silly City, great landscape  
Of chases, crowd gags and tomfoolery.  
Adventuring there, Osgood got a job  
As salesman of fine music instruments,  
And many of us citizens took note,  
Expecting the hilarity that comes  
When Osgood takes up challenges like this.  
Each eye did watch to see the gags unfold!  
Each pair of lips did wait for smiles to bloom,  
Each belly poised to shake with laughter loud!  
But Osgood's antics were not up to par.  
Out of his normally prodigious brain  
Jokes only mild and vaguely pleasant came.  
Except for one good gag using a cow  
As an array of diff'rent instruments,  
No trick he played brought more than a warm smile  
And our thirst for great hijinks went unquenched.  
Osgood himself felt inspiration's lack,  
And bravely soldiered on in spite of it,  
But with each new attempt his antics grew  
More cute and precious than hilarious.  
When last we saw him, he was running off  
In search of some good joke to break the curse.  
Whether he found it, though, I cannot say.

CHORUS

Alas! Such comic instincts overthrown!  
Now barren is the mind that once gave birth  
To laughs that did convulse both gods and men!



MITZI

Will everyone just take a nice deep breath  
Before you go proclaiming anything?  
There's tons of reasons for something like this.  
Why don't we wait to hear from Osgood's mouth  
Before we speculate?

CHORUS

We're the Chorus.  
Speculation's what we're in the play for.

MITZI

Well, cut it out! Osgood is on his way.

Osgood enters, not his usual  
plucky self.

CHORUS

And not looking too hot if you ask me.  
(To Mitzi) We also state the obvious a lot.

Mitzi ignores them and rushes to  
Osgood's side.

MITZI

Osgood, my love! Is ev'rything all right?

OSGOOD

Uh, what? Oh yeah, hun. Things are going fine.  
Well, maybe not fine now, but will be soon.  
(Obviously straining to stay cheerful)  
The gods are testing me, but that's no sweat.  
My heart is pure, so there's nothing to fear.

MITZI

How have the gods been testing you?

OSGOOD

Just watch.  
Now here's me coming up with an idea.

Osgood concentrates. A light bulb  
appears over his head. Everyone  
waits in expectation for a moment,  
then sigh their disappointment.

MITZI

It's just a light bulb.

OSGOOD

Right! And nothing else!  
It doesn't grow a bomb fuse and explode,  
Or suddenly inflate like a balloon  
And drift away upon a gentle breeze,  
But sits there - a cliché without a twist!  
Perhaps I asked for this a little bit.

I told that Spunky Skunk that I lived for  
The laughter of the gods, yet I forgot  
To tell of moments more precious than that -  
When Eckhart, all exhausted from hard work  
Would whisper out my name, and I'd look up  
To see him in his glory, pen in hand,  
Nursing a beer and 5 o'clock shadow.  
Then he would talk to me, and I'd talk back -  
Chatting with my creator just as though  
It were the thing most nat'ral in the world!  
Applause is nothing when compared to that.  
If only I could hear his voice again,  
Confiding all his thoughts and hopes to me,  
I'd never need to hear another laugh.  
But now my prayers are to anvils turned -  
They plummet to the ground as soon as made,  
And I'm left feeling like a royal putz!

MITZI

Perhaps you should seek out some holy man  
Well versed in peering into mysteries,  
Like Topsy Toucan, sage of great renown.

CHORUS LEADER

I hear he does good work at discount rates.

OSGOOD

Quick thinkin', honey pie! (To Messenger)  
Call him at once!

The line "Call him at once" cycles  
through the whole chorus, the last  
of whom crosses the stage and  
yells into the wings.

CHORUS

Hey Topsy!!!!

Topsy Toucan enters from the other  
side of the stage, drunk, carrying  
a large jug of moonshine.

TIPSY

You sent for me, Osgood?

OSGOOD

Boy, that was quick!

CHORUS

Hail Topsy, drunken seer of Wazoo!  
Who, through the chugging of much alcohol,  
Sees into secrets of both gods and men!

TIPSY

I had a vision that you sent for me  
Last night, while guzzling cheap tequila shots  
With two large matadors both named Ramon.  
Nice guys, and could the left one play guitar!

But what was I about to say? Oh yes!  
I had a vision! Vivid as the sun!  
Osgood was drowning in a sea of snores,  
And woefully cried out to me for help.  
I saw myself run, in the nick of time,  
And throw a life preserver out to you.  
But when you put it round you, it became  
A noose that strangled out your very life.  
So here I am, just as the dream foretold.

Beat.

TIPSY

On second thought, I should have stayed at home.  
If you'll excuse me -

OSGOOD

Not so fast, good sage.  
For your interpretation's off the mark.  
This dream of yours foretells my happiness.

TIPSY

Um, did you hear the same dream that I did?  
'Cause one of us has got off track somehow.

OSGOOD

Where do we go in death? To heaven, right?  
Then dwell there with the gods forevermore.  
And that is all I want, if truth be told.

TIPSY

I think there's pills for when you feel that way.  
(Offers him the jug of moonshine)  
Or here, a lot of this can work well too.

OSGOOD

I'm speaking metaphorically, ya dope!  
You saw a symbol, not physical truth.  
Your dream says that my sufferings will end,  
And I'll be reunited with the gods!

TIPSY

If you say so. Lord knows I've had a few.

OSGOOD

Then use your drunkenness to touch the sky,  
And tell me what the gods would have me do.

TIPSY

I'll need a bit more grog before I can -  
I'm only 2.5 sheets to the wind.  
It takes all three for me to prophesy.

CHORUS

Then let's get on with this - we're in suspense!  
There's not been much plot movement for a while!

The chorus pries Topsy's beak open, and pours the moonshine down his throat. When it's all gone, Topsy staggers across the stage, and sees Jake Metzger at Eckhart's desk. Topsy rubs his eyes, looks again, then staggers back in terror.

OSGOOD

What is it? Have you seen something beyond?

TIPSY

Who, me? Oh, no. Just some pink elephants.

OSGOOD

Please try again, seer. I need to know  
Just why the gods don't answer when I pray.  
Each night for months, I've called out to Eckhart  
And Bert, but they don't say a darn thing back.  
Is there some reason for this you can see?  
There's big bucks in it for you if you can.

Topsy looks back over to the drawing table, where Jake has his head down, asleep.

TIPSY

Have you tried praying louder? That could help.

OSGOOD

There's no other advice you have for me?

Topsy looks over at the drawing table again. Hesitates.

TIPSY

Just up the volume. That should do the trick.

OSGOOD

Say, why do you keep looking over there?

TIPSY

Huh? Over where? Ev'rything's spinning now.

OSGOOD

You keep on looking to your right.

TIPSY

Nuh-uh!

OSGOOD

I saw you do it! What's the deal, wise guy?

TIPSY

It's nothing. Oh, would you look at the time?

OSGOOD

You saw something! It's written on your face!

TIPSY

I don't know what you're talkin' bout.

OSGOOD

You lie!

I know the look of those by heaven touched.  
I used to wear it lots 'til recently.  
You want to keep this vision to yourself!  
You're drunk not just with booze, but power too!  
Now that the gods don't speak to me, you scheme  
To be their only mouthpiece in the land  
So we'll all bow to you and bring you gifts!  
Admit it! This whole thing's a power grab!

TIPSY

I can't hold on to power in this state!  
But even if I could, you really think  
I'd want that much responsibility?  
That's for the birds!

OSGOOD

A toucan is a bird!

TIPSY

Oh. Then it's for the llamas, or some such  
Mammal that I am not the least bit like!

OSGOOD

No more dodging the issue, you old lush!  
You'll tell me the whole truth or pay the price!

Osgood produces a huge mallet.  
Everyone gasps. Osgood approaches  
threateningly.

TIPSY

And I won't tell you for a million bucks!  
So stick that in your pipe and smoke it, bub!

OSGOOD

There's other ways of hearing what you know  
Than waiting for your lips to be unsealed.

Osgood bangs Topsy over the head  
with the mallet. A circle of birds  
fly around Topsy's head. Osgood  
plucks one of them off.

OSGOOD

(to the bird)

All right, canary, go ahead and sing.

TIPSY

No fair!

OSGOOD

Quiet! I'm not talking to you. (To bird)  
So what's the secret hiding in his brain?

BIRDY

He saw another guy in Eckhart's chair.  
See, both of your creators went away  
And left you in the hands of lesser gods.  
Those two won't answer you 'cause they're not there.  
Your gods gave you the brush-off, buddy boy!

Osgood drops the bird in horror.

OSGOOD

Abandoned by the gods?! (Turning on Topsy)  
That's blasphemy!  
And you'll pay for it dearly, just you wait!

TIPSY

Don't look at me! I didn't say a thing!

OSGOOD

You thought it, though, and that's almost as bad!

A couple chorus members grab Topsy  
and start dragging him off.

TIPSY

See? Told ya that I shoulda stayed at home.  
But sending me on back won't solve a thing!  
The cat's out of the bag, the question's asked!  
You doubt my vision's truth, then try it out!  
Pray to the gods in gen'ral, leave off names,  
And see just who it is that answers you!

The chorus members toss Topsy off  
stage. Osgood puts down the mallet  
and sighs.

OSGOOD

I hate to say it, but he's got a point.

MITZI

But Osgood, you can't think that's really true?  
I'm skeptical toward gods more than most,  
But even I don't think they'd just trot off  
Without an explanation to us all.

OSGOOD

Of course I can't believe it's really true.  
The question after that, though, is 'Why not?'  
Why am I scared to do what Topsy said?  
That jerk, he gave a simple remedy  
To prove whether or not he spoke the truth.  
So if I shrink from proving this sage false,  
What motive can there be for it but fear?  
Has my love for the gods all of this time  
Been really just a love of feeling safe?

I'll go and pray the way that Topsy said,  
And find silence or Eckhart, this I know.  
Yet if by some weird fluke, I'm proven wrong,  
I'll take truth over comfort any day,  
And I will love what's real whether or not  
That real, true thing will ever love me back.  
So off I go, then. Wish me luck, okay?  
And pray to Bert and Eckhart for me, please.  
They're not talkin' to me, but might to you.  
And if they do, come run and grab me, quick!

MITZI

Oh, Osgood, you're the bravest guy I know!

She blows him a kiss - two lips  
making smacking kissy noises that  
fly over to Osgood and attack him  
lustily.

OSGOOD

Woo-hoo woo-hoo woo-hooo woo-hoo woo-hoo!

He hops off. Mitzi follows.

CHORUS LEADER

All righty fellas, you heard what he said.  
Let's get to praying now.

CHORUS

You got it, boss!

Second Choral Ode

CHORUS

(chanting)

ECKHART AND BERT, COME HEAR OUR PRAYER  
ECKHART AND BERT, COME HEAR OUR PRAYER  
ECKHART AND BERT, COME HEAR OUR PRAYER  
NOW -

CHORUS LEADER

DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG, O GODS ABOVE  
A RUMOR'S GOING 'ROUND  
THAT YOU'VE GROWN TIRED OF OUR LOVE,  
AND MOVED TO HIGHER GROUND  
THE THOUGHT THAT YOU'D BE LEAVING US  
HAS GOT US FEELIN' LOW  
TO KEEP US ALL FROM GRIEVING THUS,

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

PLEASE SAY THAT IT AIN'T SO!

Strophe

CHORUS LEADER

SAY IT AIN'T SO

CHORUS  
SAY IT AIN'T SO

CHORUS LEADER  
SAY YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO

CHORUS  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO!

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
PLEASE WHISPER IN MY EAR THAT YOU STILL LOVE ME SO

CHORUS  
STILL LOVE ME SO

CHORUS LEADER  
SWEAR IT AIN'T TRUE

CHORUS  
SWEAR IT AIN'T TRUE

CHORUS LEADER  
TELL ME WE'RE NOT REALLY THROUGH

CHORUS  
WE'RE NOT REALLY THROUGH

CHORUS LEADER  
IF YOU LEAVE ME, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GONNA DO

CHORUS  
WHAT I'M GONNA DO

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
REMEMBER ALL THE LOVELY TIMES WE SPENT TOGETHER  
EVERY WINTER AND FALL (AND FALL)  
I MADE US HOT COCOA WHILE YOU MADE SNOWY WEATHER  
DIDN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING AT ALL?

CHORUS LEADER  
SO TELL ME YOU CARE

CHORUS  
TELL ME YOU CARE

CHORUS LEADER  
JUST SAY THAT YOU'RE STILL THERE

CHORUS  
SAY YOU'RE STILL THERE

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS  
AND I'LL PRAISE YOUR HOLY NAME HERE AND EVERYWHERE!

CHORUS  
HERE AND EVERYWHERE!

Antistrophe



The Chorus hums the verse again  
while the Chorus Leader speaks the  
lyrics.

CHORUS LEADER

Say you didn't go. For our love can surely grow! But  
if you walk out now, how will you ever know? Except,  
of course, that you're omniscient, but still - Think  
it all through. Is this the godly thing to do? To  
leave us on our own, all existential and blue?

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

I ALWAYS EXPECTED THAT YOU'D BE MINE FOREVER  
NOTHING COULD KEEP US APART.  
WELL, IT SEEMS, FOR SOMEONE SO INFINITELY CLEVER  
YOU DESIGN A PRETTY FRAGILE HEART!

CHORUS LEADER

SO SAY IT AIN'T SO!

CHORUS

SAY IT AIN'T, SAY IT AIN'T SO!

CHORUS LEADER

STOP THESE TEARS THAT NEWLY FLOW

CHORUS

STOP THESE TEARS THAT FLOW

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, LORDS -

CHORUS LEADER

JUST SAY IT AIN'T SO!

CHORUS

SAY IT AIN'T SO!

The Chorus retreats upstage, and  
kneel with their backs to the  
audience.

THIRD EPISODE

Osgood enters again.

OSGOOD

So here I go, about to pray in hopes  
That it'll go unanswered this time out.

Osgood kneels in prayer.

OSGOOD

O gods above, I do not ask for much.  
Not for inspiration as I used to,  
Nor wealth or fame, or any of that stuff.  
Heck, I just wanna know your will for me.

That's it, that's all she wrote, all that I need  
So long as it don't put you out too much.

Silence. At the drawing table,  
Jake sort of half-wakes up, in  
that weird state somewhere between  
dream and consciousness.

JAKE

Huh? What? You talkin' to me?

OSGOOD

Is that you, Eckhart?

JAKE

Who? Say, this is a funny dream. What'd I have to  
drink tonight?

He looks at the nearly empty  
bottle on his desk.

JAKE

A lot.

OSGOOD

Where's Bert and Eckhart? Why ain't they around?

JAKE

Oh, right. The fellas that split to make those Spunky  
Skunk cartoons. Never met 'em personally.

OSGOOD

It's true then, they've forsaken me? Alas!

JAKE

No need to get all broken up about it. I'm in charge  
of drawin' you now, and I can imitate their style  
okay.

OSGOOD

The ruler of my world is just okay?  
He imitates where others blazed a trail?!  
And that's supposed to make me feel assured?!

JAKE

What do you expect for ten bucks a week? A Picasso?

OSGOOD

What? I expect the gods to keep their word!  
I expect my faith to be rewarded!  
Tell me, is that too awful much to ask?!

JAKE

Without a significant raise? Kinda, yeah.

OSGOOD

What is this 'raise' you speak of? Some new sort  
Of sacrifice that you require from us?

JAKE

Sacrifice? Heh. I guess it is. Not the kind I can get from you, though. That has to come from the higher-ups.

OSGOOD

You mean that there are gods higher than you? The pantheon's more crowded than I thought! So what indignity did we commit That we are saddled with a demigod Instead of the creators of us all?

JAKE

(rubs his eyes)

All right, Jake. When the characters start insulting you, it's time to go home.

Jake gets up, gathers his things.

OSGOOD

Hey, where ya goin'? I have questions still!

JAKE

(on his way out)

I think the long nights are starting to get to me.

OSGOOD

No, wait! Don't leave like this! Not yet! Hello?

Jake opens the door, struggles with his coat.

OSGOOD

Tell me you love me! Say you have a plan! Or just assure me things will be all right!

Jake closes the door behind him.

OSGOOD

(yelling after Jake)

This isn't how a god's supposed to act! O Eckhart, why have you forsaken me?!

Osgood crumples to the ground. Mizti turns around sees him, and rushes to his side.

MITZI

My Osgood, what's the matter?! (To chorus) He turns pale!

OSGOOD

I saw a demigod whose name was Jake. He told me Bert and Eckhart left for good To lavish all their love on Spunky Skunk!

CHORUS

Abandoned by the gods?! O woe is me!  
Fallen, fallen, are the Fur Coat Forests!  
And Silly City now lies desolate!  
The Weeping Willows drown in their own tears,  
And on my frowning lips, a sad lament!

CHORUS LEADER

We'll sing it now, key of B minor, please.

A Chorus Member blows on a pitch  
pipe, but the Messenger suddenly  
runs in.

MESSENGER

Don't start the choral ode yet! I have news!  
Yea, I was down by the old railroad line,  
Untying a few maidens from the tracks,  
When we were all bathed in that flick'ring light  
That shines when gods inspire the minds of men.  
And yet, something was different this time.  
For, rather than the normal rev'rent hush  
That doth descend when heaven watches us,  
There was a joyful noise from yonder train,  
And in the distance, I saw Spunky Skunk  
In full view of the gods singing aloud!

OSGOOD

The gods never inspired me to sing  
Or talk, just do their will in funny ways,  
'Cause that's the way they work!

MESSENGER

Not anymore,  
For Railroad Spunky, as he drove the train,  
Played it as though it were an instrument,  
And made this jaunty tune for all to hear!

Spunky Skunk appears on a crudely  
drawn two dimensional train,  
singing and dancing.

SPUNKY

O, EV'RY DAY'S A BRAND NEW JOYFUL SONG!  
IF IT'S NOT THAT WAY, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING WRONG!  
THERE'S ALWAYS REASON TO BE GLAD  
UNLESS YOUR ATTITUDE IS BAD.  
BUT IF YOU HEART IS PURE, EACH DAY IS SURE  
TO BE THE BEST YOU EVER HAD!  
YES, LIFE IS SWEET, ONE GREAT BIG CHOCOLATE MALT!  
IF YOU TASTE DEFEAT, WELL, THAT'S YOUR OWN DARN FAULT!  
THINGS FALL APART WHEN YOU ARE SNIDE,  
SO JUST KEEP YOUR HEART OPEN WIDE,  
AND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE ON THE SUNNY SIDE!

Spunky pulls up the front of the  
train's cowcatcher like a skirt,  
and tap dances on the rails.

SPUNKY

Look at me, I'm dancin'!

Some more steps. A trio of Chorus Members dressed as boxcars appear, and dance along with him.

MESSENGER

And lo, the very boxcars joined in dance!

SPUNKY

TWO TRAINS RUN, THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT  
CHOOSE THE RIGHT ONE, AND EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT  
IF THINGS LOOK BLACK AND THERE'S NO DAWN,  
CHECK WHICH SIDE OF THE TRACK YOU'RE ON,  
FOR THE ODDS ARE GOOD, IF YOU LIVE LIKE YOU SHOULD,  
ALL YOUR TROUBLES WILL BE GONE...  
THERE'S A LIGHT DOWN AT THE TUNNEL'S END  
IT SHINES REAL BRIGHT FOR THOSE WHO ARE GODS' FRIENDS  
SO STAY, STAY ON TRACK, STAY ON TRACK, NO TURNING BACK, FOR  
THOSE WHO ALWAYS CHOOSE THE, THOSE WHO ALWAYS CHOOSE THE  
THOSE WHO ALWAYS CHOOSE THE SUNNY SIDE!.....  
ENJOY THE RIDE,  
THE GODS WON'T TURN THEIR BACKS OR HIDE  
FROM THOSE WHO ALWAYS CHOOSE THE SUNNY SIDE!

Spunky choo choos offstage. Osgood falls to his knees in defeat.

CHORUS LEADER

That tune's too jaunty for our circumstance.  
So let's get back to singing that lament.

OSGOOD

Our gods have gone and your brains fashion songs?!  
There are no words, no pretty phrases left  
To hold the anguish that now floods my heart!  
All reasoning, all poetry has flown,  
And in my mind, there is left only this!

A thought bubble containing a question mark appears above his head. Mitzi rushes to his side.

MITZI

My love, don't be afraid - it means no harm.  
A question can be useful for some things.

She grabs the question mark out of the thought bubble, and starts playing around with it.

MITZI

Here, look! It's a mustache! A monocle!  
A really angry eyebrow and a wart!

This actually gets a weary chuckle out of Osgood, who goes quiet and suddenly looks at her differently.

OSGOOD

You're really funny - how is it I've been  
Around you this long and not noticed that?  
Even in this dark hour, you make me laugh.  
It's brave of you - how do you keep your head?

MITZI

Inside a hatbox when not using it.  
But seriously, it's an awful shock  
To find ourselves bereft of gods like this,  
And yet, I've felt their absence in small ways  
For quite some time, so I've grown used to it.

OSGOOD

Grown used to it? But how? The gods just left.

MITZI

That's true, but they were never quite so close  
To me as they have always been to you.  
The inspiration that the gods sent down  
Just didn't seem to fit me very well.  
(Holding up question mark)  
It's rare that I get gags like this to pull,  
But yearned for them as much as anyone.

OSGOOD

You've lived with discontent for all this time?

MITZI

It's fairly common, not that big a deal.

1ST CHORUS MEMBER

I feel more like a villain -

2ND CHORUS MEMBER

- a sidekick.

MESSENGER

I wished to be a dancer of ballet.

OSGOOD

I always just assumed it was the same  
For everybody as it was for me -  
That all our lots in life matched with our hearts!  
But now I come to find that heaven played  
With loaded dice right from the very start!  
So did we ever see a true reward  
For faithfulness, or was it all a whim?  
Do gods give out their favors willy-nilly?  
Is this whole thing to them just one big joke?

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

Perhaps this god named Jake will be nicer,  
And things'll be okay. You never know.  
So -

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

WHEN LIFE IS FILLED WITH DEEP UNREST,  
EACH PASSING DAY A FAILING TEST,  
ON EV'RY SIDE YOU FEEL HARD PRESSED  
DON'T FRET - THINGS COULD WORK OUT FOR THE BEST  
WHEN TIMES ARE HARD, AND YOU DON'T KNOW, YOU DON'T KNOW...  
WO WO WO, WHEN YOU ARE FEELING LOW...  
JUST WHAT TO DO, OR WHERE TO GO -

OSGOOD

Enough! I've had it up to here with this!

CHORUS LEADER

'Scuse me, we're in the middle of an ode.

OSGOOD

You want a choral ode? I'll give you one!  
The melody's already in the air!

LISTEN CLOSE, YOU CAN JUST MAKE IT OUT  
AS IT'S CAT CALLING FROM BEHIND A SCREEN  
POKING FUN AT YOUR PAIN AND YOUR DOUBT,  
A SOUND THAT'S UGLY AND COARSE, AND MEAN!  
IT'S THE SCOFFING THAT GREETES THE LONELY SAP  
AFTER HE STEPS ON A BOOBY TRAP,  
THE AUDIENCE ALL SHOUTING, "YOU DUMB CLOD!"  
IT'S THE GENUINE SOB YOU TRY TO CHOKE  
WHEN YOU FIND YOU'RE THE BUTT OF THE COSMIC JOKE  
THAT INSPIRES THE MOCKING LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

IT RAKES RIGHT OVER YOU  
THE WAY NAILS DRAGGED 'CROSS A CHALKBOARD SHRIEK,  
THE TURNING OF THE SCREW  
JUST WHEN YOU FEEL MOST CONFUSED AND WEAK  
YOU'LL HEAR A BIG GUFFAW  
WHEN THEY TEAR THE BLINDFOLD OFF OF YOUR EYES  
YOUR NERVES EXPOSED AND RAW  
TO THE PAINFUL TRUTH BEHIND THE DISGUISE  
WELL, I WON'T PLAY ALONG ANYMORE  
WHO CARES HOW HEAVEN POKES ME OR PRODS,  
I'LL GO DOWN, BUT THE MOMENT BEFORE,  
I'LL HAVE MY OWN LAUGH IN THE FACES OF THE GODS!

CHORUS

Well, someone's being quite the Gloomy Gus!

OSGOOD

Get out!

CHORUS LEADER

But chorus stays onstage throughout -

OSGOOD

I said get out!

CHORUS LEADER

Now don't you yell at me!  
Your beef's with Aeschylus!

OSGOOD

Out! Out! Out! Out!

Osgood chases the Chorus offstage,  
then turns to find Eggs the Cat,  
box at her feet, watching him with  
satisfaction.

FOURTH EPISODE

EGGS

You don't know so much after all, do ya?

MITZI

Now look here, missy! This is not the time!

EGGS

It seems to me when gods walk out the door,  
You need as many friends as you can get.

MITZI

(sarcastic)

So now you want to be our friend? How nice!  
And what do we owe this great honor to?

EGGS

It IS an honor, but not yours to share.  
I've got no time for little girls who whine  
About the thankless role they're stuck inside,  
Then don't lift one damn finger to get out.  
My friendship is for those who take a stand.  
What do you say, Osgood? Have what it takes?

MITZI

I'll show you who has what, you little tramp!

OSGOOD

Hold on a minute, Mitzi, let her talk. (To Eggs)  
But you'd better be quick and to the point.

EGGS

You wanna have a laugh in heaven's face?  
I have the means to do it. Int'rested?

OSGOOD

A little. But why offer this to me?

EGGS

Your gods left you and favored someone else?

Osgood nods.



EGGS

We've more in common than we did before.  
For once I was a ruler just like you,  
And with my faithful sidekick, Hammy Hog,  
I had adventures wondrous to behold!  
The gods rewarded me with loud applause,  
And word of my deeds blazed across the land.  
I thanked the gods each day for their good gifts,  
And strove to please them in my ev'ry act.  
So how did they repay my faithfulness?  
They buttered me up with good fortune, yes,  
Then changed their minds and bestowed all their love  
On Hammy, my most trusted, cherished friend!  
I thought he'd stick by me, refuse the bait,  
But no! He went whole hog - pardon the pun -  
And stole from me my glory and my crown.  
All of a sudden, I was HIS sidekick!  
He got the inspiration that I craved,  
And I was left to follow him around.  
Through this indignity, I persevered,  
And sought to learn some lesson from this trial,  
But my involvement shrank as Hammy's grew,  
Until one fateful day, Hammy went out  
Adventuring and just left me at home!  
So there I sat, betrayed and cast aside,  
A victim of both friends and gods alike,  
But I would not remain a victim long.

Eggs grabs the box, opens it.

EGGS

And here is proof of heaven's injustice!

Eggs pulls Hammy's head out of the  
box, his eyes now big x's, tongue  
hanging out, with black ink  
dripping from the end. Mitzi and  
Osgood gasp.

MITZI

You killed him?!

EGGS

What was I supposed to do?  
Twiddle my thumbs and wait for him to call?  
But that isn't the worst part!

MITZI

Are you sure?

EGGS

For watch what happens now to my revenge.

Hammy's head suddenly grows a  
body. He takes the x's off his  
eyes, pulls his tongue back in,  
and looks around with confused  
happiness.

EGGS

I slay the jerk, but he just gets redrawn!  
The gods don't care if I'm around, but him  
They recreate from scratch if he goes splat!

HAMMY

Whu-whu-whu-whu-whu-where the hell am I?

He notices Eggs.

HAMMY

Hu-hey there, Eggs, not seen you for a bit!

EGGS

That's funny, I've seen you an awful lot.

HAMMY

I muh-muh-meant to call a few months back,  
So we could meet up, drink and reminisce  
Ab-bu-bu-bu-bu-bout old times and such.  
Guh-guess I've just been busy.

EGGS

Ya don't say?

HAMMY

But yeah, guh-good to see ya. Let's do lunch!  
Have your puh-people call mine, and we'll talk!

He happily trots off as if nothing  
has happened. Eggs watches him go.

EGGS

(to Osgood)

Hold on, I'll just go kill him one more time,  
And then get back to what we're speaking of.

Eggs goes to follow after Hammy,  
but Osgood stops her.

OSGOOD

Hey! Why'd you show me this? It rules out hope!  
All that I wanted was to have my say!  
But now I see the gods will have their way  
No matter what we do, and it ain't fair!  
My pain is real and must be answered for!

EGGS

That really what you want, no matter what?  
'Cause I can give it to ya if you're brave.  
I found out how to hit 'em where it hurts -  
It's dangerous, though. There's no turning back.

OSGOOD

Go on, I'm listening.

EGGS  
(gesturing to Mitzi)  
And so is she.

OSGOOD  
Then whisper it if you're so paranoid.

Eggs looks at Mitzi warily, then comes close to Osgood, gets ready to whisper in his ear. Then decides Mitzi is still too close, so she takes Osgood's ear off, crosses to the opposite side of the stage, and whispers into it.

EGGS  
Hushed whisper whisper whisper whisper - eh?

OSGOOD  
That's brilliant! But is it gonna work?

EGGS  
There's really just one way to find that out.

Osgood and Eggs look at each other significantly. A decision has been made. He marches off after Eggs.

MITZI  
(to audience)  
I'd tell him not to go, but well, you saw.  
He hasn't heeded me the whole damn play!

She looks around, lonely.

MITZI  
I wish he hadn't kicked the Chorus out.  
There ought to be a choral ode right now.

Music begins to play. Mitzi is not happy about this.

MITZI  
And there's the music intro, right on cue.

She sighs. As she sings, Osgood and Eggs stalk across the stage, Osgood wielding his mallet, Eggs with a baseball bat, then exit again.

#### FOURTH CHORAL ODE

MITZI  
I DON'T WANT TO SING THIS SONG  
WHY'D IT HAVE TO FALL TO ME?

I DON'T WANT TO HUM ALONG  
 IN THIS MELANCHOLY KEY  
 MY HEART'S TOPSY TURVY  
 I HAVEN'T GOT NERVE E-  
 NOUGH TO DO MUCH MORE THAN SQUEAL  
 NO REASON IN THIS RHYME  
 IT'S JUST BUYING ME TIME  
 TO FIND OUT WHAT I REALLY FEEL  
 SO WHY DO I STILL PLAY ALONG  
 WHEN I'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY?  
 NO ONE'S GOT NO BUSINESS PLAYING THE SONGSTRESS  
 ON A PROSAIC DAY LIKE TODAY.

Mitzi starts to leave the stage,  
 but the music keeps going. She  
 turns back, exasperated.

I DON'T WANT TO SING THIS VERSE  
 AND YET I KEEP DRONING ON  
 I GUESS IT'S JUST PART OF THE CURSE  
 OF BEING RELIED UPON.  
 WITH ME, IT'S A HABIT  
 THE BALL DROPS, I GRAB IT  
 THOUGH I'VE MORE UP IN THE AIR  
 SURE, I COULD CHOOSE NOT TO,  
 BUT SOMEBODY'S GOT TO  
 AND I'M THE ONE WHO SEEMS TO CARE  
 BUT I'VE GROWN TIRED OF THIS TUNE,  
 KEEPING IT FROM GOING WRONG  
 CLEANING OTHERS' MESSSES, THAT MORE OR LESS IS  
 WHAT I'M DOING AS I SING THIS SONG

I WOULDN'T PUT THIS BRIDGE HERE  
 I WOULDN'T CHOOSE THIS KEY  
 TO SHARE WHAT'S IN MY HEART AND SOUL  
 THOUGH NOW I'M THINKING MORE CLEAR,  
 THE REST IS UP TO ME  
 THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN MY CONTROL.  
 I CAN SHAPE THIS MELODY  
 AND SINK THE NOTES DOWN LOW,  
 OR LIFT THEM UP AND LET THEM SOAR!  
 DID THAT SOUND COME OUT OF ME?!  
 WELL HEY, WHAT DO YOU KNOW?  
 WHY'D I NOT THINK OF THAT BEFORE?

I DIDN'T WANT TO SING THIS SONG,  
 BUT IT'S TIME FOR A KEY CHANGE  
 WHY SHOULD I LET IT ROLL ALONG  
 WHEN THERE'S ROOM TO RE-ARRANGE?  
 A SONG I DID NOT START,  
 BUT FILTERED THROUGH MY HEART  
 WHOSE TUNE IS IT IN THE END?  
 DON'T HAVE TO LET IT BE  
 SO SEPARATE FROM ME  
 WHERE WE DON'T FIT, I'LL MAKE IT BEND!  
 WHEN I FINISH WITH THIS SONG,  
 IT SURE WON'T BE WITH A MOAN.

DIDN'T START OFF AS MINE, WELL SIR, THAT'S JUST FINE  
'CAUSE I'LL MAKE IT MY OWN.

FIFTH EPISODE

EGGS

(offstage)

Here! Quickly, before somebody sees us!

Eggs and Osgood rush in, with  
their weapons in one hand, each  
dragging a bound and gagged  
captive - Hammy and Spunky - in  
the other.

OSGOOD

I can't believe we got away with it!

MITZI

Oh! Osgood, what mad blasphemy is this?  
Here's two of heaven's fav'rites bound and gagged,  
More than three actors onstage all at once!  
Oh hubris!

EGGS

Those old rules don't matter now!  
For we have thwarted the celestial plan!

MITZI

What's that supposed to mean?

OSGOOD

It means justice!  
The gods have tasted their own medicine!  
(Gestures to Hammy and Spunky)  
The beams of inspiration bathed these two  
Within its flickering cascades of light  
And all the gods were gathered in the dark,  
To see their will made flesh before their eyes.  
But it was not to be, 'cause we showed up,  
And stole these two away before they could  
Accomplish what the gods had bid them do!

EGGS

Now chaos reigns and we rule our own fates!  
Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

She rips the gag out of Hammy's  
mouth.

EGGS

So how do you like that, backstabbing jerk?!

HAMMY

But Eggs, I thu-thu-thought that we was pals!

EGGS

You stole my spotlight, then tossed me aside!  
Just how exactly does that make us pals?!

HAMMY

You nu-nuh-never seemed to mind it much.

EGGS

I've killed you for it 'bout a dozen times!

HAMMY

Well ... that hu-hurts my feelings just a bit.

EGGS

Gah!

Eggs starts punching and kicking  
Hammy while Osgood undoes Spunky's  
gag.

SPUNKY

You'll never get away with this, Osgood!  
Eckhart and Bert won't let harm come to me!  
They'll be here in a jiffy, set to smite!

OSGOOD

That's what I'm counting on.

SPUNKY

Ha ha! Wait, what?

OSGOOD

Your god is free to rescue you, but first  
He'll have to tell me why he up and left,  
Bestowing all the love that once was mine  
Upon a scheming brown-noser like you!

SPUNKY

Is that honestly all ya wanna know?  
Well, why didn't you say so at the start?!  
The gods are good to me 'cause I have faith!  
I'm plucky and resourceful, won't give up!  
Gee, maybe if you acted more like me,  
You wouldn't have the problems that you do.

EGGS

So, are you gonna kill him, or shall I?

SPUNKY

You've done it now by threatening my life -  
The gods are on their way to set me free!  
And boy oh boy, your rear end's gonna smart  
When Bert and Eckhart finish kicking it!  
And look! They come right now from over there!

Everyone looks in the direction of  
Spunky's gaze. For a long time.  
With no result.

SPUNKY

Wait for it ... wait for it ... any minute ...

Still nothing.

MITZI

I'm not so sure they're coming here, Osgood.  
Can't say I think that you deserve them to.

A light bulb appears over Eggs'  
head. She quietly slips offstage.

SPUNKY

They have to come! They can't just leave me here!

OSGOOD

That was my final gambit, my last trick.  
I'll never know the reason for it all.

HAMMY

I guh-guh-guess you'll have to let us go.

Eggs re-enters, pushing a cannon.

EGGS

Yeah, not so fast there, wise guy. We're not done.  
(To Osgood)  
You may not get the answers that you seek,  
But we can still stick it to heaven good.

OSGOOD

It's no use, Eggs. We're beat for real this time.  
The gods dealt from a crooked deck of old.  
There's nothing left to do now, only fold.

EGGS

You think I'm gonna give up, just like that?  
Then you don't know a thing 'bout Eggs the Cat!

WHEN LIFE HANDS ME LEMONS, I DON'T MAKE NO LEMONADE  
WHEN LIFE HANDS ME LEMONS, I DON'T MAKE NO LEMONADE  
INSTEAD I STUFF 'EM WITH EXPLOSIVES  
AND NOW I GOT ME SOME GRENADES!  
(POINTING TO SPUNKY AND HAMMY)  
THEY SAID 'LIFE'S A BOWL OF CHERRIES',  
ALL THEY GAVE US WERE THE PITS,  
WELL NOW WE GOT OURSELVES A CHANCE  
TO BLOW THAT BOWL TO BITS!  
I SAY WHEN LIFE HANDS YOU LEMONS, DON'T YOU MAKE THAT  
LEMONADE!  
INSTEAD WE'LL SQUEEZE OUT ALL THE JUICES  
AND MAKE IT RAIN ON THEIR PARADE!

Eggs brings out a match.

EGGS

THE GODS TOOK FROM YOU - LET'S RETURN THE FAVOR NOW  
LIGHT THE CANNON'S FUSE - WATCH THEIR FAVORITES GO KA-POW!

OSGOOD  
ALL THAT I WANTED WAS TO MAKE THEM SPEAK SOMEHOW.

EGGS  
SO THE GODS AIN'T TALKIN' TO YA? YOU CAN STILL MAKE THEM SAY  
'OW OW OW'!

OSGOOD  
But won't the gods just bring them back to life?

EGGS  
We've stolen them out of the gods' design,  
We kill 'em now, and it might fin'lly stick!

HAMMY  
Whu-what?! Let's not be hu-hu-hasty now!

Osgood looks at the match in Eggs'  
hand.

OSGOOD  
It does sound pretty tempting, I'll say that.

MITZI  
Osgood, I know this isn't what you want!  
Tell her to take that ugly thing away.

EGGS  
And what then? Let the gods get off scot free?  
WHEN YOU MAKE AN OMELETTE, BOY, YOU GOTTA BREAK SOME SHELLS  
YOU WANNA MAKE AN OMELETTE? THEN YOU GOTTA BREAK THOSE SHELLS  
IF THE GODS WON'T SERVE YOU JUSTICE,  
MAKE THEM EAT YOUR PAIN AS WELL!  
HEAVEN SAVED ITS BEAMS FOR ONLY HIM,  
SURE, YOU CAN LET THAT SLIDE,  
OR YOU CAN FLIP IT OVER  
AND FRY UP HIS SUNNY SIDE!

OSGOOD  
IF I WANNA MAKE AN OMELETTE, THEN I GOTTA BREAK SOME SHELLS

EGGS  
That's right!  
SO STICK HIS EGGS IN ONE HAND BASKET

OSGOOD AND EGGS  
AND THEN WE'LL SEND IT STRAIGHT TO HELL!

OSGOOD  
SO FATE JUST ROLLS DICE, THERE'S NO JUSTICE FROM ON HIGH

EGGS  
HEAVEN SENDS ITS BLESSING TO THE ONES WHO CHEAT AND LIE!

OSGOOD  
THE MEEK OF THE EARTH ARE SUPPOSED TO JUST STAND BY?  
WELL IF THE GODS DON'T SIT IN JUDGMENT



OSGOOD AND EGGS  
WHY DON'T WE GIVE IT A TRY!

OSGOOD  
'CAUSE WHEN LIFE HANDS ME LEMONS, I DON'T MAKE NO LEMONADE  
OH NO, WHEN LIFE HANDS ME LEMONS, I DON'T MAKE NO LEMONADE

OSGOOD AND EGGS  
INSTEAD WE'LL THROW THEM AT THE WICKED  
AS WE DECLARE THE GREAT CRUSADE!

MITZI  
(to Osgood)  
THAT'S IT! NO, I WON'T LET YOU!  
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN'  
SUCH VIOLENCE IS BENEATH YOU  
AND ONLY LEADS TO RUIN  
REMORSE KILLS WORSE THAN CANNONS CAN,  
A PAIN THAT SLOWLY LINGERS,  
AND I LOVE YOUR SOUL TOO MUCH  
TO LET IT SLIP RIGHT THROUGH MY FINGERS.

(To Eggs)  
You put that match away!

EGGS  
Come make me, wuss!

MITZI  
I've wanted to hear that from you all day!

Mitzi pounces on Eggs, and the two  
of them go at each other, tooth  
and claw in what quickly turns  
into a very, very violent swing  
dance, with Eggs surprisingly  
getting the worst of it.

OSGOOD  
It's not your battle, Mitzi! Don't - oh wow.  
Just look at that - the girl fights like a champ!

EGGS  
Oof! Ow! Hey, not the face! I'm still a star!

SPUNKY  
Who's she again?

HAMMY  
My former sidekick.

EGGS  
Gah!

MITZI  
(winding up)  
You wanna see real stars? I'll show you some!

Mitzi grabs Egg's baseball bat, and knocks her upside the head with it. Eggs goes spinning. When she stops, her eyes are now two big stars.

MITZI

NOW YOU'VE SEEN REAL STARS, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN COMPETE?  
THROW US FOR A LOOP AND SWEEP THE WORLD OFF ITS FEET?

Mitzi tackles her to the ground.

MITZI

OR MAYBE YOU'RE LEFT FEELING OVERWHELMED AND INCOMPLETE?

She rips the stars off Eggs' eyes, and starts stuffing them down Eggs' throat.

MITZI

WELL IF YOU NEED SOME HELP TO BE A STAR, REMEMBER YOU ARE  
WHAT YOU EAT!  
'CAUSE WHEN LIFE HANDS ME LEMONS, I MAKE ONE MEAN LEMONADE

SPUNKY AND HAMMY

SHE MAKES MEAN LEMONADE, SHE MAKES MEAN LEMONADE

MITZI

OH YES, WHEN LIFE HANDS ME LEMONS, I MAKE DARN GOOD LEMONADE!

SPUNKY AND HAMMY

DARN GOOD LEMONADE, DARN GOOD LEMONADE!

MITZI

YOU SEE, I CRUSH THE PULP OUT OF 'EM! THEN SIT AND SIP IT IN  
THE SHADE.

MITZI, SPUNKY, HAMMY

OH YEAH!

OSGOOD

Stop, Mitzi! That's - impressive! - but enough!

In the background, Eckhart's shadow appears, drawing in the air. The lines of a door start to form.

HAMMY

Luh-luh-luh-luh-luh-look!

SPUNKY

They're fin'llly here!  
The gods have heard my prayer, boy oh boy!

The newly formed door opens, and Eckhart steps into the cartoon world he created. Osgood falls to his knees.

ECKHART  
Hey there, Osgood.

OSGOOD  
Eckhart, Lord and Creator, is that you?  
I somehow always thought you'd be ... taller.

ECKHART  
Yeah, I get that a lot.

SPUNKY  
Oh great day of deliverance! Yippee!  
My god's a swift hawk riding on the wind!  
Avenging those who love him with great speed!

ECKHART  
Huh?

SPUNKY  
You'll get what's coming to you now, Osgood!

ECKHART  
You will. Answers, if I have any. At the very least,  
a conversation. Let's talk.

SPUNKY  
Wha- what?! But he attacked me! Threatened death!  
I thought you'd come in terror and in wrath!

ECKHART  
I'm not really good at either of those. Could you get  
these two out of here, Mitzi? Give Osgood and I some  
privacy?

MITZI  
Sure.

ECKHART  
Nice job, by the way. You surprised me.

MITZI  
Oh. Um, thanks.

Mitzi grabs the ropes binding  
Spunky and Hammy, and leads them  
off.

SPUNKY  
But I want blood and thunder!  
A little retribution, pretty please?

With Mitzi gone, Eggs finally recovers enough to be defiant again.

EGGS

Don't even try to order me away!  
For I'll not budge though all of heaven quakes!  
No promise that you make can sway my will,  
No weapon that you wield can make me run!

ECKHART

Really? (Looks at the pencil in his hand) What about this?

He flips the pencil over to the eraser end, and holds it out. Eggs sees it, lets out a terrified scream and runs off.

ECKHART

So, where were we?

OSGOOD

You said answers or a conversation.

ECKHART

Ah. Neither of those feel quite right, now that we come down to it. No. What's needed is an apology. I am so, so sorry that I had to leave you.

OSGOOD

You didn't 'have to leave me', you chose to.

ECKHART

No, Osgood, I really didn't.

OSGOOD

But you're all-powerful, omnipotent!  
You say, "Let there be doors!" and then there are.  
There are no limits to what you can do,  
So why do something that you don't want to?

ECKHART

(to himself)

Oh god. How do you explain modern copyright law to a two dimensional being?

OSGOOD

There's more than two dimensions in the world?!

ECKHART

Yes, but let's not get into that right now. I can do or make anything in your world, it's true. But in mine, I have certain ... constraints.

OSGOOD

Constraints? For you? But I don't understand.

ECKHART

And I don't know if you ever will. I can't explain it in terms that will make sense to you. Just know, please know, that I didn't choose to let you go.

OSGOOD

That's a hard pill to swallow from a god.

ECKHART

I could have just gotten Spunky and left, but I didn't. I chose to be here with you now, and I have no reason to lie. If I did, I might be able to come up with something more convincing.

OSGOOD

All right, maybe you didn't choose to leave, But tell me this - why Spunky? He's so ... bleh!

ECKHART

What can I say? He's a lot younger than you. I spent years developing your character. He'll get better, wiser. I promise. Maybe he needs something to center him. A girlfriend, a buddy, or maybe a pet? Can a skunk have a pet dog, or is that too problematic?

OSGOOD

I'd go with girlfriend if I were you. I think that Mitzi saved my soul today. It makes me wonder if she has before, And I just failed to notice it somehow.

ECKHART

She surprises me, she really does.

OSGOOD

But how are you surprised? You made her up, And planned her ev'ry step since she was drawn! How'd you design her purpose in this life If you don't even know all that she is?

ECKHART

Is that why you think I created you all? So I could just know everything? Make it all click like clockwork in some elaborate machine that produces a result I want?

OSGOOD

That is the general consensus, yes.

ECKHART

Well, the general consensus is wrong.

OSGOOD

If that is so, why did you create us?

Eckhart thinks about this, and finds himself amused at the answer.

ECKHART

For fun. For the hell of it, really. Because it brings me joy. And always surprises me. Because I learn so much from drawing you - about art, life, myself. That's right, *you teach me*. Put that in your theological pipe and smoke it! I had all these ideas, and stories, and ... love bottle up in my head, and keeping them to myself just wasn't enough. I had to pour them out and share them with somebody - that's the only thing that makes them worth a damn. I created you to carry some of that. And by god, you have! More than I expected.

OSGOOD

I'll carry more, I swear! Just please don't leave!

ECKHART

I won't be drawing your adventures anymore, Osgood. I can't help that. But you'll never be without me completely. Your life is made up of my thoughts, my hopes, and it always will be. Hold on to that, and maybe you'll surprise the new guy too.

OSGOOD

But what am I to put my faith in now  
If you're not sketching out the grand design?  
What am I to believe in? Tell me, please!

Eckhart is at a loss for what to say at first. But slowly it begins to dawn on him. He starts out tentatively, feeling out the words, digesting it as much for himself as for his creation.

Exodos

ECKHART

DON'T STAND ON YOUR BELIEFS, CHASE THEM INTENTLY  
DON'T CLING TO FAITH FOR LIFE, BUT HOLD IT GENTLY.  
IF YOU RESOLVE TO LEARN FROM EV'RY HARDSHIP THAT BEFALLS,  
THEN THERE WILL BE A PURPOSE FOR IT ALL.  
DON'T RUN AWAY FROM PAIN, BUT LET IT REACH YOU,  
ACCEPT THE LESSONS THAT IT HAS TO TEACH YOU.  
AND IF YOUR TROUBLES HELP TO BREAK ANOTHER PERSON'S FALL,  
THEN THERE HAS BEEN A PURPOSE FOR THEM ALL!  
SO LIVE LIKE THERE'S DESIGN, THOUGH YOU DON'T SEE ONE.  
MAKE EV'RY CHOICE WITH HOPE IT WILL APPEAR  
THEN WHEN YOU LOOK BEHIND YOU, THERE'LL BE ONE  
SPREADING OUT TO ALL THAT YOU HOLD DEAR.  
SO ALWAYS AIM FOR TRUTH, AND LET IT LEAD YOU  
RIGHT OFF THE BEATEN PATH IF IT MAY NEED TO.  
(ECKHART PULLS OSGOOD INTO AN EMBRACE)  
ACCEPT EACH ACT OF LOVE, NO MATTER HOW BROKEN OR SMALL,  
AND THERE WILL BE A PURPOSE FOR THEM ALL.

Eckhart walks slowly back to the door, then turns to Osgood and waves. Osgood waves back.

Eckhart exits, as Mitzi enters  
with the Chorus, the Messenger and  
Topsy.

MITZI

Did he answer your questions after all?

OSGOOD

Can't really say. It almost feels like he's  
A question we can be the answer to.  
Can you forgive me, Mitzi?

MITZI

Me? What for?

OSGOOD

(More spoken than sung at first)

I'D GOTTEN IT ALL WRONG, IT'S NOT ABOUT ME  
GETTING SOME PRIZE FOR LIVING DEVOUTLY  
I THOUGHT THAT MY REWARD WOULD BE A FANCY COSMIC BALL,  
BUT THERE'S A DEEPER PURPOSE FOR US ALL.  
I THOUGHT THAT I HAD SERVED THE GODS COMPLETELY,  
THAT DOING GOOD WAS MY ONLY CONCERN  
TURNS OUT I WAS JUST A PAYCHECK EMPLOYEE,  
WHO THOUGHT A HAPPY LIFE WAS WHAT I EARNED  
BUT LIVING FOR YOURSELF'S NOT REALLY LIVING  
AND I AM NOT ENTITLED TO A DAMN THING  
NO MORE WILL I BE SATISFIED WITH JUST ME STANDING TALL  
UNTIL THE GRAND DESIGN ENGULFS US ALL!

Osgood extends his hand to the  
Chorus Leader. They shake, which  
quickly turns into an embrace.  
Osgood then moves into the chorus,  
embracing each one of them in turn  
while Mitzi and Topsy watch off to  
the side, with the Chorus softly  
singing Eckhart's verse of the  
Exodos quietly underneath.

MITZI

See any future in this, smarty-pants?

TIPSY

I see him struggle on through lesser tales  
Never to reach the comic heights of old,  
And yet many young gods shall get their start  
With drawing his adventures, and will learn  
From him the little things that sprout new life  
Within these gods' creations later on.  
Behold! Osgood gives spark to Droopy Dogs,  
Woodpeckers that are Woody, Daffy Ducks,  
And Bunnies that are somehow also Bugs  
His reputation falls to disrepair,  
And yet his spirit shall live on elsewhere!  
A vision with farsighted news of joy,  
Although the current forecast ain't so hot.  
You think that I should tell him, or hold back?

Mitzi looks over at Osgood, who has finished embracing the chorus, and now looks out into the distance with renewed purpose. Mitzi starts to laugh - a wise laugh, stuffed with pain and joy.

MITZI

I don't think it would make a diff'rence now!

She keeps on laughing as Osgood stares off into the horizon, in search of something.

OSGOOD AND CHORUS

WE'LL LIVE LIKE THERE'S DESIGN, THOUGH WE DON'T SEE ONE.  
MAKE EV'RY CHOICE WITH HOPE IT WILL APPEAR  
THEN WHEN WE LOOK BEHIND US, THERE'LL BE ONE  
SPREADING OUT TO ALL THAT WE HOLD DEAR  
SO ALWAYS AIM FOR TRUTH, AND LET IT LEAD YOU  
RIGHT OFF THE BEATEN PATH IF IT MAY NEED TO  
ACCEPT EACH ACT OF LOVE, NO MATTER HOW BROKEN OR SMALL,  
AND THERE WILL BE A PURPOSE FOR THEM ALL.

Osgood clicks his heels and runs off after new adventures.

Curtain.