



(A serious drama with music in Three Acts)

# SHINE'M UP, SHINE'M UP!



(A movie adapted from the Musical)

By  
Sidney Goldberg  
Music  
By



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## **SHINE'EM UP, SHINE'EM UP!**

### **Cast**

**ABIE.....70 year old adorable Jew.  
Speaks with a slight accent.**

**GROVER.....70 year old, Black, ex-jazz  
singer. Sings and has a  
contagious laugh. Haunted  
by his fathers past.**

**CARMEN.....35 year old Puerto Rican  
hooker. Attractive, speaks  
with accent.**

**GREG.....45 years old, mean, angry  
drunk.**

# SHINE'EM UP, SHINE'EM UP!

(CD upon request)

## Songs

AND THAT IS WHY (Abie)

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Abie)

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE (Grover).

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Grover)

INJUNS (Grover and Abie)

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Grover)

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE (Underscoring)

I JUST AIN'T GOT IT (Grover)

(Underscoring)

HOT TAMALI (Carmen)

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Carmen).

EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM (Grover)

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Grover)

I LIE (Abie)

AND THAT IS WHY (Underscoring)

I HATE HIM (Carmen)

I WAS THE KING (Grover)

SHOW BIZ (Abie)

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Carmen).

THE CAT IS RICH (Grover)

S TOO LONELY (Abie)

PERMISO, EXCUSI (Carmen)

RITA (Grover)

IF IT WASN'T FOR LITTLE OLD ME (Greg)

I AIN'T YOUR SLAVE (Grover)

SLAP HAPPY (Greg)

SHINE'EM UP (reprise Carmen, Abie and Grover)

# SHINE'EM UP, SHINE'EM UP!

Yesterday. 7:45 AM: GROVER takes off his coat, looks around, mopes and sings. 1

## EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM

Just call me a loser,  
I don't have a dime.  
They call me a boozer,  
That needs a good time.

Been livin' by myself.  
I need some lovin'.  
N' sure could some help.  
Sweet turtle dove'n.

The early bird gets the worm,  
That's what they say.  
Today is gonna be my turn.  
I'll make 'em pay when I get that  
worm.

Just can't sing anymore.  
Lost my autograph.  
I just don't know the score.  
N' I never laugh.

I sure could use a friend.  
Someone I can Trust.  
Until the bitter end.  
When I turn to dust.

The early bird gets the worm,  
That's what they say.  
Today is gonna be my turn.  
I'll make 'em pay when I get that  
worm.

## GROVER

Damn, looks like everybody went home, except these turkeys that work here. When the hell is it gonna stop snowin'? Must be 10 feet outside and it looks like it ain't ever gonna let up. I don't know how the bus got here, but I'm sure glad it did. I came here early 'cause I wanted to beat Abie for a change. I don't know how the little Jew does it, but he does. Like yesterday, beside the 20 shines he did before I got here, he did at least 20 more and all I did was five all day. Damn, maybe it's the way he says *shine'em up, shine'em up?* Hopefully I'll catch a few shines before he gets here. Fix his little Jew ass, I will. Make him jealous instead of me being jealous. See how he likes it, besides, I owe him some money, \$30. That sure was real nice of him splittin' his shines with me, otherwise, with him doin' 20 and me doin' nothin', Greg would have fired my ass for sure. Hey, I know he's getting' ready to get rid of me, that's why he brought that real fine lookin' babe to be our cohort. Cohort my ass, who the hell needs a cohort? What I need's some big tippers who want a shine... I wonder what she's doin' with that ugly, drunken bastard anyway... Man, that Jew boy sure can be a sweetheart. Guess, that's why I told him about me growin' up in the South, my sweet little Mama, my brothers and sisters, about my no good drunken father, his Yankee baseball cap and his big knife, may his tortured ass rest in wherever the hell he is. Ain't that a bitch? I was confessin' to Abie who's a Jew and Jews don't believe in confession. Wonder what those Heeb's believe in anyway? Abie don't know it, but he's the only Jew I talk to and I'm sure grateful I have him to talk to sometimes.

(Laughs.)

Hee hee, the man's teachin' me Jewish and I dig it, I really do. *Gonif's* a crook, *schlep's*

(MORE)

GROVER (Cont'd)

like pullin' somethin' I think and *meschugeneh* is crazy. I better watch out or that cat'll make me a Bar Mitzvah and I'll

(Snaps fingers.)

become Jewish just like that and he can forget about that circumcision jive, 'cause, what happens if me and my ladies don't like it? They can't put it back, can they? That's why I ain't interested, no way Jose. Hey, I don't believe it, but there's two guys comin' my way. Ooh wee, this might just turn out.

(Sings.)

to be my lucky day "*Hallelujah I'm a bum, hallelujah bum again. Hallelujah give us a*

(Sings with gusto.)

*hand to remind us again.*" Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up! For two dollars I'll spin your wheels. Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up! You'll feel cool you'll click your heels. Please shine'em up mister. Damn, with the snow and ev'rybody's gone home, don't suppose too many people gonna get their shoes shined today.

ABIE appears.

ABIE

You're here before me? I don't believe it.

GROVER

Hey man, didn't Greg say something about how the early bird gets the freakin' worm? Hello. So, how's my favorite Mocky doin'?

ABIE

How's your favorite Mocky doing? Don't ask. *Nu*, any action *boichic*?

GROVER

Just like New Years Eve and *boichic*'s a boy, right?

ABIE

It certainly is and how can you be that busy in this rotten weather?

GROVER

Unbelievable, like I haven't stopped and you said you were that busy yesterday, didn't you Jew boy? So, why shouldn't a Blackman be busy today? We got rights, don't we?

ABIE

You, and your rights, so tell me, how many shins did you do, you *gonif*.

GROVER

I'm a *gonif*? You're the *gonif*, 'cause you did 20 before I got here yesterday, so, I did 18 big ones today and it's about time, too. So, there *gonif*, that'll teach you to be late and guess who finally got the worm and you should have been here, 'cause this basketball player, Grewell or Sprewell or somethin',  
(Gives money)  
gave me a \$100 tip so, here's the 30 you lent me yesterday, brother. Sure appreciate it.

ABIE

(Takes money)

Thank you, so where's my coffee and bagel? What did you forget again?

GROVER

I was in too much of a rush to stop and get it, besides, how's about you gettin' me my breakfast for a change, cheapskate? You makin' all that money, ain't you?

ABIE

(Opens cash register and looks in.)

All right, but the machine takes quarters and I don't have any... Grover, I thought you said you did 25 shins? Where's the slips, where's all the *gelt* you said you made?

GROVER

Well, err, I don't know how to say this, but I really didn't do 30 shins, Abie. Wish I did.

## ABIE

So, why did you tell me you did 35 shines?  
you *gonif*.

## GROVER

Because I was jealous that you did 40 shines  
yesterday and all I did was five. Five  
misible shines, and today I didn't even do  
one, not one. I was just trying' to make you  
(Laughs)  
jealous, that's all Jew boy.

## ABIE

Of me you're jealous? Of an *alte cocker*  
you're jealous? I didn't do 50 shines before  
you got here yesterday. I did one *facockte*  
shine. I just told you I did 60 shines because  
maybe I'm a liar and I'm so sorry, but I  
(Sings.)  
can't help it.

## I LIE

I lie, don't ask me why,  
I cry because I lie.  
I lie, that's all I know,  
Even when it snows I lie.

I lie, I am uncouth.  
Can't tell the truth, I lie.  
I lie, a crying shame.  
I'm to blame so I lie.

When my Anna left and went away.  
I cried and drank to ease the pain.  
And suddenly my hair turned to gray.  
Why does it always have to rain?

The older I get the more it hurts.  
And so, I run into the past.  
A dream where everything always works.  
Too bad the good times didn't last.

I lie, don't ask me why,  
I cry because I lie.  
I lie, that's all I know,  
Even when it snows I lie.

I lie, I am uncouth.  
 Can't tell the truth, I lie.  
 I lie, a crying shame.  
 I'm to blame so I lie.

G-d grant me peace and serenity.  
 When will I ever laugh again?  
 And will I ever learn to like me?  
 Now all I ask for is a friend.

I lie, don't ask me why,  
 I cry because I lie.  
 I lie, that's all I know,  
 Even when it snows I lie.

I lie, I am uncouth.  
 Can't tell the truth, I lie.  
 I lie, a crying shame.  
 I'm to blame so I lie.

I lie all the time, to you and everyone and I  
 don't know why. What am I trying to hide  
 can you tell me? I didn't do 70 shines.

GROVER

You didn't, you really didn't do all them  
 shines? Oh, you sweet Jew, I'm so glad I  
 could jump.

ABIE

And you know what, even though you don't  
 like me, the sweet Jew, maybe, I like you  
 (Sings.)  
 because, "*Oh you got to have friends.*"  
 Boy, can I use a real friend and that's the  
 truth.

THEY both hug and jump for joy.

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GROVER

That means that you put your bread in the  
 register just for me and I'm sure beholdin' to  
 you. Well, the next 20 shines we do, we  
 ain't gonna make out no slips and you gonna  
 get your money back and so will I Mr. Kike.

ABIE

Would you do that for me, Mr. Kike, you lying Jew boy?

GROVER

Damn right I would. Hey, it ain't your fault you were born a Heeb instead of black-and-beautiful like me, and you just said we were  
(Laughs.)  
friends, not that I believe you liar...

ABIE

Tell you the truth; thinking about you and your beautiful voice, your drunken father with his baseball cap, his big knife and how he killed that Deacon, I couldn't close my eyes.

GROVER

(Sings.)

*"I couldn't sleep at all last night. 'Cause I  
(Laughs.)  
was thinkin' 'bout you-ou."*

ABIE

What a voice and I love your laugh. Listen, why don't you tell me about when you were a singer? At least you were famous, I, I was  
(Moves fingers together.)  
never famous, not even this close.

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GROVER

Hey man, I told you enough already. How's, about you tellin' me about your life for a change? I know you five or six years and where'd you say you were born...?

ABIE

I try to forget and this *yold* asks me where I was born, nu? Forget about where I was born. It's a past that I try to forget, ancient history and I'd rather not say.

GROVER

Why not? I told you my story and I ain't ever told anyone, much less a Jew. Why can't you tell me your story, ain't I good enough?

ABIE

You're good enough and if you think your story was sad, mine's even worse and I try never to think of it because the pain is unbearable, it still drives me *meschugeh*, I'm crazy alright.

GROVER

Come on Abie; see I called you Abie, didn't I? Since I shared my miserable childhood with you, maybe you could do the same? We just might become, what's that song you  
(Sings)  
just sang? "*Oh you got to have friends...*"  
Do, it man, 'cause like you, I need a friend so I'd sure like to know your story brother. Now where'd you say you was born?

WE hears Underscoring of THAT IS WHY."

ABIE

Oy, I was born 1930, in Schmerheim, Germany, just before that Nazi *chorlehrya* took over. My father was a doctor and my mother *Channa* was a language teacher. We had a beautiful home, but because of that Nazi bastard's determination to exterminate us, desperate and frightened for our lives, my father sold our home and most of our possession for *bubkes*, that's almost nothing. Using most of the money he had gotten on forged passports, he had our names changed to Himler and we fled to Bendine, Poland. Who knew East Poland was where Treblinka and all the ovens would be...

GROVER

Damn them freakin' ovens...

ABIE

...Anyway, one day a neighbor from Schmerheim came to Bendine; in fact she was once a patient of my father's, recognized him and reported him to the SS. I'll never forget what he whispered to me, I was hiding in the closet as they took him and my hysterical mother away: "*Never forget you are a Jew Abie, never forget.*" My mother was taken to Aushwitz and my father to Bergen Belsen... I never saw them again, never.

GROVER

You still miss them, don't you? What a drag...

ABIE

(Sadly shakes head.)

...Marta, our neighbor, who was a dear friend of my parents: My father delivered both her children, found me hiding in the closet, took me in and hid me in her basement. When she got frightened for her children, because she heard the SS was looking everywhere for Juden, Jews, Marta took a chance and hid me in her attic. You know that movie, "*The Diary of Ann Frank?*" I lived it in it for almost two year, I was there *boichic*, I was there and I'll never forget it.

GROVER

Damn Nazis. They were just like the Klan, weren't they?

ABIE

They were worse, much worse. They had ovens, gas ovens, crematoriums, where six million Jews, and who knows how many homosexuals and Gypsies died, *olev hasholem*... May they rest in peace.

GROVER

You said that about Joe Williams, what's that mean?

ABIE

I told you, *olev hasholem* means may they rest in peace, its a homily, a Hebrew adage we say for the dead.

GROVER

...Anyway, how'd you get to America?

ABIE

An interesting story my dear friend and something and someone I will never forget, may she rest in peace.

GROVER

(Sort of laughs)

Nu, I'm waitin' Abie, I'm all ears boichic.

ABIE

Marta had heard that the SS was searching all the houses looking for Jews and she was scared for the safety of her children, so, at three in the morning, she took me to a convent where Sister Catherine took me in. She was to become the kindest and most wonderful person I ever met. A saint.

GROVER

Saint Christopher is my favorite and always was. I used to hear some stories about some Jews hidin' out in a church and now I know it's true and I'm glad...

ABIE

...It's true it's true. At first, I was petrified, because I thought I would probably go to hell for having to look at Jesus Christ on that cross all day long, but I knew I had to survive, because six million Jews were more than enough. For the next year or so, Sister Catherine fed, clothed and called me Heinz, not like the baked beans, but Heinz the *goy*. With my nose and my ears, I was some *goy* all right. When we were alone, she taught me French, Latin like my mother, even gave me a copy of the Old Testament and late at

(MORE)

ABIE (Cont'd)

night, taught me my *Haftorah*, what I had to learn for my *Bar Mitzvah*, which was in six months. Hard to believe, but she read and spoke Hebrew.

GROVER

And them Nazis were all around, lookin' and tryin' to catch your ass. Unbelievable. What a woman Abie, what a fine woman, reminds me of my sweet Mama, she does... Nu? I'm waiting.

ABIE

I think I said enough, don't you?

GROVER

There's more, ain't there??

ABIE

Don't ask.

GROVER

Well, what about that cat Plato and his cleansin' jive?

ABIE

You don't forget, do you?

GROVER

I'm almost intelligent, ain't I?

ABIE

Okay, okay Mr. Intelligent... When, I was 13 she gave me this old, battered *talis*, that's a religious shawl she had hidden, *Bar Mitzvahed* me, and she laughed at Hitler and his *fahschtunkeneh*, that's stinking SS. "Never *Juden rouse*," she cried, "Never *Juden rous*. I never had children Abie, but if I had a son I would want him to be just like you," she said and kissed me. She never stopped teaching me, but the one thing, the most important thing I learned that I would never forget was: she taught me how to

(MORE)

ABIE (Cont'd)

laugh instead of cry under the worst of circumstance. She said, "*Abie, always laugh at the world and the world will laugh with you.*" She managed to get me records of Groucho Marks, Al Jolson, Georgie Jessel.

GROVER

That's why you're so funny, ain't it Jew boy? I mean Abie, I mean Abie.

ABIE

(Smiles)

...At night she would sneak me into her room where we would listen and then she would make these funny faces and we would laugh. I didn't think I would ever laugh again, but thanks to her I did. I loved to hear her laugh. In war torn Europe, her laughter was music to my big ears... I can still hear her laugh. I love you Sister Catherine I will always love you. It's funny, I remember her more than I do my beloved parents. I even have a picture of her. Do you want to see it? I carry it in my wallet. I look at it when I get depressed which is  
(Takes picture from wallet and gives to Grover.)  
everyday. It's old, very old, but to me she still looks so beautiful. Here, this was my beloved Sister Catherine and that's it. Socrates or no Socrates I've enough cleansing, enough.

Underscoring ends. GROVER looks at picture as CARMEN enters and appears battered.

ABIE

Oh, my G-d, what happened to you Carmen?

GROVER

You got a black eye. How'd you get a black eye...? Le'me guess, it was...

## CARMEN

(In tears.)

...He did it, he beat the hell out of me, that drunken *bastardo*, because I wouldn't give him a... I wouldn't give him shit so, he punched me, that's how I got this black eye. He's an alchi and he won't admit it and go for help, because all alchis are in denial. I was in denial before I went to NA and found my higher power and did the steps. He beat

(Sobs.)

the shit out of me and I can't take it. He, just kicked me out of his Caddy, I fell and

(Rubs hand.)

hurt my hand and you should have heard him laugh, like a fuckin' hyena.

## ABIE

Oh, you poor sweetheart, you poor *buhbala*. I'll go and get you some ice. I'll be right

(Exits.)

back.

## CARMEN

He is such a mother... I hate him I hate him. I don't know what to do, where to go?

Whenever he gets drunk and he's drunk all the time, he get violent and takes it out on me Because of his *malo* temper, I'm afraid,

(Loud.)

*a yudeme, a yudeme*, somebody, please help me. He's gonna kill me, he's gonna kill me.

## GROVER

Well, one thing's for sure, you can't stay with him any longer if he says he's gonna kill you. If I were you, I'd find me another place to live and fast.

## CARMEN

I would, but how can I? I'm broke, I stopped working and I don't have any money.

## GROVER

You said when you were workin' you made  
some big bread. What happened to all your  
money?

## CARMEN

(Sings.)

## I HATE HIM

I hate his fuckin' guts.  
I wish he'd turn to dust.  
He beats me 'til I bleed.  
The man is filled with greed.

*MARICON!*

*BESA ME COOLO!*

METHADONE.

I'D LIKE TO TELL HIM WHERE  
TO GO.

WHERE TO SHOVE IT!

I LOVE IT; I'D LIKE TO TELL  
HIM WHERE TO SHOVE IT!

He talks a good story.  
And I believed his shit.  
He's evil and gory.  
On him I'd like to spit.

*MARICON!*

*BESA ME COOLO!*

METHADONE.

I'D LIKE TO TELL HIM WHERE  
TO GO.

WHERE TO SHOVE IT!

I LOVE IT; I'D LIKE TO TELL  
HIM WHERE TO SHOVE IT!

Meanest sonofabitch.  
He lies and swear he don't.  
And he calls me a witch.  
He will and then he won't.

*MARICON!*

*BESA ME COOLO!*

METHADONE.

I'D LIKE TO TELL HIM WHERE  
TO GO.

WHERE TO SHOVE IT!  
I LOVE IT; I'D LIKE TO TELL  
HIM WHERE TO SHOVE IT!

I have a little son, Jose and my mother takes care of my beautiful bambino. He's not really a baby anymore, he's 17, but to me he is... I was 15 when I became *prenjada*,

(Sobs.)

pregnant and I had him and now he's 17, and every penny I made on my back I gave to *mi madre*, because I want him to have a good home, a good education, not like me. He's in high school, Stuyvesant and he's going to go to college. He has to go to college, because he is *muey inteligente*. Honor roll, my Jose made the honor roll.

ABIE

(Enters.)

Here's the ice and I brought a few napkins. Put the ice in the napkins and put it on your eye.

CARMEN

(Sits and puts ice pack on eye.)

Thank you Abie, that's very thoughtful.

ABIE

It's my pleasure sweetheart, my pleasure.

GROVER

(Sings)

*"Luck be a lady tonight. Never get out of my sight."*

ABIE

You don't know it, but Grover was a famous singer. This man was a big star Carmen, a biggie.

GROVER

I wasn't a big star or a famous singer Abie. I just used to sing a little, that's all.

CARMEN

Were you really a famous singer, Grover?

GROVER

No, but I wish I was.

ABIE

Don't listen to him. He used to sing with some of the most famous people.

CARMEN

Really, who, tell me who? Please.

GROVER

Well, once-in-awhile I used to sing with Basie and the Duke.

CARMEN

Count Basie and Duke Ellington?

ABIE

And what about all those famous singers? Sara, Dinah, Ella and what's her name? Oh yeah, Nancy Wilson.

CARMEN

Oh, my G-d, can I have your autograph senor?

GROVER

(Laughs.)

Yeah, where do you want it?

CARMEN

(Touches ass.)

Right here.

ALL laugh.

CARMEN (cont'd)

Would you please tell me about your singing career, Grover? I sure could use something to get my mind off of this eye, and my hand is killing me.

ABIE

And I'm just nosy, that's all boichic. Nu, I'm waiting mister, I'm waiting.

## GROVER

All this is gonna do is depress you, 'cause when I think about it, it depresses the hell out of me. Anyway, I got my first gig when I was about 25 in Brooklyn. Carl's Corner in Canarsie. It was this real hip jazz joint. 1956, I got 40 bucks a show, seven shows a weeks and that was a lot of bread in those days. Man I was flyin'. Started singin' all over Brooklyn and met this cat, Lee

(Laughs.)

Goldfarb. A real, bad ass Jew agent who really dug me. The cat was fantastic. Soon I was singin' in some hip bars in the Bronx, Queens too. For a guy that grew up poor I was makin' some good bread. Met this beautiful woman named Rita from Jamaica, fell in love and we got married. I thought I had it all, 'cause she was as beautiful as Lena Horne, only her skin was golden brown and I loved her to

(Sings.)

death...

## MY WOMAN

The way she used to call my name,  
She'd take my breath away.  
To her everything was a game.  
We'd play house everyday.

With her love I was the king.  
This king had everything.  
Winter always felt like Spring.  
And my heart would always sing.

She kissed me and I was on fire.  
She smiles and I would melt.  
My life was filled with desire.  
Her love was all I felt.

With her love felt like the king.  
This king had everything.  
Winter always felt like Spring.  
And my heart would always sing.

Lord, why does it still hurt so much?  
Seems time doesn't heal it all.  
And I sure miss her gentle touch.  
That's why I'm climbin' up a wall.

With her love I was the king.  
This king had everything.  
Winter always felt like Spring.  
And my heart would always sing.  
I'll always love that woman, always.

CARMEN

I wish I had someone to love me like you  
loved her, Grover...

ABIE

What's more important is, do you love  
yourself? That is the \$64 question.

GROVER

That's a good question and one I asked  
myself many times and don't give me no  
Plato, no Aristotle jive. I'm through.

ABIE

Is there more?

GROVER

Damn you with your more. Of course  
there's more. People started to really dig  
me. Did the Steel Pier in Atlantic City in  
59. Then Lee took me to Europe, can you  
dig it? A week at the Odeon theatre in Paris,  
the Old Vic in London, Switzerland,  
Amsterdam, then I got a recording contract  
with Decca. Did a real groovy blues album.  
Sang with

(Sings.)

Basie in 62, "*Goin' to Chicago, sorry but I  
can't take you.*"

ABIE

That's another one of my favorites...

GROVER

(Sings.)

...Duke in 63. *"You must take the A train."*  
I was cookin' and makin' all kinds of bread  
and the best thing about it was, Rita, my  
wife, my life, my best friend.

ABIE

I can't tell you how proud I am of you,  
Grover. Boy you were some star and you  
had someone to love, which was even more  
important, like my darling, Anna who I  
loved more than anything.

CARMEN

Paris, London, Switzerland. Basie,  
Ellington, man, you were really cookin'.

ABIE

Keep going keep going. There's more, isn't  
there Grover? So, tell us.

GROVER

Did an album with the Queen, Dinah just  
before she passed, Ella in '64 or '66. Things  
were happenin' real fast. Birdland, and  
Miles played side in 67. Up until that  
moment, that was the highlight of my career  
and to top it all off, in 69 or 70, Lee booked  
me into Carnegie Hall. My woman told  
everybody. Must have had 50 or 60 of her  
family and friends there openin' night. Lee  
was there to root me on and sittin' fifth row  
center was the love of my life. I could see  
her blowin' me a kiss as I walked on stage.  
There was so much applause that it was  
deafenin'. I bowed, blew a kiss to Rita as  
the band started playin'. I opened with,

(Sings.)

*"Am I blue, you'd be too. Ain't these tears  
killin' me, am I blue..."* Man, I was

(Sings.)

cookin'. Did, *"Folks here is a story, a sad,  
sad story 'bout a gal, her name was Minnie  
the Moocher. She was a low-down hoocha*

(MORE)

GROVER (Cont'd)

*coocher...*” “*Summertime and the livin’ is easy...*” “*Night and Day you are the one,*” and “*Miss Otis Regrets she’s unable to*

(Laughs.)

*lunch today, madam.*” Ha ha, I sure loved that tune and so did they. Flash lights, were goin’ off all over the place. People were takin’ pictures of me, I was the star, I knew

(Sings.)

it and it sure felt good. Then I sang, “*All of me, why not take all of me?*” Suddenly a giant flashbulb went off, pop, right before my eyes. I blinked, ‘cause for a second I was blinded, I couldn’t see. I blinked again, rubbed my eyes and looked up to the balcony, which was jammed packed, I blinked again and couldn’t believe what I saw and heard. There was ole Luke Chisholm, my mean, drunken father, bigger’n life, wearin’ his turned around baseball cap, laughin’ hard as he could laugh and pointin’ his big, ugly knife at me and

(WE see and hear FATHER.)

sayin’ “I told you boy, I told you I’d be back, didn’t I?” I started to shake and suddenly it all came back to me. I remembered what he said when he was in prison. “*Wherever I go, whenever I sing and I was goin’ to become a real good singer like him, I would always see his face, hear him laugh and when I do, I would start to shake, forget all the words I was singin’, look like the damn fool they said he was and become a drunken nobody like him.*” And there I was, shakin’ like a leaf and sure as shit, just like he said I would, I forgot the words, I drew a blank, nothin’ came out.

CARMEN

Nothing, nada, you forgot all the words, just like your father said, *ai caramba*.

ABIE

Nu, what are you waiting for, Grover?  
Don't you know what Kierkegaard once  
said?

GROVER

First Plato and now Kierkegaard. Who the  
hell is Kierkegaard?

ABIE

A psychiatrist that some say was as great as  
Freud, who said, "*Let it all hang out  
brother, let it all hang out.*"

GROVER

He didn't really say that, did he?

ABIE

(Grins.)

Are you calling me a liar? He also wrote  
about one's dissatisfaction with one's father,  
*nu...?*

GROVER

(Nods yes.)

Ones dissatisfaction with one's father,  
(WE see and hear FATHER.)  
huh...? And then I heard him laughin' some  
more. I hated when he used to laugh and I  
hated hearin' his laugh right then on the  
most important night of my life in Carnegie  
Hall even more. Stop laughin' Papa, please  
stop laughin' and pointin' your knife at me,  
I cried to myself as some people stood and  
started to clap, then they started to hoot and  
. (WE see and hear FATHER.)  
howl Somebody yelled, "*What'd you forget  
the words dummy?*" I couldn't breathe. I  
was so embarrassed I ran off the stage. The  
headlines in all the papers the following  
(WE see and hear FATHER.)  
mornin', including Variety said: "*Grover  
Alexander rubs eyes and bombs at Carnegie  
Hall,*" "*Stop using Grover!*" "*Alexander  
Stoned at Carnegie.*" "*Grover forgets  
words.*" I never sang again professionally.  
I just couldn't.

## CARMEN

You never sang again? What a freakin'  
drag, 'cause you can sing better today than  
most of those young, punk rappers. Man,  
you can sing.

## ABIE

Now, you believe me when I told you he  
(Sings.)  
was a big star, Carmen? *Nehboch*.

## SHOW BIZ

He once was on the hit parade,  
Thinks he's a falling star.  
He feels he doesn't make the grade  
He's just not up to par.

He has a voice but doesn't sing.  
And boy is that a waste.  
Talented, should use his wings.  
And fly off into space.

Doesn't see who he is,  
But I do.  
He should be in show biz.  
Telling you.

Pain he has runs his life.  
Its so true.  
When he finds a new wife,  
Feel brand new.

He thinks the sun won't shine again.  
I told him that he's wrong.  
He says oh yeah well tell me when.  
It will shine, sing a song.

Doesn't see who he is,  
But I do.  
He should be in show biz.  
Telling you.

Pain he has runs his life.  
Its so true.  
When he finds a new wife,  
Feel brand new.

CARMEN

You are so right Abie, all he has to do is sing his ass off . Man, you are a stud, Grover, you are so hot to trot, *ooh wee*.

GROVER

I used to be, but to tell you the truth, since Rita passed, I forgot what it's like to feel hot.

CARMEN

All you need is a romantic *muchacha* to get your engine workin' again. It still works, doesn't it?

GROVER

I supposed it does and you got anybody in mind, woman?

CARMEN

I might, why you interested?

GROVER

Maybe, but we'll talk it about some other time. Right now, since I pulled my pants down and told you my life story, I think Abie should do the same and tell us about when he said some people called this little Jew boy the funniest comedian in the Borsht Circuit. Ain't that what you said, or were you lyin' again? Man this cat can lie.

ABIE

I never said it. Don't believe him.

CARMEN

You were a comedian, really and *que dise*, what's the Borsht Circuit?

ABIE

I told you I don't want to talk about it.

GROVER

It's because of Anna, ain't it?

## CARMEN

Oh, please Abie, please. *Por favor mi amigo, por favor.*

WE hear the Underscoring of I LIE.

## ABIE

All right with your *por favors*, I'll tell you, not that I want to, but I'll tell you... Many years ago, the Borsht Circuit, which is in upstate New York, had many wonderful hotels where millions of Jews used to go on vacation every summer, like Grossingers, the Concord, the Neville, the Raleigh. Too bad I can't remember all there names because there were so many hotels and they were always packed.

## GROVER

It was a real happenin' Carmen and expensive too, with real big stars like, Nat King Cole, Tony Bennet, Buddy Hackett. Eddie Fisher was discovered there and even though this little, old Jew won't admit it, he said he did shows with the king of television, Milton Berle, and I believe he did a bit with the great Danny Kaye at Grossingers. Ain't that right *boichic*, or is you lyin' again? Man, this cat can sure tell 'em!

## ABIE

It was so long ago, who can remember?

## GROVER

You remember all right, now, lay it on us Abie, lay it on us real good.

## ABIE

Oy, where should I begin?

## GROVER

The beginning's a good place, *nu?* already.

## ABIE

All right, the beginning... I got a job at the Raleigh I think in 1959, 60 as director of activities. I really liked it. It was my job to make sure everybody had a good time all the time and was it fun. In the morning I used to get on the loud speaker and tell everybody there's only six eggs, six bagels left and first come first serve. You never saw so many *meshugenehs* running and pushing and shoving, trying to get into the dining room. When they were all seated I would announce in a squeaky voice like this, that some crazy chickens smoked something funny and became so nutty, they had an orgy and now, everyone has to eat a ten scrambled eggs, six omelets and a dozen bagels immediately because we have no room for all these fahschtunkeneh eggs, did they laugh. Maybe I laughed too, it was so much fun.

## GROVER

(Laughing.)

I told you the Jew boy was funny, didn't I?

## ABIE

Don't interrupt me, I'm on a roll. They never stopped laughing, and Marty Forbes, who owned the Raleigh, loved me and that's why he worked me to death, that son-of-a-gun. He put me in charge of teaching them the cha cha, the mambo, the Lindy, shuffleboard, badminton, volleyball, softball, rowing, it didn't stop and I was so glad to be surrounded by *Yidlachs*, Jews. I love to be with Jews. You too Grover, I love to be with you too, maybe. At night I became the emcee and comedian. People

(Laughs.)

actually laughed at my *mishegas*, my lunacy. At the end of that summer, it was Labor day when the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, she was 25 and her name was Anna Finkel, asked me to show her how to row a canoe. My heart skipped a beat. In two

(MORE)

ABIE (Cont'd)

minutes we were on the lake and I couldn't take my eyes off of her. "*Do you always stare like that?*" she asked. "*Only when I'm about to fall in love,*" I said and we both started to laugh.

Underscoring Ends.

CARMEN

She was that beautiful, huh?

ABIE

A regular Rita Hayworth. Right then I told her to stop looking, because I was going to marry her. She asked if I had a date picked out and I said the sooner the better. Like they say in the books, it was love at first sight and boy, was it love.

CARMEN

Abie, you are a regular Don Juan.

ABIE

Oy, that was so long ago.

GROVER

Stop interruptin', the man's on a roll.

CARMEN

(Sings with gusto.)

Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
For two dollars I'll make you smile.  
Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
You'll feel cool, walk around in style.

ABIE

Why did you say shine'em up, shine'em up?  
There's nobody here.

CARMEN

Just practicing Abie.

GROVER

Well, practice some other time. Abie had a problem with booze, like my father, didn't you?

CARMEN

Hey, I had a problem with it too. Lots of people do...

GROVER

...Anyway, I want to know how a little Jew became an alcoholic, 'cause I don't think I ever heard of a Jewish boozer before.

ABIE

I hate to tell you this, but when I went to AA there were plenty and a lot of them said the same thing, how they never heard of Jewish alcoholics. Addiction is a disease and it's not prejudice.

GROVER

*Nu*, you gonna tell us or what?

ABIE

I'll tell you, I'll tell you. Ooh, you're such a *pachetch*.

GROVER

That's a new one. What the hell is a *pachetch*?

ABIE

A *pachetch* is a *nuhdnick*.

GROVER

And what the hell is a *nuhdnick*? Damn Abie, I can't learn all these words.

ABIE

A *nuhdnick* is a pest, which is what you are.

Anyway, this is how I became a drunk. About 25 years ago, when my darling Anna was 40 years old she got lung cancer *nu*?

And she didn't smoke. She was in the

(MORE)

ABIE (Cont'd)

hospital for months and it was horrible. She couldn't breathe, she didn't eat and her beautiful alabaster skin was turning yellow.

CARMEN

My uncle Carlos died of lung cancer too, but he used to smoke three packs of Marlboros a day and your beautiful *mujer* didn't smoke. What a drag.

ABIE

I went to see her everyday and when I went home, I started with one drink to help me through the night. Then, that one drink became two, two became three and before I knew it I was drinking a bottle of Chivas Regal every night. Because I was a rich man and I didn't have to work, I saw Anna until they threw me out of the hospital and then went home and got *knaitched*...

GROVER

...That's loaded, right? *Knaitched* is loaded and did I hear you say you were a rich man?

ABIE

I still am...

CARMEN

YOU ARE?

GROVER

How rich Abie, how rich? You gonif.

ABIE

I own a high-rise on East 70<sup>th</sup> Street and one on Central Park West in Manhattan.

GROVER

YOU DO?

ABIE

And I have a beautiful, 16 room home on the ocean in Miami, near the Fontainebleau.

## CARMEN

YOU DO?

## ABIE

And a chalet in Switzerland.

## GROVER

A big chalet in Switzerland, 16-room  
mansion in Miami, all those buildings! Why  
the  
hell are you shining shoes? You ain't a poor  
slob like me and how'd you get all that  
(Sings.)  
money?

## THIS CAT IS RICH

I can't believe what I just heard.  
This dude has made all that money?  
Please tell me, I won't say a word.  
Man your secret sure is funny.

You clothes look as bad as mine.  
And you don't really smell that good.  
Why the hell you doin' shoe shine?  
Seems like you been misunderstood.

Praised be Jesus,  
This cat is rich.  
Ain't that a bitch?  
This cat is rich.

Man if I was as rich as you.  
I'd sail on a big ship to France.  
Now I'll tell you what else I'd do.  
I'd drink fine wine then I would dance.

I'd party 'til I couldn't stand.  
Buy some togs a big Cadillac.  
Give me some skin, man slap my hand.  
And for luck please slap my back.

Praised be Jesus,  
This cat is rich.  
Ain't that a bitch?  
This cat is rich.

We hear Underscoring of AND THAT IS WHY.

ABIE

Its not easy being rich, and I got all that money, because not only am I smart, I'm lucky too. Way back when, I used all the money I saved and bought 30,000 shares of IBM at two, then 300,000 shares of GE at four, feeling I could do nothing wrong, and I don't remember how many of ATT at three, Westinghouse and General Motor at five. In four or five years I made close too... I can't tell you how much, but I had almost as much money as Rockefeller. The reason I shine shoes is, because after my sweetheart passed away, I spoke to my Rabbi and I told him I didn't want to live anymore. Not without my Anna. I wanted to kill myself...

CARMEN

When I was smoking crack I tried to commit suicide all the time...

ABIE

Talking about ending it, I really don't feel like continuing, can you blame me?

GROVER

Remember about cleansin' your soul and that cat Kierkegaard.

ABIE

You don't forget, do you?

GROVER

Start cleansin' man, start cleansin'.

ABIE

...My Rabbi said that G-d and the bible says that as Jews it is our obligation to live and if I needed a reason to live, I should forget about myself and help someone who is in need, that doesn't have what I have. So, I walked the streets, *fahzhuzzed*, loaded and I spoke to the drunks on the Bowery. Then I spoke to the young black boys who shined shoes and seemed lost. Lots of them were (MORE)

## ABIE (Cont'd)

addicts, had no family and were lonely. I went back to my Rabbi and told him that these people needed help. He said first I should go to AA and help myself, so I did. I didn't have to find G-d because I already believed, but going to meetings, doing the 12 steps, speaking to a sponsor helped and fortunately I never drank again. At the meetings they said, don't compare, identify. I sure identified with those shoeshine boys that were addicted, had no family and were lonely, because who was lonelier than me? So I figured what the heck, I'll shine shoes and maybe learn some humility. What else was I doing besides feeling sorry for myself. 25 years later I'm still learning, but I'm sober. And now I don't feel uncomfortable because G-d granted me peace and serenity, I'm not lonely because I have you Grover, and I don't have a hole in my heart that I need a drink to fill anymore. Sure I still miss my Anna and one day we shall meet again and she'll say to me, "*Do I always stare like that?*" And I'll say, "*Only when I'm about to fall in love, only when I'm about to fall in love...*"

Underscoring ends.

## GROVER

I know how you feel brother. I still miss Rita everyday, just like you miss your Anna, and I just got to thinkin'. If you own this big apartment buildin' on the upper Eastside, don't suppose you might have a little apartment that Carmen could use, do you?

## ABIE

I suppose I could get her an apartment...

## CARMEN

...Oh, would you Abie, would you?

GROVER

When do you think she can move in?

ABIE

How does whenever you're ready sound, Carmen?

CARMEN

Oh, I can't believe it. I'm going to move out of that lowlife, *maricon's* apartment right away, this afternoon. Happy New Year everybody, happy New Year! *Muchas feliciadades!*

ABIE

Here's my business card and this is the address of my building. Talk to Mario, he's the superintendent. I'll tell him you'll be there sometime today, okay? In fact I'll call him in a couple of minutes on my cell.

CARMEN

Oh, Abie, I don't know how to thank you.

GROVER

Now, if I was you I'd go and get my things, 'cause he's probably ain't home and this way you won't have to contend with his bullshit. So, get goin' woman, get goin'.

CARMEN starts to hurry off.

CUT: The following day. 9:AM GROVER and ABIE are drinking coffee. 3

ABIE

(Gives money.)

Here's the three dollars for the coffee and bagel, you thief.

GROVER

Thief, I sorta got used to bein' a *gonif* and it's only a buck-and-a-half and it's my treat Jew boy.

ABIE

I don't believe it! Again with the Jew boy?

GROVER

(Laughing)

I gotcha, I gotcha. You ain't no Jew boy, you're Abie, my one-and-only friend and I'm sure glad you are brother, sure glad. Yes, you is my brother, my soul brother forever. So, now that we're family Abie and that's 'cause, you know all about me don'tcha? and I know all about you and them Nazi bastards, who I really hated too. Now, you gonna tell me why a man with all your money shines shoes?

ABIE

Do I have to?

GROVER

We friends, ain't we?

ABIE

Now, that you mentioned it, maybe my best friend and don't tell anybody, my only best friend.

GROVER

*Nu*, I'm waitin', your best and only friend's waitin' *boichic*.

ABIE

You see, all the people that I knew and know, who said and swore they were my best friend, who would always be my best friend, always wanted something, whether it was money, advice about the stock market, an apartment in one of my buildings, do this or that, go here or there, using my home in Miami or Switzerland, my name and reputation. They used me, boy did they use me, and friends like that I can do without. So, to get away from my supposed best friends, I knew I had to do something with my time or I would go crazy.

GROVER

You mean *meschugeh*, right?

## ABIE

Stop interrupting, you'll make me crazy. To keep busy, I tried everything, including getting involved with charity, the UJA, the Red Cross, Cancer, the March of Dimes, Muscular Dystrophy, TB, orphans, even the Library and you know what? It was the same horseshit. They all asked me for contributions and some of them I gave five  
 (Abie, remorseful he sings ala aria.)  
 Million dollars and it still wasn't enough.

## FRIENDS UNTIL THE END

Only when I started shining shoes I found peace  
 No one asks or wants anything, but a good shine.  
 And *gutsen dank*, thank G-d I found you, my dear friend...  
 I pray we'll remain best friends 'til the end of time.

Its funny I got used to talking to the wall.  
 The answers that I got really weren't that bad.  
 The telephone would ring, sorry its the wrong number.  
 I'd crawl into my bed, and boy did I feel sad.

Its too lonely,  
 When your lonely.  
 And you only have yourself.  
 Its too lonely,  
 When your lonely.  
 And your dying for some help.  
 Its too lonely,  
 When your lonely.

I look in the mirror there's a man I don't know.  
 He has wrinkles with a nose too big for his face.  
 And he doesn't remember the things he forgets.  
 He ask if he is still a part of the human race.

Its not easy growing older when your feet hurt.  
Going to the movies and sitting all alone.  
Talking to yourself and liking the answers.  
Feeling like a lost dog that's looking for a bone.

Its too lonely,  
When your lonely.  
And you only have yourself.  
Its too lonely,  
When your lonely.  
And your dying for some help.  
Its too lonely,  
When your lonely.

GROVER

...And your dear BEST friend don't want anything, except your friendship, Jew boy...

ABIE

WHAT?!

GROVER

(Laughs as Carmen enters.)

I gotcha I gotcha again. Man, I love you Abie, and I need you, I really do.

CARMEN

I'm glad to see somebody's happy around here besides me. *Buenos dias mi amigos.*

ABIE

*Buenos dias* to you too, sweetheart and what so *Buenos dias*?

GROVER

So, how was it my beautiful *senorita*?

CARMEN

Gorgeous, *que bueno, magnifico*. It's like the most beautiful one bedroom pad I ever saw. *Muchas gracias senor, muchas gracias mi amigo*. I can't thank you enough, Abie.

ABIE

You, are very welcome sweetheart and the view, did you like the view?

CARMEN

Are you kidding? 28<sup>th</sup> floor, I could see all of Manhattan, the Empire State building. It's so beautiful and thanks to you, the doorman was so nice: Helped me in with all my things. Went to Grand Union, bought some food, toothpaste, toilet paper, got everything I need and I couldn't be happier, *compadre*.

ABIE

I'm glad.

GROVER

Did you call your mother and your son to tell them the good news?

CARMEN

*Feliciadades*, did I? They came over and we went out to dinner and we celebrated big  
(Sings)  
time. "*Quanta la mera, waheda quanta la mera*." Thanks to you Abie, we were all so  
(Sings.)  
happy we couldn't stop singing and...

*PERMISSO, EXCUSI*

I laugh, 'cause I don't want to cry.  
No one will ever see my face.  
I sing, 'stead of telling a lie.  
I hate the fuckin' human race.

Deceive, I never tell the truth.  
My father the dealer sold dope.  
You may think that I am uncouth.  
Would you be diff'rent without hope?

*Permisso, excusi*, I'm sorry.  
The sky no longer looks starry.  
The sun no longer shines brightly.  
And through life I tiptoe lightly.

I want to be loved, want to be kissed.  
There is so much I want to give.  
And there is so much I have missed.  
Dear *Jesus*, please, I want to live.

Inside my heart, there is this pain.  
I have a hole that goes way down.  
And I believe I've gone insane.  
See my feet drag on the ground.

*Permisso, excusi*, I'm sorry.  
The sky no longer looks starry.  
The sun no longer shines brightly.  
And through life I tiptoe lightly.  
Hey Grover, how's about givin' us a tune?  
Sure could use one to get me out of my  
misery.

GROVER

Maybe in a little while, seems I still got my  
damn Paw on my mind.

ABIE

You know Grover, I'm sure there's  
something good your father once did. Try to  
remember the good not the bad.

GROVER

Good, not bad huh? Well, one day, when I  
was about eight or nine, he taught me how to  
fish. Got this long, oak branch, took his  
freakin' knife and sort of whittled it, dipped  
it in the river, bent it a couple of times, tied  
it real tight, then buried it under some mud  
for two or three days. Dug it up and bent it  
again and it would snap back, whap!  
Attached a string and three diaper pins.  
'Cause Mama had so many kids we always  
had lots of `diaper pins. Then he'd catch a  
couple of worms and some clams, attach  
them to those diaper pins, sort of toss the  
bait nice and easy into the water, and move  
the rod up and down, then a little sideways  
to tease the fish. Sure enough he'd catch  
one in no time. "*Now you try Grover and*  
(MORE)

GROVER (Cont'd)

*remember, back and forth and up and down. Remember you are teasin' them suckers."*

And sure enough I caught one, then I caught two and three. Paw was sureproud of me

(Sings.)

and on the way home we sang, "*I got plenty of nothin' and nothin's got plenty for me,*" and kept on singin' 'til we got there. I loved singin' with my Paw, I really did. Like a fool, it was them times that I thought I loved my Paw, 'cause he could do anything, 'specially fish, sing and he could sure cook. Even though he drank his ass off, in his own way, he was a talented sonofabitch.

ABIE

You see, you see, I told you about Plato and his cleansing and it helped, didn't it? Forgiveness, we all must learn to forgive, especially ourselves, except those Nazi bastards, may they all rot in hell.

CARMEN

I will never forgive my father. He left *mi madre* and me when I was 11. He was a drug dealer, heroin and went to prison for 20 years.

ABIE

Remember what the great Aristotle said?

CARMEN

No, what did Aristotle say, Abie?

ABIE

*"The milk, that, we are weaned on at birth, cometh from our beloved mothers, not our inebriated fathers. So, drink milk not vodka."* Nu, so what's next boichic?

GROVER

That Aristotle was a pretty hip cat, man and sure, I'll tell you what's next. We used to have a whole mess of animals, three cats and

(MORE)

## GROVER (Cont'd)

two dogs. Seems my Paw was always bringin' home a stray and since we didn't have no toys, we sure loved playin' with them strays. Slick, that's what Mama called him and he was her favorite. He was this big, fat, gray cat with green eyes that used to shine in the dark. He'd jump up on Mama's lap whenever she sat on her rockin' chair and lick her hands. Mama loved that cat. Then there was Midnight, blackest cat you ever saw and Fluffy, kinda real friendly Calico cat. Spot was this fine lookin' firedog, and Bull was a mean bulldog, but some how they all got along, except for those poor chickens. Those cats were always after them, but Mama would raise her straw broom and chase them away. "Shoo, get away get away," sh'ed say. Anyway, as usual we were out of coin, things got real bad, had no eggs since we had eaten all the chickens and we sure were hungry, that's hurtin' hungry. Now, the one thing about Luke Chisholm is, he was a fine cook. Usin' the last of the tomatoes Mama had jarred, with some onions, green peppers, yams, black-eyed peas and mushrooms, Paw was cookin' up his famous stew, which he called Chisholm's delight. Ooh wee, did it smell good and all my sisters and brothers were real anxious to get down to some real home cookin', 'cause we were hungry. Mama said grace, we all thanked Jesus Christ for the food we was about to receive and dug in. We was dippin' the corn bread, lappin' up Paw's delicious gravy, when all of a sudden, Mama, then Missy coughed and spit out somethin' real ugly on their plates. Even though they were slightly brown from the cookin', no doubt about it, it was poor Slick's green eyes. We all sort of threw-up and cried, 'cause like Mama, we sure loved poor Slick.

## CARMEN

Oh, my G-d. He cooked your mother's favorite cat... *Ai caramba*, what a *bastardo*. How could he do that?

## GROVER

I'll tell you how. The man was so twisted that he forgot to cut Slicks head off and sittin' around the table feelin' real sorry, we got to thinkin' about how many of our other pets that had been disappearin' for years, did Paw cook and from that moment on, no matter how hungry we got, we never ate or looked at his stew again. How could we?

## CARMEN

(Laughs.)

Hey Bro, you ready to do a little singin' my handsome *senor*?

## GROVER

And what would the lovely *senorita* like to hear?

## ABIE

Never mind what the *senorita* wants to hear. How about me? We're still best friends, aren't we?

## GROVER

Always.

## ABIE

If that's the case, how about, singing something you love?

## GROVER

Be my pleasure, *boichic*. Here's something I wrote for my Rita, not that she ever heard it.

(Waves imaginary baton, sings.)

Maestro if you please...?

## RITA

I will always love you baby,  
 It seems you're always on my mind.  
 Missin' you, it drives me crazy,  
 Bangin' my head walkin,' 'round blind.

I hate wakin' up each mornin',  
 Without you whisp'rin' in my ear.  
 It's always dark ain't no new dawnin'  
 Without your love I live in fear.

Rita, don't wanna go on anymore.  
 Rita, I just don't wanna live.  
 Rita, I got nothin to give.  
 Rita, I don't wanna go on anymore.

They say it gets dark 'for the storm.  
 Seems like its been rainin' all the time.  
 N' I don't know why I was born?  
 N' my poems have lost their rhyme.

Rita, don't wanna go on anymore.  
 Rita, I just don't wanna live.  
 Rita, I got nothin to give.  
 Rita, I don't wanna go on anymore.

Drunk, wearing a Yankee baseball cap backward, GREG enters outraged.

## GREG

What the hell's going on here? I don't  
 believe it! This ain't Carnegie Hall,  
 Buckwheat! Who the hell gave you  
 permission to sing on my time, you  
 cocksucker? I'm not paying you to sing and  
 where the hell were you last night? You

(To Carmen.)

ungrateful slut! And you took all your  
 clothes, even that freakin' red dress I bought  
 you with my own money, because I thought  
 you looked hot in it. Hot, hot shit!

(Pulls on baseball cap and grabs Carmen.)

If you don't come back, I'm gonna break  
 every bone in your body, I'm gonna kill you,  
 you whore, you miserable whore. That's

right, she's nothing but a cheap whore, a  
(MORE)

GREG (Cont'd)

prostitute and I saved her Puerto Rican ass from getting AIDS, because I got her to stop hookin', you hear? Me, I got her to stop selling her body and what do I get? I get shit. Come on, I'm taking you home, you hear? Lets go! Let's go before I...!

GROVER

Hey Greg, please take your hands off of Carmen! She don't belong to you or anybody, so take your scummy hands off of her!

GREG

(Pulls on baseball cap and laughs.)

Scummy hands? Who the hell do you think your talking to you low-life nigger. If it wasn't for me, you'd starve to death like the rest of your kind! Come on, didn't you hear what I just said? Get your damn coat and lets get going, damn it, lets go! And when we get home I'm gonna bang you, I'm gonna bang until you scream bloody murder, then I'm going to make you do things that you never dreamed of, you pig, you twat, you freakin' slut! And I ain't gonna pay you a dime, because you ain't worth even a penny you, because, how do you say it in Puerto Rican? You're a *putan*. Hey *putan*, let's go!

GROVER

I told you, take your hands off that woman or I'll...

GREG

(Song.)

...You'll do what, you piece of shit.

IF IT WASN'T FOR LITTLE OLD ME  
You better do what I say, Sambo?  
Or else you'll go,  
You're out of here.

Now is that clear?  
You're out of here.

Your people are the scum of the Earth.  
For all your worth.  
So get it straight.  
It's you I hate.  
So get it straight.

If it wasn't for little old me,  
You'd be living in the Bowery.  
Sleeping with all them bums.  
Begging to eat their crumbs,  
If it wasn't for little old me.

You remind me of those freakin' apes  
Monkey escapes.  
You piece of shit.  
Why don't you quit?  
You piece of shit.

Why your kind is a dime-a-dozen.  
Got it cousin?  
I don't need you.  
Ugly you shcrew.  
I don't need you.

If it wasn't for little old me,  
You'd be living in the Bowery.  
Sleeping with all them bums.  
Begging to eat their crumbs,  
If it wasn't for little old me.

GREG punches GROVER, who strikes back.

There is a tussle and they fall to the floor, wrestle and GREG'S cap falls off.

ABIE

Stop stop, what are you both crazy? Grover,  
do you want to go to jail like your father? Is  
that what you want, *meschugehneh*? The  
police are all over and they'll arrest you,  
they'll arrest you. And you're drunk Greg.  
You're so drunk that you don't know what  
you're doing. You're always drunk, so, stop  
it, stop it or I'll call the police. POLICE!

ABIE separates and stands between THEM.

GROVER kicks and angrily stomps on GREG'S baseball cap.

GREG

...I know what I'm doing you little Jew bastard, I'm going to kill this nigger, who just had the balls to step on my world series baseball cap, this whore and maybe you right now! Okay you bunch of wiseass nothings, lets see what you're all gonna do now, you Puerto Rican cunt, you black

(Pulls and points gun.)

mother and you, Mr. Jew boy... All of you, get down on your knees and start praying, start prayin' for your life, because this is your last goodbye; say goodbye and as those poor spics say, say *adios* mother fuckers, *adios*.

GROVER lunges and knocks the gun away.

ABIE quickly picks up gun and stares at it.

After a beat, GROVER rushes over to GREG, pulls out a big knife and puts it to GREG'S throat.

GROVER

Now it's your turn to say goodbye ass-hole, 'cause I've been savin' this knife, it was my father's knife, just for you sweetheart and now, now I'm gonna cut you up into little pieces, simply because I hate your guts. I've always hated your guts: the way you treated me, Abie and now Carmen, as if your shit

(Raises knife.)

don't stink. It smells all right and so does your stinkin', drunken breath.

ABIE

Don't Grover, if you do it they'll hang you like they did your father. Is that what you want? Do you want to end up like your

father, hung in jail? Please Grover please,  
(MORE)

ABIE (Cont'd)

I'm begging you. You're my friend, my best  
friend and you're not your father, you're not  
your father.

GROVER

(Puts knife down.)

I'm his son ain't I? And they say the tree  
don't fall too far from the apple. It don't fall  
too far.

ABIE

It's the other way around, *meshugehneh*.  
It's the apple doesn't fall too far from the  
tree.

GROVER

Your *meshugehneh* ain't gonna work this  
time Abie. I got to put this slimy bastard out  
of his misery, once and for all. He don't  
deserve to live another second. When I was  
just singin' and I saw him wearin', I HATE  
that damn baseball cap, always have and  
him bein' so drunk, I couldn't believe my  
eyes, I thought I was lookin' at my own  
drunken father again, and you know how I  
(Looks at and then stomps on baseball cap.)  
hated my father, Abie and I hate this Irish  
prick too, so now, I'm gonna do him like  
(Raises knife and laughs.)  
ole Luke Chisholm did Deacon Butler. I'm  
(VO of FATHER'S laugh.)  
gonna stab him and laugh, stab him, and  
laugh just like my Paw did. You ready to  
meet your maker, Greg? Start prayin'  
(Sings.)  
asshole, start prayin,' 'cause.

HARD AS A ROCK

I ain't your slave, I'm a man,  
And I got rights I got rights.  
Now you better understand  
I ain't your slave, I'm a man,

And I got rights I got rights.

I'm gonna cut you from ear to ear.  
Is that clear? From ear to ear.  
Then I will make you suck my big cock.  
My big cock. Hard as a rock.

I ain't your slave, I'm a man,  
And I got rights I got rights.  
Now you better understand  
I ain't your slave, I'm a man,  
And I got rights I got rights.

Ain't gonna take your shit anymore.  
That's for sure, not anymore.  
Take this job and stick it up your ass.  
I pass, stick it up your ass.

I ain't your slave, I'm a man,  
And I got rights I got rights.  
Now you better understand  
I ain't your slave, I'm a man,  
And I got rights I got rights.  
Now if I was you, you lowlife cocksucker,  
I'd pray.

GREG

What should I pray for, my life? My life  
ain't worth shit, it never was and if you kill  
me Sambo, you'll spend the rest of your life  
in jail like my...

ABIE

Grover, his father was like your no-good  
father. Don't you understand? He went to  
jail too. Do you want to end up the same  
way, behind bars?

CARMEN

No, it wasn't his low-life father that went to  
jail, it was his sweet, holier-than-thou  
mother, wasn't it Greg? It was your mother,  
and why don't you tell them about your  
mother, *Gregory*?

GREG

FUCK YOU AND MY MOTHER. I HATE YOU AND MY MOTHER!

CARMEN

I thought you loved your mother *Gregory*? Weren't you Mama's little boy? Well, weren't you, so, how can you say fuck your mother? when you loved her, you've always loved her. Admit it, admit it you drunken *bastardo*, admit it!

GREG

(Emotional.)

I'll admit it all right...I loved my mother more than anything. Always have, always will... She was this little, religious, Irish Lass who, come rain or shine went to the seven o'clock mass at Our Lady of Victory every morning. She was born in Dublin, Ireland, that's where she met and married my drunken father, Patrick. He even got twisted the night they were married and she often laughed that they were never legally married, because he was so drunk that he didn't consummate the marriage that night. He always denied it, but according to my mother, who swore on the Blarney stone it was true. She told our family, all their friends and they all would always laugh and laugh, much to my father's chagrin

(FATHER'S VO)

"It's a lie and you know it" he would scream in his Irish brogue. "Gregory was born nine months to the day we were married, wasn't he Rose O'Leary?"

(WE see and hear MOTHER.)

"Nine months!" "Nine months and a day, she would smile, nine months and a day..."

She knew how to get his goat and she always did.

CARMEN

Right on for his goat and right on for *su madre*, ...

GROVER

Hey Abie, ain't there anybody else you can think of? 'cause that's what I need.

ABIE

Aristotle, who was another brilliant Greek once said, "*Down with all intoxicated fathers.*" Did I mention him already?

GROVER

I sure dig them Greeks man, I sure do, 'cause he was talkin' about my drunken father.

GREG

...And mine too. He owned this bar called the Limelight, what else would a drunken, Irish bastard call it? And because he was so proud of his only son, he took me there and showed me off to all his shit faced cronies as  
(WE see and hear Priest.)

much as he could. "*Gregory me boy, show them how you can spell and do multiplication, show them how you throw the darts and how you can down a pint like your father.*" By the time I was eight, I was in love with and thought I couldn't live a day without beer and Irish whiskey sours...

CARMEN

...Oh, my G-d, you started drinking even before me...

ABIE

...His father was just like your father Grover, a drunken loser. All boozers are losers. I know, I was there, Charley.

CARMEN

Cut the bullshit Greg and tell them what you told me about what your religious mother Rose did. I think that's why he drinks so much, to forget how and where his mother died, ain't that right, *maricon?* And the reason why he beats the shit out of me is, he can't stand the pain, the memory. He's mad, because not only does he hate the freakin'

world, he hates himself, including the both of you. TELL THEM, WHY DON'T YOU TELL THEM?!

GREG

(Remorseful.)

And that Plato sure hit it on the head when he said, "*Down with all the intoxicated fathers,*" 'cause my father was the drunken bastard he was talking about. Always had four or five hookers, waitresses that worked his bar, that he kept changing every other month, 'cause he wanted and needed new pussy all the time. The man was a sex maniac. And even though he made a lot of bread from them, it wasn't the money, it was the carnal pleasure they provide him, especially this Italian babe named Louise. Mom told me she thought he was in love

(Sings.)

with her.

SLAP HAPPY

I ain't much different than my rottin' father.  
No not much different at all.  
Seems I turned out like my rotten drunkin' father.  
I feel like climbing up the wall.

I just want to be happy.  
I don't want to be sad.  
So nuts I feel slaphappy.  
And I walk around mad.

That prick hit my beautiful mother all the time.  
Then he would beat me just for fun.  
Even when he wasn't drunk he walked around blind.  
Swore to me there really ain't no sun.

I just want to be happy.  
I don't want to be sad.  
So nuts I feel slaphappy.  
And I walk around mad.

This hatred that I have still colors my ev'ry dream.

I walk around colored by pain.  
You don't understand why I don't talk I just  
scream.

I scream because I'm insane.

I just want to be happy.  
I don't want to be sad.  
So nuts I feel slaphappy.  
And I walk around mad.

CARMEN

I think that's why this *bato* thought he fell in  
love with me. Your father fell in love with  
Louise, who was one of his hookers and you  
thought you fell in love with... you're just  
like him, aren't you?

GREG

Yeah, even though I hated his guts, I'm just  
like him all right, because like a dummy I  
fell for you, a hooker, lock, stock and barrel,  
didn't I? Like father like son, huh?

CARMEN

Forget about your father and tell them about  
your mother, *stupido* and maybe Grover will  
have some *simpatico* and won't kill you, like  
*su madre* killed your old man. THAT'S  
RIGHT, HIS MOTHER WAS A FREAKIN'  
MURDERER AND SHE KILLED HIS  
FATHER!

ABIE

What, your mother really killed your father?  
I don't believe it.

GROVER

And, why did your mother kill your father  
asshole, why?

GREG

Because of me... It was my fault.

GROVER

Because of you, why, what did you do?

GREG

My mother told me when she was in jail, that she had become suspicious of my father's promiscuity when she found lipstick on a couple of his shirts. She was determined to find out once-and-for-all, for she knew something was amiss, when he stopped trying to make love to her. It was Saturday night, three o'clock in the morning and she made me go with her to the Limelight just as it was closing. Mom looked through the window, saw no one was there and since she had a key, she opened the door and we tiptoed in.

(MOTHER'S VO)

*"Stay here Gregory my love," she said, "your father's probably in the back with that tramp, Louise and this time I'm going to catch him with his pants down."* Soon as she left I fixed myself a whiskey sour, drank it real fast and made another, just as I heard her scream, *"You've been fucking all of your waitresses, especially this Louise who's your personal Italian whore all these years behind my back, haven't you Patrick McGiloughcutty! You're nothing but a cheating, Irish rogue and as G-d is my witness, you'll surely rot in hell, for that is where you belong."*

GROVER

Oh, my Lord, he was just like my Paw, cheatin' on my Mama, and he ain't even black... You got any other Greeks you want to tell us about, Abie? And do it real fast.

ABIE

Euripides, who was another sage, a scholar once said, *"Give it time and all sins will all come out in the wash."*

GROVER

Is you jivin' again Abie? He didn't really say that, did he?

CARMEN

Forget about that freakin' Greek and his wash. Let the *bato* tell us what his mother said.

GREG

If I remember correctly, which I doubt, she  
(MOTHER'S VO)  
screamed, "You can have your Louise and all your whore waitresses. I want you out, you hear?! I want a divorce, I've had it!" she said, as I walked in, really loaded, having downed my third whiskey sour. "*What's the matter Mama,*" I slurred, "*what's the matter?*" "Just look at my dear, sweet Gregory. You've turned him into a drunken sot like yourself. My G-d, he's only ten, he's only ten. Have you no shame?!" she cried, screamed and threw an ashtray, which hit him square on the forehead, and knocked him down.

CARMEN

Good for her. If it was me, I would have killed him.

GREG

Outraged, he wiped the blood gushing from his forehead, pushed Louise, who he was just banging out, ran to my little mother, picked her up, smacked and threw her against the large mirror behind the bar and it shattered, cutting my mother's hands and face. My mother was momentarily stunned. Despite being drunk, trying to protect my little mother I jumped on my father's back and started swinging. "*Stop it, stop it. Leave my mother alone,*" I screamed, "*I hate you, I hate you!*" He turned and started punching and kicking me mercilessly. Seeing how he was beating me, desperate for my safety and remembering there was a

gun beneath the register, my mother got it, pointed it at my father and told him to stop beating me or else. Being he was in a

(MORE)

GREG (Cont'd)

drunken rage, he never heard nor knew how afraid she was for my life, as he kept on pummeling me. She screamed,

(MOTHER'S VO.)

"NO, NO MORE, NO MORE OR I'LL" and fired five times. He fell to the floor, dead-as-a-doornail.

ABIE

Oy, she killed him dead as a doornail no less...

GREG

...Seeing my bewildered mother, who was bleeding profusely, standing over my drunken, dead father, staring at him in a daze, I kicked him in his ass him and screamed, "*I hate you, I hate you, you cheating drunk...!*" When the police arrived, I was still kicking him. They took me, and my mother to the stationhouse and questioned me alone. You're an accessory to the fact boy, an accessory to the fact. Tell us what happened or we'll send your ass to jail with your murdering mother for life. Now talk!

GROVER

...Ain't that a bitch, I was once an accessory to the fact too, the police questioned and questioned me and threatened to throw my ass in jail, but it was my father who did the killin', not my sweet, little Mama...

GREG

...I cried and told them my mother was too religious to hurt anyone and that she was only protecting herself, because he was trying to kill her. Being she always told the truth, she said he only threw her against the

mirror, she killed him, she said crossing herself, because he was trying to kill me, her  
(MORE)

GREG (Cont'd)

little boy, not her and that's why she shot him, and she would shoot him again and again.

ABIE

She didn't... How could she admit she shot him...?

GREG

...She was convicted of manslaughter, got 15 years and died in prison. And if you want to kill me nigger, be my guest, 'cause I don't feel much like living anymore... Maybe I had enough, because I have this headache, the pain, the pain is too freakin' much, so do it and put me out of my misery... Please, I can't take it anymore.

GROVER

(Raises knife.)

It's my pleasure asshole. I thought you'd never ask.

ABIE

DON'T! DON'T DO IT!

GROVER

Why not?

ABIE

Because can't you hear it?

GROVER

Hear what?

ABIE fires gun five times into baseball cap.

ABIE

No more baseball cap, my dear friend, it's over and Greg's not your father and I swear that's the truth. I can't believe it but I

finally told the truth, *nu?* I finally told the truth, I finally told the truth, can you believe it? And I know why, I know why. My

(MORE)

ABIE (Cont'd)

name's not Heinz, it's not Heinz, it never

(Emotional.)

was. I'm Abie, I've always been Abie Goldfarb, always, you're my best friend and Greg's not your father, aren't you glad?

GROVER

No, I guess he ain't, he sure ain't *Abie*.  
Now, take a walk asshole, take a walk and  
(Kicks Greg in the ass, who slinks off.)  
you can stick this job up your ass.

CARMEN

I hope we never see that *maricon* again.

GROVER

You won't, trust me. Now Abie, did them cats Plato and Kierkegaard really say them things about cleansing your soul?

ABIE

(Laughs.)

What's the matter, you don't believe me?

CARMEN

And what about all them Greeks?

ABIE

(Laughs)

You also don't believe me? I don't believe it!

GROVER

(Sings to Alfie.)

"*What's it all about Abie? Is it just for the moment we live?*" What's it all about brother? Why don't you do a little cleansin' yourself? How'd you get this way?

ABIE

How'd I get this way. Boy, it's a long story...

GROVER

Your friend's a real good listener, real good, so why don't you tell me? Get it off your chest, you'll feel better.

ABIE

It all started with those *fahschtunkeneh* Nazis... That hatred, that anger and angst I had for them drove me crazy, and I learned to lie to hide my identity and I'm still lying, but thanks to my beloved Sister Catherine, who said laugh at the world, I truly believe that was the impetuous that made me survive and I did. I showed those bastards, didn't I? That animosity, which I believe was and is G-d given was a blessing in disguise and when I realized it, it became an integral part of my being happy and almost serene... As long as I was angry at somebody, there was a good chance I would be happy, maybe. In 1948, when the United Nations voted Israel statehood, thanks to those Arabs who were determined to get rid of me, suddenly had another reason to go on, because as a Jew I knew we had to survive and that's when I realized that I always need someone to despise in order for me to exist. And what's the sense of existing unless you're happy? Even though I was fortunate enough to become almost as rich as Howard Hughes, I said almost and remember that movie they made of him? I think it was called "Howard and ME?" where he was supposed to be a bum and he meets a best friend. Hello Grover... That picture changed my life and was probably why I started shining shoes, and I'm not lying. Finally I'm telling the truth...

After a beat.

GROVER

...Keep cleansin' man, it sure sounds interestin'.

ABIE

Interesting, huh? Wait... When I met you Grover and I thought you hated Jews, I couldn't be happier and now you know why I say I hate Nike, Reebok and Adidas. Once I'm through with them, it will probably be Microsoft, ATT or the Yankees.

CARMEN

'Cause otherwise you won't be happy, right?

ABIE

You are so right, sweetheart, and since you're out of work and need a job my dear friend, how would like to sing again? My friend Bo Littman just bought Carnegie Hall and I hear he's looking for a good singer.  
*Nu?*

GROVER

Oh, Abie I don't know what to say?

ABIE

Don't say a word and as far as Littman's concerned, he'll just want you to sing a few songs and talking about singing, Carmen, are you ready for OUR song?

CARMEN

What took you so long, big boy?

ABIE and CARMEN hold hands.

CARMEN and ABIE

(Sings with gusto.)

Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
For two dollars I'll make you smile.  
Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
You'll feel cool, walk around in style.

GROVER

There ain't nobody around. Who needs a shine?

ABIE

(Smiles and puts foot forward.)  
I do *boichic*, if you would be so kind.

CARMEN

(Smiles and puts foot forward.)  
And so do I gorgeous, *por favor*, so do I...

ABIE

(Extends hands they ALL hold hands.)  
I think we should go out with a blast.

GROVER, ABIE and CARMEN

(Dancing, THEY sing.)

ALL

Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
For two dollars we'll make you smile.  
Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
And then you'll walk around in style.

Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
For two dollars we'll make you smile.  
Shine'em up, shine'em up, shine'em up!  
And then you'll walk around in style.

THE END