

t h e l o n g i n g and the short of it.

(a song cycle.)

(a musical evening of theatrical moments.)

lyrics and music by Daniel Maté

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t h e l o n g i n g and the short of it.

CAST (6):

Man 1 & Woman 1 (20's.)
 Man 2 & Woman 2 (30's.)
 Man 3 & Woman 3 (40's-50's.)

BAND (4/5):

Keyboard, guitar, bass, drums (optional 2nd keyboard)

LIST OF MUSICAL NUMBERS:

#	Demo track #	Song Title	Who Sings
0a	1	the short of it [overture]	—
1	2	The Long Run, part 1	ALL
2	3	Intervention	W2
3	4	All I Want	M1
4	5	You Make My Brain Work Right	M3
5	6	I Don't Think of You (It's All Good)	W1
6	7	Kissing Women Left and Right	M2 (w/ M1,3)
7	8	Starting Shit With You	W3
8	9	Before I Go	M2,3; W1 (w/ W2)
9	10	Misery Loves My Company	W2
10	11	All About You	M1
11	12	On My Wall	W1 (with ALL)
12	13	If I Wrote A Song	ALL
13	14	Something Like Okay	ALL
14	15	Just Another Schmuck at the Coffee Bar	M2 (with ALL)
15	16	February's Coming	W1
16	17	We Don't Have To Date	M1
17	18	When I Get Enlightened	W2
18	19	I Don't Want to Know	W3 (with W1,2; M1,2)
19	20	Everything Is Not As Real As This	All
20	21	Parallel Universe Me	M2
21	22	If You Would Be So Kind	W3, M3
22	23	Finally Me	W1,2,3
23	24	Marry Me, America	M3
24	25	The Long Run, part 2	ALL

the longing and the short of it.

SYNOPSIS

A musical evening of theatrical moments, featuring six actors channeling the tribulations, foibles, neuroses, strivings, doubts, hopes, existential angsts, and longings of an assortment of lovably flawed characters from teenaged to middle-aged.

Songs range from mellow to frenetic, somber to silly, comic to reflective, colloquial to poetic, in an array of recognizable classic and contemporary musical styles. No matter the genre, these are theatre songs first and foremost, and something is happening in each: a bargain, a brag, a complaint, a confession, a conversation, a plea, a prayer, a question, a scene, a stand, a triumph. The characters often finish each other's thoughts, and even in the solo numbers the ensemble remains a palpable onstage presence.

Like many modern humans, these people are all intelligent and highly self-conscious, even self-aware. But this self-awareness has thus far not helped them to feel happy, fulfilled, complete, at peace, satisfied, content— or even “something like okay.”

As the evening unfolds we watch a collective transformation take place: each person begins to question old patterns, escape old ruts, purge old hurts, express new desires, and open up to new possibilities. The show ends on a note of humor, compassion, communion, self-forgiveness, and a wry recognition that longings are life-long, and life is pretty short:

...and what's with my life?

I've made a slapstick, spectator sport of it.

A kangaroo court of it.

And all for the longing...

The longing and the short of it.

1. THE LONG RUN, PART 1

WOMAN 1

I remember twenty.
Twenty was a breeze.
It came and it went.
No big event.
I had a party or something.

MAN 1

Dreams and hopes aplenty.
Days I swore I'd seize.

But days are so short,

W2

And months are abrupt.

BOTH

You'd think that they would,
But they don't add up to much in the long run.
Not in the long run.

MAN 2, WOMAN 2

I remember thirty.

W2

Thirty was a blast!
I yelled to my friends,
"Now the torture ends!"
(I'd been drinking, or something.)

M2

Brushed off all the dirty.
Vowed I'd dump the past...

But vows are like sparks:
They burn out so quick.

BOTH

You swear up and down,
Still you can't make them stick!
But maybe in the long run...

ALL FOUR

Yeah, maybe in the long run.

Fine, so what's with the re-runs
Of old situations

That scroll by?
And what's with the smiles
On the faces of friends
As they stroll by?
And what's with my life?
Why's it so damn hard
To feel something like okay?

And what's with this **longing**?
And why do I keep getting in the way?

(instrumental break)

MAN 3

I remember fifty.

WOMAN 3

Fifty's pretty real.

BOTH

Good job, still alive.
Still, you don't arrive

ALL

At Nirvana or something.

MAN 3, WOMAN 3

Time can make you thrifty;
Say, "Sure, I'll make a deal."

ALL

And if the deal comes up short,
then I won't complain,
'Cause I'll be okay.
'Okay' is the main attraction of the long run.
Yeah, gotta love the long run.

And it's a long one...

2. INTERVENTION

WOMAN 2

There's gonna be an intervention,
This Saturday, at my place.
We're gonna finally look the problem in the face!
No more hiding.

It's gonna get emotional,

Like the ones you've seen on TV.
Oh,
And I should mention,
This intervention's for me.

(She sets up the room as guests arrive.)

Thanks for coming to my intervention.
Now I'm relying on you, my friends,
To sit me down and say, "Okay, girl, this is where it ends!
(You've been sliding.)
You're a narcissistic nutcase,
And everyone agrees you're a jerk!"
Oh,
We'll need a knife to cut the tension...
Man, this is so gonna work!

'Cause I've tried therapy—
I've tried everything!
It's not like any of this information is new to me!
Yeah, I know everything,
But none of it ever gets through to me.

But if I could just get a room of my peers
To gather on love-seats and love me to tears,
And make moving speeches, hands gripped to their knees,
And look me in the eye, and beg me "Please please please,
Go a different way!
Show us you're okay!
Make a change today..."

—I think I very well may.

Let's get started with the intervention:
"Express your feelings to the addict."
(That's me.)
Wait, where're you going?
Is there somewhere else you need to be?
Still deciding...?

(People are fidgeting, standing up.)

Hey, people. I need this.
I mean, it's kind of the least you can do.
(Whoa...!)
What's with the apprehension?
Yo! Can I get some attention?
Man, this is heart-wrenchin'.
Fine. Consider it prevention!

(Shouting after the exeunt-ers.)

Well I hope you change your selfish point of view.
'Cause you know,
I would totally intervene for you!
For you!!
For you!!!
(Yeah, nice seeing you too.)

3. ALL I WANT

*(A lonely and precocious early teen stands alone in
a schoolyard.)*

MAN 1

All I want is for Genevieve to notice me.
Just one look, and I know she'll know it's meant to be.
We'll hold hands and we'll talk until the break of dawn.
Then she'll say, "It is now the time to get it on."

So Genevieve, take your clothes off,
And I'll take off mine.
You're looking so fine,
And I just want to know what it's like
To party down like a player!
Please Genevieve,
I won't ever leave,
You can't conceive
Of the freaky things that I've been fantasizing
We could do today!

It's all I want. Is that so much to ask?
It's all I want, is that so much to ask?

All I want is to meet Kareem inside the ring.
Just one match, and I'll be the undisputed king.
He will lunge, but I'll counter with my reverse suplex.
Then he'll die, and I'll raise my arms and scream, "Who's next?!!"

And no one would dare challenge my rule,
'Cause they know I'm knocking out fools
And I just want to know what it's like
To do a power-slam!
Stupid Kareem,
I will make you scream,
I'm your worst bad dream!
And you won't call me 'Dreidel' again,
'Cause you know who I am!

It's all I want, is that so much to ask?
It's all I want, is that so much to ask?
It's all I want, is that so much to ask?
It's all I want. All I want!

And how come I can't get what I want?
I should sometimes get what I want.
But I never get what I want.

(instrumental break)

All I want is to serve aboard the Enterprise.
'Strange New Worlds': I'll explore them all with fresh new eyes.
We'll make peace with the Romulans on Galnok Three.
I'll be home as we chart and roam the galaxy.

So please, Captain Picard.
My life is hard,
I'll be your personal guard.
Just bring on the Klingon,
I'll show that Worf what a warrior means!
Then I can look down
On this stupid town
And laugh at the clown
Who's standing in the yard again
In a pastel yellow cardigan
And ugly white jeans!

It's all I want. Is that so much to ask?
It's all I want. All I want.
(Please, Captain Picard.
My life is hard.
I'll be your personal guard.)
It's all I want. All I want.
(Stupid Kareem,
I will make you scream.
I'm your worst bad dream!)
It's all I want. All I want.
(Genevieve, take your clothes off
And I'll take off mine.
You're looking so fine.
You're looking so fine.
You're looking so
Fine.)

4. I Don't Think Of You (It's All Good)

(A busy opening at a trendy art gallery.)

WOMAN 1

Oh, wow. Hey! Wow – How's it going?
I thought you'd moved out of town?
That's what your Facebook said. Well,
Anyway, whadja think about the showing?
I guess it's avant-garde.
I don't get it: she's all revered.
Pretty clear she's trying hard—
Is it me, or is this picture kinda weird?

I haven't thought of you
In so long, it's like forever;
Suddenly you're here,
Just in the neighborhood?
Funny how it goes:
Certain cords you never sever.
'Cause I don't think of you.
I made it through.
It's all good.

You look well! Better than I would have figured.
Not that I've been picturing you—
Or drawing portraits of you —
Let me see: nope, no, nothing's really triggered.
Course, you weren't the one for me.
Sad truth. It's tough to 'spin':
We were never meant to be,
'Cause if we were, we would have been!

I barely think of you.
No offense, I'm kinda busy.
Rarely think of us.
Can't see why I would.
I'm never up at night
Wondering "why?" and "God, how is he?"
I don't think of you!
And when I do,
It's all good.

Good to see you're still in shape –
You've been working out.
Good to see you brought a friend.
How's that... working out?
(Hi.) She's pretty...
Guess you made a clean escape.

Congratulations—!

—No. I didn't mean anything.
No. No really. I'm just drunk.
Whoa. Here we are. Who'd-a thunk?
Wow...
No really, I'm fine...

Things end.

(drunk-confidentially)

When you left,
I considered quitting painting.
I was thinking, how about law?
Or join the Peace Corps, or the circus, or the Ku Klux Klan—
Well, my shrink says all the dizziness and fainting
Comes from focusing on the past.
“Take time. Replace the lens.”
She prescribed a sort of fast:
A Total Mental Cleanse.

So I don't think of you;
I'm ten weeks sober!
I'm doing well.
I function like I should.
It just occurred to me:
We'd be five years this October.

Aren't you glad you came?
My number's still the same.
So if you want to call...
...it's all good.

5. You Make My Brain Work Right

MAN 3

Me and my psyche,
We're on real intimate terms.
It doesn't like me—
A view it often affirms.
It's an electrified heckler that I can't mute or unplug.

It's always yakking
'bout how it's hip to my scam,
The things I'm lacking,
And what a loser I am.
I tell it, “Listen, buddy. Nobody likes a thug.”

And there's no pill, no drug that can shut it up,

Make it peaceful or halfway docile;
So I'm thinking you've got some power that's just colossal...

'Cause you make my brain work right.
You make this creep back down so I can sleep at night!
You make my brain work right.
And that's why I like having you around.

I've got this panel
Of pundits, judges and such.
I change the channel;
It doesn't alter them much.
I spend hour after hour
In the fucking Situation Room.
(With Wolf Blitzer!)

I'm in the Crossfire,
Or else I'm Meeting the Press.
Must be a crossed wire:
All day I'm under duress!
I'm getting beat by Jack Bauer,
Or "auf'd" by Heidi Klum!
("You're out!")

But then the door goes "Boom!" and you burst in,
And Kiefer Sutherland takes a breather.
Yeah, he acts all tough, but he can't resist you either!
Oh no,

You make my brain work right!
The terrorists and the cops all hug and say, "Let's not fight!"
Oh baby, you make my brain work right.
And cross my lobes and hope to die, yeah,
You make my brain work!

When I'm stuck in mental traffic,
And crosstalk,
Crosstalk,
Crosstalk—
You're like a helpful graphic
At the crosswalk.
Crosswalk.
Crosswalk!

You slow things down.
You smile, and flash a sign.
And all the cars stop honking,
And they form a nice, neat line.
And everything and everyone,
Including me, is fine.
I'm fine...

What were you saying?
Oh yeah, this man that you met.
You stay he's staying?
...Right. That's why I'm so upset.
He says he'll make you real happy,
And then make you what, his wife...?

You're such a kidder!
But see, this joke doesn't fly.
Babe, please consider:
If you move in with this guy,
You might be happy. Really.
Living the happy life!
(Whatever that is!)

But have you really thought what you're giving up?
This decision is oh-so-fateful.
Yeah, he may be great.
He'll never be as grateful.

I mean, can you make his brain work right?
I'll bet his head's screwed on there nice and tight...

Not me, babe!
You make my brain work right!
So give a brain a break.
Give a brain a break!
Just give a brain a break,
And honey, stick around!

(It's not for me, it's my brain.)

6. Starting Shit With You

WOMAN 3

Some people love that bubble wrap, for that satisfying "pop."
And 'til the sheet is flattened out, they just can't seem to stop!
And really, there's no telling
What exactly's the appeal.
It's pointless, yet compelling,
In a way that's all too real...

And that's the bottom line with the annoying things I do:
See, I just love to start shit with you.
(Yes I do!)

I love to catch you dead asleep, or otherwise unawares,

Then park my face beneath your nose and loudly count the hairs.
Or, say we're being intimate
And I feel your passion dawning;
Just as you're getting into it,
I catch a fit of yawning!

It's nothing I can justify. It's awful through and through,
How much I love to start shit with you
Know
That
I

Wouldn't piss you off if I could help it.
I'd cut it out this minute if I could.
I'll prob'ly burn forever in a hell pit –
"...help it" / "...hell pit":
Yeah, that's pretty good,
If I do say so!

I know you hate my homonyms and all my stupid puns;
But like a melted G. I. Joe, I'm sticking to my guns.
I've got no evil motive,
It's just fun. But while I'm at it,
It'd really get your goat if
I took this tune and scat it.
(scat ad lib)
...start shit with you!

And now I think I'll play a little piano solo,
Which I know you'll hate, because I'm not very good...!

(She plays a not-very-good piano solo.)

You know, I wish I didn't have to prod and poke you.
But you used to be more willing just to play.
And I wouldn't make this effort to provoke you
If you'd only give me the time of day...

My will is pretty stubborn when there's something that it wants.
And darling, what it wants from you is, simply, a response.
I've tried a hundred strategies, from cool, to coy, to cloying.
But you're seemingly immune to all the weapons I'm deploying.
So even though I know you'll find me all the more annoying,
And hence the thing I'm after, I am actively destroying,
It seems my only choice is sitting back and just enjoying...

The way your stony face becomes that reddish-purple hue,
When I begin to start shit with you.
And don't think that you're replaceable.
No, no one else will do!

I only wanna start shit—
And this is from-the-heart shit—
I only wanna start shit with you!
(*ad lib*)

Nothing can give me the pleasure I get
When I'm zealously hellbent on starting some shit with you:
Sad but true.

6. Kissing Women Left and Right

(*A New Year's party.*)

MAN 2

(*10:45 pm*)

Drinking and talking and laughing and drinking,
And kissing women left and right.
Eyeing and smirking and smiling and winking,
And kissing women left and right.

By midnight I'll be so delighted I came.
I'm gonna lose every last vestige of shame.
Now I'm reapplying chapstick, and taking my aim, and—
Kissing women left and right.

(*11:55 pm*)

Clowning and downing my flask of Bacardi, and
Kissing women left and right!
I am the hottest two lips at this party!
Kissing women left and right!

I'm drunker than my elegant smile suggests;
Conversing with barely hidden thighs and breasts.
Now I'm breaking world records, and taking requests, and...
Kissing women left and right!

(*midnight*)

Well I'm a wolf in formal wear.
I'm a showman.
I got all my lines prepared,
And I got all my fingers crossed.
It's a sign, I do declare.
It's an omen:
Mama Venus, she's got funds to exhaust on me.
I got chickens lining up to defrost on me!
That's right –
Keep staring, folks, it isn't lost
On
Me!

(2:15am)

Do not resist me. I'm totally awesome.

M1,3

(Kissing women left and right.)

M2

Show me a cactus: I'll make that bitch blossom.
Oh yeah!!!
Well I think I'm on my feet, but I can't quite tell.
I'd take down your number, but I can't quite spell.
Now you're walking away, walking away –
Huh. It's just as well...

I got half a beer left.

M1,3

(Kissing women left and right.)

M2

Maybe it's time I left.

M1,3

(Kissing women left and right.)

M2

Yeah, it's high time I left, and...
(locating the door, with some difficulty)
...right.

(ad lib, attempt at a dignified/dramatic exit)

...Kissing women left and right!

8. Before I Go

(MAN 3 is having 'a talk' with WOMAN 2, who is caught off-guard and can't get a word in edgewise. The tone is very gentle, very kind and a little creepy.)

MAN 3

Before I go,
I want to tell you that this doesn't mean forever,
Just for now.
And you should know
That I would love to see things work with you and me,
But can't see how.

And I should tell you how much I have learned from you.
 I hardly recognize myself, I've come so far.
 I mean, before you, I'd have never had the strength to admit
 I want a girl with a slate that is reasonably clean.
 A partner for life.
 You know what I mean.

(Suddenly Man 2 appears, takes Woman 2's hand, and starts having his own 'talk' with her, while Man 3 looks on as if everything's normal. Things are getting creepier by the second. Woman 2 is a bit disoriented.)

MAN 2

Before I go,
 I hope there's nothing you might still be holding onto
 And won't say.
 Because if so,
 I mean, I'm here right now, and maybe you might want
 To seize the day.
 I know we both did things I'm sure we both regret;
 I slammed your kitchen door so hard it cracked a wall.
 And as for you, well, you'll have ample time to sit and reflect
 On all the ways you provoked me and pushed me away.

(She really wants to say something, but now it's two against one.)

M2,3

No, don't go there now.
 Give it a day!

(Make that three against one, as Woman 3 shows up and starts in on her own breakup explanation with backup from the other two. If Woman 2 is dreaming, she sure can't wake up.)

WOMAN 3	M2,3
<p>Before I go I have a thought or two to share, And it's about your self-esteem.</p> <p>I sense it's low, And that's the reason your whole love life is a bad recurring dream.</p>	<p>(Before I go, I have a thought or two to share.)</p> <p>(You're less together than you seem.)</p> <p>(And that's the reason your whole love life is a bad recurring dream. One long endless dream!)</p>

ALL THREE

It never ends!
It just goes on and on and on.
But babe, you can't turn back the clock:
What's done is done.
And really, I think we'd both feel like closure really occurred
If you'd just look at me once.
There's no capital crime.
Just give me a look.
Just give me a smile.
Just give me a touch
To last for a while.
Give me what we both want,
One more time...

Before I go.
Before I go.
And then I'll—

WOMAN 2

GO.....!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

9. Misery Loves My Company

(Direct segue from previous. W2 is suddenly alone at home. The shadowy character of "Misery" may appear silently onstage, played by another performer.)

WOMAN 2

To what do I owe this honor?
To what do I owe this thrill?
I've got a special guest
Who's impeccably dressed,
And he stopped on by 'cause he's got time to kill.
And now he's giving me his full attention.
He's so selfless! He's all about me.
Misery loves,
Misery loves,
Misery loves my company.

He's no slouch; he's an early riser.
We have this daily routine we keep:
Before I lift my head
He's at the foot of my bed,
Smirking, saying "How'd we sleep?"
And then he watches as I drag my clothes on.

I'm thinking maybe I should charge a fee,
'Cause Misery loves,
Misery loves,
Misery loves my company.

He's not all that profound,
But at least he sticks around.
He's always up for spending the day.
Our connection is unique:
I barely have to speak.
I already know what he's going to say!

Oh yes, we talk, and sometimes we argue.
But he always comes out on top.
And there ain't no party like a self-pity party,
'Cause a self-pity party don't stop!
And when I say "Hey, maybe we should spend some time apart?"
Oh, you should see his face!
He nearly spills his tea.
'Cause Misery loves,
Misery loves,
Misery loves my company!

(dance / instrumental break)

Well I don't know what I've done
To be crowned his special one.
He adores me: I'm his caged-up queen!
And he swears that he was made for me,
But god, he's so afraid for me.
The world out there is hard and mean.

To what do I owe this honor?
To what do I owe this joy?
My friend so debonair
Is now slumped in his chair.
I'm a handful, and he's a tired boy.

And so I sneak to the door, real quiet.
He says "Get back here.
I'm-a count to three."

'Cause Misery loves...

(gingerly backs away from the door)

Oh, Misery loves,
Misery loves,
Misery loves my company!

10. On My Wall

WOMAN 1

Somebody likes me.
Somebody likes me.
It's the best feeling of all.
Somebody likes me,
Really, really likes me!
Somebody wrote on my...
(pulling out her phone)
Wall.

When somebody writes upon my Facebook Wall,
An email shows up right away to share the happy news.
No matter where I am or who I'm with, I say "Excuse me."
'Cause somebody wrote upon my Facebook Wall,
And it might be important.

(W1 is joined onstage by the others. They do not interact, except with their devices.)

When somebody writes upon my Facebook Wall,
It could be some forgotten friend I haven't seen in years;
A super witty comment or a video that cheers me.
When somebody writes upon my Facebook Wall,
You're damn right it's important.

I can't tell you what a thrill I get,
First thing in the morning on the Internet.
Sharing my opinions, sending out my thoughts.

With so many friends, there's always lots to read.
Come home in the evening and I check the Feed.
Status updates, photos,
Videos, and who knows who.
I do!
I do!
I do...

They're not the friends you have to see or call.
And I love them all.

When somebody writes upon my Facebook Wall,
I get this funny feeling that I've never felt before:
A hundred thousand angels holding hands, but only
More.

And it's so unreal.
Somehow, I feel

Important.
Important.
Important!
Important!

(When somebody writes upon my Facebook Wall...)
(On my Wall...)
(Somebody writes upon my Facebook Wall)
(Somebody writes upon my Wall)
(Someone writes upon my Wall)
(On my, on my Wall)
(On my, on my)
(On! My!)

(An array of phone alerts are heard. The singers freeze. Then, to audience or each other:)

Excuse me!

10. All About You

MAN 1

Growing up with you as a brother,
I knew my place.
I knew the very best I could do was finish second
In any sort of race.
'Cause you got the drive,
And you got the smarts,
And the gifts that kept on giving.
And everybody knew you'd have this awesome life,
While me, I'd make a living.

And when anyone would ask about the family,
Like, "Hey, what's new?"
It was all about you.
All about you.

Growing up I watched as you blossomed.
I saw you thrive.
I heard about each top-of-your-class, each A-Plus,
Every five-out-of-five.
You did all your work,
You got all the breaks,
You were built for big success.
But secretly I wondered who you might have been,
If you'd been born with less.

'Cause I saw how it went to your head,
And there it grew.

It was all about you.
It was all about you!

And was I bitter?
Yeah, a little bitter.
But I said, "Hey, better him than me.
All that pressure.
So much pressure!
Who needs it? I'd rather be free."
But still I knew you were holier,
So I felt lowlier-than-thou.
I guess I pitied myself.
All my life.
Yeah, I did.
Not now.

'Cause now, you've lost a lot.
Lost it quickly.
You've had it rough.
You had a lot to lose—
Some might say more than enough.
But while you're in here, beating your head against a wall,
Have you noticed it hasn't made a dent?
I know you're angry.
And life's a rip-off.
Yeah. Welcome to the ninety-nine percent.

See, I think that rejoining your life
Is the least,
And the best you can do.
Who can say they've had it tougher?
'Cause hey, we all suffer.
And we all need to make it through.
I'm not pointing the finger—
Look, you are not the point here!
That's only your point of view.

And this is not about you!
This is not about you...
...and even if it is,
It's not all about you.

12. If I Wrote A Song

MAN 2

Well girl, I can see your library is extensive.
From Abba to Zappa; from Bach to Wu-Tang Clan.
You've got music for making love, and for being pensive.
You've got Stevie Wonder,

Steve Miller,
and Steely Dan.
Now I'm not trying to suggest there's something lacking,
And your available space is probably wearing thin;

But maybe if I wrote a song,
And sang it out nice and strong,
You might slip me right into the mix
And I'd fit right in.

MAN 3

Well it's hard to pin me down when it comes to genre.
I've got a speed-metal heart, yet slow jazz turns me on.

WOMAN 3

All I know is it would be the highest "hon-ruh..."
To bring together Stephen Sondheim,
Steve Reich,
and Stevie Ray Vaughn.

MAN 2

Now I know I can't get airtime twenty-four/seven.
You've got a hard drive full of guys, much to my chagrin.

ALL THREE

But maybe if I wrote a song,
And didn't get the tone all wrong,
You might slip me right into the mix
And I'd fit right in.

WOMAN 1

Now I know,
Styles come and go.
And what is so in vogue today could be tomorrow's kitsch.
But oh!
I don't mean to crow,

ALL

But I can hear your heartstrings singin',
And I've got perfect pitch!

MAN 1

Well I know you like to pick your tunes at random,
And I appreciate a person who appreciates an eclectic mix.

WOMAN 2

And it's not like I've got a whole arenaful of fandom;
I'm no Steven Tyler,
or Stephen Schwartz,
or Steve Perry,

or Cat Stevens...

...or Stevie Nicks.

ALL

But when I look at you, everything goes quiet.
I swear, for miles around, you could hear a pin.

So maybe if I wrote a song,
Just one perfect song,
Yeah, a perfect song might be a nice way to begin.

Maybe if I wrote that song,
Would you play me all night long?
Would you slip me right into the mix
And let me fit right in?

INTERMISSION

13. Something Like Okay

WOMAN 3

Something like okay.
A sort of peace.
Some halfway happiness.
Really, you know, that's all I'm trying to find.

MAN 2

Something like okay.
A slight decrease
In the volume and the intensity
Of the voices in my mind.

WOMAN 2

And I don't need perfection.
I know that pain never goes completely away.

MAN 1

But I'd have no objection
If it took a break
A small reprieve
So I could feel
Something like okay.

WOMAN 1

Something like okay
Would look like me
Having a day to myself
Without losing myself in a screen
Or crawling back in bed.

MAN 3

Something like okay
Would be like, "Hey,
I'm tired of talking about myself.
How are you?
Let's talk about you instead."

W1, M3

And I don't need perfection.
But I'm impatient to know, like, what's the delay?
'Cause to my recollection,
It has been too long
Since I felt
Even close to

ALL

Something like okay,
Okay,

Okay.
Something like okay,
Okay,
Okay.

I don't know what it's gonna to take for me
To feel a sense of purpose, a sense of ease.
Soon enough, the clouds are gonna break for me.
And I will see it all.
The forest for the trees.
Yes please!
Yes please!
Yes please...

Something like okay.
That's all I need,
And I'll be satisfied.
(It's all I want, is that so much to ask?)
Living day by day
The best I can,
And trying to be grateful.
It might take a little practice,
But I'm up to the task.

And I don't need perfection.
I don't think perfect's the part I was born to play.
But in my own reflection
I would love to see a softer smile;
A wink that says 'It's worth the while.'
Let me taste it once. I promise I'll
Do anything to stay
Something like okay...

14. Just Another Schmuck (At The Coffee Bar)

*(A crowded line at a bustling high-end coffee shop.
When the ensemble isn't providing peppy jazz
harmonies, they're stumbling around like caffeine
junkies on a Monday morning.)*

MAN 2

How did I get here?
I was gonna keep it real
And buck the whole cut-throat capitalist game.
Move to a commune.
Plant corn, sow oats. Build a new better world.
Yeah, that was the aim.
And there were no two ways about my grand utopian plan.
I'd say "either you're down for changing the world,

Or you're selling your soul for the man!"

So it's more than a little surreal,
Yeah, it's really bizarre
That I'm just another schmuck at the coffee bar.

I was a rebel.
Full of fire. Full of facts. Always ready
To rage against the machine.

OTHERS

("Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!")

M2

I quoted Chomsky.
Nowadays I quote online features on wine and Italian cuisine.

OTHERS

(Northern Italian cuisine, waa-ooo...)

M2

And I was sure as sure could be, we would overcome someday.

OTHERS

(We shall overcome!)

M2

Keeping my eyes
Set on the prize,
Yeah, but somewhere along the way,

I put down all the banners and books
And acoustic guitar,
And now I'm just another schmuck at the coffee bar!

(instrumental break)

M2

Look at all these zombies!
Barely half awake.
Driven to distraction by a thirst they can never slake.
They don't even question.
They see nothing odd.
They just blindly follow the aroma,
Stumbling in their caffeinated coma.
This is my community...
Oh my fucking God!

What ever happened

To the guy who was gonna go follow his dream and start a kibbutz?

OTHERS

(What in the hell's a 'kibbutz'?) (I don't know.)

M2

And how did I get here:
Gritting teeth in a line as I wait for a kid half my age
To prepare me a skim extra-hot triple hazelnut latté,
With cinnamon shmutz?

You know, if I had the chutzpah,
I would start some new campaigns:
'Consumers unite!'
'Stand up and fight!'
'You got nothing to lose but your corporate coffee chains...!'

But there's no turning back the clock, and I've come too far.

OTHERS

(He's come too far!)

M2

And it's not about where you've been, it's about where you are...

OTHERS

(Look where you are!)

M2

And where I am is stuck (at the coffee bar,)
Shelling out another buck (at the coffee bar,)
Cynical as fuck (at the coffee bar,)
And drowning in the money-grubbing muck
At the cof!-fee! bar!

No latté, no peace!

15. February's Coming

(WOMAN 1 takes a break from instant messaging.)

WOMAN 1

It's a good thing we're not speaking.
Well not out loud, at least.
No phone calls was your excellent idea.
And now you're on some mountain in Korea
Where you're so damn East,
You're almost a day ahead.
I'm dressing down for bed;

Your lunch break's almost done.

We're still not quite in sync.
Still thinking of each other.
Well, I am. And February's coming.

It's a good thing we're just 'chatting,'
By flickering Facebook light.
We keep these typed exchanges in the present.
That's how to keep things light, and mostly pleasant.
We're so damn bright!
This new friendship's like a game:
Frivolity's the aim,
But memories are no fun.

We're still a piece of work;
Still working on our timing.
Well, I am,
And February's coming.

And when February falls,
All the February calls we made—
That whole February serenade
That made Spring so sadistically delayed—
Will all be the more invasive for their absence.
They'll just remind me of what I haven't had since.

So it's a good thing we're not speaking.
It shows our common sense.
'Cause I'd be shooting off my mouth about "I'm lonely,
Yeah, and single life is hard, and oh, if only
I wasn't so damn dense,
I'd still be with you today."
And you'd just say "Well, okay;
Oh shit, I gotta run."

We're still playing with the ending,
Still hoping for a replay.
Well, I am,
And February's coming.

Yeah, I am.
And February's here.

16. We Don't Have To Date

(The end of a nice evening out.)

MAN 2

It's alright.
I understand
If you want to take a little space.
I know myself, and I know my propensity
For intensity.
And I have this habit of jumping ahead of the game.
And I totally get
That we just met
And rushing this thing would be a shame.

Nope, you're right.
It makes no sense
To even call this thing 'a thing'.
There is no 'thing' here!
Well, not yet, anyway.
What I'm trying to say
Is we have had ourselves a few nice consecutive nights.
But it's not as if that gives me any rights.

We don't have to date
If you don't want to.
I'm willing to wait;
Let me know when you know.
I guess I'll go!
I'm glad we cleared the air
And set things straight.
Yeah.
We don't have to date.

It's alright. No, I'll be fine.
Disappointment is a part of life.
It's probably for the best that I tame my tendency
For co-dependence,
See, I know
That sooner or later,
I should learn to be happy alone—
Instead of texting you ten times an hour
Then staring at my phone.

We don't have to date
If we're not meant to.
You're perfectly great
But you're hardly The One.
Like, it's been fun,
But if it's done, it's done,

There's no point fighting fate.

'Cause if you're not available
Then what's the use in wishing you were?
My feelings are curtail-able.
I can't always have what I'd prefer.
And there's no sense getting my heart irate
'Cause I don't know where on your chart I rate.
No, this time I play it smart! I wait and see.
'Cause maybe there's something happening here.
Or maybe it's just me...

Well, goodnight.
Okay, yup.

*(He goes to leave. Stops. Starts again. Changes
his mind. Finally returns and knocks.)*

I'm still standing in your doorway.
With my shoes on, ready to go.
Killing time and thinking out loud,
Saying stuff you already know.

Laughing, joking, self-effacing;
Working hard to feign like I'm fine.
What if once I let my guard down?
Put my bleeding heart on the line?

Okay, yes, I really, really like you.
Yes, I know you've got other men.
And yes, I heard you, you're not looking.
So you don't need to tell me again.

And I won't try to list all the reasons why
We would be so perfectly good.
'Cause you are free to not fall in love with me
Even though you should!
You should! You should!
You really, really, really, really, should!

We don't have to date,
But hey, I want to.
It's not a debate
But I think that you're wrong.
I have this strong inclination that I'm the guy for you.
We don't have to date,
But I hope that we do.

Ba-ba-da-da...
K, I'm done now.
Give me a call.

17. When I Get Enlightened

(The signup table at a yoga or meditation workshop, where Woman 2 is perusing literature skeptically.)

WOMAN 2

When I get enlightened,
Do I have to change my name
To something Tibetan?
I think that might threaten
My Mom's deep sense of Jewish pride.
(“Lakshmi”...?)
And will I have visions?
Meet a magic animal to
Guide me through?
And give me the lowdown on what to do?
No, I'm not kidding.
I saw it in 'Fight Club'.

When I get enlightened,
Will I have to drop the snark?
And act all New Agey?
I like being cagey,
And I'm quite fond of my impenetrable wall of words.
It suits me.
But really, no, I mean it.
Will I be communing with
Birds and plants?
Laughing in a rainstorm and doing a happy dance?
Not that I'm hating on birds,
I'm just saying:

Will I be pure?
Will I be wise?
Will I have karma dust in my eyes?
And will all my teeth be spiritually whitened,
When I get enlightened?

When I get enlightened,
Can I still resent my Dad?
Or is that off-limits?
It's just that with him it's
A constant game of “who will blink?”
(Not me!)
Yeah, and then there's my mother.
Let me guess:
I'll have to rethink her too?
After all the bullshit she's put me through?
(Sorry, I know,
But I'm serious, she's crazy.)

I guess I'll be calm?
I guess I'll be pure?
I guess I'll be way too fucking secure
To ever take the bait.
'Cause I'll be on my cloud, not a single muscle tightened...
"Hey Mom. Hey Dad. Guess what?
I got enlightened."

If I got enlightened,
Would I ever get out of bed?
'Cause, really, why should I?
If my third eye's my good eye,
Then why would I waste it
In an office
Staring blankly
At some numbers on a screen?
Beats me.

But then, what, do nothing?
Sit around and breathe and feel
Serene all day?
Wait, no, I guess that might be okay.
Don't know the last time I really tried breathing.

(tries breathing)

This busy little mind
Won't go down without a fight.
But hey, the sky seems brightened.
Did I just get enlightened?

Well, I may not be pure,
Or ever be wise,
But if I could just be,
Hey, what a surprise.
I wouldn't be high, exactly—
Maybe just sort of... heightened.

And then maybe I won't feel so frightened or stressed or upset.
'Cause I'll know there's nowhere to get,
When I get enlightened.

...if I get enlightened.

18. I Don't Wanna Know

WOMAN 3

You can go if you want.
I won't go and put the blame on you.
And you're right.
It's your right.
I won't stand in the way.
We know the deal, we know the score;
And here we are, and there's the door.
The end of you and me again.

You should do what you want.
I don't claim to have a claim on you,
The way I did –
If I ever did –
Well, I don't today.
You're a man with wants and needs.
So go ahead, see where it leads.
Maybe you'll feel free again.

But honey, save your breath,
And save the explanations.
It's all been talked to death
And love hates dying slow.
So you can say goodbye,
But please don't tell me why.
'Cause I don't want to know.

I can say what I want,
And what I say won't change the way it is.
I know your mind.
And baby, in your mind
We're a bird that has flown.
And if you're wrong, well, them's the breaks.
We live and learn from our mistakes.
Or we don't. I sure can't force you, dear.

I'm not the one that you want.
That's it, it's done; so say it is.
If there's a lesson left for me to learn, I will learn it alone.
Please! Let's not debrief.
Let's be brief.
Skip the bargaining; straight to grief.
Right here's where I divorce you, dear –

And put a nice, clean end
To all this seedy drama.
You want to be my friend? Good,
Then shut your mouth and go!

You say it hurts you too?
Well babe, I'm sure that's true.
But I don't want to know—

All the thinking you've done.
The hours of analyzing!
The pros, the cons, pondered one by one.
So agonizing for you!
It's so hard for you!
Yeah, I know, I know.
It's oh-so-hard for you...

We can talk if you want.
Come on, siddown.
Shame on you.
You can say what you need to say.
I don't mean to shut you down.
I think I'm taking this fairly well.
But then, I'm me, so I can't tell.
I hate to be a gloomy gus.
You always did see through me —
Us.

Was something left unsaid?
Something that you needed?
Or was it in our bed
That I just lost my glow?
Or were you... not in love?
Or all of the above?

Well maybe you can't see
The reasons why you're leaving.
You'll look back, just like me,
Reenact it blow-by-blow,
One day you'll work it through.
And darling, when you do,
Don't you dare tell me.
Don't you dare tell me!
Because I don't want to know!

19. Everything Is Not Real As This

(Outdoors, early morning.)

MAN 2

The sleepy sun is warming only me.
I sit alone and breathe a prelude to the day.
A moment of strange clarity and peace.
And Everything is Not as Real as This.

WOMAN 1

Another night of blurry fevered pain

MAN 3

Has spit me out, slick against the morning cool,

WOMAN 3

To hobble home, exhausted and relieved.

ALL

And Everything is Not as Real as This.

MEN

And soon the sun will leave
To take its summer post,
High above with a fierceness it can't help.

WOMEN

We're stealing gentle moments while we can.

MAN 1

The hand to strike the wake-up bell is raised.

ALL

The world will rise and fill me up with noise.

WOMAN 2

And everything will loom so large and true.

ALL

But Everything is not as Real as This.
No, Everything
Is not as Real
As This.

20. Parallel Universe Me

MAN 2

There's a Parallel Universe Me,
And he lives just as big as he dreams.
He lives large.
He is totally, flagrantly free
To be cool, or to go to extremes.
He's in charge.
He wakes up right at dawn,
And says "Life, bring it on!
I dare you."
He's crazy but he's wise.
The fire in his eyes

Could scare you.
There's nothing they don't see.

He's the Parallel Universe Me.
He's attractive and active and cool,
So hard core!
And you know when he makes a decree
People gather around and just drool,
Like, "Yes, more!"
The night is always his.
No matter where he is,
There's action.
He's always in the flow.
No holding back and no distraction.

He says "Listen.
Are you listening?
This is who you could be,
In the parallel universe..."

Ever hear that nagging voice?
"You were meant for something greater."
Time goes on. You shrug it off,
Or laugh it off,
Or put it off 'till later.
Later, bang the drums.
Later, no retreat.
Then later never comes,
And parallel lines don't meet.

Now the Parallel Universe Me,
He and I need to have us a talk.
Nice calm chat.
When I tell him that I disagree,
Will he stand there, or ask me in shock,
"Oh? How's that?"
Well, here's the thing, my friend:
I'm gonna have to end
Our deal here.
Your life looks really fun,
But I'm the only one
Who's real here.

So I'm tearing down your shrine.
I'm gonna live the life that's mine,
And see myself as fine.
Yeah, maybe that's the key!

Because I've got someone more important to be
In the actual universe
Than a Parallel Universe Me.

21. If You Would Be So Kind

(A first date — the first in a long time for both participants.)

WOMAN 3

If you would be so kind,
Be a good one:
The kind that I've not yet known.
Maybe love isn't blind,
And it's me that's visually impaired
Or pothole-prone.
'Cause so far love has not been rosy:
A pain in the ass meets a knife in the heart.
Soon enough, a girl gets cozy
Waiting for her life to start.

MAN 3

If you would be so kind,
Give me leeway
To say the most awkward things.
Seems like my mouth's designed
Like a kind of spring-loaded trap door
With no springs!

W3

Now you can be a doubting Thomas,
But don't ever doubt I'll make every mistake.

M3

I will mess this up, I promise!

BOTH

But I will clean up whatever I break.

Oh,
It's been so long—
It might be never—
Since love got to me.
Oh,
And if I'm wrong?
Well, fine, whatever.
I'm out of clever ways to argue this can't be.

W3

Would you pinch me?

M3

If you would be so kind,
Let me love you

In my own imperfect way.

W3

Stars may not be aligned,
And Cupid's prob'ly stuck on the road,
Or home sick today!

M3

So let's not wait on "Someday, Maybe,"

W3

'Cause "someday" may be forever from now.

BOTH

All of my friends keep saying
That I should feel the fear and jump anyhow,

M3

And love might just renew me.

W3

I have it coming to me.

BOTH

I'd like to believe that too.
That kind of depends
On you.

22. Finally Me

WOMAN 1

See that woman bottled up inside?
That's the woman that I used to be.
Doing well, but never satisfied:
That's the woman that I used to be.
You know, I used to be just fine.
But now I'm finally me.

WOMAN 2

Flying high on autopilot:
That's the woman that I used to be.
Knew my number, but I could not dial it:
That's the woman that I used to be!
You see, I used to be just fine.
But now I'm finally me.

W1

Always going through the motions.

W2

No emotion, just overwhelm.

BOTH

Now I'm letting go of my tired old notions,

WOMAN 3

And looking around, it's a brand new realm!

A big success! a one-woman show!
That's the woman that I used to be.
Saying 'yes' when she means 'no':
That's the woman that I used to be.

ALL THREE

Oh yeah, I used to be just fine,
But now I'm finally me!

(instrumental/ dance break)

ALL THREE (CONT.)

Well there's no turning back when you start to wake up,
Shake the ground up and plant the seed.
Me and my old self, it was time for a break-up.
Gonna find me the self I truly need!

W1

I'm not asleep, I'm keeping it real!
And you can bet I'm talking honestly.

W2

Not gonna hide what I really feel.
That's not a threat, that's a guarantee!

W1

Because I used to be just fine.

W2

Oh yeah, I used to be 'just fine'.

W3

You know, I used to be just fine, fine, fine, fine, fine...

(Fine.)

But now I'm finally me.

ALL THREE

I'm finally me.

Oh, I'm finally, finally, finally, finally, finally me.
And it feels good!

23. Marry Me, America

MAN 3

Marry me, America.
I can tell you're lonesome.
I see the things you think no one can see.
All worn out, America.
Better days? You've known some.
A fading empire yearning to breathe free.

Marry me, America.
Leave your misadventures.
Your wars and indiscretions, let them be.
Such big teeth, America;
We both know they're dentures.
So take them out and come lay down with me.

You were once the envy of the world:
Your science;
Your savvy, your splendor;
Your jazz.
Now they say you're nothing but a has-been.
But who's been
Where you've been?
No one has.

Oh, marry me, America.
Grand old girl, I know you.
I learned your funky rhythms long ago.
You done good, America.
Plenty good: I'll show you.
You've taught me nearly everything I know.

(instrumental solo)

I was so enamored with your swagger.
I worshipped your vastness,
Your sharpness,
Your shine!
Now I see you fumbling for a foothold.
You're falling, you're failing.
You're frightened...
You're fine.
'Cause you're mine, oh,

Marry me, America.

Loosen up your border.
You are your own worst enemy, by far.
Let me in, America;
We'll put this house in order.
I'll show you just how beautiful you are.

24. The Long Run, part 2

WOMAN 3

Some days, I'm wide open;
Others, not at all.

MAN 3

They ebb and they flow;
Come and then they go.

BOTH

It's like clockwork, or something.

MAN 2, WOMAN 2

Let a little hope in:
But be prepared to fall.

MAN 1, WOMAN 1

And falling's okay.
I have to assume—

ALL

It all evens out,
And there will be room for everything,

In the long run.
Yeah, in the long run.
Yeah in the long...
In the long...
In the long...

Long enough to
Turn off the re-runs of old situations
That scroll by.
And join in the smiles on the faces of friends
As they stroll by.

And laugh at my life!
I've made a slapstick, spectator sport of it.
A kangaroo court of it.
And all for the longing
t h e l o n g i n g
t h e l o n g i n g and the short of it.

END OF SHOW