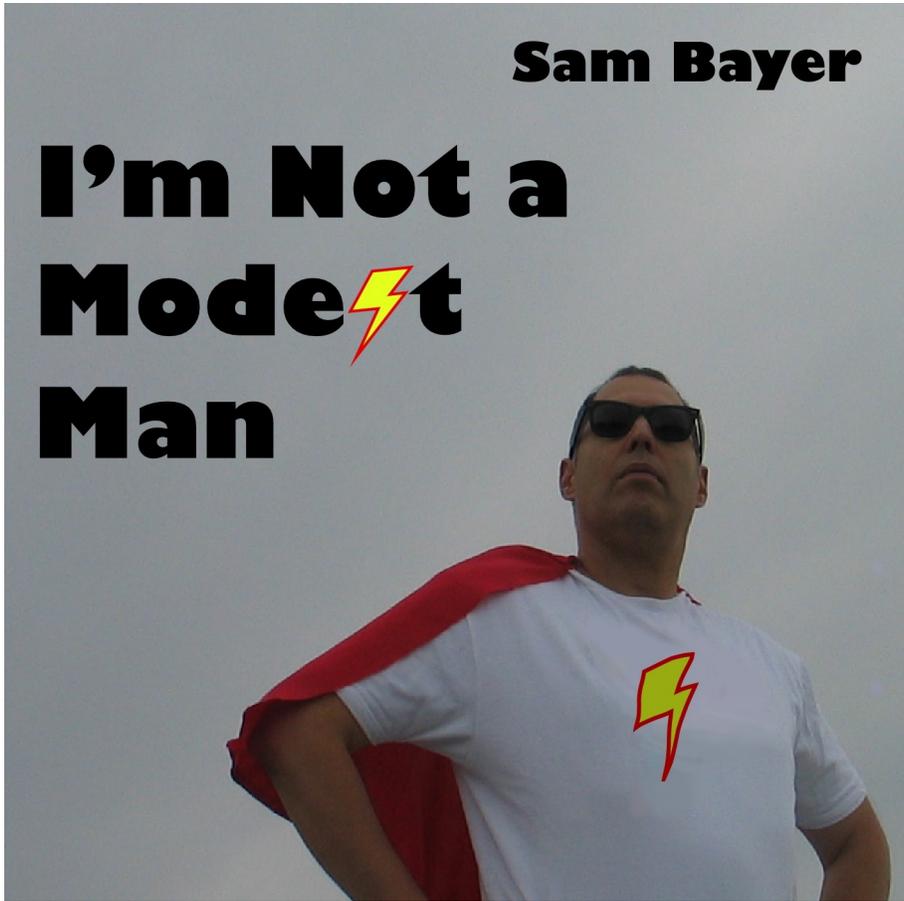


**Sam Bayer**

**I'm Not a  
Modest   
Man**



**I'm Not a Modest Man  
Five Dwarf Day  
Your Side of the Bed  
Delilah  
Icarus  
Broken  
Please Mr. Policeman  
Abbie Hoffman's Revenge  
You Gotta Mumble If You  
Wanna Sing the Blues**

# I'm Not a Modest Man

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

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

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

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

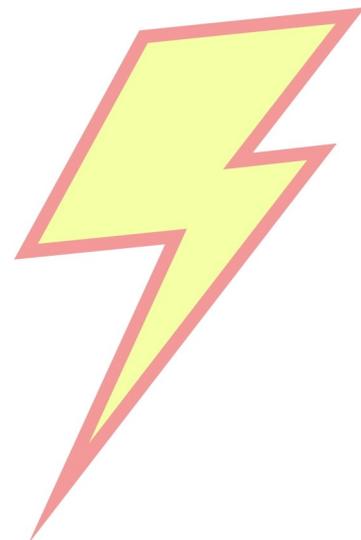
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You offer me your hand, I shake it  
You give me your name, I take it  
You praise me to the skies, and I fake it  
Cuz I've heard it all before  
They say I pushed them to a higher calling  
They say "Be still my beating heart, I'm falling"  
They say they find my shamelessness appalling

Well, at least I'm two for three,  
Gonna shoot for three for four

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

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



# Five Dwarf Day

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Morning is an oncoming train  
I'm a terrible patient  
But I grit my teeth and try to behave  
Snow White has her hand on my forehead  
Checking my pulse  
She's blurry and she sounds like a cave

"You're sneezy, and sleepy, and stubborn and snide  
You're grumpy and bashful, and wholly undignified  
Doc, you gotta cure yourself  
Cuz I don't like the way  
You're having a five-dwarf day"

Staring at daytime TV  
Oprah's uplifting  
And Jerry's got his lesbian pets  
Dinner is ibuprofen and toast  
Echinacea and soup  
And I spell my complaints in my alphabets

I'm sneezy and sleepy and fit to be tied  
Grump and bashful, and only partially justified  
Doc, I gotta cure myself  
Cuz she don't like the way  
I'm having a five-dwarf day

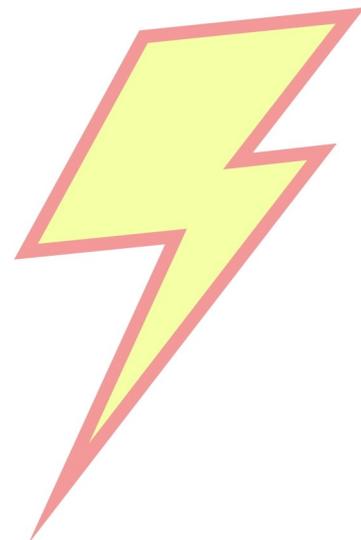
I'm this close to dying  
But my angel ain't buying  
Her impatience is welling  
It shows through the cracks  
"I know you're not happy  
When you're feeling this crappy  
But I'd settle for dopey  
If you'd only relax"

But patience is a virtue I lack  
A skill that I lost  
Or a talent I was never bestowed  
But you can do just so many crossword puzzles  
Read just so many mystery novels  
Watch just so many reruns of a familiar episode

I'm wheezy, and queasy, and clammy and dry  
I'm making up new dwarves as the symptoms

multiply

Doc, you gotta get some sleep  
Cuz she don't like the way  
You're having  
You're having a nine-dwarf day



# Your Side of the Bed

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

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

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

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

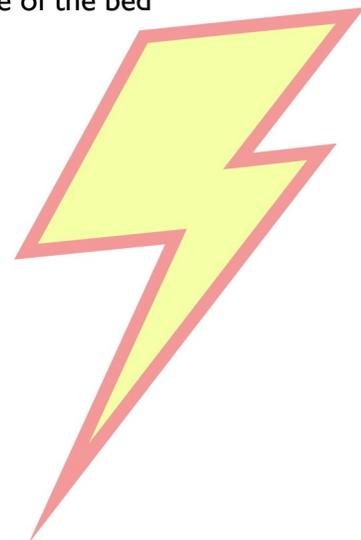
The signs are next to useless  
On your side of the bed  
They're obscured at intersections  
And they point in odd directions  
I was on my way to paradise  
And wound up here instead  
The signs are next to useless  
On your side of the bed

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

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

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

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



# Delilah

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Delilah wants to know  
What I'm afraid of  
It's only a name  
She swears her shears are in the drawer  
But I'm still scared she's looking for a man she can  
tame  
There are days when I almost believe her  
And then I catch her casting her spell  
The slightest smile, and I'm a minute a mile  
Making dates I should deny her, telling tales I  
shouldn't tell

She's trapped me without chains or walls  
Where every glance and mood entralls  
I don't know why I don't have the balls  
Not to answer  
When Delilah calls

Delilah's found a chink  
A chink in my armor  
But there's nothing to fear  
As long as I remember not to struggle  
As long as I know my place  
As long as I stay right here  
There are days when I almost escape her  
But then the searchlight hits, and I know I've been  
seen  
The slightest smile, and I'm a minute a mile  
Doing things I should deny her, meaning words I  
shouldn't mean

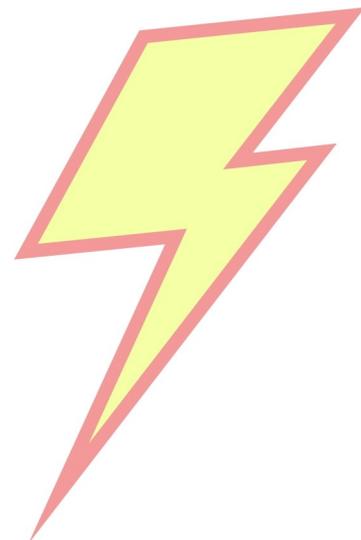
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The slightest smile, and I'm a minute a mile  
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She's trapped me without chains or walls

Where every glance and mood entralls  
I don't know why I don't have the balls  
Not to answer  
When Delilah calls

Delilah wants to know  
What I'm afraid of



# Icarus

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Icarus was running with a bad crowd  
Hitting the mead too hard, playing the lute too  
loud  
His band of brothers loitered in the empty street  
They were the Crips of the Isle of Crete

Icarus faced the court, the charge was blasphemy  
He made a hundred drachmas betting on the  
Delphic prophecy  
Screw the gods, they heard him shout defiantly  
They wear big tunics, but they can't hurt me

Daedalus stood in the doorway and bit his tongue  
A mouth so filthy on a boy so young  
And this is what you'd hear if you could read his  
mind  
"I'd like to tan that little bastard's behind"

Icarus, you moron, don't fly too close to the sun  
You never pay attention to anyone  
Don't care who put these foolish ideas in your  
head  
Why don't you listen to your father instead

Icarus left the house on a tide of profanity  
Put on his sandals from Nike, goddess of Victory  
He strapped his wings on for a joy ride  
And went to join the party outside

And Daedalus could hear them laughing when the  
wind was still  
Waiting to take a header off of Dead Man's Hill  
And this is what you'd hear if you could read his  
mind  
"I'd like to tan that little bastard's behind"

Icarus, you moron, don't fly too close to the sun  
You never pay attention to anyone  
Don't care who put these foolish ideas in your  
head  
Why don't you listen to your father instead

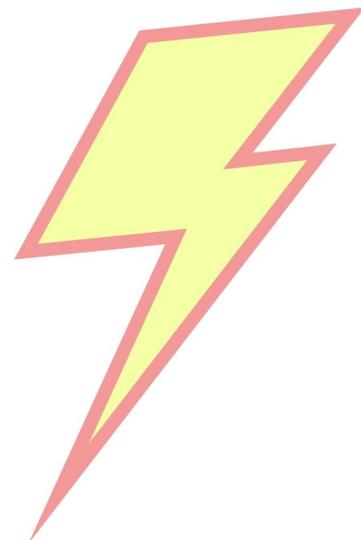
Don't tease the Minotaur  
Don't leer at the virgins

Don't poke your finger in Apollo's eye  
Don't urinate on the side of the Parthenon  
Don't spook the horses  
Don't touch the sky

And they never found the body, but he scorned  
them from the grave  
Giving Poseidon the finger as he hit the waves  
His neighbors were certain his fate was sealed  
Far from an Elysian field

And Daedalus gritted his teeth as he paced the  
shore  
And thought of that stupid wiseass sneer he wore  
And this is what you'd hear if you could read his  
mind  
"I'd like to tan that little bastard's behind"

Icarus, you Cretan, you flew too close to the sun  
You never paid attention to anyone  
Don't care who put those foolish ideas in your  
head  
You should have listened to your father  
You should have listened to your father  
You should have listened to your father instead



# Broken

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I greet the day to indifferent reviews  
Coffee raves, dish pans  
Why do the toughest critics always sit in the front  
row  
Can't hide in my dressing room  
Cuz I share it with the audience  
You think you know about me, but you don't  
know

After a while, the words don't weigh any more  
Than the ink with which they're written  
No more than the breath on which they're  
spoken  
Each time you drop us, we just get a little more  
broken

There are many dishes of honesty  
Some taste like honey, some reek like steak  
And some make you stupid like mugs of musty  
beer  
You say the boxing is good for the blood  
But I didn't marry a sparring partner  
Would you box with your shadow if I wasn't here

After a while, the words don't weigh any more  
Than the ink with which they're written  
No more than the breath on which they're  
spoken  
Each time you drop us, we just get a little more  
broken

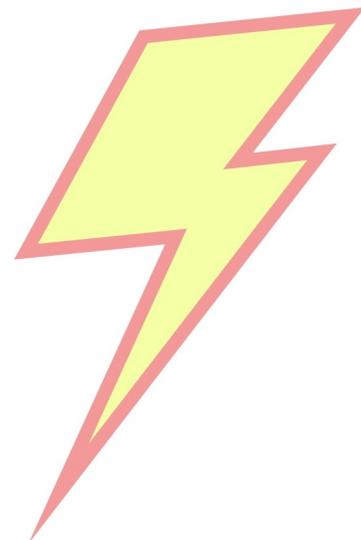
You feel the need to speak your mind  
No matter if it's cruel or kind  
It took me all these years to find  
My poison is your nectar

And after the barking is over  
You wag your tail to go again  
Nip and nuzzle, just the game you play  
But there's a dull pain inside me  
That steals my sleep and appetite  
Like a toothache that just won't go away

You claim the right to speak of things

No matter if it soothes or stings  
You push my buttons, pull my strings  
My poison is your nectar

Each time you drop us, we just get a little more  
broken



# Please Mr. Policeman

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It's way too dark to see  
But this old Chevy's been so good to me  
Picture hanging from the rear view  
Won't stop spinning till I reach you  
Seventy-five in the pouring rain  
Engine whining like it's in pain  
Cover my ears, give it gas  
Curse the slowpokes I can't pass  
I get the feeling it's one of those nights  
I'll meet my friend with the flashing lights

Please Mr. Policeman  
Take pity on me  
I'm rushing toward my sweetheart  
And she's many miles away  
It's such a worth mission  
I'm hoping you'll say  
You're gonna spare me that ticket today

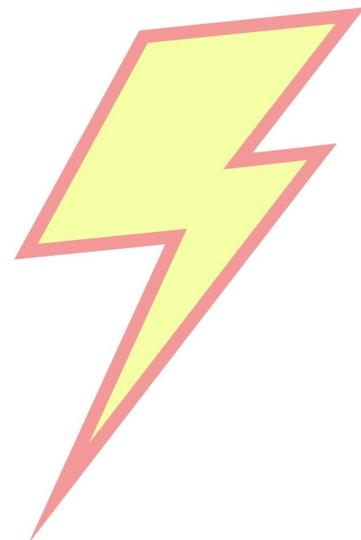
I'm getting drowsy from the drone  
So I find some coffee and a pay phone  
You tell me "slow down" when I call  
But I'm a man, and I love you, so I've got no sense  
at all  
Watching the needle cross the dash  
Hoping I don't get caught or crash  
I'm more enchanted than afraid  
Of how this reckless game is played  
I'm getting the feeling it's one of those nights  
I'll meet my friend with the flashing lights

Please Mr. Policeman  
Take pity on me  
I'm rushing toward my sweetheart  
And she's many miles away  
It's such a worth mission  
I'm hoping you'll say  
You're gonna spare me that ticket today

Perhaps I'll ask to be escorted  
A wail of sirens to your door  
Although I'm certain to be thwarted

If the miles ain't made for dreaming  
I don't know what the miles are for

Please Mr. Policeman  
Take pity on me  
I'm rushing toward my sweetheart  
And she's a million miles away  
It's such a worth mission  
I'm hoping you'll say  
You're gonna spare me that ticket today (3x)



# Abbie Hoffman's Revenge

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I stole a glance  
Something that didn't belong to me  
Tucked my nose back in the paper  
Reading the box scores and the obituaries  
Don't let anyone tell you that it's innocent  
This longing in the bottom of your brain  
She turned around, did she suspect, many years  
ago  
I would have traded a blush to know

Anticipation greets me like a long-lost friend  
Watching me falter  
I haven't felt it since I don't know when  
And I might be too old to feel it again, oh Lord,  
I might be too old to feel it again

He spat on my shoes  
And swore in my face  
Poked a finger at my breastbone  
Invaded my personal space  
I waited for the ashes on my tongue  
I waited for the rope around my ribs  
But all I thought was, what a stench of beer and  
nicotine  
He's in the way of the bank machine

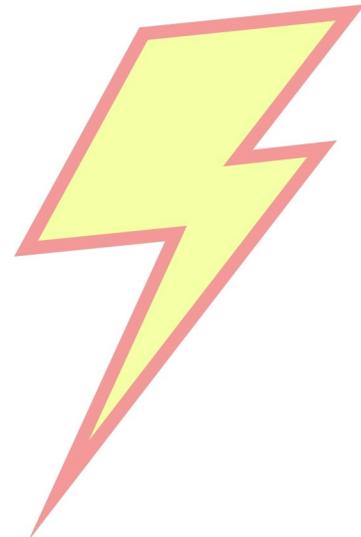
Intimidation hovers like a bird of prey  
Waiting for me to stumble  
I haven't felt it since I don't know when  
And I might be too old to feel it again, oh Lord,  
I might be too old to feel it again

I had an idea, it burned through my brain  
Set fire to the paper that I wrote on  
It was as old as the mountains and as fresh as a  
kiss  
It's heresy in the third degree that I could end up  
like this  
Without the madman's twinkle  
Without the three days' growth of beard

Without the firmly held opinions less profound  
than they appeared  
Without conventional wisdom at the mercy of my  
blade  
Without the plastic explosives 'neath the slow  
part of the day

And so I shuffle through dinner  
Nuzzle the neck of my sweetheart  
Throw some stuff at the television  
And sleep like a baby  
Don't let anyone lie about the temptation  
This oasis in the middle of my days  
My favorite mug, my weedy lawn, my friendly  
neighborhood  
I scorn them less than I thought I would

Ambition finds me in my easy chair  
Watching me slumber  
I haven't felt it since I don't know when  
And I might be too old to feel it again, oh Lord  
(2x)  
I might be too old to feel it again



# You Gotta Mumble If You Wanna Sing the Blues

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

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

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

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

Well, my jaw 'bout hit the floor  
He said "That's good, but I need more  
Think of Dugan - Duncan - Dylan, that's the one."  
He pulled a stool out from the bar  
And took my capo and guitar  
And said, "Sonny, lemme show you how it's done"

(Mumbled verse)

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

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

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

