

**Takin' It To**  
**The Emack's**

**Sam Bayer**  
with  
**David Troen-Krasnow**

**Live!**

**at Emack and Bolio's**



**- Roslindale Daily Tattler**

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

# I'm Not a Modest Man

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Not Quite Spring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# The Handyman's Waltz

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

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

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

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

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

With the gadgets that breed  
In the silverware drawer

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

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



# Your Side of the Bed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# When the Empire Falls

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Do You Believe In Me

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# You Gotta Mumble If You Wanna Sing the Blues

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Mumbled verse)

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

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

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

