

SAM

a chamber opera

in

two acts

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music by Mark Warhol

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Synopsis

SAM, a chamber opera, is about a certain ordinary man who is quite an extraordinary man.

Act I, Scene 1: Before daybreak. For years of Monday through Friday mornings, Sam's wife, Shirley, has been cooking his breakfast and getting him off to work. But this is not a typical morning. Sam was late coming home last night, and he had consumed so many beers Shirley finds he is now not eager to begin his new day. When Sam is finally up and on his way, with his uneaten breakfast still on the kitchen table, Shirley wonders what's behind Sam's night before.

Act I, Scene 2: Early afternoon of the same day. Sam returns home. He has not been to work, and he is drinking beer again. Sam tells Shirley about his new boss, David Pibb, a young man of different values and opposite views. David makes Sam feel old. When David pays a visit to see why Sam is not at work, he joins Sam at the kitchen table. With mutual and growing dislike, they assess each other and confront their differences. Sam realizes that he and David will never work together in harmony or agreement. Unwilling to compromise, yet not wanting to quit his job of many years, Sam's life comes to a standstill.

Act II: Evening, a week later. Still undecided whether to resign or return to work at the machine shop, Sam is working nights at Lissie's Lounge. He is not happy and he is not a good bartender. Shirley, Lissie, and David Pibb's secretary, Jeanne, are meeting for a drink when David Pibb arrives to talk with Sam. David believes if he can explain to Sam why he is changing things at the shop, Sam will understand and accept his reasons. David also tells Sam that he needs him at work, and wants him to return. Sam's reply is both an affirmation of himself and an act of self-discovery. With his faith restored, and with his Shirley, Sam sets out to find the next choice in his life.

Scenes/Cast

The setting is a northeastern city in America, about 1975, where the characters of SAM lead quiet, ordinary, perhaps even mundane lives. Yet just beneath the surface – present in each character and very much felt by the audience – is a strong feeling of energy – of vitality. This sense of vitality has become a distinguishing trademark of Americans, especially of those living in the larger northern cities in this era.

Act I

SCENE 1: A large kitchen in an old apartment building. It is Sam’s kitchen, and the cupboards, counters, wall-finishing, etc., are his work. The room reflects Sam and his care and skill as a carpenter. The time is early morning – before daybreak. The lighting is functional, motivated by an overhead fixture. The full effect of the kitchen – its warmth, comfort, and sense of permanence – is not revealed in this lighting.

Sam and Shirley are the only characters present.

Sam: a machinist in his early forties
baritone

Shirley: Sam’s wife, about forty
lyric soprano

SCENE 2: The same. The kitchen is now seen in full daylight, and we are very much aware of the room as a manifestation of Sam.

Shirley and Sam are in this scene, as well as David Pibb.

David: Sam’s boss at the machine shop, late twenties
tenor

Act II: Lissie’s Lounge. A blue-collar bar serving beer, sandwiches, and a steam-table special. Neither pretentious nor full of beer signs and advertisements, Lissie’s Lounge is a warm and comfortable place to drink a beer – the kind of place Sam would choose as his home away from home. The time is early evening.

In addition to Shirley, Sam, and David Pibb, two additional principal characters are present.

Lissie: owner/operator of “Lissie’s Lounge”, about forty-five
mezzo-soprano

Jeanne: David Pibb’s secretary, early twenties
dramatic soprano

There is also a male chorus – composed of Sam’s friends and co/workers, one of whom has his girlfriend with him.

Carlene:	coloratura soprano	Burton:	baritone
Vernon:	tenor	Steve:	bass
Terry:	baritone	Sylvester:	(mute)

SAM

ACT I, SCENE #1

THE ACT CURTAIN IS OPEN WHEN THE AUDIENCE ENTERS THE HALL. SAM'S AND SHIRLEY'S KITCHEN IS SEEN IN DIM NIGHT ILLUMINATION. A DARK WINDOW ABOVE THE SINK SUGGESTS STREET AND SIGN LIGHTS BELOW.

THE HOUSE DIMS FOR THE ORCHESTRAL PRELUDE. SHIRLEY ENTERS THE KITCHEN WEARING HER NIGHTGOWN AND HOUSECOAT. SHE TURNS ON THE OVERHEAD LIGHT FIXTURE, THEN THE TELEVISION SET – AN OLD FLOOR MODEL WITH RABBIT EARS ON TOP (WE CANNOT SEE THE SCREEN).

UNTIL SAM'S OFFSTAGE VOCAL ENTRANCE, ALL OF SHIRLEY'S WORDS ARE ADDRESSED TO THE TELEVISION SET – AN ANIMATE OBJECT THAT FOR YEARS HAS BEEN HER COMPANION AND CONFIDANT.

SHIRLEY: Good morning to you too
 Mr. T. V.
 Mine's beginning
 a little earlier than usual –
 it's gonna take
 a little longer
 to get him off to work.
 Oh I know –
 he'll be the first
 to tell you –
 he hasn't missed a day
 in seven years.
 What he fails to mention
 is that every now and then
 he does miss a night.
 Then it's hold on to your rabbit ears
 for the unknown morning after.

SHE PREPARES THE COFFEE POT AND PUTS IT ON THE STOVE, THEN TURNS BACK TO THE TELEVISION.

SHIRLEY: I turned you off
 when I heard him on the stairs.
 You should have seen him
 come floating in.
 Imagine the Queen Mary
 trying to set sail
 in a puddle of beer.

SHE TAKES BACON FROM THE REFRIGERATOR AND PLACES IT IN A CAST IRON SKILLET ON THE STOVE.

SHIRLEY: He doesn't often do this,
just every now and then.
When he does –
(SHRUGS)
he really does.
(REFLECTIVE)
Sometimes –
there's a reason.

SHE TAKES EGGS FROM THE REFRIGERATOR AND BREAKS THEM INTO A BOWL. SHE ADDS MILK, THEN BEATS THEM UP. SHE LOOKS AT THE KITCHEN CLOCK.

SHIRLEY: (TO SAM – KNOWING HE WILL NOT HEAR)
Well, sleeping beauty –
I may not be a princess
but your time has come.
(TO T.V.)
If anything goes wrong,
I want you to know
it's been a real pleasure.

SHE GOES TO THE HALL DOOR.

SHIRLEY: Sam –

THERE IS NO RESPONSE. SHE RETURNS TO THE COUNTER AND BEATS UP THE EGGS SOME MORE.

SHIRLEY: I told you –
it's gonna take
a little longer.

SHE RETURNS TO THE HALL DOORWAY AND CALLS HIM WITH MORE DETERMINATION.

SHIRLEY: Sam –
(PAUSE – THEN TO T.V. – TONGUE IN CHEEK)
I don't dare
go in there.
On mornings like this
he can be dangerous.

SHE RETURNS TO THE STOVE AND TURNS THE BACON.

SHIRLEY: Apparently,
it's gonna take
full voice.

SHE GOES TO THE DOOR, CROSSES HERSELF, TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

SHIRLEY: Sam !!!

SHE QUICKLY CROSSES TO THE T.V. – AS IF FOR PROTECTION.

SHIRLEY: Not bad, huh?
I used to wow em
at the Immaculate Heart of Mary's
Spring Festival.

SAM: (OFFSTAGE)
Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo –

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY ORCHESTRAL SOUNDS SUGGESTING NOISE FROM THE NEIGHBORING APARTMENTS.

SHIRLEY: (DISDAINFUL)
That's my chorus.
Strictly amateurs.
Take ensemble –
they've never even heard of it.
(CROSSING TO THE HALL DOOR)
Poor pet –
our callous neighbors
are causing a commotion.

SHE GOES TO THE REFRIGERATOR, TAKES OUT BUTTER, PUTS BREAD ON A BAKING SHEET AND INTO THE OVEN. SHE GOES TO THE HALL DOOR AND LISTENS. SILENCE. SHE GOES TO THE COUNTER, TURNS AND WINKS AT THE T.V. THEN, AS PART OF THE SCORE SHE RATTLES AND BANGS ON THE POTS AND PANS. SHE RETURNS TO THE DOOR.

SHIRLEY: (TO SAM – WITH A VOICE OF SWEETNESS AND INNOCENCE)
It sure is quiet back there.

SAM: It sure is noisy out there!

SHIRLEY: (RETURNING TO THE STOVE)
He calls us noisy –
I wish he could hear
what we heard all night –
his snoring!

SHE TAKES OUT THE BREAK PAN, SPREADS THE TOAST WITH BUTTER, AND RETURNS IT TO THE OVEN. SHE GOES BACK TO THE HALL DOOR AND LISTENS. SILENCE.

SHIRLEY: Hey Rip Van Winkle –
would you like to hear
my high C?

SAM: Shirley –
I'm up!
Almost.

SHIRLEY RETURNS TO THE STOVE.

SHIRLEY: Sure he is –
like I almost
look like Sophia Loren.

THERE IS AN OFFSTAGE CRASH.

SHIRLEY: Hallelujah!
Now he's up.
Or down.
That noise?
Don't worry –
he's still immune
to pain.
At this stage
all he feels
is an ache in his head.
And shame!

SHE RETURNS TO THE STOVE, REMOVES THE BACON FROM THE SKILLET, AND PUTS IT ON A PIECE OF NEWSPAPER TO DRAIN. SHE POURS MOST OF THE GREASE FROM THE SKILLET INTO A JAR, PUTS THE SKILLET BACK ON THE STOVE, AND POURS IN THE SCRAMBLED EGG MIXTURE.

SHIRLEY: Scrambled eggs
for a scrambled husband
on a scrambled morning.
(BACK AT THE HALL DOORWAY)
Breakfast
is waiting
your majesty.

SAM: I'm not hungry.

SHIRLEY: Hungry or not –
you get in here and eat!

SAM: Awwww Shirley.

SHIRLEY: You'll feel better
with some hot food
in your stomach.
Or would you prefer
a bowl of cold beer?

SAM: I need a transfusion
of coffee.

SHIRLEY: There's a whole pot
awaiting your arrival.

SAM: Put some in a saucer
on the floor.

SHIRLEY: (STIRRING THE EGGS)
Are you going
to take a shower?

SAM: No!
I might drown.

SHIRLEY: Water
comes out of our shower –
not beer.

SAM: Then I might freeze –
it's cold back here.

SHIRLEY: (REMOVING TOAST FROM THE OVEN)
With all that antifreeze
in your plumbing system?

SAM: Have you no sorrow
for when I've lost tomorrow?

SHE SLIDES THE SKILLET WITH THE SCRAMBLED EGGS TO A BACK BURNER.

SHIRLEY: What I have is breakfast –
if you'll get on out here.

SAM: I'm too far gone
for food.

SHIRLEY: Shall I call
an ambulance?

SAM: Too late.
Send for your priest
and the undertaker.

SHIRLEY: You were taken under
at Lissie's.
And you can't go to heaven yet –
you promised
to take me to the movies

this night.

SAM: Are you sure?

SHIRLEY: I promise
you promised.
But I'll make you a deal –
if –
and only if –
you expire before tonight,
you won't have to take me
to the movies.

SAM: And if I should
give up this ghost?

SHIRLEY: Then
we'll hold your funeral
at the movies.

SAM: If I die –
if I don't –
either way
for this day
I'm a goner.
I might as well go on.

SHIRLEY: (GIVING THE T.V. A KISS ON TOP OF THE CABINET)
Victory is ours
Mr. T.V.!
You have a night off –
I have a night out!

SAM: Woman –
pour my coffee!
Not too hot!

SHIRLEY: Well –
you can sure tell
he's managed
to put his pants on.
Most likely backwards –
and he can't figure out
what's happened to this zipper.

SHIRLEY TAKES TWO SAUCERS FROM THE CUPBOARD, POURS A SMALL AMOUNT OF COFFEE INTO EACH ONE, THEN BLOWS ON THEM TO COOL THEM OFF. SHE GETS ONE ON THE FLOOR JUST INSIDE THE HALL DOOR. THE OTHER SHE PLACES ON THE FLOOR NEAR SAM'S CHAIR AT THE TABLE. NEXT, SHE TAKES A CUP, FILLS IT WITH COFFEE, AND PUTS IT ON THE TABLE WHERE HE WILL EAT HIS BREAKFAST.

SHIRLEY: The stage is set.
Places everybody.

EXCITED, SHIRLEY RUSHES OVER AND STANDS BESIDE THE T.V. SAM COMES THROUGH THE HALL DOOR AND INTO THE KITCHEN – CRAWLING ON ALL FOURS. HE PAUSES AND LOOKS ABOUT. LIFTING HIS HEAD HIGH, HE SNARLS TWICE LIKE THE M.G.M. LION. HE LOWERS HIS FACE TO THE FIRST SAUCER AND WITH LOUD SLURPING NOISES LAPS UP THE COFFEE. HE RAISES HIS HEAD AND GROWLS AGAIN – NOT SO FEROCIOUSLY THIS TIME. HE CRAWLS TO THE BOTTOM OF HIS CHAIR AND SLURPS UP THE COFFEE IN THE SECOND SAUCER. HE MAKES A LAST MEEK ROAR, CLIMBS UP INTO HIS CHAIR AND TAKES A SIP OF COFFEE FROM HIS CUP. HE PUTS THE CUP DOWN AND LETS OUT A LONG SIGH OF PLEASURE.

SAM: Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.

SHIRLEY: (TO T.V.)
My mother taught me
it isn't love
that tames a savage beast.
(TO SAM)
I believe
you're off
the critical list.

SHE TAKES A PLATE FROM THE CUPBOARD, PUTS BACON, EGGS, AND TOAST ON IT, AND SETS IT ON THE TABLE IN FRONT OF SAM.

SAM: (LOOKING AT HIS BREAKFAST)
Oooooooooowwwwwwwwww stomach!
It looks like –
slices of pig!
And mashed up
liquid chicken!

SHIRLEY: You're lucky I cooked it
Buster!
Now pick up that fork
and eat!

SAM: I'll try,
Mama.

SHIRLEY PUT A PIECE OF TOAST ON A SMALL PLATE, POURS HERSELF A CUP OF COFFEE, AND JOINS SAM AT THE TABLE. HE HAS NOT TOUCHED HIS FOOD.

SHIRLEY: (GENTLY)
At least
eat your toast.

SAM: Yes 'mam.
(HE PICKS UP HIS TOAST AND TAKES A SMALL BITE)

SHIRLEY: Care to tell me
what the big occasion was
at Lissie's
last night?
Or am I
too young
to hear?

SAM: She finally has
her new sign.

SHIRLEY: A new sign?
What on earth for?

SAM: She's always hated
the Coca-Cola one –
with her name at the bottom
in little print.

SHIRLEY: You've
never had trouble
finding her place.

SAM: Everybody knows
where Lissie's is.
That's not the point –
the Coke sign was free –
free advertising for Coca-Cola.

SHIRLEY: It was a flop –
no one drinks Coke
at Lissie's.
How much
did the new one cost?

SAM: Installed,
eighteen hundred dollars.

SHIRLEY: Are the letters
made of gold!?!)

SAM: Neon.

SHIRLEY: Red?

SAM: Green.
Her husband

came from Ireland.

SHIRLEY: What's the message?

SAM: 'Lissie's Lounge'.

SHIRLEY: It must be fancy.

SAM: No –
not fancy.

SHIRLEY: Well –
it does flash.

SAM: She didn't
want it to.

SHIRLEY: What does it do
for eighteen hundred dollars?

SAM: Shirley,
it's a fine sign –
you'll see.

SHIRLEY: Someday pet,
I wish you'd explain
to narrow-minded me
why your beer
tastes so much better
there,
than here.

SAM: There's something about Lissie's –
something in the atmosphere
that causes beer
to sorta
leap down your throat –
without the drinker's knowledge
or consent.

SHIRLEY: You probably
don't even see
your arm
as it keeps on picking up
those countless bottles.

SAM: Come to think of it –
when I'm in Lissie's
I've never noticed
what my arms are doing.

SHIRLEY: (LOOKING AT KITCHEN CLOCK)
Well keep an eye
on those arms.

SAM: I still have
five minutes.

SHIRLEY: Aren't you going to
brush your teeth
and shave?

SAM: I haven't eaten much –
my teeth
need to rest.

SHIRLEY: I guess they are exhausted –
trapped in there
all evening
during the big flood.
What's the story
with the whiskers?

SAM: Before I had my eyes open
they were begging me
for one more day.
I had to say okay.

SHIRLEY: You are not
going to the movies
with me –
looking like a bum.

SAM: The movies?
Who's going
to the movies?

SHIRLEY: We could go
to an opera.

SAM: Which movies
are we going to see?

SHIRLEY: It's called –
"I'll Shave Tomorrow".

SAM: Yeah?
Whose it star –
King Kong?

SHIRLEY: Sam Clean-Cut.

SAM: Who's the girl?

SHIRLEY: Oh –
Some brunette
with a big voice –
Shirley Who.

(OR WHATEVER SHIRLEY'S
HAIR COLOR IS – I.E.,
'gray-head' OR 'redhead'
OR 'dark-blond' ETC.)

SAM: That name's familiar –
I wonder
was she ever
in a pin-up magazine?

SHIRLEY: If she was,
she doesn't remember
having posed.

SAM: Well I remember –
that's where
I first laid eyes on you.

SHIRLEY: And all my pages
went up in smoke.

SAM: Because,
you were so modest.

SHIRLEY: I had no choice –
you went around
and bought up all my issues.

SAM: A good move –
don't you think?

SHIRLEY: I think
it's time
you moved on out of here.

SAM: Yes 'mam.
(STANDS, TAKES A LAST SIP OF COFFEE)

SHIRLEY: Have you money
for lunch?

SAM: (CHECKING HIS WALLET)
Yes 'mam.

SHIRLEY: Bus change?

SAM: (CHECKING HIS POCKET)
Yes 'mam.

SHIRLEY: (STANDING, FOLLOWING HIM TO THE KITCHEN DOOR)
On your way out –
try not to sail
down the stairs.

SAM: Yes ‘mam.

SAM TAKES HIS COAT FROM A PEG ON THE WALL AND PUTS IT ON. HE TURNS,
TAKES ONE OF HER HANDS, BENDS DOWN AND KISSES IT. AS HE EXITS, SHIRLEY
PRETENDS TO KICK HIM IN THE SEAT OF HIS PANTS.

SHIRLEY: (CALLING DOWN THE STAIRS AFTER HIM)
If you come straight home,
you’ll have time for a nap.
After supper –
it’s off to the movies
we go!

SAM: (OFFSTAGE)
Oooooooooowwwwwwwwwww.

SHIRLEY CLOSES THE DOOR AND CROSSES SLOWLY TO THE TABLE. SHE PICKS UP A
PIECE OF BACON FROM SAM’S UNEATEN BREAKFAST AND ABSENT-MINDEDLY TAKES A
BITE. SHE PUTS THE BACON BACK ON HIS PLATE AND WIPES HER FINGERS ON HIS
NAPKIN. SHE GOES TO THE SINK AND LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW, THEN TURNS TO THE
T.V. SET.

SHIRLEY: What do you think?
Is something going on?
Or am I wrong
to wonder –
what’s with Sam?

He often stops at Lissie’s
coming home from work.
Quite a few
of his friends do.
It’s their way of unwinding
to have a beer
or two.

But he doesn’t get drunk –
not usually.
He just gets
more like Sam.
Beer
brings him out.

Sam likes to be
let out.

He's kind of shy
you see,
and all that beer
sets free his privacy.

Usually.

When the opposite happens,
like last night,
when he gets mixed up –
can hardly stand up –
when he's here
in front of me
but I can't find him –
then he's drunk.
And that's
not Sam.

The sign-
'Lissie's Lounge'.
Something's there –
Something's behind
the way he sees
that expensive sign.

What do you think?
Is something going on?
Or am I wrong
to wonder –
what's with Sam?
Maybe I'm wrong –
maybe there's nothing
going on.
Maybe
I should stop this
'what's with Sam'
and begin
again
with what's
with Shirley.

Tonight,
for supper,
I'm going to fix a steak,
and mashed potatoes,
and chocolate cake.

Now,
I'm going back to bed.
We were both up
quite late
last night –
awaiting
'what's with Sam'.

SHE TURNS OFF THE T.V. AND THE OVERHEAD LIGHT FIXTURE, THEN EXITS THROUGH THE HALL DOORWAY. THE KITCHEN IS LEFT IN THE SAME DIM, NIGHT ILLUMINATION THAT OPENED THE SCENE.

END SCENE #1

A SHORT ORCHESTRAL BRIDGE SPANS THE PASSAGE OF TIME THAT OCCURS BETWEEN THE TWO SCENES. DURING THIS INTERLUDE THE DIM, NIGHT ILLUMINATION IS SLOWLY REPLACED BY FULL DAYLIGHT – MOTIVATED AS IF THE LIGHT WERE ENTERING THE KITCHEN THROUGH THE WINDOW ABOVE THE SINK.

THIS 'DAYLIGHT' SHOULD GIVE THE KITCHEN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FEEL FROM THAT OF SCENE ONE AND ITS OVERHEAD LIGHT FIXTURE MOTIVATION.

IN SCENE ONE, THE KITCHEN WAS USED BY SHIRLEY AS SHE PREPARED BREAKFAST FOR SAM. ITS PURPOSE WAS FUNCTIONAL, NOT VISUAL.

IN SCENE TWO, THE KITCHEN IS A SETTING TO REINFORCE AND COMMENT ON THE CHARACTER OF SAM – AND ON THE THEMATIC CONTENTS OF THE SCENE.

SCENE #2

SAM ENTERS THROUGH THE BACK DOOR CARRYING A PAPER SACK. HE REMOVES HIS COAT AND HANGS IT ON THE HOOK ON THE WALL. HE REMOVES A BEER FROM THE SACK, THEN PLACES THE SACK INSIDE THE REFRIGERATOR. HE OPENS THE BEER AND TAKES A LONG SWALLOW. LOOKING OVER AT THE KITCHEN TABLE, HIS FACE REVEALS THE BIRTH OF AN IDEA. HE GOES TO THE TABLE, STACKS THE BREAKFAST DISHES, AND CARRIES THEM TO THE SINK. WHEN THE TABLE IS CLEAR, HE PULLS THE CHAIRS AWAY, SETS HIS BEER ON THE FLOOR, AND LAYS DOWN ON HIS BACK ON TOP OF THE TABLE. HE SLOWLY SLIDES HIS BODY ACROSS THE TABLE UNTIL HIS HEAD AND SHOULDERS ARE HANGING OFF THE END. HE REACHES DOWN AND PICKS UP HIS BEER AND CAREFULLY TAKES A SWALLOW.

SHIRLEY, IN A HOUSEDRESS AND LOOKING REFRESHED, ENTERS THROUGH THE HALL DOOR. SURPRISED TO FIND SAM, SHE STOPS. SAM STRUGGLES TO A SITTING POSITION ON TOP OF THE TABLE.

SAM: I was seeing
 if a man
 can drink a beer
 upside down.

SHIRLEY: Well?

SAM: I can.

SHIRLEY: I'm not surprised.

SAM: But you're wondering
why I'm home
in the middle of the day.

SHIRLEY: Did you go to work?

SAM: I called in sick.

SHIRLEY: Do you feel
that bad?

SAM: No.
(ALMOST PLEA)
Be patient
with me Shirley.

SHIRLEY: (A BIT SHAKEN)
Are you ready
for some lunch?

SAM: I'm still
not hungry.
(INDICATES T.V.)
Do they have
world news
in the middle of the day?

SHIRLEY: (MEANING THE SUBJECT OF SAM)
Yes –
a housewife
needs to know
what's happening
outside her kitchen.

SHIRLEY STARTS TOWARDS THE T.V. – BEFORE SHE REACHES IT A SOUND FROM THE ORCHESTRA SUGGESTS A TELEPHONE RINGING. SHE GOES TO THE KITCHEN PHONE AND ANSWERS IT.

SHIRLEY: Hello.
Yes he's here
and yes he's fine.

I'll tell him.
Thank you
for letting us know.
(SHE HANGS UP)
Jeanne says
David Pibb
is on his way
to see you.

SAM: Well –
bless his heart!
(HE TAKES THE LAST SWALLOW FROM HIS BEER)

SHIRLEY: Are there more
in the fridge?
(HE NODS)
I'll get you one.

SAM: Shirley,
I'm sitting here
in the middle of the day
because I didn't feel
like going to work.
Twenty-two years –
seven
since I missed a day –
then suddenly,
this morning,
something said
no – don't go.
At the bus stop
I turned the corner
and kept walking.
I didn't even
slow down.
But I didn't hurry
either.
I found a phone,
called in,
then wandered about
our neighborhood.
So many people!
Sidewalks
full of them.
Kids
on their way
to school.
Men and women
in every kind of shape –
and size –

and age –
going off to work.
For at least two hours
they kept coming –
and going –
on their way –
in a hurry –
to get somewhere –
in time.

Nine,
nine-thirty,
they were mostly gone.
Just a few of us
left on the sidewalks.
I went to Lissie's then.
She doesn't open
till three o'clock,
but she came downstairs
and let me in,
and we cleaned up
last night.
I drank
no beer
at Lissie's.

How strange
to be here
in the middle
of the day.
How many days
have passed
I never noticed
passing?

Woman –
tell you what
I'm gonna do!
I'm gonna share with you
the secret
of how to drink a beer
upside down!

SHIRLEY: No thanks –
but I'll hold you
to the movies.

SAM: Here I am
hanging on
by my fingernails

and you
drag me off
to the movies.

SHIRLEY: We could go
to California.
(TAKING HER SERIOUSLY, SAM IS STUNNED)
Sam –
I didn't mean it.
We were playing!
Sam –
I'm trying!
I just don't know
where you are.

SAM:

Who knows?

I don't.

Maybe
it's David Pibb.

Or maybe

I'm tired
of working.

It could be

my age.
It could be

this age.

Perhaps
it's just

my turn –
just

my time.

Shirley,
I've learned
a man

can do a job
too good.

SHIRLEY: Sam –
what's wrong?

What's with

my Sam.

What's with

Sam.

What's with

my Sam.

Sam . . .

Sam,

my Sam.

My Sam.

Sam –

what's wrong.

David Pibb –
he’s always telling me –

‘just knock it out’.

He says
I waste
too much time

making things
better
than they need to be.

He says
our goal

is to make money
for the company –

not to waste
the company’s money.

He says
times have changed.

He’s right –
there are
no decent jobs
at the shop
anymore.

The kind of work
you care about.

Jobs
that challenge you.

That make you feel
your work’s

What’s with

my Sam.

Sam,

my Sam.

What’s with

my Sam.

What’s

with

Sam.

What’s

with

my

Sam.

Sam . . .

Sam,

my

Sam.

Sam –

what’s wrong.

What’s

with

my

worthwhile.

That make

you feel

your worth

as a

man.

He says

times have changed –

he says

that I'm

old-fashioned.

Sam.

Sam,

my Sam.

What's with

my Sam.

What's

with

Sam.

Sam . . .

Sam.

A SOUND IN THE ORCHESTRA SUGGESTS A DOOR BUZZER. SHIRLEY STANDS AND EXITS TO THE HALL. SHE QUICKLY RETURNS, HAVING PUSHED THE BUTTON THAT UNLOCKS THE BUILDING'S FRONT DOOR.

SHIRLEY: Hurry –
get in bed –
he's on his way up.

SAM: He knows
I'm not sick.

SHIRLEY: At least
go into the living room.

SAM: I'm in
my living room.

SHIRLEY: Sam! (SHE EXITS THROUGH HALL DOORWAY)

MOVING QUICKLY, SAM PLACES HIS EMPTY BEER BOTTLE UNDER THE SINK, TAKES A FRESH BEER FROM THE REFRIGERATOR, OPENS IT, AND SITS BACK DOWN AT THE TABLE. SHIRLEY ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY DAVID PIBB.

DAVID: Sam.

SAM DOES NOT GET UP.

SAM: David.

SHIRLEY: Please sit down.
May I get you a beer –
or some coffee?

DAVID: If you have some,
I'd appreciate
a glass of milk.

SHIRLEY: There's plenty.

SAM: I could say
'what an unexpected pleasure' –
but you'd know
I know
that isn't so.

SHIRLEY: (PLACING GLASS OF MILK IN FRONT OF DAVID)
Help yourself
to more.
I'll leave the bottle
in the icebox
to keep it cold.

DAVID: (AS SHIRLEY EXITS)
Thank you.

SAM: So I'll say
(INDICATING MILK)
you must have
an ulcer.

DAVID: No,
not yet –
not old enough.
Just coffeed up.
Besides,
I like milk.
Milk's good for you.

SAM: Beer's
good for me.

DAVID: I seldom use
any form
of alcohol.

SAM: Not even
after-shave?

DAVID: We're discussing
internal
applications.

SAM: Maybe
you're afraid
of alcohol.

DAVID: I'm too well
put together.

SAM: I see –
you're scared
you'll come
unglued.

DAVID: What
holds me
together
knows
no solvent.

SAM: I could say
'what brings you over?' –
but you'd know
I know
what brings you over.

DAVID: What a feeling . . .

SAM: I could say –

DAVID: in this room.

SAM: I should say –

DAVID: This room . . .

SAM: get out!

DAVID: looks . . .

SAM: It's over!

DAVID: like you.
(LOOKING AT CABINETS)
Wood
is wasted

in a kitchen.
(LOOKING AT CEILING)
The ceiling's
so high
it's inefficient.
(LOOKING AT T.V.)
That t.v. set's
so old
the set itself
is what you look at.

DAVID: Imagine
this room
reflecting
today.
Avocado
appliances,
a Cusinart
food processor –
Amana
microwave,
with its chrome
and stainless steel.
Such things
are helpful –
labor-saving
improvements,
born of need.
Such things
are necessary
to live properly –
to live well –
to live
today.

SAM: I know
what you're doing –
sizing up my house –
passing judgment
on what you see –
passing judgment
on me.
I know
what you're doing –
criticizing what you see,
you're trying hard
to intimidate me.
You're young –
you're 'new' –
you come
'equipped'
with all
the proper
papers.
At half my age
you're earning
twice
my wage.

DAVID: I don't like this room.

SAM: No . . .

DAVID: A room . . .

SAM: not yet –

DAVID: with a past –

SAM: it isn't . . .

DAVID: a past . . .

SAM: over . . .

DAVID: much too present.

SAM: yet.

DAVID: If today's improvements . . .

SAM: They kept coming . . .

DAVID: don't belong . . .

SAM: and going –

DAVID: in a room –

SAM: on their way –

DAVID: it's time . . .

SAM: in a hurry –

DAVID: that room . . .

SAM: to get somewhere –

DAVID: come down.

SAM: in time.
On time.
It's time.
They kept coming –
and going –
on their way –
in a hurry –
to get somewhere –
in time.

DAVID: Rumors,
this morning,
have you looking
for a job.
Or getting drunk.
Or working on a plan
to get rid of me.

SAM: When I called
I told Jeanne
I was taking
a sick day.

David Pibb –
you may not know
how many ways
a man
can get sick.

DAVID: Do I overlook
alternatives?
Paint?
Wallpaper?
Ceilings
can be lowered.
Contemporary
knobs and handles –
and antique finish –
would work wonders
with the cabinets.

SAM: To imitate
the past,
first
do away
with the real one.

DAVID: Renovations –
not nearly
as effective
as a new design –
but if practical,
cheaper,
then there's something
to be gained
in salvage.

SAM: A good job –
that's something basic –
like a foundation –
something
that helps the world
go around –
and worth getting up to
in the morning.

DAVID: Sam –
what makes this world
turn around
is complicated –
and getting more so –
faster –
every day.

SAM: It's filling up
and getting emptier –
costing more
and getting cheaper.

DAVID: Maybe
our difference
is I work
so I can live.
You live
so you can work.

SAM: Work is living.
Living is work.
There's no real difference.

DAVID: The difference is
you're out of step
with the times.
You do your tooling –
your die work –
to last forever.
All that's needed
is a few months –
at most a year or two.
You waste time
and materials.
You don't understand
things don't need
to last
anymore.

SAM: I need
to be proud
of my work.

DAVID: But you take your work
too seriously!
The challenge now
is not
how good
you do something –
it's getting
what you do
on the market –
cheaply –
and as fast
as possible.

SAM: You have no dreams

and no remembrances.

What's behind you?

What's before you?

What's inside you?!

David Pibb –

it's you –

not me –

that's obsolete.

DAVID PIBB STANDS, THEN QUICKLY EXITS. AS IF COMING OUT OF A TRANCE, SAM GETS SLOWLY TO HIS FEET. HE SEEMS SHAKEN, UNSURE, TENTATIVE.

SAM: Shirley . . . ?

END ACT I

ACT II

LISSIE'S LOUNGE. OCCUPIED IN VARIOUS GAMES AROUND THE ROOM (CHESS, DARTS, BILLIARDS, ETC.) ARE SOME OF SAM'S FRIENDS AND CO/WORKERS. ONE HAS A GIRLFRIEND WITH HIM (CARLENE).

THE POOL TABLE IS JUST OUT OF SIGHT IN THE BACK ROOM. WE SEE STEVE AND TERRY THROUGH THE DOORWAY AS THEY GET INTO VARIOUS SHOT POSITIONS, CROSS AROUND THE END OF THE TABLE, ETC. LISSIE IS SEATED AT THE BAR.

(SAM DOES NOT DRINK ANY BEER IN THIS SCENE UNTIL THE VERY LAST SEGMENT.)

STEVE: (OFFSTAGE)
Blimey
to hell! (FOLLOWED BY A LOUD "CRACK")

TERRY: (OFFSTAGE)
That's five
you owe me.

SAM: And forty-five
you owe Lissie
if you break that cue!

STEVE: (APPEARING IN DOORWAY TO GAME ROOM)
My apologies
Bar-Man.
Tis a bad stick. (HOLDS UP CUE-STICK)
In remorse
for disgracing me,
it dashed itself
against the table.
I'll have a word
with it.

SAM: You do that –
next time
I'll use that stick
to have a word
with you.

STEVE: As you say –
Bar-Man.
But I must say
I liked you better
as a boss
at work –
not a boss
at play.

STEVE EXITS INTO GAME ROOM TALKING SILENTLY BUT ANIMATEDLY TO HIS CUE-STICK.
SAM THROWS HIS WET BAR RAG AND HITS THE DOORFRAME WHERE STEVE WAS STANDING.

VERNON: (PLAYING CHESS WITH BURTON)
I agree
with Steve.

BURTON: Amen.

LISSIE: All right!
Listen up!
Sam works for me!
Not you!

TERRY: (REAPPEARING IN GAME ROOM DOORWAY)
That may be true,
Lissie,
but Sam's no bartender.
Sam belongs out front
with the rest of us!

STEVE:	Hooraaaaaaaay!	(CHORUS)
TERRY:	Yeaaaaaaahhhhh!	
BURTON:	Cheeeerrrrrrss!	
VERNON:	Righhhhttttoon!	
CARLENE:	Braaaaaavvvoo!	

SILENCE. ALL LOOK AT SAM, WHO IS EMBARRASSED AND UNHAPPY. SYLVESTER DROPS A COIN INTO THE JUKE BOX AND THE OPERA RESUMES.

LISSIE: Sam
decides
where Sam
belongs.
And Sam
has made
a change.
Now leave him alone.
Give him a chance.
A chance for a change
is the name
of the game.
Nothing
ever stays
the same.
Even the world –
which is solid and sound –
keeps on turning
round and around.

SAM: (REVOLVING BEHIND THE BAR)
Round
and around
and a round peg
in a square hole
may go –
but it leaves
the corners
empty.

VERNON: (LOOKING UP FROM HIS CHESS GAME)
Hey Bar-Man –
any stew left?

LISSIE: You know the rules –
supper's over at eight.
Except on Fridays
and Saturdays.

BURTON: You used to keep
the stew hot
all night long.

LISSIE: The days
of washing dishes
'all night long'
have passed.

CARLENE: I'll wash them.

LISSIE: Not without a health card.
Besides,
Sam's already
shut down the stove.

VERNON: Well what's the chance
of another beer?

LISSIE: All chances
for you
are just
about gone.

SAM: Another beer?
Of course. (OPENS ONE)
Here. (HE SETS IT ON THE BAR)

VERNON PICKS UP HIS EMPTY BOTTLE AND SLAMS IT DOWN ON THE CHESS TABLE

LISSIE: Trying to break

that bottle?

VERNON: Just not used
to the change
to self-service.

LISSIE: Poor baby!
Not used
to self-service!
Has to push his chair back –
has to stand up –
has to walk
all the way to here
to fetch his beer!
Poor
baby!

Now, now.
Calm down dear –
we'll be right there
with a brand new beer.
You'd like some supper?
Say – half-past midnight?
Beef-stew?
Chicken-fried-steak?
We'll fix you
some Lasagna,
you're so uptight
tonight.

'Come on Lissie –
ghee whiz –
is that all there is?
I'm tired.
I'm hungry.
I'm thirsty.
Bring me a beer!
Barbecue me up
a Texas steer –
ya hear?!'

Well of course dear –
have no fear –
we're only here
to serve you food
and beer.
What if
we're tired?
Too bad!
If we're busy?

You
get in a tizzy!
'Bring me some food!
Fetch me a beer!
Now!
Now!
Now!'

Now, now.
It's okay dear – (TAKING VERNON'S BEER TO HIS TABLE)
here
comes
Mama
with your bottle –
of beer.
Lissie's Lounge?
Lissie's Nursery!
Mama Beer
and her beer-babies! (SLAMS BEER DOWN IN FRONT OF HIM)

(TO ALL)
Well swill that stuff!
Lap it up!
Drink it down!
Sop it up!
Gurgle –
slobber –
stagger –
lurch –
don't you dare
throw up!

Mother Beer
and her beer-babies.
Lissie –
just an ole beer-bitch.

SAM: And here –
 behind your bar –
 is the oldest,
 biggest,
 beer-baby
 of the entire
 litter.
 The young are wise –
 the old are foolish –
 a bartender
 I'm not.
 Having me
 come here to work

instead of play
was good of you –
but not so good
for the business
of beer.

LISSIE: Sam –
good bartenders
take time
to be good.
Bartenders
have to learn
too.

SAM: Maybe so –
but their hearts
must be
behind them.

SAM RETURNS THE STEW-POT TO THE STOVE, THEN TURNS THE STOVE BACK ON. HE OPENS A LOAF OF FRENCH BREAD AND CUTS OFF TWO THICK SLICES – WHICH HE PLACES ON THE SIDE OF A PLATE.

LISSIE GOES TO THE JUKEBOX, DROPS IN A COIN, AND WE HEAR “JULY’S DECEMBER”.

On a warm
bright
cheerful
day in summer,
a plump little bullfrog
sits without a murmur.
Quiet in the sun
on his own lily-pad,
his place on the pond
is the place to feel glad.

Across the water
on the opposite bank,
is another plump bullfrog
sitting on a plank.
So there’ll be no doubts
as to which is his side,
this second little bullfrog
raises hell with his pride.

Out in the pond –
hearing the commotion –
a pair of unseen ears
change their path of locomotion.
Cutting cleanly through the water

behind a for-ke'd tongue,
the second little bullfrog –
his last song has sung.

Back across the pond
on his private lily-pad,
the first little bullfrog
is getting kinda mad.
The noise was bad enough –
what's with all this silent stuff?
With a hop and his shout –
he paddles on over
to check it all out.

Now the long silent swimmer
is not on a diet –
in no time at all,
the pond is deathly quiet.

On a cold dark night
in the middle of winter,
there is no recollection
of last summer's adventure.
The still, silent swimmer
sleeps without dreams.
Not even he remembers
when July
was not
December's.

JEANNE ENTERS AND WITHOUT LOOKING AROUND OR GREETING ANYONE, PROCEEDS TO THE BAR AND CLIMBS UP ON A STOOL BESIDE LISSIE.

JEANNE: Gimme a beer.

SAM: May I see
your Beer-Baby
I.D. card?

LISSIE: Your husband called –
said if we served you,
he'd have our License.

JEANNE: Gimme a beer!

LISSIE: Are you serious?
I thought you
hated beer.

JEANNE: I do –

but tonight
I need alcohol.

LISSIE: There's some gin
upstairs.

JEANNE: Brown bottles
will take me
where I'm going.

SAM: (SERVING HER A BEER)
Where's
your destination?

JEANNE: My destination?
E-ne-bre-a-shun!

CHORUS: Bravo!
Cheers!
May Jeanne have fun –
in her inebriation!

DAVID PIBB ENTERS. HE GOES OVER TO JEANNE AND LISSIE AT THE BAR.

JEANNE: One sip of this stuff – (HER BEER)
I'm already
hallucinating! (REFERRING TO DAVID PIBB'S PRESENCE)

DAVID: And I'm surprised
to find you here.

JEANNE: Even secretaries
need a little booze
sometimes.
Lissie –
this is David Pibb.
David –
yes,
the Lissie.

LISSIE: The
David Pibb.

DAVID: I suspect
you know
all about me.

LISSIE: Me and these walls
know all about
sports,

sex,
politics,
and yes –
David Pibb.

DAVID: Well at least
I'm at the bottom
of the list.

LISSIE: That list
was not
in order.
How
did you find
my place?

DAVID: I 'looked in the book' –
and you have a nice sign.

LISSIE: Yeah –
but not the sign
of the times.
You
are off base here.
Did you come
to raid my place?

DAVID: I beg your pardon?

LISSIE: You gonna
tear up the joint?

DAVID: If anything
gets torn up tonight,
it will probably
be me.

LISSIE: From what I hear,
it's possible.
Now if you'll excuse us,
we'll clear the ring.
Come on Jeanne –
we'll be the sideshow. (THEY MOVE TO A DOWNSTAGE TABLE)

SAM IS BUSY WITH HIS WORK. DAVID SITS AT THE BAR, ALONE AND IGNORE.

LISSIE: (TO JEANNE)
The promise
of a big night
at Lissie's!

First you arrive –
then the devil himself.
I must
go fetch that gin!
But should I celebrate –
or commiserate?

DAVID: Sam.

SAM: David.

DAVID: I'll have a beer
please.

SAM: We have milk.

DAVID: I'll have a beer
please.

SAM: (AS HE SERVES THE BEER)
Should I say –
'what an unexpected pleasure'?
Or should I say –
when last I saw you,
you left
without saying
goodbye.

DAVID: You've never had a problem
deciding what to say.

SAM: Saying
is one thing.
Doing,
quite another.

DAVID: This time
we agree.
As for goodbyes –
your's was –
and I quote –
You have no dreams
and no remembrances.
Unquote.

SAM: Your goodbye
was my
hello.

DAVID: An unusual

greeting.

SAM: A significant
meeting.

DAVID: Perhaps
this will be
another.

SAM LOOKS AT DAVID A MOMENT, THEN GOES ABOUT HIS WORK.

LISSIE: (TO JEANNE)
You still
haven't told me
why you're here
tonight.
You should be home
at this hour –
in your cozy kitchen
with the calico curtains –
washing up from supper,
putting Laurie to bed,
settling down with Ken
for a quiet evening
of t.v.

JEANNE: A night off.
A night out.
Out by myself.
Alone.
On my own.
Considering
the known.
Contemplating
the unknown.
Wondering
why the unknown
is not known.
Not shown.
Afraid
I already know
all my life
has to show.
I see
my days passing –
all I know –
I live in limbo.

I'm a wife –
I'm a mother –

I'm a secretary.
Wife.
Mother.
Secretary.
Is that all
there is
for me?
Is that all
life promises
to be?
There must be more
in store
for Jeanne.

I could end
my office days –
find another way
to earn my pay.

I'll be a mother
living with fears,
afraid for my daughter
twenty more years.

I'll be a wife
the rest of my life.
The rest?
Is there more?
Is this
some test –
a trail
to last
but awhile?
Soon –
on this earth –
life will bring
to me
rebirth?

No –
this is so –
all I know –
I live
in limbo.

There is hope.
There is dope – (INDICATING BEER)
for when there is
no hope.

There is dreaming –
day and night –
there is longing
to take flight.

SHIRLEY ENTERS

CHORUS: Hello –
Shirley!

DAVID: Shirley.

SHIRLEY: Hello –
Lissie's Lounge!
And –
Mr. Pibb!

LISSIE AND JEANNE SEAT SHIRLEY AT THEIR TABLE.

LISSIE: Sam!
Beer!
The hens
are gonna party
tonight!

SHIRLEY: (TO LISSIE)
What's he
doing here?
(TO JEANNE)
And you –
why are you here?

JEANNE: I'm here
to get drunk.
If I know
apples from oranges –
the boss is here
to ask Sam
to come back.
David needs Sam –
he misses Sam.
We all miss Sam.

SHIRLEY: (TO LISSIE)
Oh, my!
Your sign
should turn red
and start flashing!

LISSIE: Before this night

is over,
there may not be
a sign.
And I'm not
the kind for flashing –
I'm the type
that holds their breath.

JEANNE: I prefer
the type that flashes.

LISSIE: (TO JEANNE)
Those kind
end
with splashes!
(TO SHIRLEY)
Modern times!
Jeanne wants
to trade her signs!
She's too young
to have found –
the grass is never greener –
just different shades of brown.

JEANNE: Not trade them –
shed them.
Free me
from all signs –
labels –
handles.
Leave me
to be
Jeanne.
Just
plain
Jeanne.

LISSIE: In this world –
your label
is your license.
It proves
that you belong –
shows you where you fit.
Freedom
from that license?
You sound like –
some nit
wit.

SHIRLEY: What's my

label?

JEANNE: Housewife.

LISSIE: Sam's
Shirley.

SHIRLEY: I began as Shirley – (SLOW – TENTATIVE – TRYING IT OUT)
but I became
Sam's Shirley.
That's who I've been (IT SEEMS TO FIT)
for quite some time now –
and who I want to be! (SHE'LL TAKE IT)

LISSIE: I'm Lissie
of Lissie's Lounge.
When I want to be –
when I don't
want to be.

JEANNE: I want to be
Jeanne –
just plain Jeanne.

SHIRLEY: Sam's Shirley.

LISSIE: Lissie
of Lissie's Lounge.

JEANNE: Jeanne,
just Jeanne.

SAM IS BACK BEHIND THE BAR AND THE FOCUS RETURNS TO THIS AREA.

DAVID: Sam –
I'm trying.
Will you
do as much?

SAM: You want me
to see
the light.

DAVID: Yes.

SAM: Your
light.
I prefer
my own.

DAVID: I'd like to see
you expand
your horizons –
to meet me
halfway.

SAM: Halfway
to your world
is a long ways
from mine.

DAVID: Trust me.
Give me a chance.

SAM: Your chance –
to change me –
from old-fashioned
to new.

DAVID: I was critical
of your work –
not you.

SAM: A man's work
reflects the man.
Sam's work
reflects Sam.

SAM LEAVES DAVID AND MAKES ANOTHER ROUND – CHECKING EMPTIES, ETC. THE
SCENE RETURNS TO THE WOMEN'S TABLE.

SHIRLEY: If Sam lost interest
in Shirley –
would there still
be a Shirley?

LISSIE: Lissie
had a man –
now
Lissie has a lounge.

JEANNE: Jeanne
has a home
with a husband
and a child –
but Jeanne wants a home
for Jeanne.

SHIRLEY: If Sam left
Sam's Shirley –

what would be left
or Shirley?

LISSIE: Can a place
like a bar
take the place
of a man?

JEANNE: I look down the road
as far as I can see –
nowhere
do I see Jeanne.

SHIRLEY: If Sam did leave –
if he should go –
would I survive?
Could I live
and know?

LISSIE: I'm more married
to my bar
than I was
to my man.

JEANNE: Am I selfish?
Am I wrong?
What's the reason
I don't belong?

SHIRLEY: I belong
to Sam.
Is that wrong?

LISSIE: Can a bar
die on you too?

JEANNE: No time.
No room.
No space.
Is too late
to be my fate?

SHIRLEY: Wife.

LISSIE: Widow.

JEANNE: Mother.

SHIRLEY: Shirley,
Sam's Shirley.

LISSIE: Lissie
of Lissie's Lounge.

JEANNE: Jeanne,
just plain Jeanne.

SHIRLEY: Shirley,
just plain Shirley.

LISSIE: Lissie,
Sam's Lissie.

JEANNE: Jeanne
of Jeanne's Lounge.

SHIRLEY: Shirley
of Shirley's Lounge.

LISSIE: Lissie,
just plain Lissie.

JEANNE: Jeanne,
Sam's Jeanne.

SHIRLEY: Shirley!

LISSIE: Lissie!

JEANNE: Jeanne!

- (TOGETHER)

SAM HAS RETURNED BEHIND THE BAR BY THE TIME DAVID BEGINS THE FOLLOWING ARIA.

DAVID: Like most young men,
I'm a product
of my times –
a contemporary
man –
a modern
man –
one who lives
today –
not last week
or next year.

I'm not concerned
with the past –
I don't worry
about the future.

I'm a realist –

not a dreamer.
I care about
what's real
right now –
not the old world
or the one to follow –
this world.
Today.
Right now.
This moment!

The only world
there is.

Sam –
you're out of touch.
You dream too much.
Can you not see
what our world
has come to be?
America
has always been
a land of more –
now,
more than ever
before.

Sam –
it's all here –
it's here now –
for those
who know how.

Come on, Sam.
Wake up!
Take a good look
and hustle on up.
Let your life
take wing –
the good life's
the real thing.

Sam –
you're slow
and unrealistic.
If you want to
you can change.
You don't have to stay
with yesterday.
If you'll only

stop trying –
for the things you've made
to still be here
in the next decade.

I like you, Sam.
Come back
and work for me.
I need you –
and I'll raise you.
Come back, Sam –
come back
and claim your share
of the good life.

FOR A MOMENT SAM STANDS QUIETLY AND LOOKS AT DAVID PIBB. THEN SAM OPENS DAVID A FRESH BEER, SETS IT BEFORE HIM, AND MAKES ANOTHER ROUND THROUGH THE LOUNGE AND GAME ROOM PICKING UP EMPTIES, WIPING TABLES, ETC.

THE SCENE SHIFTS TO THE WOMEN, AND CARLENE MOVES HER CHAIR OVER TO THEIR TABLE TO JOIN THEM FOR THIS SEGMENT.

CARLENE: Did Adam have a Mother?
Was Eve like me?
It's hard to be a woman,
it's hard on me.

L/J/S: Being a woman
is hard to be.

CARLENE: What is a woman?
A woman is a name.

L/J/S: A name part man,
a name part woe.
I'd like to know
why this is so.

CARLENE: Without man,
woman is woe.

L/J/S: Why
is this so?

CARLENE: A woman is a person
and a place
and a thing.

L/J/S: Woman is man
without any wings.

CARLENE: Without her woe,
woman is man.

L/J/S: Did Adam have a Mother?
Was Eve like me?
Being a woman
is hard to be.

CARLENE: Woman is female –
only a male
preceded by fee –
is that all there is
to me?

L/J/S: What's the reason for this?
Why can't I see?
It's hard to be a woman.

CARLENE: It's hard to be me.

L/J/S: Lissie!
Jeanne!
Shirley!

CARLENE: What is
a woman?

L/J/S: I began
as a baby.

CARLENE: Did Adam have a Mother?

L/J/S: Grew to a child.

CARLENE: A girl child.

L/J/S: A girl.

CARLENE: A young girl.

L/J/S: A young woman.

CARLENE: A maid.

L/J/S: A virgin.

CARLENE: A maiden.

L/J/S: Was Eve like me?

CARLENE: Being woman . . .

L/J/S: It's hard to be a woman.

CARLENE: . . . it's hard to be.

L/J/S: It's hard on me.

CARLENE: Wo-man!!!

L/J/S: Women!!!

CARLENE: Girls grown.

SHIRLEY: Mature.

LISSIE: Of age.

JEANNE: Of consent.

SHIRLEY: Wife.

LISSIE: Widow.

JEANNE: Mother.

SHIRLEY: Sam's Shirley.

LISSIE: Lissie
of Lissie's Lounge.

JEANNE: Jeanne,
just plain Jeanne.

CARLENE: Did Adam have a Mother?

L/J/S: Was Eve like me?

CARLENE: Did Adam have a sister?

L/J/S: What did Eve see?

CARLENE: Why
is it hard?

L/J/S: Hard to be me?

CARLENE: Being a woman.

L/J/S: So hard to be.

CARLENE: A woman.

L/J/S: A man
without a key.

CARLENE: Did Adam have a daughter?

L/J/S: Was she
like me?

CARLENE: Who are we?

L/J/S: Some of us
are Chorus Girls.
Some
are College Girls.
Attractive Girls.
Harem Girls,
Ugly Girls,
Geisha Girls.
Party Girls,
Call Girls,
Tall Girls,
Career Girls,
Petite Girls.
Good-Time Girls,
Prim and Proper Girls.

Some Madames,
Mademoiselles,
Ballerinas,
Bitches.
Strippers,
Senioritas.
Prima Donnas,
Princesses.
Hussies,
Heroines,
Debutantes,
Divorcees,
Stepmothers,
Grandmothers,
Surrogate Mothers.
Prostitutes
of Good Repute.
Royal Queens,
Church Queens,
Beauty Queens,
Fairy-Tale Queens,

Mothers
of Queens.

Ladies in Waiting.
Sluts of all Dreams.

Witches,
Frauleins,
Midwives,
Housewives.
Sweethearts,
Sweet Tarts.
Sob-Sisters,
Mean Sisters,
Masquerading Misters.
Nieces.
Spinsters.
Aunts.
Divas –
Divines!

Wives . . .
Widows . . .
Mothers.

CARLENE: Women.

L/J/S: Lissie.
Jeanne.
Shirley.

THE SCENE'S FOCUS RETURNS TO THE BAR.

SAM: I'm Sam –
an ordinary,
nothing special,
glad to be here
man.

Old-fashioned?
Yes!
I'm fashioned
out of feelings –
and feelings
are not new.

Unrealistic?
What came before me –
what comes after –
is just a real

as what's here
while I'm here.

This day
came to me
from yesterday.
And we –
this day and me –
we are making
tomorrow.

What fathers
have no dreams
for their offspring?
Slow?
Deliberately so!
There's a long way
yet to go.
The real fire
burns inside.
A man
is a fool
to put out
his own fire.

My horizons
are like the world
when it was flat –
try and sail a boat
out to the edge –
you'll never get there.

I've seen Cleopatra
lying in moonlight
in the valley of the Nile.

Listened to the breathing
of Michelangelo
as he worked –
on his back –
in the cold –
painting
his ceiling.

I've reached out
with my fingertips
and touched the face
of Geronimo –
before he knew
we had crossed

the great water.

With the astronauts,
I've tasted
green cheese
on the moon.

I've inhaled
the smell
of starlight.

You can expand
my horizons?
I think not,
David Pibb.
No –
we don't even
put our pants on
the same way.

You've
never dreamed
there's more to life
than one leg
at a time.
A one-legged man
is at best
a cripple.
A horse
with a bum leg –
they shoot.

WITH A SWEEPING OF HIS ARM, SAM CLEARS A LONG AREA ON TOP OF THE BAR –
SLIDING ASHTRAYS, SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS, ETC., DOWN TO ONE END. HE
QUICKLY COMES AROUND FRONT, KICKS OFF HIS SHOES, AND REMOVES HIS PANTS.

Pretend this bar
is my bed. (CLIMBING UP AND LYING DOWN ON HIS BACK)
I'm lying here –
minding
my own business –
asleep.
Suddenly –
in the middle
of a blond,
blue-eyed fantasy –
Sam?!? (FALSETTO)
This voice
is not
the blue-eyed blond's.

Sam!?! (FALSETTO)
By now,
the blond has fled.
So I sit up – (SITTING UP)
turn – (TURNING)
throw my feet
over the side – (LETTING HIS LEGS HANG OVER)
grab my pants
from the chair by the bed. (PICKS THEM UP OFF THE BAR)
Rolling back
on my ass –
it's up with the knees – (ROLLS BACK, BRINGS UP HIS FEET)
a quick lunge – (THRUSTING BOTH LEGS INTO PANTS)
and Zippity Zam – (JUMPS DOWN, FASTENS WAIST, ZIPS UP)
there stands Sam
with his pants on!
HE GOES BACK BEHIND THE BAR.

That's just one
of many marvels
old-fashioned Sam
can do.
I can even
drink a beer
upside down.

David Pibb –
what can you do?

HE LIFTS AN EMPTY BOTTLE AND HOLDS IT UP TO DAVID.

Can a man
be recycled?
When he's empty –
can he be
sent back –
refilled –
go out again –
with something
once more
inside?

No.

HE THROWS THE BOTTLE DOWN BEHIND THE BAR, SMASHING IT ON THE FLOOR.

I destroyed
an empty vessel –
I sunk
a little ship

on its voyage
through the world.
Would
I could end
as easily –
your passage.

But you have no berth.
Not
on my earth.
You sail alone.
Adrift
in empty seas.
And you make
no
wake.

DAVID PIBB EXITS. SAM COMES OUT FROM BEHIND THE BAR. HE WALKS OVER TO THE WOMEN'S TABLE, DROPS DOWN ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES, AND CRAWLS UNDER IT. THE WOMEN SCREAM, SHOVE THEIR CHAIRS BACK, AND SCRAMBLE TO THEIR FEET. SAM COMES OUT FROM BENEATH THE TABLE, STANDS UP, REMOVES HIS APRON, AND HANGS IT AROUND LISSIE'S NECK. HE PICKS UP A BEER IN EACH HAND, HOLDS THEM HIGH ABOVE HIS HEAD, AND EMPTIES THEM OVER HIS UPLIFTED FACE. HE PLACES THE EMPTY BOTTLES ON THE TABLE. HE HELPS SHIRLEY INTO HER COAT, PUTS ON HIS OWN, AND WITH NEITHER OF THEM SAYING ANY GOODBYES HE LEADS HER TO THE FRONT DOOR. HE OPENS THE DOOR FOR HER TO EXIT FIRST, THEN HE FOLLOWS, QUIETLY CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

ALL: Sam? (UNCERTAINTY)

ALL: Sam. (REFLECTION)

ALL: Sam! (EXALTATION)

THE LIGHTS FADE.

CURTAIN.