

The Millennium Bible

A Creation, of sorts, in three acts.

Ben Thompson,

Act 1

Abraham and Isaac

Dramatis personae

King James Bible

Abraham
Isaac
Sarah

The last three have broad Yorkshire accents

Note: This was written not long after the introduction of The National Lottery™ into Formerly Great Britain. I had always been brought up to believe that the fact that our government did not run a state lottery was one of the things that differentiated us from those less fortunate peoples across the English Channel. I still think it was one of the worst things that happened in England during my lifetime.

About this time there was also a lot of debate in the press about whether the church should accept funds thus conned from the masses.

[*Thunder and wind*]

King James Bible:

And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, "Behold, here I am.

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Mo-ri-ah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which God had told him. . . .

Sound of Lemmings music, electronic, moronic, spasmodic

A What tha doing, Isaac?

I I'm stuck on level seven tricky

A Fancy coming for a walk?

I You've got one bomb, one miner and one bricky
To gerrup this wall and over that there pit
I'm buggered if I can get t' hang of it.

A Turn it off then, come fer a walk.
'Snor often you and me get chance to talk.

When you were a lad,
Do you remember?
We used to go up t' rec
Fifth November
Big fire,
Parkin pigs
Smoking guy
On t' blazing twigs
Jumpin' jacks
Tetley's ale
Tie a penny cracker
On tom cat's tail?

I Aw dad, give over,
T' place is all ash,
It's nowt like that now
Smashed bottles, trash,

Swings all rusted
Seats full o' holes
Roundabout's busted
Come off its pole.

A Come on, lad, let's go up there today
Mek some use of t' holiday
Come on, it'd be right bracing

I Aw, dad, I'd rather watch racing
I've got a fiver on at ten to one

A A bloody fiver! So, you'll tell me, son
Where you come by that
It's an awful lorra money...

I Aw, dad, don't be funny.

A Come on, shift yersen, we've things to do
I'm nor 'avin' t' day messed up by you.

I (*grumbles*) Oh, all right then, keep yer hair on.

Sound of movement, garments being put on, etc.

I Why yer bringing that?

A What, this? I always wear my hat.

I Not that, t' axe yer putting in yer coat,
T' handles cracked, it's rusty, blunt as owt.

A I'll bring some oil and sharpening stone
'Appen I'll cut some wood and bring it home.

I Wood? I'm not carrying wood

A We'll grab a taxi.

I So, what yer going to burn it in, in t' Baxi?

A I'll cut some Yew or Oak, good English wood
And make a plate and mark it with some words,
Or t' number of our house, like, summat constructive
Nice day like this I feel productive.

they go out

Up here, lad, walk this side,
Out o' sight of peeping eyes.

Me and yer mother, lad, we've struggled hard
For that terraced house, that walled-in yard
But however hard we work don't matter
Poor just starve whilst fat get fatter
There were a time I thought it had a point
But lately, t'all seems queer, all out of joint.

I Dad, mind that car!

Sound of a car passing very fast

A Bloody 'ell, that were a close one!

Were that really old Bill Sykes?
Last time I saw him he were on a bike
Were that really him, that M reg Rover?

I Did yer not know? He's right in t' clover
Old Bill, he won some claim
I don't know what it were, or who got blame
Angina, emphysema, or some stress
Type thing, all more or less
Paid off by insurance, and no bother.
Good luck to him, I say, don't grudge it neither.

A Aye, but lad, think o' yoursen
It's us that picks the tab up in the end
There's tax on watter, tax on beer,
We've council tax right up to here,
T' railways owned by some rich fellas
We've to buy him his house in Marabellla
There's tax on heat and tax on light
Doctor's shut and t' schools are shite
Hospitals all run on loans
From shiny nobs wi' mobile phones
There's tax on this and tax on that,
There's tax on every kind of crap

Ower lives drip money like a leaky tap.

I All right, wait up, dad, we're here.
So where's this oak
You were talking about? I see nowt
That folk could put to any good.

Cinders, ashes, rusty metal
Dandelion clocks wi'out half petals
Scraps o' newsprint, tits and bum,
Last week's dose of page three fun
Hypodermics, johnny [condom] wrappers
Half et fish in greasy papers

A There were some trees, right by that tip
Whitsuntide they all got stripped.
Just lie down here, I'll have a wander,
Tek axe and check out yonder.

I When you come here in t' dark of night,
These cinders glow like rotten meat,
Sulphur, phosphorescent, vile
Wi dog's crap and drunkard's bile
I bet when Hell gets privatised
They'll stick it 'ere, it's just right size.

A Aye lad.

I So, all right, dad,
Come clean, what's this all about?
I weren't born yesterday, it's eighteen year
Since you first heard my bastard shout -

A Bastard? That yer not,
That's one thing yer never should have thought.

They stop speaking. Sound of whetstone on steel

I What yer doing that for, dad?
A Me and yer mother's bust ower brains
To try and step up ladder
We've lost the lot except our chains
Your mother just gets sadder

When t' market force is working reet
They'll promise yer autonomy
So long as you'll scoff poisoned meat
Fer t' sake of the "economy"

They've closed down half o't railways for
They reckon fares are failing
So we can hardly get past front door
For lorries nose-to-tailing

They're spraying nerve gas ovver t' fields
Stuff hormones in ower milk
They pay the farm to double t' yields
And burn it on the stalk

We can't go on, we've had enough
We've no hope now in t' future
They've strangled God, they've stitched us up
They've gang raped Mother Nature.

I I don't get yer.

Sound of sharpening intensifies, speeds up, then stops

A Ah, that's better, bloody thing were blunt
As arseholes, now it's sharp as cunt.

I Dad, why the axe?

A It's wor I wer saying, lad, now yer eighteen,
Another head to count for council tax,
There's water rates, light and heat,
Car insurance bread and meat,
You won't vote, you're always bored, you
Earn us nowt, we can't afford yer.

I You what?

A Settle down, calm yoursen, lad
When yer think, death ain't so bad,
Just like dentist pulls a tooth
I'll lift y'out life's aching mouth.

Just think of all that time you'll save,
No need to shit, no need to shave,
No half arsed conversations on the bus
No bums, no tits, no fags, no booze.

I No bums, no tits!
Dad, I don't want to die.

Sharpening starts again

A It's t' most sensible way.

I No, dad, don't chop off me bonse
It's the bit of me I like the best
I'll need it to look ovver t' dashboard once
I get my bleeding driving test.

A Lad, lad, look on t' bright side,
You'll still have yer feet!

I No, dad, no, it won't do at all,
My nose might run burrit runs straight to 'ell
Me feet might smell but they can't smell fanny
I need my bonse, I want my mammy!

A All reet, all reet, calm yersen, lad.
Look. I'll tell yer what.

I'll have a word with yer uncle Jack.
Shop's doing well. He'll find a job
I'm sure he needs a lad to work out back
Shift boxes, sweep a bit and scrub
Won't mek yer rich, but it's a start,
Pays yer food, yer board, yer heat.

I How long fer?

A Well, fer as long as yer need.
So, are we agreed?

Longish silence

I Mebee first idea were right,
Yer bloody job sounds really boring,
After all, what's death, but one long night
(Wi'out the wanking and the snoring).

A That's it, lad. Let's ger on with it

I Shall I pull me collar down a bit

A Nay, nay lad, I'm on top of it,
Don't bother

Sound of woman's voice in distance

S Abraham, Abraham....

I Hang on a mo, is that me mother?

S Abraham, Abraham...

A Aw bleeding 'ell, what's she come for,
I told her stay at home and lock front door.

S Ah, here you are. And thanks be to t' lord
Y' haven't done owt yet, I were right scared.
Abraham, hast thee t' lottery ticket?

A Ticket? Aye, it's in me jacket.
But tell me what tha wants it for,
I told thee stay at home...

S *a little excited*

...I just watched lottery draw,
And I don't know for certain but
I'm sure there were one number, maybe more
That were same as what you put.

A Woman, art tha raving mad,
Win on t' lottery? no chance!
T' thing is rigged, we've all been had
They sort winners miles in advance

S No, no, Abraham, that's not true,
It really, really could be you...

A Woman, hast tha lost thy grommets?
Hast tha figured out the odds
I'll sooner get hit by a stray comet
Or get that Princess Di in pod

S Abraham, that's so unjust,
It really, really could be us...

A When folk sleep rough, and beg, and suffer
You'd have to be some kind of fool
All that brass for one old buffer -
I'd nivver touch it wi' a barge-pole

It's money for old hangman's rope,
The final tax, a tax on Hope.

Rustling in pocket

Go on, then, what's numbers?

S Five

A Five. Oh yer, got that one.
That's one.

S Thirt - teen.

A Thirteen, thirteen.
Aye, yer right. Got thirt-teen.
That's two.

S Fourty five.

A Fourty five.
Snakes alive
That's three.

S Twenty seven.

A Twenty seven, twenty seven,
All fat ladies go to 'eaven

excited

Yes, it's 'ere, bugger me
That's four.

S Thirty three.

At this point, ring a bell or a gong. Happy cries hugs and congrats from A,I and S.

A Come on, son, do up thy tie,
It's time to live, not time to die.

I Everything is sparkling, dad,
That great big finger on yer head
Look, it's writing on the cinders
What's it writing, look behind us

A *amazed*
S } Four million quid.
I

A Dance for joy, lass, t' lotto's saved us
S We're all right, so bugger t' neighbours
A House in Spain, new Jag too,
S Go round t' world in t' QE2
A Flog the house and chuck me job,
Hand made suits and shoes from Lobbs
S Fitted bedroom, lifesize telly
French masseur to rub my belly . . .
A [monitory] 'Ey . . .

I That's more than a million each.

sudden silence

A } Each?
S

A Eh, wait on, lad, who bought ticket
It's ower brass, so you'll not nick it

I Oh yeah, dad, that's only fair,
You drag me out, we come up here,
You sharpen t' bloody hatchet up
And set me up for t' final chop
I'll sue for mental pain and stress
Nobbut a million, I'll not take less.

S S'an awful lorra moneeeeeey

I A lorra money? Hark at you
An hour ago you'd not a sou
Don't stand there and take bloody piss,
What you never had you'll never miss.

A Eh, don't talk to thy mother like that

S [incensed] I won't be blackmailed by yon babe

A You'll keep what's happened here under yer hat

I Aye, and me head and all, and I'll see you in court

S That bloody does it, top him, Abe.

A Cop 'old o' this!

Strangled shriek from Isaac, sound of axe falling heavily. Silence.

Entr'acte

Like plainsong or offertory, each line chanted once by a single male voice and then by a group of four or five male voices.

We the assembled bishops of the English Nation.

We the (etc)

Pray to Thee, Lord, to help us in the hour of our temptation

Pray to Thee . . . (etc)

We know that gambling is a sin, unnatural and vicious

We know (etc)

But all that lovely lottery money just looks so delicious

But all that(etc)

We will not use these tainted tithes to spread the word of Jesus

We will not (etc)

But we'll have a bit to fix the roof providing no-one sees us

But we'll have (etc)

Act 2

The Rime of the Ancient Barrister

(with apologies to Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

Dramatis Personae

King James Bible
A second narrator

The second narrator reads the rime. A dour male voice, no music or sound effects. Possibly a Scottish accent with rolling ‘R’s would be very effective.

Note: this act makes reference to several events during Mrs Thatcher’s time in office. There was a certain rivalry between Thatcher and the press. Mrs Thatcher had a press officer called Bernard Ingham, powerful and somewhat feared by the press. The text also makes reference to the death of Robert Maxwell who was found floating in the sea in mysterious circumstances after the extent of his insolvency had been discovered. And there is a reference to “The Big Issue” which is a magazine that homeless people used to sell to raise funds. It still exists and can be bought on the streets of Britain and Ireland.

[*Thunder and wind*]

King James Bible

And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of thy womb?

And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.

And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

It is an ancient Barrister
And he stoppeth one of three
'By thy scuffed briefcase and sleazy eye
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The courtroom doors are opened wide
The lawyer's palm is greasy,
For today I hope to ditch my bride
And obtain a decree nisi.'

I feared his eye, I feared his beard,
I cried 'Unhand me, fella',
But could not pass, since most I feared
The point of his umbrella.

Oh do not be so hasty, Sir,
To flee your married state,
For first I shall detain you here,
My story to relate.

Once I was wed, and loved my wife
Both gentle and adoring,
But before too long we fell to strife,
Repetitive and boring

I wept, I screamed, I strained I slogged,
I cried, 'Oh what the Dickens,
If we're going to fight like Cat and Dog,
I'll fight some younger chicken.'

I took myself unto the Kirk
I had not been since school
I said, 'Now Vicar, do your work,
Advise me of the rules.'

I clasped my hands and faced the font
In Prayer and Meditation,
He said, 'Do what the Hell you want,
Just give us a Donation.'

I had not gone a week, a week,
A week or barely twain
When my testicles began to ache
To be on the job again;

The naked women in the ads
With ice-cream on their butts,
They made me groan, they made me mad,
They made me grind my nuts,

I threw myself upon my knees,
I cried 'Lord, I'm not choosy,
Dear God, do not forsake me, please,
I just want ONE MORE FLOOZY'

I hurried down to Brighton Beach
With my jeans and my ruck-sack,
But all the girls were out of reach,
And the boys were all on crack;

The pouting lips, the glassy eyes,
The cold indifferent lasses,
The naked breasts, the suntanned thighs,
The acres of sunglasses,
And all repulsed with weary sighs
My frantic, feeble passes.

Till one girl offered me her bed,
But this was what undid me,
For when I got there, she, instead
Demanded fifty quid, see,
'Sod this for a lark', I said,
'I'll try the birds in Sydney.'

I took a boat, we sailed away,
It soon grew wondrous hot,
And lumps of toxic waste came by
As green as monkey snot.

We paced the deck, we crammed the bar,
When o'er the briny froth,
We spied a figure drawing near,
It was a Friendly Goth

With piercèd lip and piercèd ear
And piercèd nostril tissue,
We fed him fags and crisps and beer,
He sold us THE BIG ISSUE

His studs and rings, his shifty eyes,
His face, pock mark'd and yellow,
I cannot lie, with my bow tie,
I strangled the poor fellow.

'Thou heap of tripe! Thou human wreck,
What murder hast thou done!'
In a black bin bag, around my neck
His unsold mags were hung.

Then, through the window of the bar
A Ghostly ship was seen,
Upon the deck, there played at cards
Mrs Thatcher and the Queen.

'I've all the Kings!', the Monarch cried
But Thatcher just said, 'Ingham -
That pack of Aces by your side,
Dear Bernard, would you bring 'em?'

I stared and wept, like one struck dumb
As the awful spectre sank in
The pow'rs of MEDIOCRITY had won
Whilst I'd been busy WANKING.

Meanwhile, amongst the cargo crates
My shipmates had been handling,
They spied one full of video tapes
Of CHEERS and GARRY SHANDLING

Soon, gaping wide was every mouth
And every man was snoring
The sea was dead, from North to South,
The re-runs were so boring.

Then, as I sat in mute despair,
The atmosphere grew chiller
A thousand slimy things appear'd
In a motorised flotilla

They were not fish or snakes or birds
But something much more nasty
The flashbulbs popped, the Nikkons whirred,
It was the PAPARAZZI

Some held fast by slimy weed,
The waterways were choking,
Whilst others were by another seized
Which some of them were smoking

'So tell me, have you left your wife',
The boldest fellow hollered,
'And is it true, you've lost a life
We'll pay ten thousand dollars!'

But if you plan to squirm and lie,
We warn you not to try it, sir'
But then, by chance, there floated by
The corpse of his proprietor.

With sighs and ohs, the stunned journos
In stony silence sat,
I cried, 'A tribe of Eskimos
Could winter on that fat!'

Then up spoke one, 'Our pension fund,
That's what he got that size on!'
They thrashed their screws, and turned around
And churned up the horizon.

I shed a tear, 'To tell the Truth
He was an evil Blighter,
And yet they say that in his youth
He was a fearless fighter'

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The sack of mags fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Oh, sleep, it is a gentle thing,
There's nothing like reposing,
But you don't do much travelling
When all the crew are dozing
And so I turned the fire cock on
And gave them a good hosing.

One by one they came to life
As dreamers from a swound;
I cried, 'I'll go back to my wife,
Please, turn the ship around'

Is that the town? Is that the Kirk
'Pray, Holy Vicar, shrieve me!'
'Oh, hello there, um, er, welcome back,
Um, er, I would, but who'd believe me?'

I passed before my garden gate
Upon the door I hammered
But my wife was with the plumber's mate
And my children in the slammer!

Oh, divorcee, this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

With trembling hand he cadged a light
His palm was cold and greasy,
Then quoth he, 'Come and stay the night,
For now I'm AC/DC'

The barrister so san-paku
With beard so stiff and smelly
Is gone: and now the divorcee
Has ulcers in his belly.

He went like one that hath no fear,
And left his wife, the first one,
But, whaddya know, within a year
He'd married a much WORSE one.

Act 3

Adam and Eve and the Serpent

(with apologies to Lindsay Kemp and Milton)

Dramatis Personae

King James Bible

God.

Adam and Eve as innocents.

Adam and Eve as sophisticates.

The Odeon Serpent.

Bugs Bunny.

Various animals.

Adam as an innocent probably has a mild Suffolk or other English country accent - "Buoy" for "Boy", and so on. Eve has a simple sexy voice but her accent is not so important, since Adam is the buffoon. As sophisticates they are Hooray Henrys, hard sneering voices.

The serpent is the serpent in the Odeon advert, the one with all the handbags on his tail. His 's' is pronounced 'sssss' and he has a lisp.

Bugs Bunny is a one line sound-bite.

God has an educated Indian accent. Not too strong.

[*Thunder and wind*]

King James Bible:

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Birdsong. Silence. Gentle sound of a woman snoring. She sighs, she wakes up. Sleepily.

Eve:

Well, what a pleasant day to be created.
Still, better shift and find out where my mate is.
Yoo hoo . . . over here, yoo hoo . . .

Adam:

Whoa there feller, who are you?
Yesterday I was on my tod,
Apart from the odd visitor, like God.

Eve:

I know, and He who craftily devised you
Made me to be your mate and live beside you.

Adam:

Well, about time too, it's boring on my own, but I wish
He'd get a move on and get you finished.

Eve:

Get me finished?

Adam:

Well, clearly you're designed all wrong,
Your chest's too lumpy and your hair's too long;
brightening
Still, as soon as he fits you with your cock and balls
I know a GREAT game called PISSING UP WALLS.

Eve:

[gently]
But this is how I'm meant to be,
You're MAN, I'm WOMAN, don't you see?
You rant and rave and fret and storm
I keep the mossy blanket warm
Your tinkle-thing is hard, mine's soft and wet

[coyly]
Which could have certain advantages which
you haven't thought of, yet!

Sound of Adam slumping to the ground

Eve: [alarmed]

Oh my goodness, don't take fright,
Are you alright?

Adam: [apologetically]

Sorry mate, forgive me, please,
Something inexplicable just happened to my knees!

Eve:

Oh, that's all right then, I forgive you,
In fact . . .
I just might come and lie down with you

Adam:

Actually, I'm not sure that would be wise
Due to the fact that I seem to have swallowed
several thousand butterflies!

Eve giggles. At this point GOD appears. Perhaps heralded by a GONG or some churchy sounding bell. This is followed by Indian music, played on a flute or sitar to the sound of droning strings

God:

Please don't let me interrupt unduly,
If anyone's unshockable, it's me, Yours Truly
I can easily deliver my peregrination
Whilst my handywork performs its copulation.

Eve:

Oh, Great Sculptor whom thy statuette adores,
When you wish to speak my whole attention's yours
And if my mate desires the perfumed passage,
He'll just have to wait, (or give himself a massage).

But in any case, look at him, collapsed in spasms;
You might at least have warned the poor fool
about orgasms.

God:

Okay. I'll make it quick. Now, here's the thing,
Everything that swims, creeps, or takes wing,
Each vegetable, plant and growing tree,
Is given in your care and husbandry.

Except ONE TREE I'm thinking of
Purest poison to your love
Eats the moon out of your sky,
Drives the beam into your eye,
Parches the grass from your lawns,
Feeds your cattle to the worms,
Chews your days to tasteless cud
And vomits them into the mud
Steals the word within your breath
Impales you on the sting of death.

So, mark it well, remember its location,
That tree, the tree of pointless complication.
You can sniff the blossoms if you like, mate,
But nibble just one nut, it's on your bike, mate!

Eve:

He wouldn't do that, would you, Adam?

God:

What I just said goes for you too, Madam.

Whoever bids you taste it, don't you hear of it.
You have to realise that as Creation's Generalissimo and Grand Nabob,
There are certain unavoidable complexities in MY job,
But you steer clear of it.

I've told you what I came to say,
Now Paradise is yours, have fun!
You have one task, that later on today
The animals will come here, one by one,
The large, the small, the crawley and the creepy,
The hyperactive and the downright sleepy,
And you must think up names for every species
According to their genealogical niches.

There is another breed, the finny race
Who populate the ocean's airless space
And draw their breath from water, and their seasons,
But they won't be coming along,
for obvious reasons.

God's music - he vanishes, rustling of animals approaching the primeval couple

Adam:
This is going to be 'ard work, I fear

Eve:
Okay, Aardvark it is, who's next, come here
Thou flying monster, huge and white and reckless
You're Albatross, (actually, you'd make quite a nice necklace).

Adam:
Come Asphodel, come Aspidistra stalk,
Come Auroch and come Avocet and Auk

Eve:
You're Blesbok, Cacomistle and Rhinoceros
Pangolin and Kinkerjou and Hippopotamus
You're Throstle, Peewee, Phalarope and Ptarmigan
Cat, kindly don't eat MOUSE

while I am naming him!

fade out over the following

Adam:
Kaffir cat, and Kangaroo and Kudu
We think these names will fit, and we hope you do,
Coatinundi, Cuscus, Doe and Dolphin,
And hang about a mo I'll fit the Wolf in . . .

Some time elapses, fade back in, both voices sounding tired

Eve:
Crane, Buzzard, Titmouse, Chickadee, Hoopoe
We've still got over half of them to go!

Adam:
Bobolink and Hornbill, Chachalaca,
I know we have, I'm fairly fucking knackered.

Eve: [announces]

That's it for now, we're going to take a break
We'll carry on tomorrow when we wake.
Right now we're going to have to go to bed
So just for tonight, anyone without a name
is FRED.

Animals mumble and shuffle off. Eve sighs.

Eve:

Thank goodness, peace at last.
I think I'll lie down on this grass.

Adam: [seductively]

Oh, Eve, how I love your face,
Your eyes so blue and foggy,
Let's be the first of all our race
To do it doggy doggy!

Eve:

Oh, Adam, that would be a thrill;
And when dawn's fingers fondle the far hills
As in a few short hours I'm sure they will

Let's you and I, most blessed of the blessed
By perfumed zephyrs from the East caressed,
Refreshed by sleep resume our sweet fuck-fest.

But just now I'm totally shagged out,

I need a rest.

Night falls, the Brahms lullaby is played on a musical box, Eve sighs and snores. NOW - enter the SERPENT. Introduced by a tom-tom beat and the ubiquitous snake-charmer theme played on an oboe. His leitmotif is a sharp rattle, quickly dying to nothing.

Serpent:

Thievessss are Sssssilent in a public placce.
Ah! Target sss spied at ssssix o'clock,
and what a pretty fac cccccc e

Rattle. Eve wakes up.

Eve:

Who, who are you, in your glistening chain-mail,
Wh, why are all those handbags on your tail?

Serpent:

Your sssservant madam, vanquisssshed by your glory,
(Asss for the handbagsss, that'ssss another sssstory).

rattles

Eve:

Look, I'm sorry I don't have a name for you,
But I'm resting now, so won't tomorrow do?

Serpent:

My name is Sssssserpent, that's my own invention;
No, I'm here with a quite different intention,

rattles

Once I wassss a pitiful dumb creature,
Wet as ssss earthworm, devoid of facial feature,
Without the means of absssstract thought or speech or
Capacity to ssss study with a teacher -

rattles

But now,
I'm reading Kierkegaard and Nietzsche!

Eve gasps

Yessss, once my thoughts were trivial and petty,
My pers sss son much resembled cold ssss spaghetti
But, now, through nature's ssss superfecundity

rattles

I'm ssss studying the Etudes of Ligeti
And writing what I hope will be the definitive life
of Fffff ferlinghetti

Eve gasps, serpent rattles.

Dear lady, how it pains sssss me now to sssss see thee
Dis ssss atvantaged all for the sssss ake
of one sssss stupid tree!

rattles

In fact, it makes me want to sssss spit!
Which wouldn't be ssss so nice,
Sssss since there don't ssss seem to be any ssss spitoons
In Paradisssss [tails off to a rattle]

Eve: [suspicious]

If you mean the tree of which I'm thinking,
You can spare yourself the frothing and the winking,
You could have saved yourself a useless trip;
HE told us not to touch it, not a PIP!

Serpent:

Sssso, and if you DO, then what'll
He do to you? He's just testing out your bottle.

rattles

Eve:

HE bade me most directly not to scoff of it,
The rules are crystal clear, they're just KEEP OFF OF IT!

Serpent:

Who's ssss se HE? Some sss sad old geyser with a snuffle
Bandy knees sss, pathetic ssss oft ssss shoe ssss shuffle
The reason that he's warned you off that tree is
He's sssss sssss scared
you'll wind up twice as bright as he is sss

rattles

Those sss strictures ssss were for human kind decreed,
But thou, part Angel and part Devil seed,
Begat by Sssss spirit on a sssss spare rib bone
Aren't bound by petty rules ssss ...

mobile phone rings

drat, there's ssss my phone ... excuse me

Handbags ssss? I've got handbags ssss, yes, I deliver,
How many do you want? I'll ssss send them over ...

Serpent's monologue fades into the background, Eve meditates in foreground

Yes, you can pay by E-mail or by Access
Or sssss send a banker's draft round in a taxi
Or transfer funds to my brass ssss plate in Zug
Or poss sssibly I'll trade them for some drugs sss

What, tell you where I get them, I'm surpris ssssed
Just ask no questions you'll get told no lies ssss

Meanwhile, over

Eve:

It seems a shame such powers should go to waste
Surely he wouldn't know, one tiny taste?
And poor old Adam sorely needs some brains -

Ah well, nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Cut to God's music, God is flying over Eden. He is MIGHTILY pissed off!

God:

Where's that lazy disobedient Seraphim?
I ordered him to stay down there on guard
And look, that brainless good-for-nothing Cherubim
Has buggered off and left his flaming sword!

Where the Hell is Uriel, I'm FURIOUS
If that snake gets in, the woman will get curious,
Doesn't it make you SICK, the Boss of Eden
And I still can't get an Angel when I need one

What the Dickens is going on down there?

Sound of hard raucous laughter. Chattering of alarmed chimps and braying of distressed donkeys, unhappy animal noises. Adam and Eve have become SOPHISTICATES, their voices are hard and snobby.

Adam:

You're Mickey Mouse, you're Donald and you're Pluto,
Oh and Dumbo, come and dance in this pink tutu!

Eve:

You're Scrooge, you're Garfield, and you're Gruff Goat Billy,
You're Roland Rat, you're Kermit, you're Free Willy

Adam: [laughs raucously, echoes]

Haw haw haw .. Free Willy!

How about him, let's call him RUPERT, what?

Eve:

No, wait, how's this - your name is POOH.
Stitch that!!

Raucous laughter from Adam, wounded HOWL from the bear.

God:

Now wait, what's going on, why all this racket?
You just can't use such names, they'll never hack it ...
And while I'm about it will . . .

gasps

Oh what a shock!

Is that dreadful thing a RABBIT?

Bugs Bunny: [for it is he]

Er - What's up, DOC?

Eve:

They're brutes, they don't have proper feelings,
It's just a reflex action, all that squealing.

Adam:

Look, old chap, I'm afraid you can't stay there, you'll
Ruin my picture, you're parked right over my ariel.

God:

It's that blasted Serpent, he's brought hate
and discord with him;
Where is he now? I'd like to have a word with him

Eve

Well, I'm afraid you turned up just too late to save him.

Adam:

In the interest of Science, we've MICROWAVED him.

Adam: Haw haw haw

Eve: Hahaaaa!

God: [getting flustered]

You foul ungrateful creatures, cut the crap,
Damn and blast it, where's that thunderclap

God shuffles around looking for his thunder

Um, um, ah . .

A huge and menacing THUNDERCLAP followed by about five seconds of a ROARING TYPHOON which, however terminates quite abruptly, as though to indicate that it is, in fact, a sound effect.

Eve:

I'm sorry, God, you're just not frightening
Who gives a Fig for a bit of lightening,
And you're not going to scare us with some old gale
You picked up in the Radiophonic Workshop car boot sale

Adam:

Haw haw haw . . .

And anyway, now we've got depth psychology
We know you're just not real, you're old mythology.

God: [highly indignant]

Not REAL, how dare you turn your back, you'll see
Confound it, man, how DARE you MOON at me!

Adam: Haw haw haw

Eye: Hahaaaa!

God:

A CURSE on you you foul ungrateful pair,
May your LIVERS rot and your EYEBALLS grow hair

Adam: Haw haw haw

Eve:

Oh, come on God, however much you twist
The facts about, be fair, you don't exist.

God:

Oh, very well then, have the thing your way,
I knew you'd figure all this out some day;
It's true, in this persona that appears
To humankind, in wrath, with a great white beard,

You're right I'm no more real than the bubbles
in your ricicles
Or a four pound note, or, indeed, than
deep fried icicles.

But think of me as a supra natural order
Both infinitely small and infinite
Which has you infinitessimally curled within it

At once the source, the branch, the flowering tree
And unpartitioned seed of energy

And you, just like the bee, build honeycomb
And know from day to day just how to do it,
Yet you do not know the Hexagon
And can never get outside the Hive to view it

Remember, what can be described is real
Only to your bounded human eyes,
What's Eternal far surpasses your ideals,
Its power and beauty can never be described

And now, I've had enough of your BAD MANNERS
It's the parting of the ways, which we agreed on
And anyway, you'll never get the planners
To allow power plants and airports here in Eden.

Much thunder, sound of a creaky gate opening and slamming

Epilogue

Noye's Fludde

Dramatis Personae:

Narrator (Jimmy Clitheroe)
Two US astronatus.

Narrator:

Now, educated readers might recall
That Milton, at this point, has Gabriel
Pacify poor Adam at the gate
By showing him Man's destiny and Fate.

But we've decided that we'll keep him out of it
Because frankly, we're afraid he might freak out a bit,
And, if anybody doesn't want to know
What the result is, then you'd better switch off now.

Our ancient forbears did as they were bid,
They left, he got a job and she had kids
The kids had kids, who had more kids to fight 'em
And they had more and so ad infinitum.

Though Jove and Satan contest the Celestial Plane,
The victor of Mankind was Brother Cain
The crowning great achievement of whose science
Was the invention of a fabulous appliance
The doomsday bomb, a nuclear device
That seeks Earth's poles and barbeques the ice.

Only Noah had the simple nous
To figure what would come, to sell his house
And build an ark, of gopher wood, they say,
(His go-fer went to fetch it, anyway.)
Three hundred cubits long, an hundred wide,
With SOD OFF in huge letters on the side

He caulked the hull with pitch and primed the planks
And filled the rum and Coca Cola tanks,
He raised a flag, a black skull and crossbones which said on
The back of it ROLL ON ARMAGEDDON.

When, finally, arrived the dreadful day
The powers of darkness rose and torched the sky;
He gathered all the animals within it
(At least, all that he could round up in four minutes)

With piercing trumpet blast and curling sail
And half creation puking at the rail
The ark embarked upon the foaming flood
As Icarus remarked, so far, so good.

However, due to some new microchip
Designed by Shem to automate the ship
They mounted Gilgamesh's drowned domain
With both their bow doors open to the rain.

At this point, splashing of water, squealing of animals, and some background dialog, off.

"man the pumps",
"what pumps",
"man the lifeboats",
"lifeboats?",
"aaaargh" etc.

And so doth perish all the human race
Excepting - somewhere out in space

Sound of intermittent radio static

beep

1st Astronaut:

Er, Houston, we have a problem.

beep

Radar telemetry failure. [*laughs*] Instruments indicate the whole of Texas under five miles of water.

beep

Houston, do you read me. Houston. Jesus - Tom - Jesus, looks like we got a serious [*beep*] Waterworld situation down there.

2nd Astronaut:

Jesus - look at that. Looks like a serious termination of humanity problem down there right now. Jesus . . . what the [*beep*] [*beep*] [*beep*] we supposed to do now? Jesus!

1st Astronaut:

Emergency procedure, Tom. It's up to us, gotta perpetuate the human species.

2nd Astronaut:

No you [*beep*] don't, you [*beep*] [*beep*], just my [*beep*] luck to get stuck in orbit at the end of the world with a [*beep*] faggot.

1st Astronaut:

Negative, Tom. A biological impossibility, anyway. Nope, all we can do is hope we're not the only craft in Earth orbit.

Mayday, Mayday, this is Apollo 25 calling all craft. Mayday, Mayday, we gotta serious end of the human race situation, Mayday, Mayday . . .

etc. fade

Mayday, Mayday, are there any WOMEN up here!

etc. fade to silence.

Introduction on a school piano that sounds as though it went in the Ark with Noah and hasn't been tuned since. Then mixed children's voices, including one TONE DEAF GRUNTER.

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
We're going to kill them all

The tyger in the forest
With fangs and fearful frown
We'll grind his bones for powder
To sell in Chinatown

All things . . . (etc)

The rhino in the game park
With armour plated skin
He won't be feeling horny
When we get through with him

All things . . . (etc)

fade to . . .

A FEW HUMMING OR INSTRUMENTAL CHORUSES with CREDITS OVER

fade back up

The grizzly in the film show
With slavering teeth and gums
We'll soon take care of Biffo
With automatic guns

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures cold and hot
All things wise and wonderful
We'll kill the blooming lot

Bell rings

Teacher: Playtime!

Manic chatter, delinquent laughter, w.h.y., fade. FINIS