

***“THE RESURRECTION  
OF JACKIE CRAMER”©***

*(THE MUSICAL)*

***ORIGINAL BOOK AND LYRICS BY  
FRANK GAGLIANO***

***MUSIC BY  
RAYMOND BENSON***

***CONTACT***

***sandrico@aol.com  
([www.gaglianoriff.net](http://www.gaglianoriff.net))***

## **STORY**

***["THE RESURRECTION OF JACKIE CRAMER" is an entirely sung original musical Theatre Piece about a 16-year old boy, Jackie Cramer, who denies pain and tears in life, by laughing at everything.]***

When the musical starts, Jackie slips in dog do, hits his head on a Volkswagen fender, dies and goes to heaven. There he discovers that God is a Board of Directors (the BOD), and he laughs at them. For this insolence, Jackie is sentenced to stay in Limbo until he stops laughing and learns how to cry. It turns out that Limbo is just the place Jackie's been looking for all his young life. Because of a celestial loophole, Jackie can stay in Limbo for eternity. So the BOD set out to rectify their error. They lead Jackie on a journey through heaven and earth, and force Jackie, for the first time, to confront his family, former ("freak") friends—and himself. Will the BOD get Jackie to cry? The musical culminates in a cemetery showdown.

## **CHARACTERS**

Jackie Cramer (Tenor)  
 The Chorus (Single singer/Male or Female)  
 Board Of Directors (The B.O.D.) (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass)  
 Susie Lou (Soprano)  
 Pop (Tenor)  
 Father Bodoni (Bass/Baritone)  
 Remo (Tenor)  
 No-legs Willy (Tenor/Baritone)  
 Benjy (Non singing; uses sign language)  
 Ensemble (All voices, except Jackie)

## **TIME**

The Recent Past.

## **PLACE**

Heaven, Limbo, and all over Bodoni County, USA.

## MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

**1) PROLOGUE: JACKIE CRAMER DIES, GOES TO HEAVEN, WHERE HE HAS A COUPLE OF LAUGHS AND IS KICKED OUT.**

“Jackie Cramer, Susie Lou’s Boyfriend”  
 –CHORUS, JACKIE, ENSEMBLE. B.O.D.  
 “I don’t Get It” – JACKIE  
 “Limbo” – JACKIE  
 “Gotta Get Him Back” – B.O.D., JACKIE

**2) THE WAKE.**

“Jackie’s View Of His Dead Self” – JACKIE, ENSEMBLE  
 “Susie Lou’s Lament” – SUSIE LOU, JACKIE  
 “Mom and Pop’s Revelation” – MOM, POP  
 “Remo’s Revenge” – REMO  
 “Father Bodoni’s Confession” – BODONI. B.O.D., ENSEMBLE  
 “I Gotta Laugh” – JACKIE, B.O.D., ENSEMBLE

**3) JACKIE TRIES TO MAKE CONTACT WITH LIVE BROTHER REMO**

“Movin’ On Out” --JACKIE, REMO  
 “Remo’s World” – REMO, SUSIE LOU, JACKIE, ENSEMBLE “The Funeral Procession” – ENSEMBLE  
 “PSSST!” – REMO

**4) INTERLUDE**

“What Does It Feel Like?” – CHORUS

**5) FREAK STOP ONE: MISS LULU, THE FAT LADY WHO CRIES IN HER BEER.**

“The Ballad of Miss Lulu” – CHORUS, JACKIE

**6) INTERLUDE #2**

“Which Way To Turn?” --JACKIE, B.O.D., ENSEMBLE

**7) FREAK STOP TWO: NO-LEGS WILLY REMINISCES.**

“No-Legs Willy” – CHORUS, NO-LEGS, B.O.D.  
 “The Little Girl & Her Balloons” – NO-LEGS, JACKIE

**MUSICAL SYNOPSIS**  
**(Continued)**

**8) FREAK STOP THREE: BENJY IN THE AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD.**

**“Benjy, The Deaf Boy” – CHORUS, BENJY, JACKIE**

**“The B.O.D. Interfere” – B.O.D., JACKIE**

**9) INTERLUDE #3**

**“I Better Laugh” JACKIE, B.O.D.**

**10) THE CEMETERY – AND THE FINAL SHOWDOWN.**

**“The Funeral Procession” –The Chorus, ENSEMBLE.**

**“Life Did A Number On Me” –MOM, POP, SUSIE LOU, BODONI**

**“The Blasphemy” –B.O.D., ENSEMBLE, JACKIE**

**“Remo’s Reversal” –REMO, ENSEMBLE, JACKIE**

**“Follow Us Up To Heaven” –ENSEMBLE**

**“He Is Risen! Alleluia!” – JACKIE, ENSEMBLE, REMO**

[THE FOLLOWING *SPOKEN OPENING*  
— BEFORE OVERTURE—  
WAS NEVER USED]

Drum roll and cymbals.  
The performers enter.  
Each line is spoken by  
a separate performer. Rapidly.  
in the manner of a stand-up comic.

**BOD**

“Good evening, ladies and gentlemen”  
“Welcome to heaven  
“That’s right, this is heaven.”  
“And we’re God.”

**TOGETHER**

Do-wah!  
(Drum roll and cymbals)

**BOD**

“Or”  
“You can look on us”  
“As a celestial Board of Directors.”  
“B”  
“O”  
“D”  
“A BOD!!!”

**TOGETHER**

Do—wee!  
(Drum roll and cymbals)

**BOD**

“We’ve got a lot of clout up here.”  
“But,”  
“As you will see,”  
“There are limits.”  
“And sometimes our clout clunks!”

**TOGETHER**

Cluuuuuuuuunnnk  
(Drum roll and cymbals)

**BOD**

**“As you will see.”**

**“And do you know why?”**

**“It’s because of this former human person”**

**“Whom we will now cause to materialize.”**

**(Drum roll and cymbals  
as Jackie Cramer materializes in)**

**“Say there,”**

**“Materialized former human person”**

**“Say ‘Hi’ to the folks.”**

**JACKIE**

**Hi, folks.**

**BOD**

**(Together)**

**His name is Jackie Cramer.**

**JACKIE**

**My name is Jackie Cramer.**

**BOD**

**(Together)**

**“Tonight, he expects to get into heaven.”**

**JACKIE**

**At first. But then I won’t want to get in.**

**BOD**

**“The reason why”**

**“He won’t want to get into heaven,”**

**“Is what this show is all about.”**

**JACKIE**

**No it isn’t. It’s about laughing and/or crying.**

**BOD**

**(Together)**

**Among other things.**

**JACKIE**

**So if you feel like laughing and/or crying—**

**BOD**

(Together)  
Or crying and/or laughing—

**JACKIE**

Do so!

**TOGETHER**

Dooooooooo Waa—

(Drum roll and cymbals)

**BOD**

“One other thing.”  
“No! Two other things!”

**JACKIE**

What’s the first thing?

**BOD**

(Together)  
In this heaven, we BODs wear many hats.

**BOD#1**

“I, for example, will be Jackie’s tour guide; his ‘chorus’ for those of you who have a classical bent.”

**BOD**

“ She (He) will lead Jackie on his journey,”  
“From laughter to tears,”  
“From being an incomplete human being,  
“To being complete,”  
“From being a boy,  
To being a mensch,”  
“From—“

**JACKIE**

Enough! Please! We haven’t even started and I’m exhausted. Now, what’s the second thing we’ve got to know so that you can get me to the starting line?

**BOD**

“In our heaven”  
“Everyone sings.”  
“Just about all the time.”

**JACKIE**

Like who?

**BOD**

“I’ll play his priest, and I’ll sing.”  
(Sings a few notes: Held under)

**BOD**

I’ll play his mother, and I’ll sing.  
(Sings: Held under)

**BOD**

I’ll play his father, and I’ll sing.  
(Sings Held under)

**BOD**

I’ll play his brother Remo, and I’ll sing.  
(Sings: held under)

**BOD**

I’ll play his girl friend, Susie Lou, and I’ll sing.  
(Sings. Held under)

**JACKIE**

Then I guess I’d better sing, too.  
(Sings: Held under)

**BOD**

(Sing together)  
And since there is song,  
You may therefore be sure

**ENSEMBLE**

(Sing)  
That we start our heavenly tour  
With an overture.

(They indicate musicians.  
Lights out on ensemble.  
Lights up on musicians)



## OVERTURE

(THEN: LIGHTS UP ON CHORUS  
and ENSEMBLE – FOR PROLOGUE)

### CHORUS

(Speaks)

Here begins “The Resurrection of Jackie Cramer.”  
PROLOGUE: In which Jackie Cramer slips in dog do,  
Hits his head on a Volkswagen fender,  
And meets his makers.

### CHORUS

(Continued. Sings)

Jackie Cramer, Susie Lou’s boyfriend,  
At the age of not-quite sixteen,  
Died on a Monday  
By slipping in dog do  
And hitting his head  
On a Volkswagen fender.

### ENSEMBLE

Low, low blow for skinny old Jackie.  
Low low blow for skinny old Jackie.

### CHORUS

Jackie Cramer, made heaven that same Monday.  
Was interviewed that Monday,  
And filled out forms in triplicate  
That very day.

Jackie Cramer,  
Trying to be kosher,  
Sat with his knees closed  
And answered with—

### JACKIE

“Yes, m’am,”

**CHORUS**

Was sent right through to the Head Man that Monday,  
And he laughed, Jackie laughed.

**ENSEMBLE**

Which was typical of Jackie,  
'Cause he'd laugh.  
How he'd roar—

**CHORUS**

—At the damndest things  
That no one would find funny.

Jackie Cramer thought he would lose it.  
He tried to hold back and not be inane.  
But when he peeked once again at the Head Man,  
He knew that heaven was also insane.

**JACKIE**

Cause the Head Man up here is a Board of Directors.  
Am I seeing right, A Board of Directors?  
(double take)

I swear to God,  
A Board of Directors!  
(Speaks)

A BOD.

**BOD**

(Sing)  
Aye aye aye aye aye,  
A Board of Directors.  
We're sent here to assist you,  
To see you finally get into heaven.

**ENSEMBLE**

So he laughed. Jackie laughed.

**JACKIE**

(Through laugh)  
Heaven's gonna be great,  
If there's nothing but clowns here.  
(He shakes their hands.  
slaps them on the back  
and, perhaps, tap dances)

**ENSEMBLE**

Tee—hee.  
 Ha ha.  
 Hee hee.  
 La la.

**CHORUS**

So the BOD lose their cool  
 And point their fingers at Jackie.  
 And they say as they point their fingers like guns:

**BOD**

Jackie Cramer, get the hell out of here, boy!  
 You don't laugh at Head Men with clout.  
 And don't come back till you take your death serious.  
 Try to remember your bod's in a shroud.  
 So get your butt right off of this cloud.  
 So get your butt right off of this cloud.

**JACKIE**

(Settles down. Considers)

You mean. . .get out of heaven?  
 You mean—get out of heaven?

I don't get it.  
 I sign forms in triplicate.  
 And I'm not supposed to laugh.

I don't get it.  
 God becomes a fun quartette.  
 And I'm not supposed to laugh?

Alive, I'd laugh at everything;  
 My folks, my priest, the whole damn town.  
 'Cause everything was silly there.  
 Well, it turns out it's silly everywhere.  
 That's clear.  
 Even here.  
 Especially here!

I don't get it.  
 I drop dead in doggy shit.  
 And I'm not supposed to laugh?

**JACKIE**

(Continued)

Don't you get it?  
This place is a comic bit.  
And I'm not supposed to laugh?

Afraid I can't oblige you guys.  
Cause here the laughs go off the graph.

So better get used to it.  
I find it a joke-and-a-half.  
Cause Cramer's here!  
The giggler's here!

And I'll laugh,  
Laugh,  
Laugh,  
Laugh,  
Laugh!

**BOD**

(Speaks)

Oh yeah?

(Sings)

Then you stay out there nowhere.  
The choice is all yours!  
Once we kick your butt off,  
It's your will. Free will. Free will!  
Those are the rules.  
Let him float in nothing for awhile.  
He will make the wise choice, they always do.  
That's the way to make you wise-asses wise up!  
That's the way to make you wise-asses wise up!

Jackie Cramer,  
Jackie Cramer,  
Jackie Cramer,

**JACKIE**

(Considers. Speaks)

"Nowhere?" Float in "nothing?" Nothing.

(Making light of it.

Speaks)

Jimmy Crimbo! You mean I'll be in Limbo?

**BOD**

(Speak)

That's right.

**JACKIE**

(Speaks. Considers)

What's Limbo like?

**BOD**

(Speaks)

Like that. Out there.

(They back off into the darkness  
as hot white light goes down on Jackie)

Out there.

(Only their voices now  
from way off in the darkness)

Out there.

Nowhere.

(The word "nowhere" reverbs.  
then dies.

Pure silence for a slow  
5 count)

**JACKIE**

(Considers. Sings)

Nowhere.

There's nothing in this nowhere.

I'd be all alone from here on out.

Nowhere in this nowhere world,

Could I hear a whisper or a shout.

So what am I gonna do?

(Considers. He begins to get the answer.  
It's tentative. Soft.)

Fly. Fly.

(Slowly, the following happy  
discoveries keep dropping in)

I won't need people.

I won't need water.

I won't need tears.

I'll be my own order.

I won't need food.

No artist's creation.

**JACKIE**

(Continued. Sings)

I won't need sunshine.  
Won't need inflation.

I won't need fathers.  
Won't need politicians.  
Won't need a Supreme Court.

***THERE ARE NO LIMITATIONS!***

I won't need justice;  
Since there isn't any.  
Won't need lots of money.  
Not one single PENNY!

(He has only, at this moment,  
fully put it together)

**NOWHERE!**

I've *always* wanted nowhere.  
I knew there'd be peace in it,  
Oh yes!  
I'll have in this nowhere house,  
A forever-lease that comes with it;  
And oh, what am I gonna do?  
FLY! FLY!

(Speaks)

Hey BOD! Come out and listen up.

(The BOD materialize)  
(Jackie Sings)

Thank you God,  
You Board of Directors.  
Thank you BOD  
For kicking me out!  
Thanks to you,  
I've got a *somewhere* now.  
Permanent somewhere to giggle in.  
Here's the choice that I'm taking:  
I won't leave from this place.  
Go on back; back where you came from.  
Go on back and get off my case!

**BOD**

He likes it!  
 He likes it there in Limbo!  
 He loves it!  
 There's joy in that boy's voice!  
 How stupid  
 To offer him a choice!

Them's the rules.  
 We used this ploy before!.

But no one stayed.  
 They each came back before!

I knew it.  
 We came on much too strong!.

It's our job.  
 To get him to belong!

Now that we gave him the sack,  
 It might be tough getting him on back!

Get him back,  
 Get him back,  
 Gotta get him back,  
 Get him back,  
 Get him back,  
 Gotta get him back

**JACKIE**  
 (Sings together)  
 Fly! Fly!

(The BOD go into a huddle.  
 When they emerge from the huddle  
 they seem humbled and contrite)

**BOD**

Look, Jackie, you gotta have a heart:  
 We made a mistake coming down so hard on you.  
 Look, Jackie, you gotta have a heart:  
 When you laughed at us we got mad.  
 What else could we do?

But now we apologize.  
 Shake hands. Give heaven a try.  
 Up there, though, you can't only laugh.  
 Like in life, you laugh and you cry.

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Me? Cry in life? Never did!

**BOD**

(Sing)

Please, Jackie, you gotta have a heart.  
 It's our job to see you make heaven without any strings.  
 So, come on, do this nice and neat.  
 Cry a little and then you will be complete.  
 Whatever you've done has been prologue,  
 You had your lively laugh flings.  
 So cry a little;  
 C'mon and do it now—  
 Let's go and get your wings.

**JACKIE**

So sorry, you funny old quartette;  
 But now, I've got the clout.  
 So in Limbo I'll stay,  
 Without any doubt.

(BOD huddle, break from it;  
 this time ready to do battle)

**BOD**

OK, my funny little friend,  
 Before you go and grin,  
 You'd better stop and kick this one about:  
 Before we are completely shut out,  
 We've got one earth-hour  
 To lead you in and out,  
 For one last try to make you cry your song,  
 And fly you back up to heaven  
 Where you belong. . .

**JACKIE**

Ah...  
 Now I get it.  
 Through the cosmos we will flit,  
 And you'll try to stop my laugh.



**BOD**

(Speak)  
In one hour!

**JACKIE**

Hope you get it!  
In an hour I will sit forever,  
Alone, and laugh.  
Because you guys are gonna lose.

**BOD**

(Speak)  
We've still got an hour!

**JACKIE**

Hell, you can't make me get the blues.  
But do what you've got to do.  
It's all still a joke and a half.  
Cause Cramer's here; the giggler's here,  
And in Limbo I will laugh, laugh, laugh.

(Laughs and, perhaps, tap dances)

**ENSEMBLE**

Jackie Cramer  
Knows he has won.  
To laugh forever in the blazing sun.  
When the hour goes by,  
Then he'll start to have -- fun!

**CHORUS**

Jackie Cramer, make this your high point.  
Relax, enjoy it; this Limbo is your joint.

So let the BOD do  
Whatever they want to.

So let the BOD do  
Whatever they want to.

Jackie Cramer,  
From here on in it's a breeze.

**BOD**

(Continued)  
Jackie Cramer,  
From here on in it's a breeze.

(MUSIC held under.  
(Speaks)

**BOD**

(Continued)

At least that's what it seems like.  
For now.  
We'll see.

End of Prologue.

*(MUSIC crashes.  
Blackout)*

**BOD**

*To start him on his salvation journey,  
He must first fly to his own Wake.  
Let's bring on the family.  
Mourning for their Jackie.*

*(The Wake is conjured up.  
Mom, Pop, Susie Lou and Remo dissolve in)*

*(Speak)*

*Hey, Jackie, that's your Wake they're revving up for. You're gonna have to peek in on all that wailing over you.*

**JACKIE**

*(Speaks)*

*It's your hour. Anyway--yeah--it might be fun. ... Yeah.  
It will be fun. I'm gonna have a few laughs at my own  
Wake.*

**THE WAKE****JACKIE**

I'm standing here at my funeral,  
watching the mourners mourn me.

And I'm trying not to laugh now.

I'm weaving my way closer to the chalk boy  
in that strange black suit with baggy pants.

And I'm trying not to laugh now.

Why did they have to rouge and powder me?

I look capricious

(That's one of my tickle words).

Why didn't they clam and chowder me?

At least I'd be delicious

(I'd like to think so).

I'm Stopping now, at my funeral.

Watching my mother crying.

And I'm trying not to laugh now.

I'm listening to my father talking to Uncle Harry.

Oh God, he's lying about me.

And I'm about to laugh now.

**ENSEMBLE**

Jackie's at his rest.

He'll be no more pest.

Laughter's got to cease,

When you're at you're at your peace.

Rest in peace.

Rest in peace, Jackie.

R.i.P. Jackie.

Rest in peace, Jackie.

**JACKIE**

Yes, I'm about to laugh...

at the solemn faces, at the black clothes.

And even at the casket with the brassy handles...

How can you not laugh in a room

that's lit with 12-dozen candles?

It's about to happen.

I feel it coming.

It happened!

**JACKIE**

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 Tickle tickle tickle tickle  
 Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 Tickle tickle tickle tickle

**ENSEMBLE**

Rest in peace.  
 Rest in peace, Jackie.  
 Rest in peace.  
 Rest in peace, Jackie.

**JACKIE**

Oh God, I'll bet you that wailing won't stop!  
 It's nothing but yucky, p-pious bull plop!  
 Or if it's sincere, it's much too sloppy.  
 I've got to free them to laugh — be happy!

(He tickles the mourners.  
 They control themselves)

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 Tickle tickle tickle tickle  
 Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 Tickle tickle tickle tickle

**ENSEMBLE**

Rest in peace.  
 Rest in peace, Jackie.  
 Rest in peace.  
 Rest in peace, Jackie.

**JACKIE**

That's great, that stiff wants to thaw and wake up!  
 He wants to join you to laugh and break up!  
 That's what you want to do anyway now.  
 Kick up your heels and then start to play now.

Ha ha ha ha ha ha haha  
 Tickle Tickle Tickle Tickle  
 Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 Tickle tickle tickle tickle

**ENSEMBLE**

Rest in peace. Rest in peace, Jackie. Rest in Peace

(Jackie has tickled the mourners.  
 They break up, laughing.)

The BOD zap Father Bodoni.  
 He controls himself)

**BODONI**

**Stop it! This is serious.**

**(The mourners control themselves)**

**(The BOD zap SUSIE-LOU  
to step forward)**

**(SUSIE LOU steps forward)**

**SUSIE LOU**

**(Speaks)**

**It's me, Jackie. Susie Lou. Your girlfriend?**

**(Sings)**

**Jackie, the things I'd really like to say seem tacky.  
And even though you were so strange and whacky,  
Oh, Jackie, you were swell.  
Oh, well.**

**Jackie, there are so many things I feel you lack-y.  
The main one being that  
you never tried to hit the sack-y,  
Oh, Jackie, with me, sad me.**

**When you got hot and bothered,  
Then you'd never see me.  
I knew you'd run across town.  
I know that you went to find Bipsy Lee.  
To make Ripky Pipky with Lee.  
But never with me.  
No Ripky with me.**

**(Music held under.**

**Speaks)**

**Look, Jackie. I know you got it in your head to be all "contrary." If all the  
other kids were "going all the way," you had to be different. Have someone  
different. A lady.**

**JACKIE**

**(Speaks)**

**Well, you are a lady. That's what I liked about you.**

**SUSIE LOU**

(Speaks)

I don't know how I really felt about all that sex stuff.  
I do know I wanted to get as close to you as possible.  
And you know what I think now? That you were afraid to  
get too close. That kind of close.

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

“Afraid?”

**SUSIE LOU**

(Speaks)

Too bad, too.

(Sings)

Somewhere under that laughing cover,  
There lurked a serious lover.  
And even though at times  
I wanted to hiss you,  
It was so sweet  
When you finally let me kiss you.  
Remember our sunglasses bunked  
And even I laughed  
. . . And now I miss you.

(The next with cautious bravado)

But, Jackie, the world goes on  
And I must, too,  
--in fact-y-  
you ought to know  
I've taken up with  
Conrad Mackie.  
Oh, Jackie,  
It's true, it's true.

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Conrad Mackie?! He's got zits on his zits!

**SUSIE LOU**

Well, my folks like him better.  
Cause he doesn't make waves.  
Besides, he's rich,  
And they say that's great.

**SUSIE LOU****(Continued. Sings)**

So don't hate me;  
 I've fought them enough.  
 You know we fought over you.  
 If you hadn't died,  
 I would have made clear—  
 We're through.

Why didn't you wait  
 until I could say "we're through."  
     You never loved me,  
     But I really did love you.

**(The BOD zap MOM and POP  
 to step forward)**

**MOM and POP**

You were our eldest  
 And we took you for granted, Jackie Boy.  
 For, after all, your brother Remo  
 Was a bed wetter at twelve.  
 (As our Jewish friends say, "Oy")  
 And as puny as a plastic toy.  
 And an underachiever,  
 While you were an "over,"  
 Jackie Boy.

And Remo has a list of sorrows  
 That never ends:  
 Like that left testicle of his  
 That sometimes descends.

And Jackie Boy, you know  
 Remo has an awful rage.  
 That stalks us even in our home  
 (We mean our cage).  
 While you—  
 Above it all—  
 With your look of joy—  
 Like a high—Llama sage—

**MOM and POP**  
(Continue singing)

Licked your thumb  
And calmly turned  
Page after page,  
Jackie Boy.  
So we guess there's no need to mention,  
That Remo got all the attention.  
Well, we were scared of Remo, you see.  
And you, you seemed  
So proud and free.  
You seemed so self sufficient:  
**SO DAMNED EFFICIENT.**

**MOM**

*And then there was the fact  
That your father had his cardiac.  
And we were all concerned with that.  
And we all know the pension situation.  
When they wouldn't give him that,  
Retirement was out,  
And that was that.*

**POP**

*So who could think of anything but that?  
Who could think of you at all?  
Your mother got a job,  
And I could think of nothing but that!*

**MOM and POP**

Besides, that laughing all the time  
Made us feel confused.  
We used to go all patch-work quilt-y!  
And if you haven't forgotten—  
Because of all the laughing, Jackie Boy,  
We used to call you "rotten"...  
And now we're guilty.

Oh, Jackie, we miss your laughing  
(and your snotty attitude)!  
And wherever you are,  
in the altitude above,  
finally, we guiltily, bury with you  
our love.



(The BOD zap REMO  
to step forward)

**REMO**

Thank you God for Volkswagen fenders;  
Jackie, I'm glad you're dead!

(The BOD zap FATHER BODONI  
to step forward)

**FATHER BODONI**

Seeing such a young one dying.  
Oh, God.  
Jackie'd laugh and say,

**JACKIE**

You're lying.

**FATHER BODONI**

That's hard.  
When he came to confession,  
He'd confront me with questions  
I refused to answer,  
'Cause I was God's spokesman  
And God has his ways.  
And, if there was such evil allowed in the world,  
Then it's God's way, I said.  
So don't question it,  
Say five hail mary's,  
Do penance,  
Say "Amen, amen."

Jackie's papa lost his pension.  
Oh, yes.  
Business greed and Union henchmen.  
Oh, yes.

**JACKIE**

When the old man just took it;  
Didn't rage at the system.  
Well, then nothing mattered.  
It was not worth crying.  
Cause there was no justice.  
And if there wasn't justice  
There couldn't be God—

**FATHER BODONI**

I said, "Stop it! Get out!"

**JACKIE**

If that's all you can say

**FATHER BODONI**

--Jackie laughed,

**JACKIE**

Then just stick to your "Amen, amen."

**FATHER BODONI**

(Speaks)

Was that all I could say?

**BOD**

Jackie Cramer, look at the ruckus  
You've caused down there.  
You even messed up our own boy.  
Now doesn't that make you sad?

**JACKIE**

Oh *ho ho ho ho* of course not!  
It makes me happy as hell!  
He's ridic-idic-I-diculous!  
I'm gonna love being nowhere!  
Their pain won't touch me here.  
(No no no—no no no)  
Their pain won't touch me here.

**BOD**

(Speak)

He's protesting too much.  
Yes, the Wake has gotten to him.  
We've got to keep at him.  
Make their pain break down his Limbo walls!  
We'll get him to be serious yet!

**FATHER BODONI**

Saying “Amen” takes its toll, God.

Too bad.

Now I realize I’m old, God.

That’s sad.

‘Cause I feel I’ve been useless

When a Volkswagen fender

Can kill a young boy

Then I feel like laughing,

But my reflexes stop me.

So I’ll go to my grave  
like I sit in my box  
nodding “Amen, amen.”

And refuse to answer a young boy’s questions  
That haunt him, haunt him.

I’ll continue my pitch that it’s God’s way,  
Accept it,  
Do penance,  
Say “Amen.”

And I’ll nod in my grave  
And be smug and be useless forever,  
Ever...  
Amen, amen, amen. .

**INTERLUDE:**

**JACKIE and REMO  
MAKE CONTACT**

**JACKIE**

I’m getting bored with my silly family—  
Not to mention Bodoni.  
So I’m gonna keep on movin’, right now.

**BOD BASS**

But your family,  
Didn’t they move you?  
Didn’t you see them in a new light?

**BOD ALTO**

Their sincerity.  
Their love for you, their concern—

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)  
Sincerity? SINCERITY?

(Sings)  
Yeah, they really acted sincere here.  
I gotta laugh. I gotta laugh.

Tried to make it all seem despairing.  
I gotta laugh. I gotta laugh.

All I get from this group of monkeys  
Is a lot of lousy self pity.  
So, OK, they kind of surprised me,  
You think I'll change?  
Oh, no!

Why don't you go back to your board room?  
I gotta laugh, I gotta laugh.

Choose a weaker kid to go chasin' —  
I gotta laugh. I gotta laugh.

And no matter what you try,  
you'll never get me to cry.  
So go hang your fuzzy-headed heads,  
Cause you lost —  
And wonder why—

While I laugh my butt off  
in lovely, luscious, painless Limbo and—  
FLY, FLY!

**BOD**

He wants to fly!  
He wants to fly!  
He wants to fly!  
We cannot let him get by us!  
We cannot let him get by!

**MOM, POP, REMO, BODONI, SUSIE LOU**

Rest in peace. Rest in peace, Jackie.  
Rest in peace. Rest in peace, Jackie.

**BOD TENOR**

Yes, you're about to fly!  
But you feel that all of that wailing  
Has made you mad  
And you want to get at 'em,  
Get at 'em,  
Get at 'em,  
You wanna' get right back at 'em,  
Right?

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Right! But how?

(The BOD zap REMO  
TO STEP FORWARD)

**REMO**

(pointing to Mom, Pop, Susie Lou, Bodoni)

Now I know what Jackie would laugh at:  
I finally got a clue!  
Since he's dead, your wailing is stupid.  
He must've laughed—  
**AT YOU!**

(The BOD zap REMO. He freezes)

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Remo! You're not as much of a butt-wipe as I thought you were. Maybe there's hope for you yet. . . .I know. I'll make you leave my wake! That'll disgrace 'em!

(MOM, POP, REMO, SUSIE LOU, BODONI  
seem to vanish)

**BOD**

You don't mean  
You'd re-educate him,  
In your individual ways?  
Do you, Jackie Cramer?  
Do you, Jackie Cramer?

**JACKIE**

**Yeah! That's exactly what I mean!  
Here Remo. Good boy. Here Remo.**

**(The BOD zap REMO  
And make him do what JACKIE wants.  
JACKIE thinks he's making it happen.  
REMO acts under the spell)**

**JACKIE**

**Come on, little brother,  
Break ranks from those funny folk.  
If you want to stay nasty,  
You've got to get the larger joke.  
Follow me through this town—  
Your brother will show you where  
To poke out the fun.**

**That little brain might unbend  
And your turkey-personality  
May start to transcend.  
So break away from that Wake ,  
And stop that sour-faced pout!  
And follow me, little turd,  
C'mon.  
Let's move it out.  
Move it on out!**

**Move it on out to the school  
Where brains are so bored that they freeze!  
The place is a "boffo" place,  
Just take this school yard—  
Please!  
Inside we were taught to love each other,  
And turn the other cheek.  
Out here in the school yard  
The teachers sit back  
While the bullies stomp on the meek.**

**One of the meek was me**

**So I stayed in for recess;  
Looked out from that window.  
And laughed on the mayhem down here,  
And I was free. See?  
Follow me.**

**JACKIE**

(Continued)

Move it on out to the Mall where  
All the town folk come to pray.  
This Church is a circus now.  
Just take this glitzy midway!  
That store sells scented candles  
To make you barf and choke.  
That one over there punches holes in ear lobes—

**REMO**

And the price of a foot-long hot dog's  
A freakin' joke!

**JACKIE CRAMER**

As far as the eye can see—  
The old faithful keep on coming,  
coming for their benediction—

**REMO**

Coming to our Lady of J.C. Penney,  
To bend their knee!

**JACKIE**

(Speaks. Surprised at Remo's "wit.")

That's good, Remo! That's good!

(Sings)

Move it out to that fire trap  
Where Grandma stayed:  
"La Casa Despair!"  
Move it out to the new bus station  
That's falling apart—  
Beyond repair!  
Move it out to the Burger Bun.  
The Burger Brew,  
The Burger Fan-Fare!

**REMO**

Get sick at the Burger Fry,  
The Burger Broil,  
The Burger Tar-Tare!

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Hey, that's very good! You got it now, Remo!

**JACKIE**

**(Sings)**

**Move it on out downtown  
To City Hall in the Square.  
The folks that rule our house  
Crank laws out daily there.**

**REMO**

**When Mama wouldn't pay that bribe off,  
Violations soon were found.  
And Daddy's sick heart  
Got sicker and sicker—**

**JACKIE**

**Guess whose savings drew off the hound!  
Mine!  
I paid 'em off that day!  
The inspectors keep on coming,  
They're all on the take.  
And my death insurance  
Will pay them off  
'Till the house blows away.  
So all's OK.**

**JACKIE AND REMO**

**So laugh it up, laugh it up—  
Hey!  
Keep the laugh going each day after day!  
You're always shafted, so laugh—don't cry!  
So move it out, even after you die!  
So laugh it up, even after you die!  
So move it out, even after you die!  
So laugh it up, even after you die!**

**(They dance together,  
*But never touch*)**

**BOD**

**Before that boy continues to glide,  
We must show him Remo's strange side.  
So get ready, Jackie Cramer.  
Are you ready, Jackie Cramer?**

**(They zap REMO)**



REMO

Now I know what I feel like doing.  
But can I take the time to go that far?

JACKIE

How far?

REMO

What the hell, I'm having fun,  
And somehow I feel if I want I can go that far!

JACKIE

How far?

REMO

(Speaks)

Hey, Jackie, I still feel you're here. With me. Come on and move it on out  
with me now.

JACKIE

(Speaks)

With you? Where?

REMO

(Sings)

It's out past the Thumb Tack plant.  
Cross over the Interstate.  
Move out past the  
Howard Johnson's and Travelodge.  
Go out past old Army camp—  
The one that's deserted now?  
Move up that steep Lonesome Pine Hill,  
'Till you get to the top.  
Then run down the barren side.  
The side that's all dried up dirt.  
Run down the barren side—  
and finally stop. . .

JACKIE

(Speaks)

What is this place? I've never been here!

**REMO**

This is the place where nothing grows,  
 Where nothing moves,  
 Where nothing comes.  
 Look at those rusty barrels  
 And you'll know why.  
 This was the dumping place  
 For all of that chemical stuff.  
 This is the place,  
 That cold dead place where nobody comes—  
 Excepting me  
 . . . Excepting me

Oh, some rats once came in  
 And even they turned and had to flee.  
 Excepting them  
 (That once)  
 Excepting them. . .  
 It's just been me,  
 And that alcohol smell,  
 And those rusty barrels—  
 And not one tree.

This is the place where nothing laughs,  
 Where nothing cries, where nothing comes.  
 No one can hassle me here, they wouldn't dare.  
 So I come out to clear my head  
 And to really feel free!  
 This is the place where nothing cares,  
 Where nothing grows. . .  
**BUT ME!**

**JACKIE**

What's going on?  
 Can Remo love this?  
 What kind of a wacko case  
 Can love this place?  
 This kind of upsets me,  
 I'd better get back  
 To my laughing in Limbo land!

**Fly! Fly!**

(The BOD zap on  
 MOM, POP, SUSIE LOU  
 and FATHER BODONI)

**MOM, POP, BODONI, SUSIE LOU**

**Remo! Remo!**

**BODONI**

**Remo! Disgraceful!  
Leaving your brother's Wake!  
Look how pained your Mama and Papa appear.**

**REMO**

**But he's here!**

**MOM, POP, SUSIE LOU**

**What?! Who's here?**

**REMO**

**Jackie! I sense him! His presence!  
For the first time that crud treated me like a peer!**

**BODONI**

**Blasphemy, too! It's back to the wake with you!**

**REMO**

**Let go of my ear! Owww!**

**(BODONI pulls REMO back  
And the Procession commences)**

**ENSEMBLE**

**The funeral procession snakes through the town  
On its way to lay Jackie to rest.  
Like coffins themselves,  
The black sedans are polished and at their best.**

**And all that we see inside.  
As the black coffins ride and glide,  
Are the family statues,  
Keeping their thoughts inside.**

**MOM, POP, SUSIE LOU, BODONI, REMO**

Jackie, you silly giraffe,  
 Why didn't you let us in on your laugh?  
 If you tried you'd have gotten through,  
 Then we all could have laughed at the joke with you.  
 Why didn't you give us a chance?  
 Was your head so full of romance and arrogance?  
 Oh, Jackie, we might have laughed with you,  
 if we only knew at  
**WHAT!**

(The procession moves off)

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Remo, wait! There's lots more to laugh at! There's lots more to . . .

(Pause. He looks out)

There they go.

(Silence. Jackie considers)

(The BOD motion to THE CHORUS)

**CHORUS**

Before it was fun being nowhere.  
 This endless abyss was a "wow!"  
 But you've journeyed on in this nowhere.  
 Is it still lots of fun to you right now?

What does it feel like looking in,  
 Forever. . .from outside?  
 How will it feel never again going along for the ride?  
 Look at them move. Look at them go.  
 Disconnected, they still can connect.

Will you laugh? Will you cry?  
 Will you shrug? Will you fly?  
 Which one of the above will you select?

In this game that goes on and on,  
 Can you ever win?  
 In this "nowhere" you want,  
 Can you stand being out—  
 Not being "in"?  
 No one to touch you;  
 No human heat!

## CHORUS

(continued)

Can't you give in to this final defeat?  
 In your "nowhere"  
 Where you're a voyeur  
 With no place to hide—  
 What will it feel like looking in  
 Forever. . . forever. . . from outside?

(Pause. Then JACKIE snaps  
 out of it)

JACKIE

(Speaks)

No one to touch me? Not being seen?  
 Wait! There are others! Sure!

(Sings)

I've got a set of friends who will see me.  
 They'll know that I'm here and they'll touch me.  
 Arid what my family and priest can't touch—  
 Could never touch—  
 Will never touch—  
 My freak friends will touch—  
*They'll* comfort me.  
 Together we'll turn the tide, even here.  
 Outside. Outside.

(Exits)

## CHORUS

And now Jackie journeys to his Freak Friends for solace and comfort. First  
 Freak Stop: The Dive. Where Miss Lulu, the Fat Lady, cries in her beer.

## THE BALLAD OF MISS LULU

## CHORUS

Miss Lulu weighed four hundred pounds.  
 She worked in a place called "The Dive."  
 The place where the town's freaks and misfits all met;  
 Where Jackie was bus boy when he was alive.  
 Miss Lulu would cry in her beer.  
 She'd put on a white wedding dress.  
 When Lulu came in through the curtain of beads,  
 Each soul, in his own heart,  
 Would start  
 To confess.

These misfits were Jackie's great friends.  
 They knew what he laughed at and why.  
 In fact, when old Lulu shed her pearl tears,  
 She hoped they would laugh. . .  
 These great friends must not cry:

Parky Punkhouse,  
 Mabel Christian,  
 Johnny Stern,  
 And  
 Dick McFee;

Henny Blimpo,  
 Carrie Rosebud,  
 Millie Concho,  
 Bipsy Lee;

Stuie Lingham,  
 Barney Bluegrass,  
 Dinky Dewdrops,  
 Frances Klee;

Frankie Hamhocks  
 No-Legs Willy  
 Brinsy Crawford

**JACKIE**

Even me.

**CHORUS**

But Jackie, the Dive's gonna close.  
 The Mayor condemned this fine room.  
 There's just Parky Punkhouse  
 Who sits and who stares,  
 And one flickering candle,  
 And a feeling of gloom.

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

Ah, the heck with them, Lulu. Let them close you down. You can shed your tears anywhere. Never could understand why your crying in your beer made us feel so good. But it did. It does. So, c'mon—

**JACKIE****(Continued. Sings)**

Lulu, make me laugh.  
 Lulu, make me smile.  
 Lulu, make me grin.  
     Lulu, tickle me.  
     Lulu, pickle me.  
 Lulu, fill my blood with gin.

Lulu, giggle me.  
 Lulu, wiggle me.  
 Touch my funny bone.  
     Lulu, shake me up.  
     Lulu, wake me up.  
 Lulu, don't leave me alone!

**CHORUS**

So Jackie gets his wish and Lulu comes.  
 The beaded curtains part,  
 She stumbles out.  
 But things are not the same this time at all.  
 She's lost some weight,  
 The kewpie face is old.  
 No wedding dress,  
 She wears a black nightgown.  
     *The goblet in her hands*  
     *Is now a washed-out jar of jam!*  
     *A washed-out jar of jam.*  
 She looks at Jackie, sighs.  
 And then she cries.  
 The jam-jar falls.  
 She drops.  
 Then Lulu dies.

**(ENSEMBLE hum a chorale  
 under the following dialogue)**

**JACKIE****(Speaks)**

No, no, Lulu — you can't — Hey! Wait a minute! Lulu. You're only dead! So am I! We can be together now!

**BOD****(Speak)**

Yes, we're letting her in. Welcome aboard, Lulu. You're a nice *serious* lady.

**JACKIE****(Speaks)**

So we can really have fun now, Lulu. I mean, no one can close you down now. You can cry to me forever!

**BOD****(Speak)**

'Fraid not, Jackie. You're in Limbo, Jackie. Lulu's not. No way to bridge that. And you should see her new goblet. Shiny gold. And the stones: Sapphires, black onyx and lapis lazuli. Worthy of a high priestess. Too bad, Jackie.

**JACKIE****(Speaks)**

Oh, yeah? Well, if you really want to know, I couldn't care less about any sapphire goblet. I liked the jam jar better! . . . And if you really, really want to know—

**(Sings)**

I don't need Lulu.  
I don't need the Dive.  
I'm still delighted  
That I'm not alive!  
I don't need priests,  
A father or mother;  
Don't need this dumb town,  
I'm still my own order!

**(Short dance. Perhaps a tap.**

**JACKIE's disoriented. Jumpy. What he's doing is obviously bravado to cover his disorientation from the Lulu episode. Perhaps he keeps running into the funeral procession, and images of his family, or The BOD)**

**BOD and ENSEMBLE**

Which way to turn?  
Which way to turn?  
Which way to turn?  
Jackie's got time to burn.  
Jackie's got time to burn.  
Well then, well then, why does he yearn?  
Well then, well then, why does he yearn?  
Which way to turn?  
(He doesn't know)  
Which way to turn?  
(He doesn't know)  
Which way to turn?



**BOD and ENSEMBLE****(Continued)****(He doesn't know)****Which way to turn?****JACKIE****(Speaks over )**

**What are you talking about? I know exactly which way to turn. And as for yearning — the only thing I yearn for, BOD, is for you to get bad anal fissures, and you should get scabs on your tongues and —and—and, yeah, that's what I yearn for. So I have time to burn. Who doesn't?**

**BOD****(Speak)****Oh, so you know which way to turn?****JACKIE****I sure do!****BOD****(Pointing in one direction)****Hey, isn't that another one of your freak friends?****JACKIE****Huh? Where?****BOD****(Pointing in another direction)****There.****JACKIE****There?****BOD****(Pointing in still another direction)****No. There****JACKIE****Oh! Right! Right! That's who I'll turn to: No-Legs Willy!**

**(No-Legs Willy is wheeled on  
On a board with skate wheels)**

## NO-LEGS WILLY REMINISCES

### CHORUS

(Chants. As News Boy)

Wuxtry! Wuxtry! Read all about how No-Legs Willy doesn't want to fool around with the kids who love him, because No-Legs just lost his best buddy, Cramer. Wuxtry! Wuxtry! Read about how No-Legs hasn't figured out a suitable parting gift for his deceased friend, and won't join in any jollity until he does!

(Sings)

No-Legs Willy, known as "The Stump."  
 Has no legs and a not-too-large hump.  
 He's old and sloppy and gnarled as a tree.  
 You'd never guess he's a Ph.D. —  
 In Children's Lit,  
 'Cause he loved all the kids.  
 His body busted, he went on the skids.  
 He met Jackie and they made up stories.  
 They'd gather all the kids around.  
 And have them rolling on the ground.  
 Then they all picked up their reward  
 — No-Legs became a fun skate-board!

(Chorus exits as Jackie runs on)

### NO-LEGS WILLY

Cramer, Cramer, life is insane.  
 I still sell my papers on Congress and Main.  
 Near where your head hit that Volkswagen bug.  
 Right near the spot where you smashed in your mug.  
 I'm down to two dailies and I'm waiting for you,  
 And your funeral procession to pass on through.  
     Cramer, Cramer, how can it be?  
     That you who would always laugh, died before me?  
 I'd give up an arm and stump for you.  
 I'd give up my lucky hump for you.  
 If I could lay down in your spot—  
 BUT I can't give up what I've got.

### JACKIE

(Speaks)

What have you got, you truncated freak? Not me anymore to help you laugh off your pain. Chuck it all, No-Legs! Skid down some steep hill and

**JACKIE**

(Continued. Speaks)

smash into your own VW bug! Find your own Limbo orbit--free from pain:  
Yours and everybody else's!

**NO- LEGS WILLY**

(Speaks)

What do I have without Jackie?

(The BOD put the answer into his head.

And as he realizes it, he joyously *Sings*!)

People passing, buying from me;  
Passing the time, and buying from me.  
Forget the weather or headline shocks.  
I'm always here like a human mailbox!

I make them feel good!

I make them feel good!

And you know what's even clearer to me,

Because I'm such a mess,

They feel superior to me!

I make them feel good!

(By being a freak!)

I make them feel good!

**BOD**

And what about the kid stories you'd tell?

We hear those stories made them all feel swell.

**NO-LEGS WILLY**

Oh yeah, they like all the stories I tell.

I make them feel good, I tell them so well.

**BOD**

Then while you wait for the funeral lorry, In Cramer's honor,

(speaks)

**TELL HIS FAVORITE STORY!**

(The BOD zap No-Legs with the idea)

**NO-LEGS WILLY**

(Speaks)

Hey, I just got an idea! What final gift to give Cramer! I'll tell you all one of  
Jackie's stories. One, no one but me ever heard!

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

What story? You don't mean— No! Not that story! I don't want to hear it!  
Don't want anybody to hear it!

**NO-LEGS**

(Speaks)

Gather round, kids, and listen to the world premiere of Jackie Cramer's  
story of "*The Little Girl and Her Balloons.*"

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)

I'm going No-Legs.

**BOD**

You don't really want to leave, do you Jackie? A story of yours has got to  
be a million laughs!

(Jackie is unable to leave)

**NO-LEGS**

(Speaks)

Wherever you are, Cramer, this is for you.

(Sings)

A little girl and her balloons  
went flying to the sky.  
She landed on a planet  
So red and, oh, so high.  
So happy to escape the earth  
Which she could see below.  
But then the red beneath her feet  
Began to flow and flow.  
    Oh, it flowed up to her ankles.  
    And it flowed up to her knees.  
    Soon it flowed up to her shoulders,  
    Save her please, oh please...

**JACKIE**

(Despite attempts to fight it,  
He takes over the song)

The little girl grew very scared.  
And wanted the reverse:  
To move from that red planet  
Out to the universe.  
And out she went on her balloons;

**JACKIE****(continued)****This time they were her bed.****But when she found her orbit,****the whole universe was red.****Oh, it flowed up to her ankles,****And it flowed up to her knees.****Soon it flowed up to her shoulders,****Save her please, oh please...****NO-LEGS WILLY****(Resumes song as Jackie gives out)****And now she glides through galaxies;****Too young to hide her fears.****She doesn't like the loneliness,****And hates her red, red tears.****She hates the red, red tears so much:****They sting her and they burn.****Perhaps the black earth was OK,****But it's too late to learn.****And it flowed up to her ankles.****And it flowed up to her knees.****Soon it flowed up to her shoulders,****save her please, oh please.****Save her please, oh please.****Save her please, oh please.****Save her please, oh please. . .****BOD****(Speaks)****Why Jackie, what a non-funny story you once wrote. Yucky, in fact. Where are you going? Didn't you like it? No-Legs did it for you — to make you feel good! Don't you feel good, Jackie? Hey, where are you going?****(Jackie is able to move now.****He runs off)****NO -LEGS****(Sings)****I make them feel good!****I'll bet I made Jackie feel good!****QUICK BLACKOUT.  
LIGHTS QUICKLY UP ON:**

**BENJY IN THE  
AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD**

**CHORUS**

Benjy, the deaf boy,  
Sees his dead friend go by.  
He stands in the dust on the highest pile  
Of Buicks and Fords.  
The twisted steel,  
In this graveyard of cars,  
Makes a perfect hill to look out at the world.

So Benjy watches from here  
As his dead friend goes by.  
What goes on in the mind of a deaf boy alone?  
A deaf boy whose father ran out on him  
Two weeks ago?

What goes on as he stands all alone  
Near the shack where he lives at Chevrolet Square.  
And looks out with laughing mouth  
As his dead friend goes by.

**JACKIE**

(Enters)

Benjy! Great! Hey, don't disappoint me. Not you. Hell, you couldn't. Not you.

(Benjy then signs a song.  
Jackie sings it as he interprets)

**JACKIE/BENJY**

The smile on my face  
Is because of the good times we had,  
JC.  
    Especially the Christmases  
    When you'd bring me those funny gifts.  
That transistor radio made me laugh for a week.  
And those stereo ear phones —  
Even now, when I think of them,  
Makes me want to pee.  
You never felt sorry for deaf little me,  
You see.  
And that's why I'm smiling now,  
JC.

**BENJY/JACKIE**  
(continued. Sign/sings)

The smile on my face  
is because of the real gifts you'd bring,  
JC.  
Especially that Siamese cat  
With the purr like a Cadillac.  
The motor inside her  
Made my fingers go twang.  
And the look of her,  
When she slowly stretched,  
Made me think bad thoughts  
About Bipsy Lee!  
You felt it was proper  
For me to be horny,  
You see.  
And that's why I'm smiling now,  
JC.

And you took the trouble to learn how to sign  
And confided in me,  
In fact, I remember a time  
When your smile was a lie!  
That was the time, though your face was laughing,  
Your signing fingers began to cry.  
And, oh, you wouldn't say why.  
And I didn't ask;  
Just kicked an old fender  
And looked at the sky.  
And by seven inches I grew,  
'Cause in all of this world I knew—  
Through the howl in your fingers—  
That I was the only person  
You ever cried to.  
I was the only person  
you ever cried to.

(The BOD interfere)

**BOD**

Ah ha, Jackie Cramer,  
there was a time when you were serious!  
That's a fact that makes us delirious!

**JACKIE**

Just for an off-guard moment when I was so weary-us;  
When my fingers were a part of me.

**BOD**

Ah ha, we see.  
Then why can't you make this  
An off-guard moment as well?  
Begin with your fingers,  
Contort your face,  
Then start to bawl like hell.  
You can do it!

**JACKIE**

But I can't cry,  
And that's a fact!  
If I start to bawl,  
It'll only be an act!

**BOD**

He's weakening. Let's try a different tack.  
Jackie Cramer, what do you think  
Will happen to Benjy now?

**JACKIE**

Oh, he's ready for a girl to play fingers with,  
And the two of them will relate.

**BOD**

Wrong! Because his father ran out on him,  
He'll now be owned by the state.

**JACKIE**

No.

**BOD**

Yes. And this is Benjy's fate.

(matter of factly.  
Just the facts)

Because he was a battered child, the injuries in Benjy's head will keep him permanently deaf. It could be worse. He could still live a very full life. But, because he was a battered child, the other injuries to his head will help to slowly deteriorate his brain. In the meantime, because he gets no affection from the State, he'll look elsewhere for it and meet a girl who loves him. But she'll be killed when a hit and run hits and runs them both down at an



**BOD**

(Continued)

intersection and Benjy will be struck blind and made crippled and will have to walk with seeing-eye crutches the rest of his deaf/blind life, along with a palsy that will keep him shaking even as he becomes a vegetable until he dies at 45.

(Sing)

What's the matter, JC.  
There's enough suffering there by half!  
Doesn't our overdoing it deserve a laugh?

**JACKIE**

Horrible, it's horrible. Why?

**BOD**

Every so often we showcase an offering  
of one human being in excessive suffering.

**JACKIE**

Why don't you take him ,while he's still half alive?  
Why must you wait till he's an eggplant 45?

**BOD**

Every lout has to wait for his own printout.  
Let's say we could or would,  
What about your friend Benjy?  
Would he rather pass over?  
Would he rather be dead?

**JACKIE**

Yes, he'd rather be dead?

**BOD**

Really? Let's hear what Benjy has to say.

**JACKIE /BENJY**

(Again interpreting as Benjy signs)

The smile on my face  
is the future I clearly see, JC.  
A vision of love and laughs and hope is waiting for me.  
The fact that I'm all alone  
Only makes me strong.  
If I can't hear, I can think and walk,  
And in my heart, sing a love song!  
Your laughter gave me a new-found zest for life, you see.  
And that's why I'm smiling in memory of you, JC.

(Benjy exits)

**JACKIE**

He doesn't see it's all downhill on the graph.  
And there's nothing I can do.  
So I might as well keep laughing!

(Speaks)

You guys have really done yourselves in.  
Ohmyohmy you surely have.

(Sings)

You piled it on for all of my freak friends.  
I gotta laugh! I gotta laugh!  
Tried to make it all seem despairing.  
I gotta laugh! I gotta laugh!  
Just because you put on the pressure.  
Showed their pain, to get me to feel it.  
Just because a part of it touched me,  
—you think you won?  
OH NO!!!

'Cause you finally overdid it.  
I gotta laugh! I gotta laugh!  
Pushed to hard, and revved up my giggle.  
I gotta laugh!  
I gotta laugh!  
And no matter what you try,  
You'll never get me to cry!  
So go hang your fuzzy-headed heads  
(Cause you lost and wonder why).  
While I laugh my ass off—  
In luscious,  
Lovely,  
Painless Limbo—  
And Fly!  
FLY!

**JACKIE**

I finally won!

**BOD**

He's finally won?

**JACKIE**

I'm glad I won!

**BOD**  
 He's glad he's won?

**JACKIE**  
 I really won!  
 Jackie can dance in the sun!  
 Jackie can dance in the sun!

**CHORUS**  
 The funeral procession—

**BOD**  
 (Speak)  
 Ah, here comes your funeral, Jackie.

**CHORUS**  
 —Keep snaking along--

**BOD**  
 (Speak)  
 The cemetery, Jackie. With your grave.

**CHORUS**  
 --On its way to put Jackie to peace.

**BOD**  
 (Speak)  
 Can you take one last battle here? There are just ten minutes left of the hour we had.

**CHORUS**  
 The black sedan coffins—

**JACKIE**  
 (Speaks)  
 Sure, you boys can't touch me—

**CHORUS**  
 Shiny and long—

**JACKIE**  
 (Speaks)  
 Anywhere!

**CHORUS**

—Keep sliding on streets of grease.  
 Soon as they turn off the boulevard,  
 The rolling procession  
 Enters the People's Graveyard.

**THE CEMETERY—  
 AND THE FINAL SHOWDOWN.**

**CHORUS**

Then they arrive at Jackie's hole,  
 At a street called "Heavenly Cruise."

**JACKIE**

(Speaks)  
 A street called "Heavenly Cruise?"  
 (Laughs)

**CHORUS**

And after the invocation  
 And "dust to dust, dust to dust,"  
 They each take a shovel of dirt to dump on Jackie.  
 For dumping is a traditional must.

**MOM, POP, BODONI, SUSIE LOU**

Jackie, you think we're so dumb  
 That we didn't know all about your freak friends?  
 But we were responsible folk—  
 Were brought up to grindstone our nose  
 And never joke!  
 Maybe if you took the trouble to feel,  
 You'd have found that our dreams  
 Made us real!

**CHORUS**

(Speaks)  
 Their dreams, Jackie. You're going to have to listen to their dreams.

(The BOD zap them each  
 to step forward)

## SUSIE LOU

I wanted to live in a time  
 When a Juliet had to do  
 What her folks made her do.  
 I'd have everything done for me  
 And I'd make no choice,  
 I'd be happy to do what they said.  
 No Montague kid for me.  
 I'd want no one to screw up  
 My comfort, you see.

But life did a number on me,  
 Did a number on me.  
 Life did a number on me,  
 Did a number on me.

## BODONI

I wanted to live in a time  
 When a Monastery contained  
 All the art and the thought.  
 I'd work hard on my glass collection,  
 My colored glass—  
 For a lifetime, just glass-bits and me.  
 And I wouldn't speak to a soul,  
 For 80-some years, till I died, I'd be free.

But life did a number on me,  
 did a number on me.  
 Life did a number on me,  
 did a number on me.

## REMO

I wanted to live in a time  
 When a king would put on a cloak  
 And get lost in the mob.  
 He'd lay eyes on this dirty tadpole,  
 But see in me such a sweetness,  
 He'd take me to Court.  
 And there they would treat me like dirt.  
 Till the King made me heir  
 And they'd all kneel to me.

But life did a number on me,  
 did a number on me.  
 Life did a number on me,  
 did a number on me.

**MOM**

I wanted to live in a time  
 when an Isadora could dance all alone  
 In her gauze.  
 I'd dance long in my see-through gown,  
 For lovers' eyes we'd be shocking,  
 My gauze-gown and me.  
 And I wouldn't care how they'd laugh,  
 My untutored dance,  
 From my Soul, would swing free.  
     But life did a number on me,  
     did a number on me.  
     Life did a number on me,  
     did a number on me.

**POP**

I wanted to live in a time  
 When you bummed around everywhere  
 On a freight train all year.  
 Got no skills,  
 Can hardly keep friends,  
 But I'm no threat,  
 So they put up with me  
 And they shrug.  
 My bums would have no expectations.  
 At a garbage-can fire they'd like me for me.  
     But life did a number on me,  
     Did a number on me.  
     Life did a number on me,  
     Did a number on me.

**MOM, POP, REMO, BODONI, SUSIE LOU**

So life, with its tricks  
 And its fuss did a number on us.  
 Yes, life did a number on us,  
 Did a number on us—  
 Did a number on us—  
 Did a number on us!

**JACKIE**

What's going on?  
 What's stabbing at me?  
 What is there about them all  
 That's grabbing at me?  
 Soul move away from here  
 And fly me again  
 to that nowhere Limbo land.

**JACKIE**

(Continued)

**Fly! Fly!**

**Won't let compassion stop my laugh  
From floating forever and ever  
And ever and ever and ever—**

**Fly! Fly!**

**BOD**

(Speaks)

**Enough with the kid gloves, it's time for some muscle!**

(Sing)

**Mom and Pop and Susie Lou;  
Father Bodoni—you, too—  
It's time you forget this contrition deal;  
All of this civilized, self-pitying zeal.  
Show Jackie what you really feel.  
Because to get into heaven, he must serious be,  
YOU'VE GOT TO PRODUCE A BLASPHEMY!**

**MOM, POP, BODONI, SUSIE LOU**

**Jackie!**

**You and your goddamned  
Seeing-through-it-all laughter!!!  
Maybe we're corrupt and hypocrites, too.  
But that's only one side; we're other things, too.  
We cry from our pain, but laugh and love, too.**

**How dare you stop us from loving you!  
How dare you stop us from loving you!**

**BOD**

**Rage, rage, rage.  
Rage, rage, rage.  
You've got to vent your rage now.  
You've got to vent your rage now!**

**BOD CHAIRMAN**

**So pull up your pants and skirts and socks  
And do a tap dance on his box!**

**BOD SOPRANO and ALTO**

Tap, tap,  
 Tippy tap tap tay,  
 Time-step your rage away.  
 Ding-dong,  
 Dingy-ding-dong domp,  
 Forget T-tap now, it's time to stomp!

(MOM, POP, SUSIE LOU and  
 BODONI are dancing and stomping uncontrollably)

**BOD BASS**

Now change the beat, the stomp's a drag.  
 Get more funky--THE BLASPHEMY RAG!!

**BOD CHAIRMAN**

Drinking cocktails from a chalice,  
 Fornicating like a stag.  
 Barf and pee all over Jackie's body,  
 Doing the Blasphemy Rag.

Pick your nose and belch your heart out,  
 Let your bellies out to sag.  
 Let the stuff that's in-between your toe's drop,  
 Doing the Blasphemy Rag.

**MOM**

(Speaks. Dancing)  
 Papa. Daddy. Didn't we love Jackie?

**POP**

(Speaks. Dancing)  
 I'm pretty sure.

**MOM**

Then why are we doing this?

**POP**

I don't know! I can't help myself! I want to help myself. But I can't help myself!

**MOM**

Well, we've got to try. We've got to try!



**MOM and POP****(They now sing)**

**Father Bodoni, don't lift up your skirts.  
 Passing wind on Jackie really hurts.**

**God in heaven, these bumps and grinds  
 will only whack out our behinds.**

**Whatever rage we really feel, we really love him too.  
 Jackie's body needs to be plowed under  
 Or his soul won't pass on through.**

**BOD**

**Don't listen to them everybody, stomp on the grave!  
 Don't listen to them everybody, stomp on the grave!**

**(MOM, POP, BODONI, SUSIE LOU  
 all stomp on the grave)**

**Stomp on the grave!  
 Stomp on the grave!**

**ENSEMBLE**

**Stomp on the grave!  
 Stomp on the grave!**

**1,2,3,**

**Jackie, you look like you need to potty!  
 Feel that it's all kind of crass and shoddy!  
 T'was great to laugh at what you thought was dotty.  
 Not funny now when they laugh on your body!  
 Rest in peace.  
 Rest in peace, Jackie.  
 Rest in peace.  
 Rest in peace, Jackie.**

**And now Brother Remo breaks from that crowd.  
 He sees what they're doing; shouts it out loud.**

**REMO**

**It's one thing to show how angry we got.  
 But it's wrong to let it out on his plot.  
 (He jumps back onto the grave.  
 The rest back off)**

**Can't you see, this is Jackie's new home:  
 The only sacred home he's got.  
 Let's forgive Jackie's being such a snot,  
 At least we're alive,**

REMO

(Continued)  
And poor old Jackie's not!  
He will rot!

MOM, POP, BODONI, SUSIE LOU

We can't stop!

REMO

Try to stop!

MOM, POP, SUSIE LOU BODONI

But we can't!

REMO

Then I've got to try stopping you.  
Don't you see, I've got to stop you

(He tries. They pile on  
top of Remo)

JACKIE

What's going on?  
Did I cause all this?  
Did my never touching them, bring them to this?  
Oh God I feel the pain,  
Of knowing I never was knowing  
My family's pain.

REMO

(Reaching out from under  
the pile of bodies)

Fly Fly!

(They pull REMO back)

JACKIE

(Speaks)  
Stop it! Don't take out on Remo what you always wanted to do to me! I'm  
sorry! But it's too late! Isn't that funny?  
(Laughs)  
I'm dead and it's too late.  
(Laughs turn to sobs)  
...Too late...too late...  
(sobs)

**BOD**

Jackie looks so pale and car sick;  
 His long pained face is American Gothic.  
 Jackie, come into the arms of your Lord.  
 You cried your way in. Welcome aboard!

**ENSEMBLE**

Follow us up to Heaven  
 Where you will be made one,  
 With all the star stuff in the universe.  
 And through the grave hole,  
 Where every mother's son must fall,  
 Jackie, you'll keep a straight face  
 Every minute of eternal time.

**JACKIE**

(Rises and stands on his grave)  
 They say I'll always keep a straight face.  
 That old laugh of mine is gone.  
 (He reaches from REMO,  
 who rises and stands beside him)  
 But oh, somewhere in my heavy soul,  
 Is a newer laugh that can go on.  
 This time will go on and on. . .  
 Never die. . . Fly. . .

(He looks at Remo, who takes the music over—  
 as if that part of Jackie is now with him)

**REMO**

Fly... fly...

(And Remo laughs.  
 It is a Jackie-like laugh.  
 Jackie walks over to the BOD.  
 They help him into heaven.  
 He smiles. They smile)

**ENSEMBLE**

He is risen! Alleluia!  
 He is risen! Alleluia!  
 He is risen! Alleluia!  
 Amen! Amen! Amen!

**END**