

Osgood Rex: A Geek Tragedy

By

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Dramatis Personae

Humans:

Eckhart Unger - mid 20's, cocreator/ animator of Osgood.

Bert Winslow - mid 20's, cocreator/director of Osgood.

Jake Metzger - replacement animator for Osgood

Cartoons:

Osgood the Scrappy Squirrel - male, star of the cartoon

Mitzi Mink - female, Osgood's girlfriend

Spunky Skunk - male character played by female actress, up and coming cartoon star

Eggs the Cat - female, former cartoon star

Tipsy Toucan - male, a prophet, played by the actor playing Eckhart

Hammy Hog - male, former partner of Eggs

Chorus Leader - male

Messenger - played by the actor playing Bert

Chorus of supporting cartoon characters

A note on language:

Human characters speak in plain prose. Cartoon characters speak in the unrhymed iambic poetry of traditional Greek drama, hence the off-format spacing of their lines, adhering to pentameter rather than page margins. (And yes, the Greeks wrote in hexameter, but pentameter suits English better. All the translators say so, I swear!)

A note on "Cartoon Gags":

The seemingly impossible bits, such as flying kisses, things appearing above characters' heads, etc. are meant to be effected by the chorus, using the most ingeniously low-tech stagecraft you can muster. Rather than trying to hide the sources of the illusions, it is the author's opinion that it's more fun to let the audience in on the joke. Be creative, and most of all, have fun.

PROLOGUE

New York. 1928. On one side of the stage, a shabby little office where an equally shabby looking animator, ECKHART UNGER sits at his drawing table, sketching with surprising quickness. The rest of the stage is the limitless white expanse of the paper that he draws on.

ECKHART

(to the character he's drawing)

You're in the mood for mischief now, Osgood? What'll it be this time? No, you tell me - I swear, you know better than I do. Three years now since I came up with you, and you still surprise me. But I guess we've both come a long way.

IN THE BEGINNING, I WAS BORED,
BY EARTH AND HEAVEN, JUST IGNORED
AND MY WORLD WAS WITHOUT FORM AND VOID.
ANOTHER LONELY S.O.B

WITHOUT A PURPOSE GUIDING ME,
ALWAYS UNINSPIRED AND UNDEREMPLOYED
'TIL I GOT SICK OF WAITING 'ROUND
FOR SOME PERMISSION TO BREAK GROUND,
DECIDED I WAS THROUGH PLAYING DEAD.
THEN I THOUGHT "MY LAST TEN CENTS'LL
BUY A DRAWING PAD AND PENCIL"
SO I SPENT THE LOT, TOOK WHAT I GOT, AND SAID -

'LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S NEW, HELL, JUST BECAUSE'
PENCIL 'CROSS THE PAPER FLEW, AND THEN THERE WAS!

OSGOOD THE SCRAPPY SQUIRREL, all in black and white, begins to appear in the white expanse. He wears (as do all the CARTOON CHARACTERS) a half mask in the style of 1920's animation, with just of a hint of the Greek to it.

'LET THERE BE SQUIRREL, BOTH SCRAPPY AND WISE
WITH A MISCHIEVOUS KIND OF A GLEAM IN HIS EYES.
LET HIM BE MORE ALIVE AND FREE
THAN THE WAY I TEND TO BE'

Osgood takes the top of his head off, and tips it to Eckhart as though it's a hat. Then, as Eckart sings, Osgood reaches into his head, and pulls out an exclamation point. He uses the period part as a ball, and the rest as a baseball bat.

AND THEN THE IDEAS, THEY STARTED FLOWING
THOUGH I WASN'T QUITE SURE WHERE THEY ALL WERE GOING
HE WAS SO PLUCKY AND ENERGIZING,
IF I MADE HIM UP, THEN WHY'S HE SO SURPRISING?
So I said

LET THERE BE STUFF FOR HIM TO DO, NOW WATCH HIM GO

Jumping, and running, and a somersault!

Osgood follows Eckhart's
instructions, with a few
flourishes of his own.

LET THERE BE LANDS TO JOURNEY THROUGH, AND THINGS TO KNOW
LET ALL THESE PEN STROKES CONVERGE IN A WAY
THAT REVEALS CERTAIN THINGS I'M TOO BASHFUL TO SAY
LET THERE BE STUFF, A WHOLE LOT MORE STUFF!
AND LET THERE BE MORE THAN ENOUGH!

Like a big, smiling sun!

A CARTOON CHORUS MEMBER appears,
carrying a big, smiling sun on a
stick. The sun chases Osgood until
Osgood uses his exclamation point
bat to knock it back into the sky
where it belongs.

And trees - that dance!

More CARTOON CHORUS MEMBERS enter
with cut-outs of trees with faces,
dancing around Osgood. Osgood
likes their moves and joins in.

MITZI MINK enters, sexy, but still
adorable, and falls immediately
into Osgood's arms.

THEN CAME A GIRLFRIEND TO SHARE HIS SLUMBER,
IF YOU'VE GOT ADAM, THEN YOU NEED AN EVEN NUMBER

The Chorus Members come out from
behind their trees and the sun.

PLUS SOME COMPANIONS TO STOKE THE FIRES
THAT KEEP ME DRAWING EVERYTHING MY HEART DESIRES!
SO I SAY
LET THERE BE A WHOLE WORLD TO SEE, AND NOW THERE IS
CHOICES DON'T JUST BELONG TO ME, NOW SOME ARE HIS

Osgood bops one of the Chorus
Members on the head with his bat.

OSGOOD
SO LET THERE BE LAUGHTER -

The bat bounces back and hits
Osgood's head as well.

OSGOOD
AND LET THERE BE PAIN.

Osgood teeters and falls into
Mitzi's waiting arms.

OSGOOD AND MITZI
AND LET THERE BE GOOD TIMES THAT COME BACK AGAIN

ECKHART
LET THERE BE STUFF I'D LOVE TO SEE,
LIFE THE WAY IT'S MEANT TO BE!

Osgood, Mitzi and the Chorus rev
into high gear, with all sorts of
antics.

CHORUS
LET THERE BE PLACES TO EXPLORE!

ECKHART
Knock yerselves out!

OSGOOD
LET THERE BE STUFF WORTH LIVING FOR!

ECKHART
WITHOUT A DOUBT.

CHORUS LEADER
LET THERE BE HIJINKS!

MITZI
AND LET THERE BE LOVE

OSGOOD
AND LET THERE BE JOY THAT FLOWS DOWN FROM ABOVE

ECKHART
LET THEM BE THEIR OWN ENTITY,
SOMETHING MORE
SOMETHING MORE THAN ONLY
ME

LIKE YOU AND YOU
AND YOU AND YOU AND YOU
AND YOU AND YOU!

CHORUS
LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S
NEW
LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S
NEW
LET THERE BE SOME STUFF THAT'S
NEW
THAT'S NEW!

The cartoon world disappears as
the office door opens, and BERT
WINSLOW bursts into the room.

BERT
He screwed us, Eck! The bastard screwed us good!

ECKHART

What? Who?

BERT

While we were bent over our desks for sixteen hours a day, that sonofabitch Parnell crept up and stuck it to us hard!

ECKHART

Huh. I didn't notice. Guess nature wasn't kind to him at all.

BERT

He stole the rights from under us, Eckhart! That rat Parnell now owns Osgood the Squirrel!

ECKHART

What?!

BERT

He didn't just produce the damn cartoons, he registered the character as his!

ECKHART

But that's not true! We brought Osgood to him -

BERT

That's not the tune Parnell's chorus line of lawyers'll be singing. He's got the money and the law firms, Eck - all we've got is a handshake no one saw.

Silence. It starts to sink in.

ECKHART

What are we gonna do?

BERT

Get the hell out. We finish this cartoon and then we scam.

ECKHART

Just like that? Abandon our creation to that hack?!

BERT

Look, we've got a brand new character we like - let's get him out of Parnell's reach while we can. We'll start a business we own, with Spunky Skunk as our new star!

ECKHART

And what? Leave Osgood here to rot? I've worked three years on him!

BERT

Three years we have squat to show for -

ECKHART

The character's expanding, Bert! There's all these nuances, these little subtleties I hadn't planned. Hell, I couldn't explain 'em if I tried! I can't just throw that all away.

BERT

We don't have much of a choice, pal.

ECKHART

You think Osgood's just some blot of ink that we tell what to do, but Bert ... that ink has mingled with my sweat and my hopes and - He's all the things I wish I'd done if I were that much bolder, just a bit more quick. You really want me to walk away from that?

BERT

No, Eck. That's what I want you to become.

Silence. Eckhart sits at his desk, bewildered, then lashes out at it with his fists.

ECKHART

Damn it all to hell!

The jolt to the desk causes the inkwell to tip over, sending a torrent of ink over Eckhart's pages.

At that same moment, billows of black fabric flow across the white expanse of the stage.

Bert and Eckhart just stare at the pages for a moment.

ECKHART

Looks like Osgood's last adventure will be fighting off an invasion of ink.

BERT

His last adventure?

ECKHART

(sighs)

From me, anyway.

BERT

I'll go and grab some towels from the john.

Bert exits, as Eckhart continues to draw on the sullied pages.

ECKHART

And thus does fate conspire to separate Creation from creator in a flash,

Like some Greek tragedy played in reverse:
Events reveal the limits of the gods,
Who wait upon their worshippers' judgment.
For such an act as bringing things to life,
Some form of retribution always comes.

While Eckhart scribbles away, the
CHORUS of supporting cartoon
characters enters, inspecting the
black billows across their space
with a mixture of curiosity and
fear.

PARADOS

CHORUS

Behold! What's this that mars the Great Blank Wastes,
Most ancient, sacred Doorway of the Gods
Eckhart and Bert, oh bless-ed be their names!
For here in this white space they do create
A litany of wonders to behold -
In wintertime, a forest of fir trees
Whose stately limbs do sprout lovely fur coats.
In autumn, leaves cascade and gently fall -
Along with anvils, very heavy safes,
And the occasional piano grand.

CHORUS LEADER

Such sweetly zany music our Lords make,
Yet this resembles not their handiwork -
No sense of humor, no reason nor rhyme,
A message neither comical nor clear.

CHORUS

It just feels too plain random, don'tcha think?

CHORUS LEADER

And if it's not, it sure is Greek to me.

Rim shot. Awkward beat.

CHORUS

Well, since we've got that joke out of the way,
Let us all ponder what this sign portends.

CHORUS LEADER

For look! The shadow spreads across the land!

CHORUS

From north unto the south, from east to west,
Things look decidedly less funny now.

CHORUS LEADER

WHAT HAS BEFALLEN YOU, BELOVED GAG-FILLED SOIL?
YOUR SMILING SUN HAS COME DOWN WITH THE BLUES!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US
WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US

CHORUS LEADER

THE BUTTERCUPS HAVE GONE AND LET THEIR BUTTER BOIL
THE COBBLESTONES HAVE LEFT OFF MAKING SHOES!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US
WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US!

CHORUS LEADER

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS LEADER

WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW

CHORUS

WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW!

CHORUS LEADER

WITH A SIGH-SIGH-SIGH

CHORUS

WITH A SIGH-SIGH-SIGH

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

WE CRY WOE UNTO US

Antistrophe

CHORUS

OUR MINDS THAT ONCE WERE FERTILE, FILLED WITH ANTICS RARE
NOW ECHO, CHAMBERS EMPTY OF ALL MIRTH

CHORUS LEADER

I SAY WOE UNTO US!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US
OUR LIMBS, ONCE FULL OF PRATFALLS ARE NOW BONES LAID BARE
JUST WAITING TO BE BURIED IN THE EARTH

CHORUS LEADER

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US!

CHORUS

WOE, WOE, WOE UNTO US.

CHORUS LEADER

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS

FROM ON HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HIGH

CHORUS LEADER

WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW!

CHORUS

WE'RE BROUGHT LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW-DE-LOW!

CHORUS LEADER

WE SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH

CHORUS

WE SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH-DE-SIGH

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

AND CRY WOE UNTO US!

Epode

CHORUS

OH GODS ON HIGH NOW HEAR OUR CRY, SOOTHE OUR UNREST
AND GRACE OUR EYES WITH WONDERS ONCE AGAIN

CHORUS LEADER

A MIRACLE THAT LEAVES US SUITABLY IMPRESSED
COULD REALLY COME IN HANDY NOW AND THEN!
FROM YOUR HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HEIGHT

CHORUS

FROM YOUR HIGH-DE-HIGH-DE-HEIGHT

CHORUS LEADER

COME AND SHOW-DE-SHOW-DE-SHOW

CHORUS

COME AND SHOW-DE-SHOW-DE-SHOW

CHORUS LEADER

YOUR MIGHTY MIGHTY MIGHT

CHORUS

YOUR MIGHTY MIGHTY MIGHT

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

AND TAKE AWAY THIS WOE FROM US!

FIRST EPISODE

CHORUS LEADER

My fellows, quick! Word of this strange mischance
Must straightaway be brought to great Osgood!
With mind and body both most nimbly framed,
He'll find solutions where we see but doom.

Enter MITZI MINK.

MITZI

No need for that - he has already heard.

CHORUS

Behold! That noble lady, Mitzi Mink,
Beloved consort to our dotting king,
And quite the looker, too, if you ask me.

Some sexist whistling from the
Chorus. Mitzi ignores it,
examining the black billows.

MITZI

Where this dark river flows, all laughter dies,
All jokes catch in the throat, and none escape.
While my heart froze in terror at the sight
Of this dread shadow's dark and oozing path,
Hot inspiration blazed in Osgood's eyes,
And up above his head appeared an egg,
Which cracked, and gave birth to a bulb of light.
This also cracked in turn, and from its shell
A rooster rose, with plumes of crimson fire,
Cocked back his head, and crowed to shake the earth,
Then flew toward this stain that blights our land.

CHORUS

Hot damn! But that's one hell of an idea!

MITZI

Which Osgood even now goes to enact,
While I've come here in chase of secret doubts,
To see what may one day undo us all.

CHORUS LEADER

But surely you don't doubt Osgood's success?

MITZI

Not him, just what he puts his faith into.

CHORUS LEADER

Why, Osgood's saved your life a thousand times!

MITZI

I know. He's really lucky in that way -
The gods demand what Osgood wants to give,
And so, to him, the whole world seems quite fair.
Not so for us from whom the gods require
A service that our nature ill befits.
For Osgood gets adventures by the score,
While I look pleased and blithely bat my eyes
Until some ruffian absconds with me
So that my love can save me once again.
To tell the truth, I'd rather save myself,
And much prefer batting a baseball bat
Aimed squarely at my hijacker's nose holes.
Oh, how I'd love to send that bastard's head
A-sail right into Osgood's catcher's mitt!
Then we could spend the whole day playing catch,
With my abductor's noggin as the ball.
That puts the punch in punch line, don't you think?
But since this does not fit the gods' design,
I'm left to wrestle languishing desires.

The laughs I get are few and far between,
And silence is a heavy weight to bear.
So Osgood thrives and knows the gods are just.
I ache, and thus suspect they're just bluffing.

CHORUS LEADER

I'd keep that to yourself if I were you.
Those discontent with gods do often tend
To meet particularly sticky ends.

The ink spill suddenly blows away,
to relieved gasps.

CHORUS

But look! The shadow has been overpower'd!

MITZI

Then Osgood's plan has triumphed after all!

CHORUS LEADER

(pointing into the distance)

And here's a messenger to tell us how,
Arriving right on cue!

CHORUS

Now how 'bout that!

A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER

I'd gone into yon forest with my pail,
To glean the salty tears from weeping willows,
When sudden darkness poured down from the sky,
Devouring all that lay within its path -
Great beauty lost in inky nothingness!
The weeping willows saw, and wept the more,
Till both the pail and my own eyes o'erflowed.
But as we stood, awash in our own grief,
Bold Osgood rushed forth, crying "Have no fear!",
Grabbed up a fallen branch and fashioned it
Into a sort of brush, then turned to face
The faceless evil tarnishing our woods.
"I cannot fight a formless thing," he said,
"Without losing myself to formlessness,
But if you are contained within a shape,
I'll be a match for you in any guise!"
With that, he dipped his brush into the dark
And tamed the black into a solid form -
At first a fearsome dragon, belching out
Hot breaths of flaming shadow at Osgood.
But Osgood acted quick, and with his brush
Wrought arrows out of this stygian fire,
That flew back at the beast and shattered it
Into eight pieces, writhing, dismally.
And with each blot, brave Osgood did the same,
Imposed on them a form, then mastered it -
Tamed lions, shot down hawks and lassoed bulls
Until there was no longer marring ink,
But only solid creatures, all subdued.

The willows, at this sight, did cease to weep
And my own heart did well up with such joy,
I sang a song of praise unto Osgood,
The scrappiest of squirrels in the land!

As the messenger has been giving
his speech to his rapt audience,
Osgood enters behind them,
unnoticed, and listens casually,
munching on an acorn until the
messenger finishes.

Meanwhile, in Eckhart's office,
Eckhart has finished drawing, and
begins packing up his belongings.

OSGOOD

That's awful nice of ya, but not too bright.
The gods just might feel jealous, and then SPLAT!
Trust me, I've had my share of being hit
With safes, pianas, sometimes 2 ton weights -
It ain't a pretty feelin', no sirree.

Mitzi, the Messenger, and the
Chorus turn to see Osgood behind
them.

MITZI

Osgood, my sweet, you've conquered once again!
Not only this disturbance, but my heart!

Osgood rushes over to Mitzi, and
catches her up in his arms.

OSGOOD

Oh Mitzi, during all the pranks I pulled
Upon that lousy monster, inky black,
Within my belfry fluttered just one bat -
The thought of you, your lovely batting eyes
Just gazing at me as they do right now!

MITZI

In truth, I bat them for nobody else
And even then, only at gods' command.

OSGOOD

You see how smart my honey-muffin is?
A far sight more than Messenger Boy here.
You went and sang a song of praise to me?
You might as well thank that there rusty pail
For what the willows filled the darn thing with!
We're nothin' but old buckets, she and me,
Filled up with inspiration from on high,
Our only job to pour out what's inside.

Finished packing, Eckhart carries his small box of belongings to the door, opens it, looks back at the room longingly.

In Osgood's world, the sound of a mighty wind. A couple chorus members and some very surprised looking clouds are blown across the stage.

CHORUS

From whence now blows this wind so harsh and cold?
The very clouds do flee from it in fear!

OSGOOD

Remain steadfast, good friends! All signs will show
Their meaning to those who wait patiently.

Eckhart exits, closing the door
after him. It slams shut.

Cracks of thunder in cartoon land,
shaking the very ground the
characters stand on.

CHORUS

Good grief! So many omens in a row!
We can't keep track, much less interpret them!

MESSENGER

And even now, more riddles drawing near:
Two travellers come, supplicants, methinks.
They bear gifts to exchange for passage safe
Through this, the holy blank-lands of the gods.
The first approaches meekly, eyes downcast.
The other with a fierce, unruly stare.

OSGOOD

Bid them both welcome in my name and say
That I shall hear their wills, one at a time.

The Messenger nods, and exits.

MITZI

My love, put them off 'til another day.
This one's too stuffed with portents for my taste.

OSGOOD

That's where you're wrong. These signs are nothing
more
Than heavenly reminders to be just.
The gods know what these pilgrims will request
And urge us to be careful when we judge
What we should grant and what we should deny.

MITZI

Still, I've a real bad feeling about this.

Spunky Skunk enters, bearing a cream pie.

SPUNKY

Oh mighty Osgood, noble king, hi-ho!
The name is Spunky Skunk, how do ye do?
I bring with me a gift - this custard pie,
My country's ancient, secret recipe.
Both light and frothy, yet its aim is true.
Well balanced, it strikes foes at 50 yards,
And lands with a most satisfying splat
Upon the shocked face of your enemy!

OSGOOD

A gift most rare and noble - thanks a lot!
So what brings you to these most sacred lands?

SPUNKY

The gods Eckhart and Bert call out my name -
They beckon me to seek out solitude
Within the Great Blank Wastes, most holy soil
That I may liken myself unto it,
And make a blank page of my very soul,
To let the gods inscribe what words they please.

OSGOOD

Your heart and mine beat with the same desire!
Go take your journey and my friendship too!
For folks like us are few and far between,
Who do not seek the gods for our own gain,
But to find out a purpose we can serve!

SPUNKY

And has your search for purpose yielded one?

OSGOOD

You betcha! Though it may sound kinda strange.

LISTEN CLOSE, YOU CAN JUST MAKE IT OUT
AS THOUGH IT'S CALLING FROM BEHIND A SCREEN
QUIET, SOFT, YET BEYOND ANY DOUBT,
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT SOUND CAN MEAN!
IT'S THE MUSIC THAT GREETES THE UNDERDOG
REACHING THE END OF HIS LONELY SLOG
TO FINALLY EMERGE AND BEAT THE ODDS
IT'S THAT GENUINE GASP OF TRUE SURPRISE
WHEN THE DAY IS SAVED BY THE LITTLE GUYS
IT'S THE SOUND THAT I LIVE FOR - THE LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

IT WASHES OVER YOU
A RAIN OF FALLING PIANO KEYS
WHEN SOIL IS OVERDUE
FOR NOURISHMENT OF NEW MELODIES
YOU FEEL DEEP IN YOUR HEART
FRESH SONGS SPRING UP FROM OUT OF THE EARTH
AND YOU CAN'T HELP BUT START
TO LAUGH ALONG WITH THE HEAVENLY MIRTH

NEVER KNOW JUST WHAT'S GONNA INSPIRE
ONE OF THOSE ACTIONS THAT HEAVEN APPLAUDS
BUT THERE'S NOT ANYTHING I DESIRE
MORE THAN THAT CHIMING LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

SPUNKY

What must I do to hear this sacred noise?

OSGOOD

It isn't about do's and don't's at all!
You gotta scrub your mind of all that stuff.
Here.

Osgood hands Spunky a long
handkerchief, then takes out one
for himself. He sticks the
kerchief in one ear, and draws it
out of the other, so the ends of
it stick out of both ears. Spunky
follows suit, and they
rhythmically clean their brains to
the music.

OSGOOD

So how's your brain feel now? All squeaky clean?

SPUNKY

Boy howdy, it sure does! What happens next?

OSGOOD

NEXT YOU'RE BATHED IN A FLICKERING LIGHT,
AND ALL AROUND YOU BECOMES HUSHED AND STILL
IN YOUR SOUL, YOU FEEL SOMETHING IGNITE,
THAT LEAVES YOU BURNING TO DO GODS' WILL!
So what would ya do?

SPUNKY

HOW 'BOUT A CARTWHEEL OF PRAISE?

OSGOOD

THAT MAKES SENSE!

SPUNKY

MAYBE A PRATFALL OF PENITENCE?
THEN SUDDENLY JUMP UP, JUST SMILE AND NOD?

OSGOOD

I like it!

PLUS A COUPLE HEEL CLICKS THAT SHOUT 'REJOICE'!

SPUNKY

AND THEN WHEN I LAND, I WILL RAISE MY VOICE,
TO SING BRAND NEW AND JOYFUL SONGS UNTO THE GODS!

OSGOOD

Wait wait wait wait.

SPUNKY

Why, is there something wrong?

OSGOOD

Our words and songs are fine for mortal ears,
And may be offered to the gods in pray'r,
But when the light of Inspiration shines
And all the gods are gathered in the dark
To see their will made flesh before their eyes,
We must in holy silence make our way,
To praise them, not with sounds, but with our deeds.

SPUNKY

A hard command to follow when your heart
Is bursting forth with music like mine is.

OSGOOD

And yet the gods decree it, so it's good.

TO SOME FOLKS, THE GODS' LAWS ARE A LIST
AND YOU JUST CROSS OFF ITEMS AS YOU GO.
BUT FOR ME, THEY ARE WHY I EXIST,
SO I DO MY BEST TO LET IT SHOW!
I DON'T STOP AT THE MINIMUM REQUIRED,
GIVING THEM ACTS THAT ARE OLD AND TIRED,
RELUCTANTLY OBEYING WHEN THEY PROD.

SPUNKY

YOU DO EVERYTHING THAT YOU CAN DO
INCHING JUST ONE STEP CLOSER TO

OSGOOD AND SPUNKY

THAT BEAUTIFUL SOURCE OF THE LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

SPUNKY

I WANNA BRING A SMILE
UNTO THE LIPS THAT BREATHED LIFE IN ME!
THEN LISTEN A LITTLE WHILE
AS THEY WHISPER WHAT I'M MEANT TO BE!

OSGOOD AND SPUNKY

WE'RE NOT SETTling FOR
LIVES THAT SCRAPE BY AS JUST GOOD ENOUGH
THE GODS DESERVE MUCH MORE
SO COME ON LET'S GIVE THEM OUR BEST STUFF!

OTHER FOLKS SCAMPER AFTER ACCLAIM
OR WEALTH AND POWER NO MATTER THE ODDS.
BUT YOU WON'T FIND US PLAYING THAT GAME
'CAUSE THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE AFTER!
WE JUST WANNA HEAR THAT LAUGHTER
THAT FULFILLING, THRILLING LAUGHTER OF THE GODS!

Osgood sends Spunky off toward his
destination.

OSGOOD
Go forth, brave skunk, and tell 'em Osgood sent ya!

Spunky salutes him, and hurries
off toward the Blank Lands.

OSGOOD
Well, that was easy. Who do we have next?

MESSENGER
When asked, she would not give her name to me,
Demanding to be judged by deeds alone.

OSGOOD
A mystery! Well, I'm game. Send her forth.
We'll see just what these actions speak of her.

Enter Eggs the Cat, carrying a
large box.

EGGS
Which of you is Osgood, scrappy squirrel,
The ruler of this land and gatekeeper
That guards the Great Blank Wastes which lie beyond?

MITZI
Is it not plain to all which one he is?
His kingly bearing, fully in command?
His zany eyes ablaze with comic fire?

EGGS
I trust appearances about as far
As I can toss a sea-sick buffalo.

CHORUS LEADER
That may be a fair distance - look at her.

CHORUS
It's very clear that she works out a lot!

EGGS
The point, you morons, is I don't assume
To know a thing based just on how it looks.
For outward sweetness often is applied
To mask a deadly poison's bitter sting.

OSGOOD

In your rough manner, there's some truth, kiddo.
I am Osgood the squirrel. What's your wish?

EGGS

The same as any trav'ler to these parts -
To journey where gods' pen and paper meet.

OSGOOD

That's fair enough. What tribute do you bring?

EGGS

I've brought my gift for passage in this box.

OSGOOD

And what does it contain?

EGGS

You won't know that
Til you accept the offering from me.
Is that not how the gods bestow their wares?
We all receive our fate from them with thanks
Before we know just what that fate entails.

OSGOOD

That's true, but gods are perfect; we are not.
I know their good intent, but don't know yours.
Share that with me, then maybe I'll accept.

EGGS

I asked for passage as a courtesy,
But if you will not give what I desire,
I'll have to clear my own way through brute force!

She tears into the chorus,
knocking them out of the way with
her large box. Chaos ensues.
Osgood snatches up the custard pie
Spunky left, holds it up
threateningly.

OSGOOD

You'd better stop right there! I have a pie,
And I am not afraid to use it, too!

Eggs halts in her rampage.

OSGOOD

These actions give you out - you're Eggs the Cat -
That heretic most infamous in name
Who plotted murder 'gainst her closest friend
And brought the wrath of heaven on herself.

CHORUS

A very naughty girl by all accounts!

OSGOOD

Come you to entreat mercy from the gods?

EGGS

I come not to entreat but to accuse -
They are the ones who wronged me, yes, the gods!
Let's see if they've the spine to answer me!

CHORUS

O blasphemy! O hubris! O the nerve!
To think that you know better than the gods!
Just who do you think you are anyway?

EGGS

My story is well known throughout the land,
Yet people know less than they think they do.

OSGOOD

I know enough to turn down your request.
You'll not set foot on that most holy soil
As long as it's on my watch, that's for sure.

MITZI

Dear Osgood, wait! Hear what I have to say.

OSGOOD

Don't bother if you're speaking up for her.

MITZI

Not just for her, my love, but for us all.
So she has a complaint against the gods -
Why, surely they can take care of themselves.
For if the gods are great as we believe,
What do they have to fear from mortal hands?
Is it not wiser, then, to send her off
Unto the gods whom no mere man can hurt,
Or leave her here where she can work much harm?

CHORUS

I hate to say it, but she has a point.

OSGOOD

It sounds like wisdom, yes, but you forget
The really spooky omens we just saw.
I'm sure the gods could handle her just fine,
But these loud signs they sent say it's a test
To find out what it is we value most -
The honor of the gods or our own skins.
First we must do our part, then they'll do theirs.
No harm will come to us if we have faith.

EGGS

Well, look at Mr. Holier-than-thou!
He's got the whole damn world all figured out!
But there may come a time when you will find
Your precious rules, they don't amount to squat!
It's then you'll wonder what was in this box
But it won't give the solace that you seek!
So go jump in a lake, you stupid jerk!

She storms off.

CHORUS LEADER

Should we, um, maybe keep an eye on her?

OSGOOD

No, let her go. She don't scare me one bit!

MITZI

I hope you're right, Osgood.

OSGOOD

Don't hope, have faith!
And it'll be rewarded, wait and see!
Now I've got more adventurin' to do
Before it's supper time. I'll see you then!

He gives her a huge kiss, and runs
off. Mitzi looks after him
uneasily.

MITZI

I do admire his faith, but fear it too.

CHORUS LEADER

Why would you fear a precious thing like faith?

MITZI

Because it is a weapon, not a toy!
No wooden shield, but one with edges sharp,
To press through battles, not to lean upon.
Rely on it for more than its intent,
And you could get a doozy of a wound!

CHORUS LEADER

Well, sure, you *could*, so just believe you *won't*
And then the gods reward your strong belief
By keeping you from harm. That's what faith is.

MITZI

I'm pretty sure it isn't.

CHORUS LEADER

Tell her, boys.

First Choral Ode

CHORUS

O FAITH, THE HOLY GAMBLE!
FAITH, THE ENGINE OF THE HEART!
THAT REVS YOU UP TO RAMBLE
WHEN YOU MIGHT BE SCARED TO START!
MAN'S NATURE IS TO COWER,
BUT THE GODS ARE MUCH MORE HEP
THEY'LL IMBUE YOU WITH THEIR POWER
IF YOU JUST TAKE THAT FIRST STEP!

Strophe

CHORUS LEADER

SO YOU CAN WAIT AROUND AND WORRY IF IT'S SOLID GROUND,
OR YOU CAN JUST -

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

TAKE THAT STEP OF FAITH!

CHORUS LEADER

IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH CARE, YOU'LL FIND YOU NEVER GO NOWHERE
INSTEAD YOU SHOULD -

CHORUS LEADER AND CHORUS

TAKE THAT STEP OF FAITH!

CHORUS

THE SKEPTICS SIT AND POUT, WEIGHED DOWN BY TONS OF DOUBT
WHEN HELP IS JUST A PRAYER AWAY!
THE GODS ARE WAITING TO WORK PROBLEMS OUT FOR YOU
IT JUST TAKES TRUST TO MOVE RIGHT THROUGH THE UPPER CRUST!

CHORUS LEADER

SO BUCKLE UP YOUR PANTS! GET OUT THERE ON THE FLOOR AND DANCE
ALL FANCY WITH -

CHORUS

YOUR NEW STEPS OF FAITH!

CHORUS LEADER

Show her how to step it, boys!

The Chorus bursts into frenetic
tap dancing. Mitzi remains
unimpressed, and interrupts.

Antistrophe

MITZI

BUT WHAT IF YOUR FAITH'S A BIT MISPLACED -
YOUR GRAND DESIGN'S GOT LINES ERASED,
AND THE GODS DON'T DO THINGS QUITE THE WAY YOU THINK?
IS 'JUST BELIEVING' ALL THEY ASK,
OR HAVE THEY CHARGED US WITH THE TASK
OF KNOWING WHEN TO STEP BACK FROM THE BRINK?
YOU CALL IT FAITH, I MUST CONFESS
IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE RECKLESSNESS
TO ASSUME THE GODS WILL ALWAYS LEND A HAND
YOU SAY 'JUST DANCE' - THAT WOULD BE NICE,
BUT ILL ADVISED WHEN ON THIN ICE
BEFORE I DO, I'LL KNOW JUST WHERE I STAND.
I STILL BELIEVE, BUT KEEP IN MIND,
IT'S LOVE, NOT FAITH, THAT SHOULD BE BLIND,
SO I WILL TRUST, BUT I WON'T CLOSE MY EYES.

Mitzi does a dance where she carefully tests out a part of the floor, then dances impressively before tiptoeing to another spot, trying it out gingerly, then dancing with full confidence. The Chorus then advances on her in a tap dancing line.

CHORUS LEADER

IT MAKES YOU FEEL SO PROUD TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD,
THOUGH PRIDE, IT COMES BEFORE A FALL
BUT YOU WON'T BELLY FLOP IF YOU REPENT AND HOP
WITH ME AND MINE IN THIS OUR HOLY CHORUS LINE!

Mitzi can't safely back up quickly enough, and is swept into the line with the Chorus, only backwards.

Epode

CHORUS

SO YOU CAN WAIT AROUND
AND WORRY IF ITS SOLID GROUND
OR YOU CAN JUST TAKE THAT STEP
OF FAITH
IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH CARE
YOU'LL FIND YOU NEVER GO NOWHERE
UNTIL YOU JUST TAKE THAT STEP
OF FAITH!
THE SKEPTICS SIT AND POUT
WEIGHED DOWN BY TONS OF DOUBT
WHEN HELP IS JUST A PRAYER
AWAY
THE GODS ARE WAITING TO
WORK PROBLEMS OUT FOR YOU
IT JUST TAKES TRUST TO MOVE
RIGHT THROUGH THE UPPER CRUST
SO BUCKLE UP YOUR PANTS,
GET OUT THERE ON THE FLOOR AND
DANCE ALL FANCY WITH THOSE NEW
STEPS OF FAITH!

MITZI

WHAT IF YOUR FAITH'S A BIT MISPLACED?
YOUR GRAND DESIGN'S GOT LINES ERASED,
AND THE GODS DON'T DO THINGS QUITE THE
WAY YOU THINK?
IS JUST BELIEVING ALL THEY ASK,
OR HAVE THEY CHARGED US WITH THE TASK
OF KNOWING WHEN TO STEP BACK
FROM THE BRINK?
YOU CALL IT FAITH, I MUST CONFESS,
IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE RECKLESSNESS
TO ASSUME THE GODS WILL ALWAYS LEND A
HAND
YOU SAY 'JUST DANCE', THAT WOULD BE NICE
BUT ILL ADVISED WHEN ON THIN ICE
BEFORE I DO, I'LL KNOW JUST WHERE I
STAND!
I STILL BELIEVE, BUT KEEP IN MIND
IT'S LOVE, NOT FAITH THAT SHOULD BE
BLIND
SO I WILL TRUST, BUT I WON'T CLOSE MY
EYES.

Toward the end of the song, two chorus members take out giant tennis rackets. A third chorus member holds up a picture of the sun on the stick, which the members with rackets bat back and forth. When batted one way, it's the sun. When batted the other way, it flips over and becomes the moon. Meanwhile, in the animation office, JAKE METZGER enters, with a box of his stuff, sets things up, and starts drawing at what was Eckhart's table.