



Imaginary Music

A 2022 playlist

Contents

Just A Little Love	<i>Nat King Cole</i>	3
Pimply Vituperations	<i>Kanye West</i>	4
Teething	<i>Yellow Magic Orchestra</i>	6
Brotherhood and Broad Beans	<i>Mikis Theodorakis</i>	7
Vile Banquet	<i>Slayer</i>	9
Current King	<i>Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard</i>	10
The Man In The APEC Conference Shirt	<i>Steely Dan</i>	11
World's Smartest Garbageman	<i>The Clash</i>	13
Joined The Circus	<i>Tom Waits</i>	15
Call For Hope	<i>Genesis</i>	17
South Korean XII	<i>Pindar</i>	19
Thousand And One Knives Of Panayioti Kalokairinos	<i>Ryuichi Sakamoto/David Sylvian</i>	20
Dream II	<i>Scott Walker</i>	22
English Folk Song	<i>Unknown Musicians/Viv Stanshall [Voice]</i>	23
The Ballad of Marina Soulakiotou	<i>Simon and Garfunkel</i>	24
Three Bird Tankas	<i>Mitski</i>	26
Harry's Grand Morgue	<i>Tom Lehrer</i>	27
Carnival Dance	<i>Gabriel Faure/Frederica von Stade</i>	29
Lullaby		30

This is a collection of lyrics. When combined with potential artists, the poems allow you to imagine them as fully realised pieces of music. Through words they evoke wordless sounds.

Of the songs, some could have been, some could not, and some could still be.

[Ch] = chorus

[Sp] = spoken-word

Just A Little Love

Nat King Cole

I could find myself
On a train ride to nowhere in particular
I imagine the sun might set
And the night trolley come round yet.
I'd glimpse you passing in the hallway
By your red boots hid by silver trays –
“Good evening, what should we bring you?”
Well, just a little love will do.

I could one day be
At a wood table in some lonely library
Thinking I ought to go back home –
As every road led me to roam.
You'd borrow the book I'd come to find
Deny we'd met there – claim you were blind –
“Is there another book you'd choose?”
Well, just a little love will do.

I can't but fantasise
I'd be a king, humbled by fantastic raiment
Commanding armies, building life
Feeding all with my silver knife
I'd look for you with all my powers
You'd flee the country, all my towers;
“And would my lord favour the many or the few?”
Well, just a little love will do.

Pimply Vituperations

Kanye West

[Sp:] Yeah, yeah, we don't want to hear any more of your pseudo-babble. (Yeah) (Pseud shit, yeah)

I'm sick of social theories, clear these
Charlatans out of here, give 'em fear
And burn their temples down,
No chance in the ring, short round
A study of life that's so falsely synergic
Allergic acerbic and fully thaumaturgic
A pointless continuum of unbearable sonorities
From untouchable bastards with no grasp of priorities

Give me that dogma, dogma, yeah
Give me that dogma, dogma
Let me read that Oghma
(Infinium, motherfucker, with all the lore'a
Hermaeus Mora)
Tell me you're better, regrettter, your kingdom in fetters

You ought to know it all since it's your legacy
You think you're a genius 'cause you're gettin' ahead of me?
Let's set this scene satisfactorily, bitch;
Now listen close, here's my Catalogue of Ships:
Thalassic Jurassic fantastic and elastic
(anyone can join)
Any sudden moves and we'll do somethin' drastic
Quote a thesis of blood and smoke, stoke a flame
Alexandria's library should be put to shame

Give me that dogma, dogma, yeah
Give me that dogma, dogma

Let me read that Oghma
(Infinium, motherfucker, with all the lore'a
Hermaeus Mora)
Men without qualities commit endless idolatries

Anyway it's over now, questions we left open how
Pernicious and so vicious they can kill us;
I don't think you're tough, I won't make any deals
You think you can flex? Well, I've got Flex Seal
Carcinogenus passing his fetus to a burned-out
Rocker-patch of Woodstock's proper catch
This is where you belong, a mind-dead field
An autonomous zone with nothing to steal
A pathetic garden, apathetic wardens, warlords, war-torn
Screamin' law 'n' order seeking royal quarter
Now that the gilded palace's collapsed.

Give me that dogma, dogma, yeah
Give me that dogma, dogma
Let me read that Oghma
(Infinium, motherfucker, with all the lore'a
Hermaeus Mora) –

[Sp:] "Somebody shut that tape off!"

Teething
Yellow Magic Orchestra

Moonless night

They crawled from my head

Creeping down the hall

Chattering to wake the dead

[Sp:] Thirty white horses on a red hill.

First they champ...

Creeping down the hall

So quietly

[Sp:] Then they stamp...

They held funeral games in my room

One was taken the night before

And this is why they fled

[Sp:] Then they stand still.

Try to creep back

Once the sun rises

And then I wake up.

[Sp:] Oi! Get back in my head!

...やれやれだぜ*.

**"Give me a break."

Brotherhood and Broad Beans

Mikis Theodorakis

There is a roaring from under the ground.

There is a screaming from under the ground.

The village can't ignore it,

The city can't ignore it any longer, no,

The ancient shouting must be placated

With black fire and white fire.

Angels you have been told a thousand times

Are not your childish images,

Are powerful and monstrous and full of fire

And this is meant to destroy them.

The sun burns our skin

And the rain drowns us

The sun burns our skin

And the rain begets us.

We swim through humid air

Coughing at cigarettes,

Breathing smoke from behind barbed-wire fences

Angels you have been told a thousand times

This was a garden yesterday

And this a vegetable patch;

This was a student's house and here

Where the old widow lived, where the wanderer died

Among the blind ones

Feasting and putting his feats up

Among the blind ones in the shining humid air, beneath the light.

Brotherhood and broad beans

Sycamores and guns
Beneath the searing light
The boots, the searching light
And roaring from under the ground.
Brotherhood and broad beans
Among tall questing shelves
The lights from their eyes
The light of the world.
Brotherhood and broad beans
Those eyes meet an implacable grinding
The abattoir shreds; the sprinklers activate
Pissing freezing cold water in the dark
Water over black fire and white fire.
Steam rises and still the flames remain
Burning brotherhood and broad beans
Tiny black husks in the dirt on a cavernous hillside
The fire inside them
Immolating their own children.

Vile Banquet

Slayer

Forest submerged in blood
Cross past death, lose the key
Rictus grins, corpse-full mud

Below red clouds I see
Leaves like bodies impaled
Trees like spears around me

Warnings elders regaled
The death of demon's bane
I laughed at their tales

Boiling under void rain
Soldiers and builders burn
Black face of Tubalcain

Current

King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard

Electric current events

Busy bee-keeping busy bee?

Electric current affair

Grimness shorn of care

Electric current flow

Go with the – go with me

Don't you wanna know?

[Woo!]

Electric currents – prevent

Does he see, sleeping, can it be?

Electric current – prepare

Trimness, shorn of hair

Electric current - glow

Gamma theta, beta meter

Don't you wanna grow?

The Man In The APEC Conference Shirt

Steely Dan

I got

My promise from your sordid lot

I told you I wanted a place

To call my own H. Q.

But you couldn't even let me have that

And you're standing before me now

In the uniform I earned by the sweat of my brow

And I ask

Who

Is that man in the APEC conference shirt

Running away from me

With such misplaced panache?

Recall

The suits of armour all

I told you to stay away from that

Wantonly marked-up girl

How could you show her to the family affair?

Not every two-bit conferencer fool

Needs a Tattooed Tabitha to keep things cool

And they'll ask

Who

Is that man in the APEC conference shirt

Running away from us

With such misplaced panache?

It's gold and it's raunchy

It's patterned with flowers
The Hawaiian shirt that gives you your powers
They'll teach you well, Samson,
Anticipation's the name of the game
For the next G20
The big-britches' fame

Panitya Pantsers
My favourite team are cancers;
I told you not to watch that Rob Downey J
In Avengers 10 again
You're demoted; you'll wake up.
How can you switch around like that
From a human to a brain in a Sci-Co vat?
And it asks

Who
Is that man in the APEC conference shirt
Running away from himself
With such misplaced panache?

Who?
Is that man?
Who?
Is that man...

World's Smartest Garbageman

The Clash

I'm leaving you baby,
'Cause you've had too much for me -
Handy-dandy, upper class brandy
Oxbridge food and pointy shoes, your life's glue's our horse's hooves
And your last boyfriend, he did car sales and meth on the side?
Camping, hustling, hobbies that changed with the tide?
And then there's me...

World's smartest garbageman
World's smartest garbageman!
I get to pick at the world's endless variety
Sort it into piles for the pit and for propriety
Fifty styles per second, hot topics cooling down
Buckets of lists and ten-pence trends for the ground
And what about the one before him
Oh, he was the same? No, he was a shame...
He only fit in the second-highest tax bracket,
A massive ponce with his classic Wilson tennis racquet
Dropped him fast and moved on to the gourmet
Then the chef and finally the one who put them all away...

The world's smartest garbageman
World's smartest garbageman!
All these suits don't suit you, the styles go right through you
And it's too late to say you're going to stay with me too
Jacked off all trades, mastered none
You'll learn a life's no hired gun
But not today.
So bring your tired trash, I'll take

The crap you found in teeming stores,
Send these, the trinkets, sales-tossed, to me
I push my switch to fill the stinking moor.

Joined The Circus

Tom Waits

Born to fleeing king in a circus troupe
Curtains lies and wires made him wise
And his royal dad used a silver spoon
To scoop the sleep out of his eyes

Set to be king of the ring, the big top's
Big boss, Frank found a nice side-piece
And everything he'd ever juggled dropped
All for that dirty golden fleece

Circus forced to close on the headline night
Frank absconded in alleyway fear
Ringmaster cursing, the animals' fright
His father never shed a tear

And Frank found himself a little wood bed
Girl gave him a rash and was gone
A straw mat on which to lay his sweet head
A quiet street to sing sour songs

Frank learned all the movements underground
He froze, and he shivered at night
With his hole-filled wet blanket draped around
He counted time in ammonites

Catching whirl of the stinking western wind,
Frank stole himself a cheap blue suit
He showered himself in a public gym
Rotten apple fit with the fruit

Of course he got stuck climbing that ladder
Frail and frayed as the circus' rope
Saw doctors for a thing in his bladder
Got a wife, a kid, and a cope

He fossilised before he died, old Frank
When he fled the edge of the knife
Too well-adjusted to walk on his plank
He gave up his story for life

Call For Hope

Genesis

It's no different for kings and little men

Nor even for scouts or their eagle-eyed ken:

In the highest courts, before the cracked kooky-glass

The city watch's captain looked himself over hard

Became obsessed with despair, and tired of his guard

And even the smallest hope seemed a distant farce

[Ch:]

And what else did we expect to find

But hope retreating

Asking us to follow

To follow

In every funhouse mirror, at each senseless bend

A rictus guarantee of salvation stared back

His self-hatred froze him and showed him what he lacked

He knew himself the foe of joy and good life's end

While, in us, pointless melancholy is distilled

By the random follies of a synthetic world

In this medieval waste a new quest unfurls:

A rickety bridge to be crossed by the strong-willed.

[Ch]

He sees something appear at the bridge's other side

A small wind-torn figure at the top of the slope

Not *arete*, virtue, not skill or technic pride

But the unflinching shadow of a humble hope.

[Extended keyboard solo leading into Ch]

How far might someone be carried
By a hope's wan and subtle promise?
What could they need to be happy?
How little we need for our *domus*.

Oh hope, retreat; come on, despair!
The carrot and staff that guide my way;
I trust the feeling in the air
I think you got what I didn't say

South Korean XII

Pindar

Give much praise, O gods,
For Cheong, the son of Seong, the son of Samsung,
Winner of the League of Legends World Championship.
Singers will tell of how he aped the great Champion Braum,
Even as he brought that same hero to victory in the top lane:
With his shield, the magic door that never opens,
And his heart, the gate of which never closes,
Stout of hand and mind Cheong has proven himself.

Just as Braum himself found a calling in traveling,
So too did Cheong make the long journey from Seoul
To North America to fight, during the days of plague -
When other, happy Decameronic figures merely lazed.

And while his clan did not believe
This quest to be of worth, while they
Castigated and shamed their son in his isolation,
He held trust in his hours of practice in the dark.

He excelled in his concentration,
Avoiding endless distractions: for the truth unfolds beyond the sensible,
Beyond what is perceived in the whole collection
Of heroes and legends brought to life
By poets and tricksters.
Rather singlemindedness, and the ambrosia they call
Gamer Fuel, aided him instead.
But as in all things it is virtue alone
That brought the laurel to Cheong's worthy head.

Thousand And One Knives Of Panayioti Kalokairinos

Ryuichi Sakamoto/David Sylvian

When gold bonbons were common in high courts,
And burghers' streamers hung in cobbled streets,
Before the war began they knew they ought
To be good diplomats; to be discreet.

As Europe's borders blurred and fell to shade
Those monuments to the contest of talk
By keystones of compromise souls were weighed
And treaties carved by men with minds of hawks.

A thousand knives did not bring us to this
But one, stainless and unimpeachable;
Plagues, floods, and death clean-split from fatty bliss,
Each silver mirror-side unreachable.

Along infinite edge, the knife means peace,
A quantum point known only as concept,
To touch it is the fool's and sinner's lease,
To fall into its trap Satan's precept.

Their battle plans, their ordered lines were drawn,
Foxtrots at Russian balls were vanished airs;
Nations' pride waned as large cities were born,
And doctrine thought that none could think unfair.

Now bubbles fill ivory baths, foment,
Comfort is cheap and cash is made of bits;
The world is unprepared for the moment
The thousand-and-first knife opens the pit.

Utopia, it flashes in the light
Yellow tiles shine in beeping sawtooth worlds,
Chaotic life succumbs to Ares' blight
The horsemen's flag against the moon unfurls.

A target told by Princess Shahrazad,
Metal missiles fly at the Archduke's head.
Fission's egg will smash his strong façade
And glowing yolk will drench and soak the dead.

Now gold bonbons are common in all straits,
The poor – for talk and warmth alone they strive.
Before the war begins we ought await
Warning glints of the thousand and one knives.

Dream II

Scott Walker

New weakness in the knees

That means you'll fall

Spice in wanton tears means

You'll taste them all

An urge to dominate

Throbs in your hands

You'll leave your world no giants

On which to stand

What's it mean to be big-souled?

Not kind, not bad, but only bold.

English Folk Song
Unknown Musicians/Viv Stanshall [Voice]

[Entirely spoken, in the plummiest Oxfordian English you can muster:]

Hello, good evening, and welcome.

We can clearly see, through the chaos of spinning planets...the drink and the drunken...

What appears to be some kind of stock photo.

Let me say it once more. Stock photo.

Taken in the early 2000s. Note the red pupils, an unmistakeable dating sign.

Ah – and this photo contains the record – the indelible, ineluctible, unerasable record -

Of a session in Parliament – where a spurious provocation was made concerning the Minister of Defence, Lord Humphrey Thistlethwaite-Throwback...

That being his inopportune aping of David Cameron

In staging a rather...yes, a rather unseemly altercation with a confused citizen, of the porcine type.

If we remove it, most gently from the wall here...like so...we can see...it is in fact a print. From a local printer's shop. A reproduction. Now observe, if you will -

...Observe, if you will – the downright – yes, downright degenerational – be that a word? - pictures upon this hallowed establishment's walls – the...pornography, one might venture cautiously to term it...

It would not be outside the realm – even the demesne – of possibility that a canny proprietor could procure such a reproduction. As the story was in the papers – ah, the papers! For some period.

A worthy – do not play so loudly, gentlemen, this wine has traveled northwards swifter than Hannibal – very worthy thing to find. I think.

Vivian Stanshall, about 9:40 in the evening...Brisbane...2022.

Goodnight.

The Ballad of Marina Soulakiotou

Simon and Garfunkel

From the sparkling sea she came
And for water she was named;
Marina the black-souled nun –
The hidden, schismatic one.

From her meteor she sold
Oil and rubber bits and gold
The days meant nothing to her
Old time, it ended through her

[Ch:]

Marina, I'd like to know
What kind of mad world is this
Where the sinner intercedes
On behalf of the innocent dead?

So, ra ra Rasputina
Devotee of Vresthina
Tuberculosis treatment plant
Doctors nuns and nurses can't

Come and join the covenant
Spirits look for providence
Many servants took her robe
Land and blood filled up her globe...

[Ch]

Raids, her trial filled the news

Victims, lawmen, grateful Jews
Perfect way to dodge the war -
Marina, newsman's thankless whore

Still some praise her now, they say
Sea-born, walking on Christ's way
Her colours shifting with the light
Vanishing from human sight

[Ch]

Three Bird Tankas

Mitski

Ornithologists

Only observe overland

Offal oligarchs

Operatic overtones

Over Ondine's old ocean.

Bold black butcher birds

Barking, beating, breathless by

Bars, bawling bleakly.

Beggars bringing bills - bounty,

Boughs broke by burdensome beasts.

Monochrome, matted,

Moultling marking marble malls,

Macabre movements

Mawkish, melancholic, miss

Meeting my meddlesome mind.

Harry's Grand Morgue

Tom Lehrer

You might be recycling lunch,

Harb'ring dark, turbulent hunch

This coroner job weren't you,

You want a new thing to do.

To alleviate your dismay,

this sage advice should make you...joyful.

[coughs]

A tradesman's secret I'll disclose,

It's something every scalper knows...

Behold the sight of lower glands,

Gaze fondly at those Netherlands.

That bit's natural, a bush like any other,

Autopsyin's a sport you can't play undercover,

Like cranberry, hibiscus

The pole-vault and the discus,

All're welcome in Harry's Grand Morgue.

One day the mayor came through,

Errant push, my trolley flew

Down the ramp and out the door –

And wheels screamed along the floor

He's stopped in place to pick his nose,

In trolley's path, 'kerchief he blows...

And now her course is fully set

I can but wistfully regret

I work as Harry's gopher still -

With body speeding down the hill.

Dragging its cross, on the *via dolorosa*

Specimen escaped and now it's getting closer,

So help me God regain us

This ambulat'ry anus

And welcome once again I say

(we beg you when you come to stay) –

To Harry's Grand Old –

You're shy and unfamiliar

With lesions, bruised maxilla,

Lovely bullous pemphigoid,

With tumours and with haemorrhoids;

All in fabulous supply,

(You'll be added once you die),

In Harry's Grand, Filthy, Old Morgue.

Carnival Dance
Gabriel Faure/Frederica von Stade

To cry plaintive like a frog

Drowning in the garden –

Hunt down a fatal lover

This final Carnevale night

To the plaintiffs we will go

Ensconced within their soft wars

Apocalyptic waltzing

Between the cell and the sea

To the plain page we belong

Roving between black canals

Inexpressible feelings

Between their banal dances.

Lullaby

O little moth
In your light world, endangered by the strange
Constant in your need for change
Flutter on your golden road
'With the moon above, and the sun below'
You may yet forget to follow that moon,
Baffled by all the world's wind

Don't waste time with the centre of those suns,
Don't let hot air fill your lungs:
False apotheosis wrought
And wings are burned without a second thought.
O little moth, you must follow the moon
And stay as safe as you can

The night circus signals Artemis' face
With moon above, false light is no disgrace
Her beautiful form, shining across time [*λάμπει μέσα στο χρόνο*]
Will always put you on the proper path. [*το δρόμο τον καλό.*]

No matter how many candles you light,
Or how many towns you sight
Beckoning tired wings to rest,
Remember your life is always a test.
And only the hope of one day reaching
that moon will keep you flying.

This is the end of the playlist.

It's not good to listen to loud music for too long, so you may like to switch it off now.

And look around you...

Meanwhile, While Your Headphones Were On...

I - Alp Arshore

Romanus IV Diogenes:

Betrayed by Andronikos,
And again by Psellos,
And by John Doukas –
Ever victim to society;
With the lion's knee on his purple neck
They treated him like a king.

Ρωμανός IV Διογένης:

Προδομένος από τον Ανδρόνικο,
Και πάλι από τον Ψελλό,
Και από τον Ιωάννη Δούκα -
Πάντα θύμα της κοινωνίας,
Με το γόνατο του λιονταριού στον πορφυρό του λαιμό¹
Τον φέρθηκαν σαν βασιλιάς.

II - παραμύθι [fairytale]

The following is the story

Of A and also B.

A lived in a castle, in a dead land, and on call
At the centre of a marshy bog
Where nothing grew at all;
The pampered daughter of a king
With a great surplus of names
Whose vanity required that
He keep her locked in chains.

Whacked in time

Reverberating off continual hit techs and subservient
To a five-stroke roll

“You are like a brilliant light that leads me forwards
And you are light, without any true weight or substance.
You make light of my love, and ease its burden.”

Rock back and fifth on the deck of the ship
There's a captaincy waiting with your name on it
And the Master of Crabs awaits below deck
The King of the Rats

We headed off, in desperate haste,
A beast that slouched its way to Bethlehem;
All the while subject to a salty mire, a sullen smile
A sweet smell, as of asphodel.
And such remission did we undergo
A caustic carving out the tide
The world's dormition we witnessed there
Undone by howling rumbling snow—
All buried in reams of paper files,
Torn by blind black claws and hid away for someone's sake.

Laythese labours, and gentill the men, gather square
And listen there; to an unctuous ramble unequalled by any [?]
For I yearn to tell of a torrid hate unfair...

III - birds

A crow cannot rest except in the highest place,
Being one of complete seclusion, and inaccessible.
A crow can never lay an egg
In a shattered glass place
Shards attack and perforate the sky
Shards destroy the child in the skull/shell
Yolk drips into the parking lot and the crow moves once again, lamenting death
The nomad flies against the sun
And falls with the [?]
The nomad flies against the sun

And dines with the drums.
A tortured crow picks at remains
Consumer's crust, detritus
With such poor fare a [starling?] collapses and entreats us
Raised from hell a sheet of glass and let him look at the sky
And when he raised his wings and shattered it we were taken by surprise...
And there was no fragment but that of the window,
Only that which was everything
And could be interpreted every way.

Two at a time, on opposite sides, their tunics flapping in the wind
A low clash – steel reverberating through mountain air.
Two more – “I'll kill you!” “I'll kill your children!” High blows;
Then the charge: lined up, they drum on horizontal blades,
Leaping down and forward;
Reverse – the attackers hold the line
And meanwhile,
Drum, drum, the animal skin;
Anticipating - the animal skin.

Let your arms fall for once
Let the power fall
Maybe save itself for a fight that matters.
Twelve hundred causes call you,
One is right;
Twelve hundred prophets rave
You sicken at the sight;
Tiresias the dreamer, the liquid man-to-meme
Mercurial, restless, blurry,
Out of time,
Out of time.
Fruit pieces, compote, sludge

A mind that clammers into itself
Like a shy set of Russian dolls
Revolving inside out as if laughing
Like the absent shadow of Nitocris' gold.

The holy rock pigeon is swimming in the lake
The ever-hungry god looks famished for food to eat.
Living in a world full of great [?] giants,
The pigeon dodges shoes and feasts on blessed crumbs—
The sky is closer than this distant land,
The land of man is present yet lacks meaning
And the holy pigeon darts from crumb to crumb
Tree to shadowed earth,
Understanding nothing,
Sanctified since birth.

IV - maffs

Distortion, a torus of light
A string, and gagging in the dark
Disruption, and then silence
For everything a stunted tree grows

Pick with dirt-stained figures –
At the dark, and points of light
Brief candles for a cramped labyrinth
Brief sojourns through dead ideologies

It collapses under its own weight,
A drone, a thrumming fold,
The ziggurat wall rotates ninety degrees
Pagan deadlands ruled by a sideways king.

Split the victim in half as rain splits the world

And a chord splits time

An imaginary number is tortured,

Screaming at the altar of logic

Guns, retorts, mortars, thoughts

Lies, statistics, footage, courts

War begins unabashed between the gallows and the deep cruel beat.

Only publicans remain

Sheltering under the auspicious iron roof

Thunder and love in the rain

A final dismemberment of truth.

Made a devil's deal with Caesar

For some Earl Grey tea;

A luxurious commodity

From across the yellow sea;

And when it came on deck

The King of the Rats

Signed Caesar's check

And in next day's wreck

Killed profligate brats.

Condensation, smoke

The eternal play of steam on steel walls;

Scented burnings, leaves that broke

Aurora Borealis in the tea-cup's fall.

V - “*Kahl! Kaaahl!*” “*What?!*”

The moment of awkwardness, as when

A victim assists his bully with some minor matter;
Or a king calculates his own bounty,
Only to turn about and destroy his captors
Washing off blood with contented catharsis.

Everything's odious and somehow melodious
And why are they 'Germans'?
When they should be 'Germen'
- "And the Gerwomen and Gerchildren too"
Have nothing to say to -

Somewhere there lives a young butcher
In a scrapyard of fresh-reddened bones
Carving like mad as the boss won't be glad
His beef couldn't buy him a throne_
Somewhere there lives an old servant
At a disinfected desk of white wood
Standing at ease as he files the lease
And the records are checked, and found good.

Arise, o publicans, from slumber,
Wake up now, and unencumber
Yourselves of heavy, vicious chains
All your work for others' gains.

I await the Firebird; I await the snake_
Agony, apathy, agony, apathy, contests won and contests cost
Alleluia, alleluia_

VI - Matthew's prayer

The city stinks of rotten fruit,

It is presided over by an invisible serpent;
Unknown oligarchs prowl in carpeted back-rooms a hundred floors up –
Cheaters and drunks fight among the ruins
Eyes crimson and glazed
And pick needles_
Under iron needles, enter veins,
Under iron needles enter veins
Under iron...
And the vision begins, untaxed and trim,
Entry worth the price
Admission denied to a park smelling of smoke and blood;
Permission implied and the iron is pierced by snakes' fangs.

Enter the sacrilegious Firebird,
Come to burn the rot away,
And enter the knowing, humble asp,
And the crow in tow, feeling evil.
And last, the lark, reserved and stark,
Upholding phantom virtues still,
And struggling with the threat of submission.
Yet it deserves a chance to live, thrive
In this temple of rust and closed sunsets,
Like anyone else.

And grey lizards crawl beneath the wainscoting of society,
Seething as they bathe in the skinless sun.