

THE DREAM EXPRESS
SET I

by
Len Jenkin

November 2004

TRAIN SOUND.

SPIN MILTON and MARLENE MILTON appear on stage.

Spin sits at an electronic keyboard and rhythm machine. Marlene stands alongside him. Both Spin and Marlene have mikes.

It's late at night, somewhere in America.

SPIN MILTON

Good evening. On behalf of the Uncle Remus Motel, I'd like to welcome you all to the Briarpatch Lounge. I'm Spin Milton, and this is my lovely ex-wife Marlene. But that's just a label. The label on the bottle, not the juice inside. And as most of you out there already know, we're THE DREAM EXPRESS.

Tonite means a lot to me. It's kind of our anniversary. We've been at the Briarpatch for exactly three months now. Three pretty terrific months. Isn't that right, Marlene?

MARLENE

Some kind of wonderful...

SPIN

You know, only a few of you out there know this, but I was raised in a state orphanage and after that, an endless series of foster homes.

(MORE)

SPIN (cont'd)

For me, the late night crowd that pulls in here off Central for a little warmth, a little musical sharing--is the only real family I've ever known.

A little musical sharing...You know, sharing is caring. Total sharing is total caring. Hey, the truth is you can say it all in three little words. God--Love--Acid. Hey, just kidding. Those days are gone, right--but not forgotten.

Thank you all, a very real thank you, for being with Marlene, and me, and our music. This is Spin Milton reminding you again, in case your mind is a little fried, a little shaky tonite--a nite where the outlines blur, things slide into one another--that hand resting on the thin rayon fabric of her skirt, touching the warm thigh, beneath that hand just dissolves into her flesh, flesh to flesh. A meltdown.

MARLENE

Relax. Don't let Spin make you nervous. It doesn't matter. We're all one body anyway. THE body. And while you come to terms with that one, I'll remind you that we are the DREAM EXPRESS. We hope you're having as much fun as we are.

SPIN

You paid for the whole seat, but you'll only use the edge, edge, edge...

MARLENE

You know, I've heard many people speak words of love. I've seen them wash the car with a green garden hose in a green shade and short shorts in the sunset. In the scented nighttime, they rub up against each other, make true love, and watch a Godzilla movie on the late show.

(MORE)

MARLENE (cont'd)

It's bend over Red Rover, and in the shimmery glimmer of the morning after, whenever it may fall-- somebody look over their shoulder and somebody gone, with a heigh-di-ho and a fare-thee-well.

Hey, my friends--who knows what is in anybody's heart?

SPIN

It's a mystery.

MARLENE

Bees make honey, even in the lion's ear.

SPIN

You know, whoever you are, the very fact that you're sitting here tonight implies that you may very well have ruined your whole fucking life already. Don't you just know it. I know it. I know the shit you think. Don't smile, sweetheart. You're not on the outside, looking in the cage. These remarks are inclusive. Good looks don't get you off this time.

MARLENE

That's right.

SPIN

I know what's in that nighttable drawer, and in the trunk of the Chevrolet Caprice. I know what it takes sometimes to get you through till dawn.

I love you. Anyway. So does Marlene. That little candle is still burning, you know, the one you lit in a dream when you were five years old. That's why we're here. A little tenderness. Open your heart, and let us in.

Ready, Marlene.

MARLENE

Ready, baby.

SPIN

Let's do it like we did it in
Memphis. When the train came, we
were already gone...

MUSIC.

DREAM EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

Let's Get Physical (Milton Version)

SPIN

You're liking all the things that you know I'll say
Cause I make stimulating conversation
I gotta handle you just right
I know what you mean

You took me to a Polynesian restaurant
(Tell me Samoa)
Then to a Lithuanian movie
(Viva Vilnius, baby)
There's nothing left to talk about except horizontally

Let's get physical, physical
I wanna get physical
Let's get into physical
Let me hear your body talk, your body talk
Let me hear your body talk

Now Miss Universe, let me talk to
your mind for a minute
I been patient, I been good
Two total strangers on a table
I been a doorknob in a golden room
I know what you mean
You think I'll understand your point of view
(That's right, baby,)
'Cause we know each other mentally
Can you conceive that you're bringin' out
The animal in me

Let's get animal, animal
I wanna get animal
Let's get into animal
Let me hear your body talk, your body talk...

And so we watched in amazement
As the miller told his tale

(MORE)

SPIN (cont'd)
 As her face at first just ghostly
 Turned a whiter shade of pale
 Doot doot doot doo doo doot etc.....

END MUSIC.

MARLENE

Thank you, thank you so much. We're so glad to be back at the Shalimar Lounge. Our music communicates best when we work on the edge of town -- between the check cashing place and the Blood Donor Center. Between the Jack in the box and the Interstate Off-ramp. You know, this town is clinging to the planet by its teeth. Everybody let go and float up to heaven -- or tumble ass backwards into the abyss.

The fact is, it's a tad slow out there on the main stem. We seem to be here, but where the hell is everyone else?

I remember now. They're all gathered around the town well...

MUSIC

DREAM EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

TOWN WELL

SPIN

Hey Sugar, you wanna go for a drive? We wheel 'round to my place, I got the VCR repaired so we can view a fuck movie. They got em down the store twenty four so whatddaya whatddaya whatddaya say? It ain't love but it ain't bad.

MARLENE

What? (laughs)

SPIN

You can't stand there with your girlfriends forever, man. Those bitches are stupid.

Music continuing under. Spin sobs into the mike, a child CRYING.

MARLENE

Mommy's only gonna be inna Price-Chopper for a minit. You jus' wait inna car, O.K? You'll be all right. And stay outta the damn glovebox. Mommy's got her private stuff in there.

SPIN

(as a child in tears)

I wanna go inna Pirce-Chopper with Mommy...

MARLENE

Ahma bring you sompin. Bag o those toasted chitos. What kind you want? They got em cool ranch style? Old fashioned cheese? Chimichanga?

SPIN

(as child, crying louder than before)

I wanna go inna Price-Chopper with mommmy!

MARLENE

Shit.

Music continuing under...

SPIN

I'm an old man, an old old man and I'm blind. Lost my sight in a work related accident. Jones and Laughlin never give me a dime. Fuck it's my negligence. Have a drink in the parking lot don't mean I can't run the damn roller.

I worked hard in my day. Worked like a fucking cart horse and broke my health. Now I ain't even got a decent place to flop. I gotta go hunting me a rat hole at night.

MARLENE

Hey, I'm sorry. I really am. I...

SPIN

A man can't get a square deal in this world. There ain't no justice in this world.

MARLENE

She is a hard life, my friend.

SPIN

No justice and no mercy.

I'd drag my balls across broken
glass just to finger-fuck your
shadow...

Music continuing under...

MARLENE

Hey, babe, how you doin'? (no
answer) I said, how you doin'?

SPIN

Doin' my wash.

MARLENE

Believe it or not, I knew that. I
haven't seen you around before.

SPIN

I just hit the rinse cycle here...

MARLENE

Hey, I apologize. Please. I mis-
spoke. Forgive me. What I meant to
ask was who the fuck are you?

SPIN

Hey, take it easy, lady. No law
says I gotta talk to everybody.

MARLENE

This is not a legal question. It's
about you being a rude asshole.

(sweetly) So?

SPIN

I'm just a guy, just a guy around
here.

MARLENE

That's interesting conversation,
all right. So, uh, what do you do?

SPIN

What do you mean, what do I do?

MARLENE

Hearing problem is it? What do you do?

SPIN

I hang around the Launderama, watch college girls fold their underwear with my dick hid inna box of Tide.

MARLENE

Talk dirty to decent people, someone's gonna put your head through the wall. You get that?

SPIN

Hey, I was kidding, lady. A joke.

I'm a student, O.K. Down the T.I.A.

MARLENE

T.I.A.?

SPIN

Technical Institute of America. That's the college, down on Central. I start next week, if my loan comes through. I'm gonna study computers. What makes the screen light up. How they actually work, you know.

MARLENE

Well, Mr. College Student, here's my idea. We leave the wash to spin the fuck around and we drop in the liquor store buy a quart of Sweet Leilani, you come over, we drink it up, lay you down on my sofa, close your eyes and have the nicest li'l dream...

END MUSIC

SPIN

Once again, we're all here. In the Tiger's Eye. On the wobbling pivot.

MARLENE

And while you get your balancing act together...

SPIN

Equilibrate yourselves.

MARLENE

...let me remind you that we're the Dream Express. I'm Marlene Milton, and the gentleman on my right is...

SPIN

Spin Milton, alias Long John the Doctor. I'm not the doctor for what you think is wrong with you -- I'm the doctor for what is wrong with you. (looks crowd over) Hmmmm. Open wide. Say AHHH. Ah ha. You got love trouble.

Just take a red onion, half a glass of turpentine, and a pinch of Uncrossing Powder Number Nine. Grind it up in the cuisinart with some fine Colombian coffee beans and a spoonful of your pubic hair. Brew by the drip method, sweeten liberally and serve hot when the lady or gentleman comes to call.

MARLENE

Get some, and get it right this time. Help is at hand. Lucky dogs, all of you.

SPIN

Lucky lucky dogs.

MARLENE

Long John the Doctor is IN.

SPIN

All my prescriptions can be filled by the pharmaceutical division of the Seven Spanish Powers Curio Shop.

MARLENE

La Botanica Latina.

SPIN

Near the railroad tracks outside of Corpus Christi, Texas. If they don't have it, they'll go out and get it, and if it can't be got, they'll make it up in the bathtub.

MARLENE

Es muy muy muy barato.

SPIN

Now let's just say I fix you. The one you desire becomes your love slave.

MARLENE

Esclavo amoroso.

SPIN

They're lying in bed right next to you, naked and exhausted, snoring into the pillow. But you're wide awake. Clock says three a.m. And you're covered in sweat. Your body's shaking and your brain is on fire.

'Nother little nightmare. Pain and Death tearing at you with their yellow fingernails -- and your wrinkled old Mom and Dad, your beautiful children, even your new lover, they're all around you, hopping on one leg and gnashing their teeth. They suffer, moaning with grief and madness. In the background, a great mob of people you don't even know are drowning in a senseless lake of sorrow. The green ball is spinning out of control.

Why've you been dropped off here? Some kind of failed experiment? Who are you, anyway? Not a clue. What's gonna happen to you tomorrow, or in thirty years, and is it gonna hurt?

Nobody cares.

Marlene blows a kiss to the audience.

SPIN (CONT'D)

What you really got, the sickness that's creeping in your window at night, that lives in your underwear, that's walking behind you so you're scared to look back over your shoulder -- that's Amnesia. You forgot who you are. If you're a bad case, so does everyone else.

(MORE)

SPIN (CONT'D)

Get any worse, I'm gonna forget who you are. So is Nurse Marlene.

MARLENE

Who are you?

SPIN

Amnesia is not a disease -- it's a condition. You don't need to catch it -- you got it. Amnesia is your birthright in the USA. And if you don't remember you got it, you got the worst case of all.

(Siren sound) There's an ambulance. You need not ask for whom the red light flashes...

MARLENE

You, baby.

Call for the doctor.

SPIN

Call for the nurse.

MARLENE

Call for the lady with the alligator purse.

SPIN

I'm Spin Milton, a.k.a. Long John your barefoot medical practitioner, and for each and every case of amnesia -- I got the cure.

Spin and Marlene look over the crowd.

SPIN

See me between sets, darling.

MARLENE

You interested, Chief? See the Doctor after the show.

SPIN

See me later, sweetheart. Backstage.

MUSIC under...

MARLENE

For everyone in trouble, a love song. Un chanson d'amour.

SPIN

Il pleure dans mon coeur comme il
pleut sur la ville, bebe.

MUSIC

MUSIC EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

The Pina Colada Song (Milton
Version)

SPIN

I was tired of my lady
The bitch had made me insane
I was lost.
My life was a lie.
Lying next to her made my flesh crawl
So while she lay there sleeping
I read the paper in bed
And in the personal column
Was this letter I read

MARLENE & SPIN

If you like pina coladas
Getting lost on a train
If you're not into health food
If you have half a brain

MARLENE

If you like making love at midnite

SPIN

Ah ha...

MARLENE

In the dunes on the Cape

SPIN

P-town!

MARLENE

I'm the one that you've looked for

SPIN

That's in Massachusetts.

MARLENE

Bring electrical tape.

SPIN

Wow!

MARLENE
He didn't think about his lady

SPIN
Rhonda, the bitch!

MARLENE
I know that sounds kinda mean

SPIN
This ad was meant for me alone.

MARLENE
For him and his old lady

SPIN
Someone is strangling swans...

MARLENE
Had fallen into the same old dull
routine

SPIN
In the Bois de Boulogne

MARLENE
So he wrote to the paper

SPIN
That's in Gay Paree

MARLENE
Took out a personal ad
And though he's nobody's poet
He thought it wasn't half bad

SPIN & MARLENE
Yes I like pina coladas
And I have half a brain
I'm not much into tofu
And the dog's a Great Dane

SPIN
I've got to meet you by tomorrow noon
Or else I'm gonna go ape
At an eatery called Denny's
I'll bring electrical tape

MARLENE
So he waited with high hopes

SPIN
I brought my pistol too

MARLENE
And she walked in the place

SPIN
Fourteen shot clip

MARLENE
He knew her smile in an instant

SPIN
Hi! My name's...

MARLENE
He knew the curve of my face

SPIN
Oh my God...

MARLENE
I was his own lovely lady

SPIN
Rhonda!

END MUSIC.

MARLENE
And I said -- Oh, it's you, Nelson.
You put an ad in the paper, you
dweebhead. Were you gonna fuck her,
Nelson?

SPIN
I brought my pistol, Rhonda.

MARLENE
Oh. Are you gonna kill me, Nelson?
Are you gonna kill me, Nelson? Are
you gonna kill me, Nelson? Bring it
on, baby. Bring it on!

SHOOTOUT AT DENNY'S: GUNFIRE, SCREAMS:

CROWD
(on tape)
Oh my God! He's got a gun! Do fries
go wid dat shake? Get the children
under the table! Charlene, can we
get a mop out here? Oh god oh god
oh god. I that ketchup or what?
What!

MARLENE

Missed me, Nelson.

ANNOUNCER

(on tape)

Singing Duo Survives Shootout! Film
at eleven!

MARLENE

I don't like pina coladas. I like
sad carnivals, drawings of the
devil, extravagant operas,
childhood storybooks, religious
wars, living rooms at the bottom of
lakes, fog, black silk sheets,
churches, snow.

END SONG.

SPIN

Thank you.

MARLENE

Thank you very much. We are the
Dream Express.

SPIN

And we're coming around a curve
here at the Jack O' Hearts Lounge,
the fully mentholated nitespot of
the Royal Flush Travel-lodge.

MARLENE

You know, only a few of you out
there know this, but last summer
Spin and me were heading west on I-
Forty in this old Plymouth Duster.
It's three a.m. And I'm half
asleep, and right where the road
curves down under viaduct, we get
hit broadside by a ten-ton semi
hauling strawberries in from
Mexico.

I lay there in the front seat,
covered with glass and blood. Spin
was trapped behind the twisted
steering wheel, and he's moaning.
The truck driver gets out of the
cab, steps into the headlights.
He's got a girl with him, maybe
eighteen. They look at us bleed.
"Madre de Dios" he says to her.

(MORE)

MARLENE (cont'd)
 "Let's get the fuck out of here."
 Then I heard a siren, and I passed
 out.

MUSIC BEGINS UNDER.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
 Intensive Care Unit. Sunrise, some
 intern with a babyface and pale
 blue eyes looked down at me. "Wheel
 away the paddles," he said. "The
 chick's a goner. No need to
 defibrillate dead meat."

Then I floated up to the ceiling
 and looked down on Spin and me.
 Spin had six tubes coming outta
 him. He was pale, like he'd been
 drained of blood, and I could see
 the breath shake his chest as he
 gasped for air. Suddenly there was
 a high pitched sucking sound like
 an industrial vacuum cleaner, and I
 was outta there, my bed soaring out
 the window like a child's dream.

Next thing you know, I'm in a
 golden room. My Grandma Gussie
 comes in from the kitchen. She
 hands me a cold colacoko in a jelly
 glass. Then she smiles a beautiful
 smile in her wrinkly face.

SPIN
 (echoing under, soft)
 Marlene...Marlene...

MARLENE
 You ever wonder what the dead might
 have to say? A lot. "Shut up,
 Grandma," I finally said, "and just
 tell me -- what secrets do the dead
 know that the living don't?" She
 tried to answer me, but her head
 burst into flames. Grandma's voice
 called to me out of her burning
 head. She was trying to reach me,
 to tell me...

SPIN
 (echoing under, more and
 more insistent)
 Marlene...Marlene...MARLEEEEEENE.

MARLENE
SPIIIIIIIIIIN!

MUSIC ENDS.

MARLENE
I wanted to stay with Spin. We're not finished here yet.

I came to, with all functions reading normal. I'd been dead for seven minutes.

The doctors didn't know how I made it back. Jerks.

Irreversible brain damage, my ass. Albuquerque Medical Center... napalm the bastards... trying to genocide the red man...

MARLENE EXITS. SPIN DOODLES AT THE KEYBOARD.

MUSIC - SPIN'S RIFF

SPIN
Here's a little riff I learned from a gentleman by the name of Mister Groove Holmes, king of the funky-butt organ.

SPIN DOODLES SOME MORE

END MUSIC.

SPIN
Same train, different time... A young girl is standing by the side of a low-country road in the evening. Its misty, little chill in the air, and she's just standing there in the sawgrass with a sleeveless dress on. A white party dress, like she's going somewhere.

I pull over. "Where you headed?" I say. She says "Nowhere in particular." I say "I'm going down to this dance by the water. You wanna go?" She gets in and folds her hands in her lap. We barely spoke all the way to the beach.

(MORE)

SPIN (cont'd)

They had this dancefloor near the ocean, colored lights strung up everywhere. Christmas in the summertime. Rock and roll music, some local radio station playing.

There's a fried clam shack on a pier out over the water. We walk out to the far end of the pier. No one else around, and the surf's running dark underneath us. A boat goes by with a green light on the stern, way out on the black water.

I kissed her. After a long moment, she pulls away.

They play a slow one, and dance.

(sings)

"The ship of love, carried you from me, ooh ooh ooh ooh
But I'll always love you, for eternity
I spend my nights, by the lonely sea
Wondering are you thinking, are you thinking of me..."

On the way home, she asks to ride in the back seat. She's quiet. I keep checking the rear view mirror to see if she's really there. Then we hit an empty stretch of road, no lights, no other cars, and she starts to sing.

MARLENE

(singing very softly)

"I spend my nites by the lonely sea
Wondering are you thinking, are you thinking of me..."

SPIN

And then I'm not driving anymore. I'm going down the same road, but I'm on horseback. On a horse. I'm riding bareback, one hand twisted up in the horse's mane with her behind me, body pressed to mine, arms tight around my waist. The horse gallops down the road like a mad thing.

Her warm breath is in my ear. She whispers...

MARLENE

(whisper)

I won't ever forget you, Spin. Not
ever, ever, ever.

SPIN

And she laughs. That laugh will be
a bell ringing in the clouds when
my children and myself are dust.

She gets out, and I hear the car
door slam shut behind me. She walks
away through the mist and the
sawgrass into darkness.

I sit there till the sun comes up,
waiting for nothing.

MUSIC

DREAM EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

Wear Your Love Like Heaven - (Milton Version)

Color sky prussian blue
Scarlet cheese changes you
Crimson ball sinks from view
Wear your love like heaven
Wear your love like heaven
Wear your love like heaven

(PHONE RINGS under)

Lord kiss me once more, fill me with song, Allah
Kiss me once more, that I may, that I may
Wear my love like heaven
Wear my love like heaven
Wear my love like heaven
La la la la la la la la

Spin and Marlene each sing a difference verse,
simultaneously. One of them's singing the wrong one. A PHONE
still rings somewhere.

SPIN

Color sky Havana lake
Color sky rose carmethine
Alizarine crimson

As Marlene sings

MARLENE

Canna believe what I see
 All I have wished for will be
 All our race proud and free
 Wear your love like heaven
 Wear your love like heaven
 Wear your love like heaven

PHONE rings louder, drowning out music and song. Spin and Marlene stop singing and playing. END MUSIC. Phone continues RINGING, then a CLICK OF CONNECTION.

UNCLE WOLFIE

(on phone)

Gotcha! At last. Bust my balls over the luminous...

Spin? You with me?

SPIN

Yeah, Wolfie.

WOLFIE

Bust my balls over the luminous phonelines surfing the infinite web to find you.

SPIN

Uncle Wolfie, our manager.

WOLFIE

I'm as good as ever, but somehow, somehow my coffee's getting weak here. It's your goddamn fault. The two of you are fucking hopeless.

Marlene, you there?

MARLENE

I'm here, Wolfie.

WOLFIE

(sings)

"I'm the pied piper, follow me, I'm the pied piper, trust in me, and I'll show you, where its at, hey come on babe, follow me, I'm the pied piper, trust in me..."

Let's hallucinate together shall we? About Des Moines Iowa. The River West Club.

SPIN

Oh man, I took a bullet there...

WOLFIE

Two weeks from now. See... uh...

MARLENE

Manny.

WOLFIE

...Manny.

MARLENE

Woflie, you're fucking with us. Manny doesn't pay us. He hasn't paid yet for the gig last March, and...

WOLFIE

Doubt insults me. Like Jesus said to Thomas, a doubting woman is not gonna swing with the angel band. If you be the Jesus take the thorns from off your head? Is that what it was about, getting the damn thorns off? Making miracles, while Papa Joe still pulls a sixteen hour shift down at the pretzel factory. Twist! Twist! Twist! Like we did last summer, and the summer before, 110 in the fucking shade. Is it about where's my railroad ticket and my blue serge suit? Or is it about transforming this endless suffering into some kind of fucking grace.

Marlene, You still there?

MARLENE

Yeah, Wolfie. I'm still here.

WOLFIE

Remember the motto of every great artiste - 'Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em kiss ten bucks goodbye.'

Send a check to your Uncle Wolfie.

PHONE GOES DEAD. BUZZING SOUND. CLICK.

MUSIC.

DREAM EXPRESS
 (sings and plays)
Fuck You, I'm a Millionaire

I know that it's me that you can't stand
 But I got money in a suitcase,
 twice five hundred grand
 So if you don't like me I don't care
 Fuck you, I'm a millionaire

I got bank accounts in Switzerland
 Hotels in Martinique
 I have five Eurasian girlfriends
 who come in twice a week
 You say that you don't like me,
 ask me if I care
 Fuck you, I'm a millionaire

There's a couple dozen senators
 With whom I often dine
 There's nine supreme court justices
 and all of them are mine
 My memos to the president
 Have literary flair
 They say, Fuck me, I'm a millionaire

The hobo on the corner says
 "Got a nickel you can spare?"
 I say Fuck you, I'm a millionaire.
 Fuck you. Fuck you.
 Fuck you! Fuck you!
 Hey where you from? Ohio?
 Why don't you get fucked.
 Tax breaks for me
 Family value for you!
 Fuck you. Fuck you!

END MUSIC.

SPIN

I got an inspiration I wanna share
 with all of you, and I'm sure
 you're gonna enjoy it. Why don't
 you clean yourself up, buy yourself
 some flowers, take yourself out to
 a show or a movie, buy yourself a
 couple of drinks afterwards, take
 yourself home, crawl into bed, and

SPIN & MARLENE
 FUCK YOURSELF.

END SONG.

MARLENE

Thank you.

SPIN

We're gonna take a little break,
that little pause that refreshes.
We are the DREAM EXPRESS, the
rockin railroad, the midnite liner,
keeping all our friends out there,
keeping all of you, and you know
who you are, keeping you on track.
We'll be right back, so don't go
home. Nothing there but your empty
bed. You go home, we'll come find
you. You wake up, it's four a.m.
And there's Marlene, sitting on the
end of your bed sucking on a Salem
lite 100, and I'm in the corner by
that beat up dresser, stark naked,
and I'm plugging in.

MARLENE

While the Dream Express is out in
the alley, getting itself back on
track, maybe all of you can spend a
little time together.

SPIN

Love will find a way. We'll be
right back...

INTERMISSION (SORT OF)

MARLENE

We're back. Back from the deeps of
space, back from the very lip of
the void -- and you're still here.

SPIN

Worn out your welcome in the rest
of the universe?

MARLENE

Doesn't matter. Here at Pepper's
Town and Country, we take your
presence as a profound compliment
to the band, and we respect the
precious gift of your -- attention.

SPIN

We're conveniently located in the Asteroid Belt, the place of broken shells. A world that didn't quite measure up, but out of pity God couldn't throw it away.

We're here for you, baby. Sharing is caring, and total sharing is total caring.

MARLENE

You're riding in a club car on the Dream Express, and we're way over the speed limit. You can't call home anymore, Charlie. Spin has cut the lines.

MUSIC BEGINS

DREAM EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

Charlie

MARLENE

Woman at the next table leans toward you. Smell the perfume. Somethin' you remember? Ambush? Tabu? Rotting meat? She got one of those faces they pay people for and she says, "Let's go someplace nice."

SPIN

Go on, Charlie. We'll take care of the bill. Follow her.

MARLENE

Slip out that side door, Charlie. Look for your car in the parking lot. Uh oh. Your car's not there, Charlie. Matter of fact, the parking lot's not there. That girl's not there anymore.

SPIN

What the fuck...?

MARLENE

You're on the street, Charlie, downtown, in some kinda city.

(MORE)

MARLENE (cont'd)

There's a dump called the Elk Hotel next to a sort of Moorish arcade made out of popsicle sticks with a green light coming out of it, as if the interior of the arcade was beneath the sea. On the far side is a lingerie shop -- Celeste's Nights of Desire Boutique. The boutique is still closed, but the key, the key is in your hand. You're wearing a flower print dress, and red pumps. You've got a lifestyle here, Charlie. I mean, Celeste.

SPIN

Go inside, girlfriend.

Marlene steps forward.

MARLENE

Smells like rotting meat in here.

The phone rings.

Marlene picks up the phone.

SPIN

(on phone)

Celeste? Don't forget that potluck party tonight. And don't wear those red pumps. You look like a whore. Oh, and the kitchen sink's backed up again. Some kind of animal is living in the pipes. And some doctor called, says he needs to talk to you about biopsy results. Oh and everyone you know is dead, and the world is on fire. Celeste?
Celeste?

MUSIC ENDS

SPIN

There's been a mistake here. Hasn't there? I mean, in regard to your life. Things not turning out the way they should. Don't get bitter about it. No one ever knows what's actually shaking. And that's quite all right. It's O.K.

MARLENE

A-O.K.

SPIN

It's O.K.

Picture this.

MARLENE

In your mind, Charlie.

SPIN

Spin and Marlene Milton are in the back seat, and Uncle Wolfie's at the wheel. They're coming outta Fort Worth, on their way to Amarillo for a week at the Hi-Hat Lounge. Been driving all night, and about ten o'clock in the morning Uncle Wolfie pulls around to the rear entrance of the Hi-Hat.

MARLENE

(as Wolfie)

Sound check. Come on, darlings.

SPIN

No answer.

Wolfie gets out, opens a rear door of the Buick. Marlene's body rolls out into the gutter.

MARLENE

(as Wolfie)

Stoned again.

SPIN

Wolfie leans into the back seat. Spin's lying there with his mouth open. A fly lands on his tongue.

MARLENE

(as Wolfie)

Oh, shit.

SPIN

Their dealer gave them a bad bag. Double overdose. Spin and Marlene Milton, the Dream Express, died in the back seat of a Buick on the way to a club date in Texas.

Uncle Wolfie's first thought was

MARLENE

(as Wolfie)

Five nights five hundred a night
out the fucking window. Money in
the grave.

SPIN

Uncle Wolfie was broke. He looked
at the corpses.

MARLENE

(as Wolfie)

Stupid junkies.

SPIN

Then he got an idea.

MARLENE

(as Wolfie)

Ah hah!

SPIN

He got behind the wheel, drove out
to a picnic spot he knew by the
banks of the Ohio. He stripped the
bodies, tied on enough concrete to
keep them down in the mud with the
catfish, and rolled them into the
river. Spin and Marlene. There they
go -- --

MARLENE

Bye, bye.

SPIN & MARLENE

See them suffer a sea change, into
something rich and strange. Sea
nymphs hourly ring their knell.

SPIN

Hark, I hear them.

MARLENE

Ding, dong, bell.

SPIN

Uncle Wolfie made it to a pay
phone. Two calls. I was at the Hi-
Hat in 20 minutes. She was already
in the dressing room, combing out
her auburn hair.

MARLENE
 (her younger self)
 Hi.

SPIN
 (his younger self)
 Hi.

MARLENE
 You got a cigarette?

SPIN
 Uncle Wolfie came in.

MARLENE
 (as Wolfie)
 Here's the deal, you two. SINGING
 DUO SURVIVES CAR WRECK! A MIRACLE!
 Newspapers'll be here in a minute.
 You two are now the...

SPIN & MARLENE
 Dream Express.

MARLENE
 So you see, we are shadows. See
 right through us. Shadows of a duo
 who, for all we know, were also
 shadows. Someday we'll make a wrong
 turn, and our manager will make two
 more phone calls. Who knows for how
 many centuries Uncle Wolfie has
 been riding on the Dream Express.

Here's a love song.

MUSIC.

DREAM EXPRESS
 (sings and plays)
Changes (Milton Version)

SPIN
 Everyone is going through changes
 And no one knows what's going on
 And everybody changes places
 But the world still carries on

SPIN & MARLENE
 Love must always turn to sorrow
 And everyone must play the game
 It's here today and gone tomorrow
 But the world goes on the same

MARLENE

Love must always turn to sorrow
And everyone must play the game
It's here today and gone tomorrow
But the world goes on the same

END MUSIC.

SPIN

(whisper)

Thank you.

END MUSIC. SPIN EXITS.

MARLENE

First time I saw Spin he was
standing on the streetcorner in the
falling snow, with a little casio
keyboard hooked up to a speaker,
and he's standing there in a thin
coat with his toes peeking outta
his hightops and a scraggly beard,
and I see him reach over on the
street for a butt and he lites it
up. He's maybe twenty. I'm
seventeen at the time, and I'm
working. This is my lunch hour. I'm
working at the Taco Bell.
Chimichanga? Chimichanga? I'm not
like the other kids on the line.
I'm full time so I can get enough
money to buy a car, drive outta
town so fast they'll think I
dematerialized. Say, Janet, where's
Marlene? See those two red lights
in the dark. Look at 'em get
smaller. That's Marlene's spirit
body out on I-40. Smaller and
smaller. Now she's gone. Bye bye.

So there he is, this very beautiful
boy standing in the snow like a
jerk, and now he's singing this
dumb sixties song.

MUSIC. SPIN RETURNS, SINGS.

DREAM EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

Walk Away Renee (Milton Version)

SPIN

And when I see the sign that points one way

MARLENE

I know that one...

SPIN

The one we used to pass by every
day

MARLENE

So I join in

SPIN & MARLENE

Just walk away, Renee
You won't see me follow you back home
The empty sidewalks on my block are not the same
You're not to blame...
From deep inside the tears I'm forced to cry
From deep inside the pain I chose to hide
Just walk away, Renee
You won't see me follow you back home
Now that the rain beats down upon my weary eyes
For me it cries.

MUSIC continuing under...

MARLENE

We start talking, and we're talking
about stuff, like movies, an' he
says

SPIN

You got any cigarettes?

MARLENE

Yeah, but I'm sorry they're
menthol. Kools. (shows pack)

SPIN

That's my brand. (shows crumpled up
empty pack)

Both take a cigarette from Marlene's pack.

MARLENE

We light up.

They light up.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Cigarette party.

We don't have anything else to say.

(MORE)

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Nobody's passing by to give any money for music cause the weather's so lousy.

But we just stay there sucking in the smoke, and the snow's falling all around. I'm freezing, and I think he is too but he won't say anything...

END MUSIC.

MARLENE

I got a place. It's warm there. You wanna come over?

SPIN

She takes my arm and we walk. After awhile we come to this old red brick building between two factories and we walk up to the fourth floor. We go into her apartment. It's a hole in the wall, but she's got it fixed up clean and pretty. She's got a single bed, with some kind of guatemalan rug or something over it, and a beat up stuffed squirrel on top.

MARLENE

Living room, bedroom, kitchen. Simultaneously. You like it?

SPIN

Yeah. I like it.

MARLENE

Really? You really like it.

SPIN

Looks like a mansion to me.

MARLENE

I'm a little behind in the rent. The landlady's been getting on me lately.

SPIN

It's hard times for a lot of people. I'd like to give you some money, but I don't have...

MARLENE

Hey, I'm just talking about how things are, O.K.? I didn't invite you here to ask you for anything.

SPIN

I didn't think that. Don't worry about it. You were just talking.

MARLENE

Uh, why don't you sit down -- anywhere. You hungry?

SPIN

Yeah. I'm hungry.

MARLENE

O.K. I got some food. I'll make us some food.

SPIN

Great. That's great.

She takes off her little hat, like a beret, and starts to cook. She's pretty, doing that. Her eyes shine.

She's excited that I'm there, and that she's cooking, and I'm watching her.

We eat. We eat roast chicken, and creamed spinach, and potatoes browned in the pan grease in the oven. We have pistachio nuts and bananas for dessert, and drink sweet wine.

I walk over to the window. It's still snowing. City lights blink on and off through the haze of snow. She comes to the window and stands beside me. She takes my hand.

MARLENE

I like the snow, but I'm glad we're not out there. There are worse off than us tonight. Having a roof over your head is something.

SPIN

Yeah. Yeah, it is. I like it here.

MARLENE
My name's Marlene.

SPIN
I'm Spin.

MARLENE
What kinda name is that?

SPIN
You know, like how the world goes
around.

MARLENE
That's a funny name to have.

SPIN
Maybe so.

MARLENE
Where you staying tonight, Spin?
You got a place?

SPIN
In the park. I been sleeping in the
park.

MARLENE
You can stay here. There's enough
room for the two of us -- until the
landlady kicks us out.

Quiet. They kiss.

MARLENE
One hundred, ninety-nine, ninety-
eight, ninety-seven, ninety-six...
THREE

MUSIC

SPIN
Zig zag, and her face goes all
Picasso.

DREAM EXPRESS
(sings and plays)
Come and Get Your Love (Milton Version)

Hey, (hey) what's the matter with
your head yeahhh

(MORE)

DREAM EXPRESS (cont'd)

Hey, (hey) what's the matter with your
mind and your sign and a ooh ooh ooh

Hey, (hey) nothing the matter with
your head, baby, find it, come on
and find it

Hey, with it baby cause you're find and
you're mine and you look so divine

Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love

Hey, (hey) what's the matter with your
feel right, got to feel right baby

Hey, (hey) it's your business if
you want some, take some

Get it together baby

Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love now
Come and get your love

Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love
Come and get your love

Hey, (hey) what's the matter with
your head!

MUSIC ENDS.

MARLENE

Once upon a time, Spin and me are
cruising across Nevada at the
midnight hour. In the vast desert
between Frenchman's Cliff, a town
made of wood, and Eureka, a town
made of brick and steel -- we run
out of gas. Spin hauls out an empty
can from the trunk.

SPIN

Saw an all-nite Sunoco a few miles back. Stay with the vehicle. No sense both of us walking miles in the nighttime. Gila monsters out there.

MARLENE

He starts to walk away. He stops, looks up at the sky.

SPIN

Hey, baby, those stars are cold.

MARLENE

Bye bye, Spin.

He's gone, and I lean back on the hood. Watch says one ten in the a.m. That light way out there... Zat a firefly? Or a wandering soul? No room left in hell so the damned are set loose in Nevada with their heads forever on fire.

I'm thinking this sort of shit out there in the middle of nowhere and the light comes closer, and I can see it's not one light at all, but a circle of lights, hovering about fifty feet off the ground. Uh oh. I get in the car, lock the doors, and before I know it he's standing there in the headlights. A small man in a white linen suit with a Nehru collar. His black hair's painted on. He looks like a young Peter Lorre at some fictional garden party. Thin lips, and very frail somehow, as if a wind could lift him and blow him gently away.

Then the headlights went out. All four locked doors flew open and I fainted.

This next part is in very soft focus. I'm lying on my back, and spidery fingers poke my body, my face. I struggle. Then I feel a sharp pain in my belly, and there's a smell like pomegranates.

(MORE)

MARLENE (cont'd)

Then I'm in a golden room and the being who resembles Peter Lorre is sitting next to me on a sofa. He sounds like Peter Lorre too.

SPIN

(as Lorre alien)

I am from a far place. You call it the Spiral Nebula in Ganymede. By the way, you bit me.

MARLENE

I what?

SPIN

(as alien)

Your child will be born under a distant sun.

MARLENE

My what?

SPIN

(as alien)

I am a... research person. You bit me, Marlene.

MARLENE

I'm sorry. Oh God. You're gonna put me in a zoo in another galaxy.

SPIN

(as alien)

Who told you that? It's a filthy lie, Marlene. I wouldn't hurt a girl like you. How could you even think such terrible thoughts.

Please. Show me your world.

MARLENE

Well, O.K. I'm showing our world to this alien being. You come too.

SOUND OF SAUCER TAKE-OFF

MARLENE

Bye bye, Briarpatch Lounge.

SPIN

(as alien)

Briarpatch Lounge...hmmmm...

MARLENE

Look! That's the Grand Canyon!

SPIN

(as alien)

The Grand Canyon...

MARLENE

Look, there's the Eiffel Tower!

SPIN

(as alien)

La Tour Eiffel

MARLENE

Look! The Lucky Dog Motel.

SPIN

(as alien)

L'Auberge du Chien au Bonne Chance.
Closer, Marlene.

MARLENE

A man is in Room Ten, lying on the
bed. He's smoking a cigarette and
looking at the ceiling. He's drunk
and thoughtless.

SPIN

(as alien)

Closer still, Marlene.

MARLENE

No, not completely thoughtless.
He's thinking of a Daffy Duck
cartoon he saw once on TV.

SPIN

(as alien)

Le canard fou est tres amusant.

MARLENE

Why are you talking in French?

SPIN

(as alien)

It's the language of love, Marlene.
Lie back on my sofa. Close your
eyes, and have the nicest little
dream...

ALIEN DREAM MUSIC UNDER...

MARLENE

Look. Girl at the wheel of a black Monte Carlo in a white T shirt, sun is shining like a Carribean lemon. Car radio's playing. She's pregnant, isn't she? She pulls off the road, down under the viaduct... gotta meet someone. (sings) "Just walk away, Renee, you won't see me follow you back home..."

SPIN

Summer night along the lake road. Taking a walk. "Look honey. A falling star. Make a wish."

MARLENE

Parking lot of the shopping mall, and a three year old girl is running between the cars in a pink party dress. Mommmmy! Mommmmy! I wanna go inna Price-Chopper with Mommy.

SPIN

On the back lawn, lying on his belly in the grass, a boy's reading a comic book -- "Crimson Claw Adventures -- The return of Doctor Doom." Wow. Far overhead floats a single white cloud.

MARLENE

There's a room in Milwaukee that faces Hannay street, and in that room a man watches TV. This TV is playing an old movie, black and white people from the dead time dance across the little screen in their gowns and tuxedos. Everyone in that dancehall of the dead is gone, dust and ashes in your mouth. A young girl's shoulders gleam in the party lights... "You want to dance with me?"

SPIN

She's sitting on the edge of the bathtub in a house in a Connecticut suburb. She's got a husband asleep in the bedroom, two kids already in college. She writes a note in lipstick on the mirror.

(MORE)

SPIN (cont'd)

Says I love you jinglebells. Then she swallows a handful of seconal and lies down on the tiles to rest...

MARLENE

Old man pulled over on the Interstate Parkway sitting in the driver's side door like a toddler with his pants wet piss dripping down into his shoe. He needs a shave and his eyes are red with crying.

SPIN

"You don't worry about me, kids. My wife's gonna come get me. We live right over in Boynton Beach" --

MARLENE

Only his wife's been dead for ten years and Boynton Beach is 3,000 miles away.

SPIN

"Come into this world bare ass, and when you go out you might have a different suit on. That's the only difference."

MARLENE

And ain't that how we live...

ALIEN DREAM MUSIC ENDS.

MARLENE

Look! There's Nevada, with those cacti. There's my car!

SPIN

(as alien)

Goodnight, Marlene. Au revoir.

Sound of saucer take-off.

MARLENE

And then the alien being and his ship were gone. I was lying on the sand alongside the vehicle, looking up at the cold stars.

You know, our world is the most beautiful of all the worlds god made.

(MORE)

MARLENE (cont'd)

It has the most beautiful people in it.

Why are so many of them weeping?

Long beat.

SPIN

Amnesia. Long John the Doctor knows. Amnesia makes it hard to remember that we live in Paradise.

And we're not talking about Diddy Wah Diddy, all painted up like rainbows, where the lemonade springs and the bluebird sings, up in the pearly clouds of love.

MARLENE

You know where it really is, baby. My little baby. The gate of heaven-- it's right here, darlin', in the piss-stink hallways.

In shit.

I'm Marlene Milton, and this is my ex-husband, Spin--but that's just a label. You're riding through the night on the Dream Express. Spin's at the throttle, we lost our airbrakes, and we're doing ninety down a twelve percent grade. Hit it...

MUSIC.

DREAM EXPRESS

(sings and plays)

Do Ya Think I'm Sexy (Milton Version)

He sits alone, waiting for suggestions
She's so nervous, avoiding all the questions
His lips are dry, her heart is gently pounding
Don't you just know, exactly what they're thinking

If you want my body, and you think I'm sexy
Come on sugar tell me know
If you really need me,
Just reach out and touch me
Come on honey let me so, (So me no, baby)

He's acting shy, cause all the birds are singing
Two total strangers, lets spend the night together

(MORE)

DREAM EXPRESS (cont'd)

Outside it's cold, it's misty, and it's raining
 Give me a dime, so I can call my mother
 He says I'm sorry, but I'm out of milk and coffee
 Never mind that sugar, we can watch an early movie

And so we watched in amazement
 As the miller told his tale
 As her face at first just ghostly
 Turned a whiter shad of pale
 Doot doot doot etc...

END MUSIC.

MARLENE

Thank you, babies. Thank you all so much.

You know, love is a Mystery.
 Capital M. It's a cracked window in
 a strange hotel room, look out down
 the alley to a violet streetlamp on
 the boulevard, down the boulevard
 to the city line, climb halfway up
 a ragged hillside over the highway,
 get your back against a tree and
 wait. Light up a smoke and wait for
 something. Love is in that waiting,
 little blue glow on the earth line
 tells you it's day and the night
 has ended.

You're in the kitchen and the
 butter go sizzle in the pan, and
 you pour in two eggs, and stir 'em
 around, look over your shoulder and
 she got the little bunny's head in
 her orange juice and she's laughing
 and laughing.

Somebody just opens their blue eyes
 wide, and lets you look inside.

Now is the hour of the dragon, that
 hour of the deep night when our
 hearts are open. Sharing is caring.
 And total sharing is total caring.
 We care about every one of you. We
 wish you peace.

Have a last one---cause it's just
 about closing time.

(MORE)

MARLENE (cont'd)

And when you get home tonight, safe in bed--right before you drift off to sleep, take a moment, and think on Spin and me.

A long silence.

You'll be back here tomorrow night. I know you will. I asked the management to put a little "comeback" in your drinks...

SPIN

One drop is all it takes.

MARLENE

You know what the preacher and the politician have to say? You can see that message on your TV, in your newspaper and on the street--

SPIN

"Them that hath shall be given some more, and them that ain't got never shall get, world without end, thus and forever, amen children."

MARLENE

You know what we say? Spin and me?

MARLENE & SPIN

No cover, no minimum.

SPIN

We giveth, and we ain't taking nothing away. And please remember, boys and girls. If you do have trouble in love, just singe the hair off a dead black cat, and fill its mouth with lemon peel and melted red crayons.

MARLENE

Crayola.

SPIN

Wrap the body in tinfoil...

MARLENE

Alcoa.

SPIN

...and leave it where the one you desire is sure to pass it by...

MARLENE

Good night. Say your prayers.
Pleasant dreams.

SPIN

Keep your nose clean, use the man
inside, be kind to everyone. We're
back at the Briarpatch tomorrow
night. Join us. Meanwhile, enjoy
the garden.

MUSIC.

Lay down, my dear brother,
Won't you lay and take your rest,
Won't you lay your head down
Upon your Maker's breast,
Oh I love you
But the Good Lord loves you best,
And I bid you goodnite, goodnite, goodnite

Lay down, my dear sister,
Won't you lay and take your rest
Won't you lay your head down
Upon your father's breast
Oh I love you,
But the Good Lord loves you best
And I bid you goodnite, goodnite, goodnite

Lay down, my dear children
Won't you lay down and take your rest,
Won't you lay your head down
Upon your mother's breast,
Oh we love you,
But the Good Lord loves you the best
And I bid you goodnite, goodnite, goodnite
And I bid you goodnite, goodnite, goodnite
Goodnite, goodnite, goodnite
Yeah I bid you goodnite, goodnite, goodnite
And I bid you goodnite, goodnite, goodnite

Goodnite, sleep tight, don't let
the bedbugs bite. Goodnite moon,
goodnite brush, goodnite old lady,
whispering hush...

END MUSIC. THE PHONE RINGS. SPIN AND MARLENE LOOK AT EACH
OTHER, THEN EXIT. THE STAGE IS EMPTY EXCEPT FOR THEIR MIKES,
PIANO, ETC. PHONE CONTINUES RINGING. CLICK OF A CONNECTION.

UNCLE WOLFIE

(on phone)
Gotcha! Heh heh.
(MORE)

UNCLE WOLFIE (cont'd)
 (pause) It's your Uncle Wolfie,
 calling you from nowhere. Spin? You
 there? (pause) Maybe they're
 asleep. It's late.

"Lay down, my dear children, won't
 you lay and take your rest, Lay
 your head on your Uncle Wolfie's
 breast..."

Marlene? You there? (pause) I'd
 drag my balls across broken...heh
 heh heh. What the hell. I'll be in
 touch.

CLICK, AS THE PHONE GOES DEAD

ENCORE

THE DREAM EXPRESS RETURN TO THE STAGE.

SPIN
 Here's a little cupcake to take
 home with you.

MUSIC.

DREAM EXPRESS
 (sings and plays)
I Think We're Alone Now (Milton Version)

Children behave,
 That's what they say when we're together
 And watch how you play,
 They don't understand
 And so we're running just as fast as we can
 Holding on to one another's hand
 Trying to get away into the night
 And then you put your arms around
 me as we tumble to the ground and
 then you say

I think we're alone now
 There doesn't seem to be anyone around
 I think we're alone now
 The beating of our hearts is the only sound

Look at the way
 We gotta hide what we're doing
 Cause what would they say
 If they ever knew
 And so we're running just as fast as we can

(MORE)

DREAM EXPRESS (cont'd)
Holding on to one another's hand
Trying to get away into the night
And then you put your arms around
me as we tumble to the ground and
then you say

I think we're alone now
There doesn't seem to be anyone
around
I think we're alone now
The beating of our hearts is the
only sound
Ahhhhhhhhh Ahhhhhhhhhh
Ahhhhhhhhh Ahhhhhhhhhh

And so we watched in amazement
As the miller told his tale
As her face at first just ghostly
Turned a whiter shade of pale
Doot doot doot etc...

THANK YOU!

AND OUT

TRAIN SOUND. EXIT.