

Tell Me Why

A Metaphysically Conceited Comedy in Two Acts

by
Chuck Puckett

Last Revised: 1 June 2006

© 2006 Chuck Puckett

Chuck Puckett
Puckett Publishing: www.puckettpublishing.com
629 Jackson St. SE, Decatur, AL 35601
Email: puckett_chuck@hotmail.com
Phone: (256) 682-0783

Setting

Just before the Dawn of Creation, and then shortly thereafter in and around the Garden.

Time

Just before, and then for awhile after, Time begins.

Act I

Scene 1

LIGHT: stage is completely dark. A voice speaks out of the darkness.

MOSES

Ahem. It's going to be a little hard to get this written down in the dark. I know "In the beginning" is the usual place to start, but you could roll things forward some. This is tough enough without having to guess at what it is I'm writing. How about jumping right ahead to "Let there be light"? Fiat lux and all that.

LIGHT: Lights come halfway, but only on half the stage: the other side is still in blackness. MOSES is seated at a desk, quill in hand, parchment before him. He wears some sort of robe implying Biblical times. Behind him, there is a forest. There is also a gate standing unattached to any wall. The Gate is open. A ladder slants up into darkness at the edge of the stage.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Oh, that's very nice. A clear separation of light and darkness. I'll just get that down while the image is fresh in my mind. "And the light was separated from the darkness." Listen, if this is as bright as it ever gets, you'll have every single living thing gone completely blind before the week is out.

LIGHT: Lights come up full on the lighted half.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Much better. Okay, here's what I've got so far: First there was Nothing, then there was Something. Then comes Light, and that separation there. The other side is Night of course. Then splitting the firmament. Oh, and there's some water someplace: over, under, it's not clear which.

GOD descends ladder. He is dressed in workman's clothes, and has a tool belt. He holds a tape measure.

GOD

Sounds sort of blasé, Moses. Is that the best you can do?

MOSES

I'll spice up the language later.

GOD hands one end of tape to MOSES.

GOD

Hold this and stand next to the firmament there.

GOD extends tape from edge of light to edge of stage.

GOD (CONT'D)

I don't want it spicy, I want it dignified. And I want you to make sure you get all of it. Very important.

MOSES

For now, I'm just trying to concentrate on the main stuff. That's what you said you wanted.

GOD

(to himself)

Let's see, six hundred billion light years this side. The other side'll be the same. Big enough. If not, I can always expand it. Said I wanted what?

MOSES

For me to describe the Creation.

GOD

Frankly, I was hoping for a better description. The Creation of the Universe should get decent coverage. This is not exactly easy work I'm doing here, Moses. Well, actually, it is pretty easy.

MOSES

You're kidding?

GOD

I do not kid. You see, all I have to do is say a thing, and bingo! There it is. Word equals Thing. The hard part is dreaming up what to say. After that, it's a piece of cake.

MOSES

Just say it and there it is, huh?

GOD

Check this out: "Bacteria."

MOSES coughs.

GOD (CONT'D)

Voila, we've got disease.

MOSES

Nice trick.

GOD

You do have to be God.

MOSES

It couldn't hurt. Anyway, I'd be no good at it. I'm slow of speech and slow of tongue, as you well know.

GOD

Yes, I know. I know everything.

MOSES

If the Creation were up to me, it'd take a lot more than the six days you scheduled for it.

GOD

Six days, eh?

MOSES taps tablet.

MOSES

That's what it says here.

GOD

Actually, I figured in some slop time. I could do the whole thing in four days, five tops.

MOSES

Don't brag. Now go ahead and say whatever it is you're going to say, I'll try to keep up. But I have to tell you: I'm already getting writer's cramp. I hope I don't miss anything.

GOD

Just make sure you get the big stuff. The devil is in the details.

MOSES

What is that, the first joke?

LIGHT: As GOD enumerates the days, lights quickly go down to half and back to full to indicate the passage of days. GOD rubs his hands together.

GOD

Okay, here we go. That first light and dark and the firmament, that's two days already. Now, pile the waters up over there and that'll be the seas, and the dry land will be whatever's left. We'll put grass on the land, and plants and trees. Especially fruit trees.

LIGHTS: come up on the other side of the stage, where we see a large tree and a tall chest.

The tree has fruit hanging from its branches and roses around its base.

GOD (CONT'D)

That'll do for a day.

GOD motions and LIGHTS go down almost off.

GOD (CONT'D)

Okay, the night is obviously way too dark, so put up a smaller light to take care of that, keep the big light for the day.

LIGHTS: Back up.

GOD (CONT'D)

Oh, and make the lesser light kind of fluctuate every few days, like a big pendulum.

LIGHTS: On one side of the stage go to full and black a few times.

GOD (CONT'D)

That's right. That way everything will be able to keep up with what time of year it is. That's a day. Big day coming up, it gets interesting here. Put fish in the sea and animals on the land.

SOUND: Animals.

GOD (CONT'D)

Oh, and let there be birds, lots of birds. Over both.

SOUND: Birds.

MOSES

The birds are a nice touch.

GOD

Thanks. But wait till you hear this. I made all of them, fish, birds, whatever, have two sexes, male and female. And that's all I had to do. They'll do all the work, and I sit back and watch them be fruitful and multiply.

MOSES

A peeping tom, that's what you are. But I have to agree that it is clever.

GOD

I am nothing if not clever. Okay, that's a day.

GOD motions with his hand, LIGHTS go down and up.

GOD (CONT'D)

That's five days, right?

MOSES nods.

GOD (CONT'D)

I told you I could do it in less than six. A nice job, if I do say so myself, and I do, and that's that.

MOSES

That's it?

GOD

This is it.

MOSES

You're sure this is it?

GOD

This is definitely it.

MOSES

Oh. So, what about man?

GOD

This is almost it.

MOSES

I thought Man was supposed to be the whole point. Create Creation and then give it to Man.

GOD

It is the whole point. I want to make sure I get it exactly right, that's all.

MOSES

You can get it wrong?

GOD

Let's just say I can get it less right. I am especially hung up on this free will issue. I mean, when a Creator goes to all the trouble of creating the universe, gets it just the way he wants it, he does not have a warm fuzzy feeling when there's a loose cannon like free will charging about the place.

MOSES

But you want Man to admire what you made.

GOD

Yes, and a little praise wouldn't hurt my feelings.

MOSES

All that admiration and praise will be so much empty noise if Man can only act like a parrot. Which is a very nice looking bird, by the way.

GOD

They have their place. But you're right. Without free will, I may as well use the parrot. Still, it is a risk.

MOSES

Who says you have to decide now? Go ahead and make Man, and then see how you like him. If you're satisfied with the way things turn out, give him free will then. Or don't.

GOD

Moses, for someone who is slow of speech, you do occasionally come up with a reasonable notion. Who says I have to decide now, indeed? Nobody but me. Okay, we'll start with mud.

MOSES

Mud? Why mud?

GOD fashions with his hands.

GOD

(building to a pitch)

I made the land and water first, so naturally, those have to be part of him. Then I add a little light, the "light of reason."

LIGHTS: brighten, then back to normal.

GOD (CONT'D)

And to top it all off, I breathe wind into the whole concoction.

GOD breathes into his hands.

MOSES

Why in the world would you want to break wind into him?

GOD

Breathe wind, not break. My breath. It's for his soul.

MOSES

That's a relief. What's he going to look like?

GOD

Why, me of course. Ecce, homo!

ADAM emerges from behind the tree, wearing a bathrobe.

GOD (CONT'D)

Well, what do you think?

MOSES

I'd have used more light and less mud. He has got your nose.

GOD

(to ADAM)

What do you think?

ADAM

I don't.

GOD

It's early yet.

MOSES

Does he have a name?

GOD

Let's see. His name should sound like... "Adam".

ADAM

Adam? Yes, that is my name. What's yours?

GOD

I'm God. But you can call me the Lord, if you want to. Or possibly Creator of the Universe. We try not to be too formal here.

ADAM

Nice to meet you, Lord.

GOD

Sooo... how do you feel?

ADAM

I feel great! Just great. Is there some other way I should feel?

GOD

Not at all. I was wondering how you liked all this. I made it for you.

ADAM

Really? Well, it's just great. Really. Looks great.

GOD

I made the whole thing, the entire Universe, just before I made you. It was sort of a big deal.

MOSES

That move from Nothing to Something, Bang! That was impressive.

ADAM

Well, it really is just great. Swell.

(pause)

Is, uh, this all there is?

GOD

All there is? What do you mean, is this all there is? There is a whole bunch of this. This goes way the hell out there, practically forever.

ADAM

Oh. Well, I could only see this part right here, and—

GOD

This is all there is.

(to MOSES)

You see what happens when you stuff an infinite spirit into a finite body? Cosmic myopia.

(to ADAM)

Is there anything you'd like to say? Any small word of appreciation?

ADAM

I said it was great. The, uh, Creation is really great.

GOD waits expectantly, MOSES discretely points to GOD.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Oh, and you. You're great, too. Oh, how great you are!

GOD

Well, thank you. Now it's time for you to get with the program, idle hands are the devil's workshop. Nothing has a name yet, except you, so naming things will be your big responsibility.

ADAM

But—

GOD

Oh, and if you see any odds or ends lying around, I'd appreciate it if you might clean up a little.

ADAM

But—

GOD

I already got rid of the trilobites and the dinosaurs, so it should be mostly okay. There is a lot of comet dust left over from that, but there's a broom around here somewhere. Moses, it's back to the Sinai for you. I've arranged a little meeting between you and Jethro. And his daughter, Zipporah. You're going to like her.

MOSES

I hope she's better looking than Nefertiti. Way too skinny.

GOD gives him a thumbs up and MOSES exits. GOD contemplates Creation one last time, motions for LIGHTS to go down and up (ADAM is awestruck by this), gives an appreciative nod and exits. ADAM watches him go, then drifts around the stage, idly looking up the tree, out over the Creation, examining the Gate. He picks up Moses' book and smells it inquisitively. He hums to himself. He looks at the ground, startled.

ADAM

What the—! What is that?

ADAM picks up something small.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I've never seen one of these. But then I've never seen any of this. I wonder what I should call it? Hmmm. For some reason, "earthworm" sounds right. Earthworm it is.

He sets it back down.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Now how did I know that was an earthworm? Hey, there's a lot of things around there.

He shades his eyes, gazes out.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Let's see. I'm pretty sure that's an oak tree. And that has to be a daisy. That's a, uh, wolf. Or is it a dog? No, it's a wolf. That's a dog. And there's a deer. There's a quail. And a duck. And a wide-mouth bass, and a crappie. And a catfish. Say, a fella could have himself a pretty good time around here.

He picks up another bug.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Now, is this a millipede or a centipede? One, two, three, four, five, six... Oh, what the heck, make it a centipede.

He tosses it carelessly away.

ADAM (CONT'D)

No sense in naming everything all at once. Anyway, I probably got most of the important stuff.

ADAM sits at desk, hums, twiddles thumbs, looks around, then up at ladder, then around.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Yessir, got the important stuff. Naming the animals, that's what I'm doing.

ADAM goes to ladder and looks up.

Uh, God? Lord, sir? Are you up there, God?

GOD (OFFSTAGE)

Yes, I'm up here. I'm trying to rest up here, if you don't mind.

ADAM

Oh. Excuse me, Lord. Sorry about that.

ADAM again sits at desk, hums, twiddles thumbs, etc.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Yessir. Animal namer, that's me. Hmmmm.

He goes to ladder and calls up.

ADAM (CONT'D)

God! Hey, God! I'm really sorry to bother you, but, well, doggone it, it's lonely down here. I was wondering, you know, if you're not too busy, maybe you could-

GOD sticks his head out.

GOD

I said I was resting, didn't I? Those to whom I give the gift of language usually understand that resting is the opposite of busy.

ADAM

Sorry. I am kind of new at all this.

GOD climbs down. He is wearing a bathrobe like ADAM'S.

GOD

That's alright, I was only drawing my bath. I hope I didn't leave the water running, I don't want to flood the place. Yet. Now, what's all this about being lonely?

ADAM

Look, you put all this great stuff around here, and I really do appreciate it. But there's nobody to talk to, nobody to play with. I've got all these brand new words in my head, and I'd sort of like to use them. Can't you stay down here with me? We could talk.

GOD

Stay? I can't stay here all the time. This is a big universe, I mean, this thing is huge! Running a universe is a full-time job. And frankly, I don't see where you'd make much of a conversationalist. If you're lonely, I guess I'll have to get someone to stay with you.

He goes to chest, opens it. Red light and steam are seen.

GOD (CONT'D)

I had some earlier designs that didn't exactly work out. I believe I left one of them down here. Might be a nice companion for you. Ahh, yes.

GOD helps LUCY out. She is beautiful and sexy, practically poured, as they say, into a slinky dress. She walks to ADAM.

LUCY

(seductively)

Hello, there, handsome. Where have you been all my life?

ADAM

Right here. Only place I've ever been. My name is Adam. What's yours?

LUCY

For everybody else, I'm Lucy. For you, I can be whatever you want me to be. What do you want me to be, Adam? How about Lilith? Would you like me to be your Lilith?

ADAM

Oh, yeah, I'd like that a lot!

GOD

I'm not getting a good feeling about this. I just remembered why I put you down there. We'll have to come up with something different, Adam.

ADAM

But, I like this one, God. Really, I do!

GOD

Yes, I can see that.

GOD pulls ADAM aside.

GOD (CONT'D)

Listen, Adam, she wouldn't work out. She'd make you do things you wouldn't like.

ADAM

Name one thing I wouldn't like!

GOD

Okay, okay, you'd probably like them. At first. But believe me, you'd never be able to keep up the pace, not with a hot-to-trotter like her. She'd wear you down like sandpaper.

ADAM looks at LUCY.

ADAM

Possibly. Probably. But I'd sure like to give it a try.

GOD

I'll start from scratch and make something that will always be agreeable with you. You'll be much happier. Lucy, thanks for your time. Maybe we'll get back with you, I'll let you know.

LUCY

Are you sure, Adam? We could have a whole lot of fun.

GOD

He's sure. Now off you go.