

## **I PLAYED THE CONCORD**

All Words and Music © Kenny Karen

### **I PLAYED THE CONCORD**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

I played the Concord with Jackie Mason  
And other leading pros whose acts were  
smooth as silk  
They were the “A” team, I was evolving  
And as they drank their scotch and sodas  
I would stare into my glass of chocolate milk.

In the years of my development  
Every weekend proved to be another test  
I would drive up to the mountains  
Stopping only at the famed Red Apple Rest  
Monticello was the heartland  
Kiamesha Lake, the vintage of that age  
And through managers or mentors  
My conditioning began at centre stage.

I played the Concord with Jackie Mason  
And other leading pros whose acts were  
smooth as silk  
They were the “A” team, I was evolving  
And as they drank their scotch and sodas  
I would stare into my glass of chocolate milk.

Lowly colonies of bungalows  
Casinos where performers tried and failed  
Latin dancing acts or acrobats  
Aging comics whose material grew stale  
And by one a.m. the audience  
Would nod off as the band began to play  
No one heard and no one listened  
‘Cause the seats were filled with snoring molds  
of clay.

I cast aside the ethnic songs  
That melt the heart and long for days gone by  
Just be a Wasp like Bob Goulet  
The difference was that I could make ‘em cry

And I opened once at Grossingers  
Where the ghost of Eddie Fisher still remained  
He lay buried in his jukebox  
And his pictures suffered from neglect and  
stains  
All the promises of stardom  
I absolve all those who knew not what they  
said  
I am still alive and kicking  
As for the aforementioned, most of them are  
dead.

I played the Concord with Jackie Mason  
But that was long ago still I remember when  
They were the “A” team I kept evolving  
And as I drink my scotch and soda  
I keep thinking I would do it all again.

## NINETY-SECOND STREET “Y”

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

At the Ninety-Second Street “Y” room and board  
are provided

Transitory scholars reside, floors to house the  
misguided

Every six by eight domicile prison configuration

A community of exiles, Bolshevik inspiration

Prices underscoring while costs are soaring

Our fates rely on the Ninety-Second Street “Y.”

At the Ninety-Second Street “Y” cafeteria’s open  
Mashed potatoes, ketchup and fries, fifteen cents  
buys a token

To escape the poverty line Broadway lists of  
auditions

And each call-back leaves you behind, one more  
night of attrition

Acting class encroaches and vocal coaches

Personify at the Ninety-Second Street “Y.”

Predators, senators, editors, janitors

Student night, open mike, fisticuffs, call your bluff

Lois Lane, candy cane, salad bar, cookie jar

Contraband, hand in hand, Attavan, you d’man

Legalize, prophesize, in demise, euthanize

Live it up, give it up, chamber group, chicken soup

Artistry, ministry, chemistry, up a tree

Entertaining group.

At the Ninety-Second Street “Y” temperaments are  
exploding

You can kiss your baby goodbye, fortune cookie’s  
eroding

And at fourteen dollars a week rent can be  
problematic

And the independence you seek, nice but not  
automatic

And if waiting tables not romance fables

The Met is calling, the sky is falling

The great white way is on holiday

I’m in short supply at the Ninety-Second Street  
“Y.”

## **ALLERTON AVENUE**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Staring outside my bedroom window  
Summer of sixty-three  
Diversified as neighborhoods go  
Working in harmony  
Strollers and stalkers fill the playground  
Keeping me company  
Candy store hawkers know their way 'round  
Pride of the IRT  
Bronx botanical s – halfway to the zoo  
Follow the "El" on Boston Post Road  
To Allerton Avenue.

High riser bed and muddy echo  
Stereo at my feet  
Clearing my head to Buddy Greco  
Swingin' on Nowhere Street  
Telephone's down and disconnected  
Payment is overdue  
Making the rounds I feel dejected  
How will I make it through?  
Ride the train at night-a different overview  
My new terrain is my delight  
On Allerton Avenue.

Home sweet home, room and board  
Sanctuary, thank the Lord  
Forge ahead or stay behind  
Ordinary is a waste of time

Hitting the road in my Impala  
Cruising the Franklin D  
Lower East Side's a royal gala  
Losing my lethargy  
Writing my songs at 1650  
Broadway is calling me  
Stringing along and being thrifty  
Money's an absentee  
Independence is a phase I'm sticking to  
Those were the days of my defiance  
On Allerton Avenue  
Learning the ways of self-reliance  
On Allerton Avenue.

## **AND NO ONE CARES**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

There is no light – a sense of foreboding  
No one is right and everything's wrong  
There is no truth, just faceless emoting  
And passions exploding where no one belongs  
And no one cares....

There is no time to wait for tomorrow  
There is no hope that God will prevail  
And all the prayers and promises broken  
The words are mere tokens when time's not for  
sale  
And no one cares...and no one cares.

Evil controls when the souls of the vanquished  
have died  
Cleansing impurities, matter of power and  
pride  
When there's no place to hide.

There is no shame though children lay dying  
Their bodies lame and tangled with fear  
Their muted cries as hunger awakes them  
And soon God will take them, they'll just  
disappear  
And no one cares...and no one cares....

**THE PLEASURE IS ALL MINE OR**  
**ODE TO THE IMMORAL MAJORITY**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

It's such narrow-minded thinking, so one-dimensional,  
We just go to church like Ol' John Birch, we are so conventional.  
To hell with rhyme and reason and an independent line,  
There's no discourse and no remorse 'cause it's just a waste of time.  
Three cheers for Pat Buchanan, he's politically enshrined,  
They've had their chance, their song and dance  
Now the pleasure is all mine.

It's hard to fight the religious right when the words all seem to fit.  
In God we trust and He trusts us, we're gonna reap the benefits.  
Just take a look at the Holy Book when the world's in such distress,  
We can set you straight, seal your fate  
'Cause we know that we're the best.

It's such narrow-minded thinking, such a bankrupt enterprise,  
No gun control, no birth control, we never compromise.  
We preach our moral values and we sail the Holy Sea,  
America the beautiful, God gave this land to ME.  
We listen to Rush Limbaugh, he's rotund, but he's refined.  
He'll take your call, then watch you crawl  
And say, the pleasure is all mine.

Your tired, cold and hungry have all washed upon our shores,  
They bite the hand that feeds them, then they yell and scream for more.  
Illegal immigration, sweet land of liberty  
They steal our bread, they're too well fed  
There's nothing left for me.

It's such narrow-minded thinking, all your democratic views,

Come join the fold, we'll buy your soul, then we'll sell it back to you.  
You sins will be forgiven, have a wafer, pass the plate.  
Keep up those contributions, you'll sail through those Pearly Gates.  
We'll do all your researching, never question what's divine,  
He is the one, God's only son, beat the drum then step in line.  
Conservative's the way to live  
From now on your ass is mine!

## **FATHER'S DAY**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

In a gathering of springtime harvest, lakeside  
jubilee  
Generations bring their independent ideologies  
There are stories told and times remembered, old  
philosophies  
Be it autumn leaves or chilled Decembers, stirring  
memories.

And my daughters reminisce of winters gliding on  
the lake  
While the boys encountered warmer waters, Carvel  
birthday cakes  
And my grandson laughs at photographs whose  
colors fade away  
But, what's left behind's a state of mind, designs  
of younger days.

As the silent sails and noisy engines pass in  
serenade  
There is harmony in nature's bounty sitting in the  
shade  
There is food and wine anticipated slowing down  
the pace  
With the taste of time well cultivated etched on  
every face.

Now I've lived to count another summer's cast of  
souvenirs  
Sentimental ties to childhood slumber's unrelated  
tears  
There is much to do and much to see much more I  
need to say  
And my gifts are smiling back at me this happy  
Father's Day.

On this Father's Day, happy Father's Day  
All my babies have come home.

## **DIRT**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Dirt – it's what we live for  
Dirt – of thee I sing  
Do we revel in the crime?  
Should they all be doing time, or are they  
innocent  
Dirt – it's a beautiful thing

Glancing through the papers, journalistic  
points of view  
Masochistic capers, someone's always getting  
screwed  
Allegations flying, who did what and where to  
whom  
No sense in denying dust is flying off that  
broom  
Guilt is an obsession that we savor  
Truth is only there to call their bluff  
Headlines vow to trash the daily flavor  
Craving more, we just can't get enough

Of all that Dirt – it's what we live for  
Dirt – of thee I sing  
There are scandals to be fed  
Salivate, then scratch our heads  
It's always scintillating, Dirt – it's a beautiful  
thing

Vixens and pariahs fill the tabloids every day  
Holy pedophiles, though reviled are on display  
Paparazzi's favorites, Hari Krishna, solitude  
Grimace at the cameras then disrobe and pose  
half-nude  
Hurricanes and earthquakes are destroying  
Preachers praise the Lord then yell "repent"  
Plague and infestations are annoying  
Heaven only knows they're heaven sent

Hell bent on, Dirt – it's what we live for  
Dirt – of thee I sing  
We all clamor for the worst  
Blow 'em up then watch 'em burst  
It's always captivating, Dirt – it's a beautiful  
thing

Where are the treasures that open the mind  
Laundry exposed and abused  
Regurgitation reflects the divine

Don't genuflect when you chew

It causes indigestion, Dirt – it's what we live  
for  
Dirt – of thee I sing  
Though we grovel through the slime  
Life is still worth every dime  
And as for stimulation, Dirt – it's a beautiful  
thing  
The best of all creations, Dirt – it's a beautiful  
thing  
Except for fornication, Dirt – it's a beautiful  
thin

## **ENGAGED**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Engaged, my daughter's engaged  
She's well past the time of knowing her lines  
and turning the page  
Ideals, explicit ideals  
The fairytale rhymes, intangible signs, explain  
how she feels  
Her dream fulfilled.

Engaged, my daughter's engaged  
She leveled the score, a bridesmaid no more,  
she's found center stage  
It's late, but never too late  
She sat in the shade and watched the parade  
and questioned her fate  
Aware, afraid  
Engaged, my beautiful girl's engaged.

He's kind, attentive and kind  
He offers her truth, the semblance of youth  
envelops his mind  
They'll wed, this summer they'll wed  
The scent of outdoors, a twilight's encore, the  
breaking of bread  
A sip of wine.

It's time, it's certainly time  
Maturity feeds on mutual needs, they're still in  
their prime  
Her eyes, it's all in her eyes  
The trace of a smile, the face of a child, a  
haunting disguise  
The joy, the prize  
Engaged, my beautiful girl's engaged.



## **BACKSTAGE**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Performers all are practicing, each movement,  
every line

The acrobats use tumbling mats  
The juggler's, rings and artifacts  
Rehearsing one more time  
Then sit down and wait your turn  
The flames are starting to burn  
Internment is all the rage Backstage.

The orchestra sits restlessly, awaits their call to  
arms

Conductor's gifts have atrophied  
Baton is a catastrophe  
Relying on his charm  
As anxieties collide  
Hostilities coincide  
Instability's disengage Backstage.

What is the fate of the greater extremes  
Run of the mill or fulfillment of dreams  
Is their aptitude unlimited or lesser than they  
seem  
Are they over the hill or just beginning.

Comedians wait nervously, reclusive and  
withdrawn  
Perpetuate absurdities  
Congenial infirmities  
Their chance has come and gone  
When all else they've tried has failed  
Then profanities prevail  
It's the new approach and age Backstage.

Singers project their delectable skills  
Scales and selectively difficult drills  
Will they reach the heights of victory or suffer  
from the spills  
Is the prize that they seek well worth the  
winning.

The dancers are in uniform perfection in their  
line

Despite their choreography  
Their eight-by-ten photography  
They've lost their sense of time  
As for me I strut my stuff  
Not as great but still good enough  
As we turn another page Backstage.

## **SOPHISTICATED**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

They said you're too goddamn sophisticated  
Who do you think you are?  
High-brow phrases you've created  
You've taken things too far  
You can find poetic license  
We don't understand a thing you say  
Don't indulge your own neuroses  
Less is more, don't get in your own way.

Just be like some court reporter  
Sit right down and just record the facts  
Messin' round with ol' Cole Porter  
Can't compete with ancient artifacts  
Inner rhyming's too extensive  
Cross your "T"s and always dot your "I"s  
Your pretense seems too defensive  
Keep it simple learn to compromise.

They said you're too goddamn sophisticated  
Who do you think you are?  
High-brow phrases you've created  
You've taken things too far  
You can find poetic license  
We don't understand a thing you say  
Don't indulge your own neuroses  
Less is more, don't get in your own way.

Once you find a subject matter  
Keep your train of thought clearly defined  
Just forget the idle chatter  
Stick to a simplistic frame of mind  
Never mind what's motivating  
We'll decide how best to feed the soul  
Franks and beans are stimulating  
Trying to achieve a common goal.

Searching for a new alliance  
Trying to comply with my worst fears  
Fusion and robotic science  
Integrate the language of my years.

They said you're too goddamn sophisticated  
Who do you think you are?  
High-brow phrases you've created  
You've taken things too far  
You can find poetic license  
We don't understand a thing you say

Don't indulge your own neuroses  
Less is more, don't get in your own way.

They said you're too goddamn sophisticated  
Who do you think you are?  
They said you're too goddamn sophisticated  
Who do you think you are?

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOVE ME**  
**ANYMORE**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

We suspended operations  
'Cause nothing felt the way it did before  
And we lost communication  
Declarations could no longer be ignored  
As the hallowed halls of justice turned away  
and locked the door  
Closing all negotiations  
Now you don't have to love me anymore.

We had passion in our bloodstreams  
Fragrant honeysuckle growing on the vine  
And we fortified each sweet dream  
Every day consumed another year of time  
And I never would conceive I'd wind up  
pleading on the floor  
But this legal proclamation  
Says you don't have to love me anymore.

Strangers passing in the night  
Out of love and out of sight  
Hollow now where spirits once would soar.

Every story line is pending  
With the final chapters lacking in detail  
And the truth is not worth bending  
Only emptiness and loneliness prevail  
There may come a time when peace of mind is  
all that lays in store  
But my heart will still be mending  
There's no joy in my pretending  
I believe in happy endings  
But now you don't have to love me anymore.

## **SENIOR MOMENT**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

I look into your eyes, surprise, who are you?  
Your face is familiar, similar to one I knew  
I might be a bit forgetful time to time  
Winding down the back roads is driving me  
out of my mind.

I feel like I'm in absentia all the while  
It's not a full-blown dementia, cramps my style  
I try to associate the where and when  
Fit the puzzle pieces together then do it again.

Senior moment, knocking at my door  
Losing track, I keep coming back for more.

Assembling names and faces, friends and foe  
Addresses and calling places just for show  
Remembering who is who and where is where  
New and distant memories disappear into thin  
air.

I'm gathering information, hard to find  
Deciphering old quotations line by line  
I'm using my verbal skills to fill a void  
Standard bearing mental agilities feel paranoid.

Senior moment, knocking at my door  
Losing track, I keep coming back for more.

I'm finding this all amusing to be sure  
I'm feeling a touch confused and insecure  
But when I look back at hard times you can bet  
Nothing painful is worth remembering so I  
forget.

Punctuating fast lanes and interludes  
Calibrating youthful ineptitudes  
Senior moments fill me with gratitude  
Why? I forget.

## **ELEGY**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

There were times long ago when the north  
winds would blow  
We were locked in a winter's embrace  
When the cold would set in through the frost  
and chagrin  
We'd resemble a harlequin's face  
We would dance through the night, all our  
visions were right  
Our precision would brighten the course  
Our ideals would prevail where all others had  
failed  
Though bereft of regret and remorse.

And our spirits would soar and our voices  
would roar  
Disapproval of whispers and lies  
We would laugh at pretense, at the ladies and  
gents  
At their failures and lost enterprise  
One more round for the young, for the songs to  
be sung  
The preservers of hope and esteem  
To the very last drop, to the cream of the crop  
To the sweet benefactors of dreams.

And I cry just a little bit easier now,  
retrospectively probing the years  
Where perfection was just a reflection of trust,  
and delusion a preview of tears  
Recollections mistakenly modify facts into  
fractions of what used to be  
Our misguided conceptions and lack of  
perception composing our own elegy.

Stages come and then go, interrupting the flow  
Intercepting each moment in time  
And our casual flair disappears in thin air  
As we cross each invisible line  
Class reunions negate every cruel twist of fate  
Gravitating to what we've become  
But, we are who we are as we stand at the bar  
Mesmerized by our vodkas and rum.

For the rest of our lives we'll be husbands and  
wives  
Our convictions upstaged and replaced  
Only youth could provide what we all cast  
aside  
Ingenuity time had erased  
But, the sentiment grows as the truth is  
exposed  
We are not who we thought we might be  
Someone else will decide, we're just here for  
the ride  
Uninvolved in our own destiny

And I cry just a little bit easier now,  
retrospectively probing the years  
Where perfection was just a reflection of trust,  
and delusion a preview of tears  
Recollections mistakenly modify facts into  
fractions of what used to be  
Our misguided conceptions and lack of  
perception composing our own elegy.

## **ANOTHER NEW YORK STORY**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Just another New York story, one more tale in  
black and white  
Panorama is unfolding, never-ending appetite  
Every try out and rehearsal gives more  
meaning to the call  
Each approval or reversal, one step closer to  
the fall.

Each defensive mechanism, each expert  
ineptitude  
Motivation is self-driven with a touch of  
attitude  
Every acting class behind me, résumés  
exemplify  
My abilities uprooted, the deception of a lie.

Stars in my eyes, grace in defeat  
Broadway's misgivings pacing the streets  
Out on the town, misunderstood,  
Waiting on tables, waiting for good.

Just another New York story, like the snows in  
Central Park  
Where the weather's transitory, chasing  
shadows in the dark  
And the lovers fill Sheep's Meadow to the  
daffodil's delight  
As the one act repertory fades away into the  
night.

Stars in my eyes, grace in defeat  
Broadway's misgivings, pacing the streets  
Out on the town, misunderstood,  
Waiting on tables, waiting for good.

Cigarettes and neon headlines  
Main attractions, closing deadlines  
Audience reactions rise and fall.

Just another New York story, one of many  
we've been told  
Is there glory in illusion? Are the streets still  
paved with gold?  
Temporary city dwellers, undivided or alone  
Share a wealth of satisfaction that New  
Yorkers call their own.

## **TABLE FOR TWO**

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

I look out at the people who've come here  
tonight  
As they search for a whimsical place  
And the noticed are labeled with fabled delight  
While a dominant smile fills each face  
They're all happy to be here, to be entertained  
To explore an alternative view  
As I soar to the heights of my soul there are  
drinks coming through  
At a table for two.

There are masks that protect me rejecting the  
truth  
From the shadows surrounding the hall  
And the monitor gently encounters my youth  
As the music deflects off the walls  
And a questioning vision and circles of light  
Now reflect on the world I once knew  
I meander through opening nights sighting wait  
staff and crew  
And a table for two.

And the management's pleased that the house  
has been filled  
As the seekers of truth search for cause  
There are friends and well-wishers whose  
minds have been grilled  
To the protocol rounds of applause  
Then the roar of the lions, resounding and clear  
All is ready, the lights and the cues  
Now presenting a legend of song in his proper  
milieu.

And I make it look easy, with charm and with  
grace  
Never minding the bridges I've burned  
I feel twenty years younger the fear's been  
erased  
As the prodigal son has returned  
There are love songs remembered, some comic  
relief  
There is nothing I feel I can't do  
And I close with a sense of belief and a loving  
adieu,  
To the table for two.  
There are thunderous ovations the end is in  
sight

And the love of my life's in full view  
Take my bows as I exit stage right leading me  
back to you  
And a table for two.