

# Job Triumphant

a verse drama in the style of a Medieval Mystery Play



produced at the Yale Graduate School of Drama in 1965

© 1964, 2015, Robert W. Lawler  
PO Box 726, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

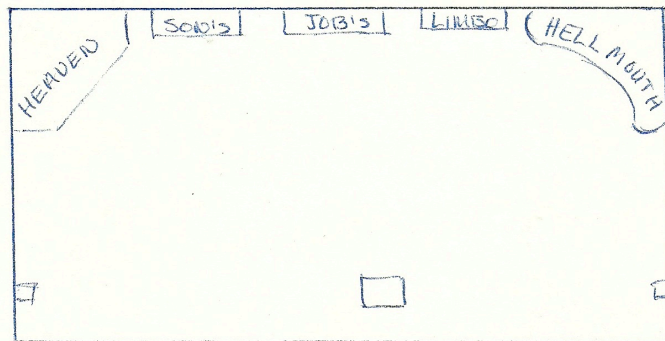


Cast of Characters  
(in the order in which they speak)

GOD  
CHORUS OF DEVILS  
SATAN  
FIRST MESSANGER  
JOB  
WIFE  
THIRD MESSANGER  
A RELATIVE OF JOB

MUTE CHARACTERS: 3 shepherds; 4 devil-robbers; 2 farmhands;  
4 devil-soldiers; second messenger; children of Job;  
devils; relatives of Job.

This play was written in imitation of the Wakefield Master. Thus, the stage for which it was designed has a polyscenic set. There are five mediaeval mansions, or places of action, surrounding the center of the stage. The five mansions are Heaven, the house of Job's eldest son, the house of Job, Limbo and Hellmouth. Below is sketched a possible groundplan for such a set on a proscenium stage:



The action of the play moves forward in a continuous stream of time. The story itself is imagined to have taken place circa 900 B.C. in the land of Uz.

The stanza of this play is an adaption of the Wakefield stanza. The rhyme scheme is the same as that of the original (the nine lines rhyme: ab/ab/ab/ab/c/d/d/d/c ). I have permitted myself the liberty of using apocopated rhyme, e.g. forces, door, more, tortures (they rhyme if you cut off the end of the word; words such as forces and tortures may be considered verbal analogs of run-on lines of verse.) The meter is primarily based upon stresses. Each half-line of the quatrain has two stresses. The fifth line has one stressed syllable. The sixth, seventh and eight lines each have three stresses. The ninth line has two stressed syllables. Generally, the lines of this play have more unaccented syllables than those of the original Wakefield stanza. There is a tendency toward a rising paeonic rhythm. In reading aloud or reciting, the lines should be spoken "trippingly on the tongue".

At curtain:

God is alone on the stage, seated in Heaven. God is a robust and dignified man, roughly fifty years of age. He is not the Patriarchal Justicer, but a human, loving father. God permits Satan to rebel against him in a way that will eventually teach Satan to pity and love. God can permit Satan to hurt Job because he is able to easily efface Job's pain. God sees the necessity of permitting Satan's rebellion because Satan, having imperfect intuitional knowledge, must learn through experience.

GOD crosses down center.

### **GOD**

1. I am God, the Trinity. Your Attention I command.  
I bring this tale for you to see that you may better understand  
How through Grace, God's Charity, and Faith, a man's own hand  
Can beat the Devil thoroughly, despite his evil, puissant band.

Of human birth,  
Job, our man, has the tenacious  
Faith of child in his father. Ungracious  
Satan will try Job's faith, rapacious  
In his hope to rule the Earth.

2. Job's children Satan kills and forces them to Hell, but them I send  
Out and keep in Limbo. When the door opens from Limbo, whence they wend  
Homeward, Job's united once more with his children and his friends.  
For sustaining Satan's tortures, Job is sainted at the end

Of the story.  
This is right, as I have willed,  
For Job is with lovingness instilled.  
Job loves his God, his children.  
His wife he... endures.

3. Despite ridiculous humanity, Job persists where Adam fell,  
Eschews the inducements of wily Satan, an act none could excel  
Until my son's divinity surpasses through harrying Hell.  
I've published through the Cosmos a decree, summoning Satan to my dwelling  
Place above.

I summoned him to help him learn  
Through the defeat he shall earn  
To subjugate his self-concern  
To pity and to love.

GOD returns to Heaven and resumes his seat upon  
his throne, awaiting the approach of Satan.

From stage right - or through the audience if the stage form permits - enters SATAN with his escort of Devils, singing, marching and tumbling in the manner of the legions of a Roman General in a Triumphal Parade. Their song may be repeated as a necessary accompaniment to their movements on the stage. The rhythm is regular, capitalized syllables accented.

#### DEVIL CHORUS

4. SATan was the FRIEND of God but GOD was FEARful OF his power.  
GOD tried to obSCURE his glory. SATan CURSED him, FOUGHT and beat him.  
WINning nether CHAOS and the GREAT aBYSS of HELL forever.

HAIL Satan HAIL, all HAIL.  
SATan is a DOUBLe DEALer.  
SATan is the SOLE soul-STEALer.  
SATan is a TRUE faith HEALer.  
HAIL Satan HAIL.

With a gesture, SATAN dismisses his escort which disappears into Hellmouth as he stalks up to Heaven.  
In relation to GOD, SATAN might be best considered a clever adolescent. He imagines himself a heroic tyrant and to reinforce this self-image he denies reality whenever necessary, employing whatever rationalization occur or an extreme skepticism.

#### SATAN

5. Monarch of the Celestial Sphere, Co-Regent of the Universe,  
Since once in battle as your peer I gave and got no worse  
Than I had given and cost you dear, you know the power of my curse  
And I would not come in fear at your command... nor would I nurse

A grudge for what  
Is past. I offer peace,  
For when battles cease  
And hatred finds a soft release,  
Then war is not.

6. Millenia, in truth, have passed since the date when once we fought.  
Let us face the truth at last and make a treaty as we ought,  
A treaty such as this I cast on coming... (a scroll) where I've sought  
To guarantee to the whole vast double kingdom peace war bought

With its demise.  
Your claims you must but fold  
To lands creation-myths have told  
Are yours, and let each hold  
The worlds he occupies.



GOD

7. You say "the worlds he occupies"... Tell me, whence have you come?

SATAN

From Earth, where I exercise dominion.

GOD

You would sum

Earth with the painful prize of Hell and your hard won scum  
Of Nether Chaos ? Man lies in your power too ? Come, Satan, Come,  
Don't be silly.

SATAN

Every human act is tainted.  
Every single soul is painted.  
Not a soul, a single sainted  
Soul serves your will.

GOD

8. Have you considered my servant Job? Search out far and near  
You'll find none like him on the globe, a prayerful man who would veer  
Away from sin, of immobile, saintly faith, no mere  
Man, but a theophile and theophobe most holy.

SATAN

Does Job fear

God for nought?

Have you not, as I've suspected  
Hedged him in, his goods protected?  
Will he pray with wealth defected,  
Children netted up and caught?

9. Let me bring Job to the test, snatch up all his wealth, all his lands,  
And children with the rest. I'll prove that the ground on which he stands,  
That faith you tout, to be at best sated, sensual demands,  
If you but grant me this request.

GOD

I do, but lay not your hands

Upon himself.

SATAN

And you'll renounce your claim  
To Earth when my little game  
Shows Job to be the same  
As men of lesser wealth?

GOD

10. Satan, Satan, how absurd! Your hope's impossible for what  
Never will, nor has occurred, for me to err.

SATAN

O Rot!

So you say, so I've heard you claim. I don't believe a jot  
Of it. The truth is, in a word, you're afraid. You do not  
Have faith enough  
In what you say you know.

GOD

Very well then, be it so.

SATAN

With your permission, I will go  
To Job... and call your bluff.

Satan leaps from the platform of Heaven down to Earth.  
God, remaining in Heaven, withdraws behind a curtain.

SATAN (alone)

11. By all the shapeless sulphur of Hell... haha, I've got it now...  
Fragrant earth... can the cedar smells of woodlands ever purge the foul  
Stench of sulphur from my stellar consciousness, fulfill the vow  
Of Heaven's hope I daily tell before my legions to rally

Their support?

Oh fragrant Earth, though you are  
But a step to Heaven, you are  
More temp'rate tempting than... the bar  
At Heaven's Court.

12. Come out, Job... It's your kind will replace my legions down below  
While we once more embrace the free air.

Job enters from his house, crosses to the altar and begins to pray.

No use... I know

That God won't hear and when I chasten your faith then your woe  
Will make you curse the light, your nascent spirit, and the God-foe

Who gave you pain.

As well as life. To the task:  
Job's children, fields, and flocks I ask  
My fiends to destroy. Let caskets  
Show Job life's gain.

The action of the following invocations is performed in  
dumb show. The destroyers, entering from stage left  
via Hellmouth, are devils only thinly disguised with  
trappings of thieves and soldiers. They enter, strike  
their prey and drag off the bodies, always passing  
upstage of SATAN and JOB.

Enter from stage right three shepherds in costume.  
One carries a stuffed lamb, another carries a crook.  
At Satan's direction, four devils cross to the  
shepherds, kill two and carry off the bodies.

SATAN

13. Thieves and robbers heed my will: descend upon Job's herds and flocks;  
Drive them out from field and rill; drive them bleating with your stocks  
Farther than the furthest hill; give the herdsmen fatal knocks;  
Let their pleadings come to nil; break their backs and skulls with rocks.

Let free but one.

Devils take their souls  
To Hell. Let burning coals  
Tell in the stench of sulph'rous holes  
Their tortures have begun.

14. From Nineveh come on the north winds blown, with your Assyrian army  
Burn the crops. Let Job moan for the wealth of his farm.

Three farmhands have entered from stage right. One may  
carry a sickle; another carries a sheaf of wheat with  
the DEVILS burn. Four DEVILS kill two farmhands, letting  
the third escape, and carry the bodies to Hellmouth.  
The FIRST MESSENGER, the Shepherd who escaped, has  
approached Job during SATAN's chant.

FIRST MESSENGER

Your herds and flocks, master, are flown with thieves. Killed before the alarm,  
Your hands are dead. I escaped alone with my life.

JOB

Rest safe from harm:

Your duty's done.

Job directs the first MESSENGER into his house. At this point,  
the destruction of Job's "farm" has been completed.

SATAN

Devils take their souls  
To Hell. Let burning coals  
Tell in the stench of sulph'rous holes  
Their tortures have begun.

During the next stanza, the SECOND MESSENGER crosses to  
Job and relates to him through gestures what has happened.  
Job directs the SECOND MESSENGER, the escaped farmhand,  
into his house.



SATAN (to the audience)

15. Job's children here are dining in the house of Job's eldest son.

SATAN points and the wall of the house swings out and away from the house. The audience sees a picture representing the banquet of Job's children.

Their souls will soon be mine. The roof must weight a ton.

Without this wall of the design, it falls. I'm the one

To do them dead. Job will whine. Objections? I hear none!

Thus...

SATAN pulls down the roof with one hand. It falls with a crash and considerable plaster dust as the results. The DEVILS carry out bodies, male and female. A young servant crawls out of the house on the side away from the DEVILS: he is the THIRD MESSENGER. He makes his way to JOB by the most roundabout path he can find, not arriving until JOB's WIFE is on the stage.

it's done.

Devils take their souls

To Hell. Let burning coals

Tell in the stench of sulph'rous holes

Their tortures have begun.

JOB

16. Misery, my wealth is gone. My children will be poor

With no inheritance, each a pawn of fortune, none secure

From rampant evils at the dawn of his ephemeral life. Lord,

Protect them, as fawns in the wilderness from the roaring

Lion's might.

JOB'S CHILDREN begin to appear at the gate of Limbo.

And Lord, protect me from my wife.

She's the terror of my life.

For little cause or none, strife

She stirs up at my sight.

17. As it is now, she bosses me all over the place.

When she is angry she's awesome, and she'll spit scorn in my face

Counting little the cost of a beating.

WIFE (off-stage)

Job!

JOB

Oh, by God's grace,

If she's heard of our loss I'll be... Good day, wife, why haste

You now to me?

WIFE

The hasten with my raving

At a lazy, shiftless knave

Who wouldn't act to save

His house from poverty.

WIFE

18. Lost my wealth! Job, you're a bumbling fool... ho --

Enter the THIRD MESSENGER. He hesitates to speak.

What is it? Young master

Lockjaw, say!.... Don't mumble.

THIRD MESSENGER

I... My....

WIFE

Speak up!

THIRD MESSENGER

My...

WIFE

Faster.

THIRD MESSENGER

My message makes me stumble, announcing disaster..

A windstorm... houses tumble... your children, mistress... master,

All are dead.

JOB directs the THIRD MESSENGER into the house to join the others, then rejoins his wife.

WIFE

These children, they kicked tabors

On my belly, like sabers

Cut my womb. Death voids the labors

I've suffered on my bed.

19. You should have saved them, Job. Children and wealth, lost without a fight.

Oh the pain women bear for their silly men, bearing men all night,

Worse, once our bellies are filled, thrusting children into sight,

But worst is bearing men's folly, still slaves to men's power when we're right.

Oh, the shame!

Women can tell you the worst of men.

They've known it since Adam, the first of men.

Job, you must be the most accursed of men,

Though you hardly deserve a man's name.

JOB

20. Woman, you try my patience, surely.

WIFE

You'd beat me if you dared,  
But your patience is cowardice more than a virtue. You're scared  
Of living, refusing to war on the world for those cared  
For... You don't love your fam'ly... or you;d have saved us all... prepared  
You just yelp!

JOB

My fam'ly I've loved and my business  
Attended, but what of God's? What's wisdom?  
My first duty is HIS,  
And he's my final help.

WIFE

21. God a help? Will nothing awaken you, Job? Is this the same  
God you pray to, who's forsaken you, and you are so cowardly tame  
Your faith is still not shaken?

JOB

From the womb naked I came.  
The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name  
Of the Lord.

WIFE

Job, your holiness makes me sick.

JOB

Your legs had better be quick.  
Wait till I get my hands on a stick,  
And I'll beat you till you're scored.

As JOB bends over to pick up a stick, his wife clouts  
on the side of the head, knocking him across the  
stage. She runs into the house. Job recovers and  
follows her.

SATAN

22. Well I'll be damned. This despicable lump of dust  
Is faithful still, though I ram him in poverty and a gust  
Of my northern breath crams his children in Hellmouth he prays, just  
Blesses God the same... then he ambles off to beat his wife. He must  
Not feel at all;  
Insensible as the very dirt  
Of which he's compounded, he blurts  
Out mechanical prayers, unhurt  
By losses me would appall.



SATAN

23. Job's losses count nothing! Then his body's his world... a world in a fleshy sack.  
For this super-selfish clod I lose the Earth! It's his lack  
Of feeling triumphs, not some model faith for the ages. Then it's back  
To Heaven for me. God. GOD. GOD!!

SATAN crosses to Heaven as he calls

Come or I'll cry till the Heaven's crack.

GOD (enters Heaven)

Satan, whats wrong?

SATAN

You've fooled me with a trick,  
But you'll never make it stick  
For I'll cry and scream and kick,  
Keep at it all day long.

GOD

24. Satan, you must stop this non-sense, cease.

SATAN

I've been cheated and I won't take it,  
I tell you. This ends the peace I offered if by trickery and a fake  
Kind of faith you unleash from me the lands I hold. You stake  
Your claim to Earth on Job. Increase the scope of the test then, make  
Job feel pain.

GOD

Satan, now be warned:  
If you torture a man forlorn,  
Sure as Justice turns the world, you'll mourn  
This request as your bane.

SATAN

25. Warn... predict... I don't care what you say. The simple fact  
Is I've been cheated. Either be fair, as you claim to be, or our pact  
IS ended, for your grant is really bare of meaning... a cheat.

GOD

Be exact

When you tell me: precisely where in your request have you lacked  
My complying?

SATAN

Well... nowhere... but even so  
I'm cheated, as you know,  
Because Job's not holy, but so  
Egomaniacal -- no denying

SATAN (con't.)

26. Of yours will change what I know to be true. Job didn't rail  
At you or curse since he felt no sense of loss; no loss entailed  
In his wealth or family's going, as he valued them nought.

GOD

What a gale

Of words this is you blow up to obscure your own failure  
From your eyes.

My protection of Job you once decried  
As that which made Job's love abide.  
That reason for love you've just denied,  
Contradicting your surmise.

SATAN

27. I won't be tricked up so easily. You protect Job still. You forbid  
Me to touch his body. Who sees not Job loves his body and piddling  
Counts another's weal? So he's still untested. An incident  
Only this previous episode. Let the sleazy, sham faith of Job be gotten rid  
Of by a beating.

GOD

How can you hope to argue right  
With wrong assumptions? Fight  
Me as you will in your spite,  
You but practice self-deceit.

SATAN

28. The proof, I say. I'll not swerve... Job feels nothing. None who feels  
Could loose what Job lost and still serve God.

GOD

Have you, Satan, really

Considered Job, who remains my servant though I've permitted you to peel  
His possession from him in your fervor to prove your power, your zeal  
To sink in error?

SATAN

Free Job from your protecting mesh.  
Let me crack his bones with pressure  
Putrefy his flesh...  
He'll curse you in his terror.

GOD

29. Job is in your power, but spare his life, and, though, indeed, you  
Think him a weakling, you'd best beware of Job, for his strength will be renewed  
At his asking.

SATAN

If YOU don't scare me, why should I let Job? His ruin  
Will be complete. I'll so ensnared the fool that he, not I, will do  
Himself to death.

GOD

Satan, beware Job's power.

SATAN

Job has had his hour.  
Now his life turns sour,  
And curses fill his breath.  
*Satan leaps back to Earth; God withdraws.*

GOD

30. Job, I call, come learn to curse your God.

JOB

Lord, I come to your altar  
For the souls of children immersed in death. As proper, they have fallen  
To your hands, a reimbursement, I know, but... not even their palls  
Have been left us... yet, worse, I fear no plans for your calling  
Had been made.

SATAN

I draw my circle on the ground  
And this human, Job, surround.  
Though relatives and friends abound  
Let none bring him aid.

JOB

31. Oh, God, I thought relief could be found with my friends  
But I've found instead how brief man's memory is, for the slender  
Rope of friendship snaps, in grief a man's alone. No one sends  
Me help now I need it, and, chiefly, this I ask, Lord as I bend  
Here in prayer:  
Do not from me turn;  
Let the altar fire burn  
My offering...

*Job attempts to light the sacrificial fire: SATAN blows it out.*  
Burn... burn... burn!  
How much can I bear?



## SATAN

32. Fiends of sickness rise from Hell. Wrap this creature in your coils.  
Pierce Job with the ills of my spell: Dry up all his body oils;  
Pour infection in each cell; lance his skin with poisoned foils;  
Cause his tongue with pus to swell; rot his teeth out, with boils

Strike his skin;  
When he scratches at the bumps  
Let his skin fall off in clumps  
Of putrefying lumps.

Now torture Job within.

As this stanza begins, Job begins to wail. The wail increases  
to a scream at the moment before he loses consciousness (in 33).

33. Light your fires in Job's intestines. In his organs fevers start:  
Crack his ribs and burst his breast, burn his liver, scorch his heart.  
Let Job be mad... In a rat's nest thrust his head.. His eyes dart  
Inwards. Let Job see bestial men gnaw his living flesh and start

Upon his spawn.  
Let Job find life's meaning garnered  
With his children's carnage  
In the stifling charnel

House... consciousness is gone...

34. Your body's weakness lets you flee my painful power, but when I  
Have you in Hell... You've been free from pain too long, Job, arise.

## JOB

How shall I love God when misery for relief... relief, it cries,  
For waves of pain drown memories, tears blind the backward eye?

In your will  
Has been my peace, Lord. Heed  
My prayer and grant as I plead:  
Give me the strength I need  
To love you still.

## SATAN

35. I can't believe it. What a blow to my hopes this is... I'd planned...  
This clod, this brother to the hoe he uses, whose life is a slander  
To the spirit worlds, he grows in hope... I'll yet see him unmanned.  
Though men can stand misery, no man, in misery, can stand  
nagging wife.

Devils, hear, and do your duty.  
Bring me now a Job-Wife suit.

SATAN crosses to Hellmouth, where pillows are attached to  
his chest and rump, a scraggly wig is placed on his head.  
There's a scream offstage; a woman's dress is thrown out.  
While SATAN dresses, JOB tries and lights his sacrificial fire.

Satan, you're truly a brute...

The ultimate torture... a wife.

SATAN, seeing Job's fire, rushes to him to extinguish it.

SATAN-WIFE

36. Job, put out that fire.

JOB

No. What's gotten into you, wife? Stop that now.  
Why do you care whether I build a fire? What's the scow  
For, wife?

SATAN-WIFE

That wood... I bet you got it from the pile I gathered. How,  
Tell me, how shall our pot of soup be cooked? My stomach's growling  
For a bowl.

JOB

I've taken your cooking wood,  
It's true, but, surely you would  
Not claim that food's as good  
As saving our children's souls.

SATAN-WIFE

37. You'd better replace the wood you took. Get it now... I'll watch this fire.

JOB

But wife, gathering wood, like cooking or sewing's woman's work.

SATAN-WIFE

My admired  
Husband Job, your parents mistook when they named you a man. You're nigher  
An old maid than anyone seen today. Get wood... or dire  
Things be done.  
I'll beat YOU like a heedless wife  
And your cries, for you'll cry, I'll stifle  
With flogging you to an inch of your life.

JOB

You get wood... I'll none.  
38. I fear no woman. I've been played by the hand of God.

SATAN-WIFE

Is that so?  
You'll be played as you've never been played before.  
SATAN picks up a stick; they struggle for it.

JOB

Woman, let go.  
When I'm miserable you berate and try to beat me. You will know  
I'm your master by this.  
Job wrests the stick from SATAN, breaks it, then returns to praying.

SATAN-WIFE (to himself)  
Hey!... Can it be I'm growing  
Weak as clay?  
My superhuman strength's without  
Effect on Job... A single clout  
Should kill him  
SATAN strikes JOB hard.

JOB  
Cut it out.  
Woman, I'm trying to pray.

39. Oh Lord --

SATAN-WIFE  
Oh, Lord, don't tell me, not again!

JOB  
Let me pray in peace.

SATAN-WIFE  
Never, Job, to that fell God who my brood of children fleeced  
Of their lives and sent to Hell in their innocence. How recently  
They died, yet you yelp of faith and pray. They never creased  
Your belly, grew  
In your flesh to painful size.  
My loved ones God me denies.

JOB  
Wife, I know and sympathize  
And pray God console and forgive you.

SATAN-WIFE  
40. Forgive me? Never will I, never forgive him. I curse him.

JOB  
Wife, retract your curse.

SATAN-WIFE  
Why can't you learn God hates you, you simple  
Fool... Curse him, don't cry.

JOB  
God is love and life. In him  
Is all my life.

SATAN-WIFE  
Curse God and die.

JOB  
You speak as the foolish women  
Speak. Either spare  
Me your tongue or presence.



SATAN-WIFE

Curse him,

SATAN grabs JOB by the shoulders from behind and above,  
by which he shakes JOB's body as he reiterates his command  
to curse GOD. As SATAN finishes, he kicks apart the sacrificial fire,  
the bursts out laughing.

Curse God, Job, curse Him,  
Damn it, curse him, curse him  
And make an end of prayer.

JOB

You're damning our children's souls to Hell. Some Devil's gotten in you.  
I'll beat that Devil out. It's doleful you'll be when your punishment begins  
For I'm getting me a big stout pole to beat you, since cursing God's your sin,  
Till you ask God for mercy.

SATAN-WIFE

How droll. I'll give you a kick in the shins if you try.  
But I'll never, never beg  
God for mercy.

JOB

What, never? You're a regular  
Devil, then. Try this peg  
On your rump for size.  
When JOB swings, Satan trips him up and stands over him.

SATAN-WIFE

41. Still I say never.  
SATAN attempts to fall on top of JOB and crush him, but  
JOB rolls to the side, then leaps on SATAN's shoulders and  
proceeds to beat his padded rump with a board that lays  
nearby. SATAN emits an exaggerated yelp with every blow.

JOB

We'll see how long is never.

SATAN-WIFE

Oh, Oh, Oh!

Job, not so hard on your wife, please.

JOB

You're a treble tongued trouble

SATAN-WIFE

OH!

JOB

Not a wife.

SATAN-WIFE

I mothered three daughters and seven sons.

JOB

And you show

Your love by damning them.

SATAN-WIFE

Mercy then, for all the saints and whole

Heavenly army....

For God's sakes.

JOB

Which God?

SATAN-WIFE

The whole damn Pantheon... The TRUE GOD...

JOB

What?

SATAN-WIFE

Nothing... may the TRUE GOD

Have mercy on me!

Job stands. Enter GOD to Heaven. When he speaks, JOB  
turns to Him and kneels. SATAN crawls away to Hellmouth.

GOD

43. Cease, Job. Do you recognize me.

JOB

Yes, Lord. your glory's

Unmistakable. I'm surprised and grateful you'd appear before  
The trivial wretch I am.

GOD

The assize of ranked angels shall broadcast your  
Fame, too little known on Earth. Rise, Saint Job, sainted for suffering more  
With firmly planted

Faith, without the usual

Lapse into despair, than a crew

Of normal men could bear. Have you

Any wish I could grant?

JOB

44. Two, Lord. First I pray your will be done.

God

That wish is granted always,

Without the asking.

JOB

Distill your oil of mercy on the small  
Brood of my children. Fulfill my hope for life in their deaths.

GOD

Call

With this prayer later. Until then, worry not for children fallen  
In youth.  
Job, your goods were not lost.  
The MESSENGERS, all three, were tossed  
In error, to your great cost.

JOB

Lord, is that the truth ?

GOD

45. As much of the truth as a human needs to know.

JOB

But my children,

Are they, "not lost" too, living still?

GOD

Yes, they're living still...

And here...

The gate of Limbo opens and Job's children enter; the  
servants enter after them.

Go greet them, JOB. Few for any are these moments of fulfillment.  
Greet your children.

JOB crosses to his children.

SATAN

You can't do that!

GOD

I have.

SATAN

I killed

Them, they're dead.

GOD

You killed them; they're alive.

Hie you hence to Hell, and thrive

As you may until you strive

With my son... I have said.

Exit SATAN through Hellmouth; JOB's WIFE enters, dumbfounded  
upon seeing the children.

GOD

Job, your wife is approaching now to ask forgiveness  
For her doubting of me. Broach the subject openly. Forgive her.

GOD draws back a little as the WIFE comes to JOB.

JOB

Wife, your doubts --

WIFE

I need no coaching to recite my faults. I'm driven  
To recant, for I've been poached in the muck of doubt and now shriven's  
What I'd be.

JOB

You can have the pardon you crave  
If you'll pardon the beating I gave  
You.

WIFE

You say you beat me, knave?  
Well, you're mad, but I'll agree.

GOD

47. May you prosper and multiply, both wealth and fam'ly increase.  
Delayed over much on the highways, let relations, who recently  
Set out to apply balm to your grief, come with a feast  
Applauding your fortune's revival. Last, I'll grant you peace  
In your age.

A mass of relatives enter with a banquet, accompanied by  
musicians. The chief relative speaks. GOD returns to Heaven.

RELATIVE

We were all delayed by chance  
On the road. Let music enhance  
Our feast and begin the dance.

All on stage begin an ancient communal dance except  
JOB who comes forward.

JOB

So ends the pageant of our stage.  
48. I speak to you now for our company, to solicit your applause.  
The play we presented's a mimicry, botchery of flaws  
Of past and present. Our company's acted well within the laws  
The play set for us. Piteous be: let suffering Job escape the taws  
Of your rage.  
Gentles be, as you appear,  
And grant us what we long to hear:  
Let all who've enjoyed our cheer  
Clap us from the stage.

finis