

Lyrics to Selected Songs

From *The Rise and Fall of the Blackbird Brewing Company*

Lyrics by Erik Kennedy and Ben Small

Note: In most of these songs, spoken words are notated clearly as such. However, when characters alternate frequently between singing and speaking, it's not always explicitly written. Whenever the character's name is above the words, it's sung, and whenever the character's line is on the same line as his or her name, it's spoken.

Also note that the lyrics of the actual songs differ somewhat, mostly because of difficulty fitting in syllables, or not writing music for specific portions of the songs yet. By and large, the lyrics listed here are what we prefer.

1. The Blackbird Public House

Dennis, Claire, Emily

The opening number of the musical, this is an expository song about Dennis and his family.

Dennis:

The Blackbird Public House
at 22 Willow Street in beautiful Elmwood.

I've worked here my entire life, as has my father and his dad
And his father before him and maybe further back.
To be honest, I'm surprised it still is standing.
These walls have seen a lot.

My work is in this bar room, my family lives upstairs,
My hobby's in the basement, it's been like this for years.

And so for seventeen years, I've run and kept this place.
Or-- I don't do it by myself-- I have a saving grace.

Claire:

The Blackbird Public House
at 22 Willow Street in beautiful Elmwood.

We weren't even married when Dennis inherited the bar.
So I've seen it all with him, and it's gone well so far.

He's started brewing his own beer downstairs.
Someday he wants to sell it, but that may not be for years.

Dennis (spoken): The Blackbird Public House... wow, it's practically part of the family. Speaking of which--

(Emily enters)

Emily: Dad, I'm home.

Dennis: Hey Emily. How was school today?

Emily: Fine.

Dennis: Did you learn anything?

Emily: No.

Dennis: Okay, let me re-phrase that. What did you learn?

Emily: Nothing.

Dennis: Claire, your daughter's home!

Claire: Hi Honey. Come upstairs.

Dennis:

For seventeen years, I've run and kept this place.

For seventeen years, I've mopped and swept this place.

For seventeen years, I've poured drinks, brewed beer, served food and ran this place.

2. The Usual

Dennis, Chorus of barflies (Joe, Dave, Roger)

The second song in the musical, it comes almost immediately after The Blackbird Public House. This song is also expository, and introduces the type of community, people-centric atmosphere that is found in the bar.

Stephen:

I try to tell my students

That they should learn from history.

Maybe I should talk to Wannstedt

'Cause he clearly cannot see.

I mean the Bears have lost again this year,
and no one is surprised.

Since Ditka's days in '85,

We have not won that prize.

But that's why I teach history,

To relive those days of yore,

like when Caesar crossed the Rubicon

and the Bears offense could score.

So 'till we see that time again,

I'll drink the bears away,

Cause I know I'll always have this bar,

My beer, my chair, my place.

Stephen and Dennis:
The usual, the usual,
A friendly face, the same old place
The usual, the usual,
It's always the same, but at least we know your name.

(spoken)

Dennis: What can I get you?

Stephen: Oh... the usual.

Dennis: Sure thing. So what's new, Stephen?

Stephen: Oh, not a lot, Dennis. Holding out for the weekend. Had to sit through three periods of student presentations today. It gets to be a lot, y'know? Wouldn't be so bad, but most of the time they're talking, they're hardly saying anything. It's incredible!

Dennis: I can relate. I'm a bartender, remember.

Stephen: Right, BS is the name of the game.

Dennis: Hey, question for you. How is Emily doing in your class?

Stephen: Emily? Oh, she's doing just fine. Why? Anything you're concerned about?

Dennis: Well. No, I just want to make sure she's learning.

Stephen: Despite the fact that I'm teaching the class, she seems to be doing a pretty good job.

Dennis: Now I gotta' keep an eye on both of you.

(enter Marina)

Dennis: Evening Marina.

Marina: Boys, how are you?

Dennis: Good.

Stephen: Good.

Dennis: Did you end up getting your car?

Marina: No, because--

Stephen: Good! Wait until the weekend, and I'll come with you.

Marina: I don't need you to come with, Stephen. You're very kind though.

Dennis: Oh let him go. He knows all the features you'll need.

Marina: No, he's dead weight. If I go with him, the salesman will know he's there to bargain for me, and it won't be a comparative advantage. I'd rather go alone and be underestimated.

Stephen: Whoa-ho-ho! Someone has this all planned out.

Marina: No offense, but I can get my own car.

Dennis: Just make sure you get the tow kit.

Marina: Dennis!

Dennis: Oh, and what can I do for you?

Marina: I'll have... hmm...

Stephen: She'll have her usual.

Dennis: You'll have the usual, won't you?

Marina: Yeah! I'll have the usual!

Stephen, Dennis and Marina:

The usual, the usual,

A friendly face, the same old place

The usual, the usual,
It's always the same, but at least we know your name.
(spoken)

(enter Joe)

Joe: Howdy, crew. How's everyone doing?

Dennis: Evening, Joe.

Marina: Fine.

Stephen: Great, you?

Joe: Doing decent. Rough day at the paper though. Management laid off another two people from printing, and some of the writers think we're next.

Marina: Oh, that sounds awful.

Stephen: Do you think they're right?

Joe: No way. All the writers there are full of it!

Marina: Look who's talking!

Joe: Hey, you can trust me. I'm not leading any of you astray.

Dennis: Good, because otherwise I'd have to kick your ass straight out of the Blackbird.

Joe: Can't believe you haven't already. I'm a detriment to attracting new clientele.

Dennis: New clients? Here? You're crazy.

Joe: Guilty as charged. And my head *has* been feeling funny lately, doc. You have anything for that?

Dennis: I believe we do. You want the usual?

(a beat)

Joe: Nah, I was thinking of getting nachos this time.

Dennis: Really?

Stephen: For real?

Marina: You never have nachos!

Joe: Ok, dammit, I'll have the usual!

Everyone:

The usual, the usual,

A friendly face, the same old place

The usual, the usual,

It's always the same, but at least we know your name.

3. Nothing We Can't Do

Dennis and Claire

This is a duet between Dennis and his wife Claire after they visit Dennis' dad in the hospital for the first time. Dennis is distraught, and his wife comforts him. Together they resolve to get through this tough time.

Dennis:

There are words I cannot say,

There are smiles I cannot fake,

No medicine for this torment,
By a dull and steady ache.

There are things I cannot do
There are miracles I cannot make
How quickly life will turn around
I give but never take

Claire:
There is sickness on the horizon and a cloud looms overhead,
But we've been here, I know this wall, with certainty I say,

(chorus)
We will make it through,
Not alone, but two,
We'll overcome, come what may,
And in the end, look back and say,
There's nothing we can't do.

Dennis (spoken): That's a familiar line. Do you remember when Emily was born?

Dennis:
It was two months to the day
Before Emily was due
Our first child, unexpected and stressful
Yet all turned out successful

Overnights in the hospital
You said "I don't know if this
Is something that I can do,"
And I took your hand

Claire:
What did you say?

Dennis:
We will make it through,
Not alone, but two,
We'll overcome, come what may,
And in the end, look back and say,
There's nothing we can't do.

Claire (spoken): what makes you think it will be different now?

Claire:
Flashback to now, take my hand in yours,
There are some things you cannot do,
But those things are thoughts wasted,

We have a road to go, you and I

Both:

And we can say,

We will make it through,
Not alone, but two,
We'll overcome, come what may,
And in the end, look back and say,
We have made it through.

The world will bring its worries
And stress enough to make a person lose
His faith in what another person who
Cares can say and do

We'll overcome, come what may
And in the end, look back and say
There's nothing we can't do,
Nothing we can't do.

7. On The Road

Richard, Chorus of bar representatives

This song takes place shortly after the brewing company is founded. It is a montage of scenes in which Richard is selling beer.

Richard (spoken intro): So it came to pass, the Blackbird Brewing Company. It was the great American business: the dream that two men might rise above their upbringing through unparalleled hard work and dedication. Normally that's not the sort of thing I'm into, but I'm willing to make an exception here. Let's hit it!

(guitar intro)

Richard:

On the road, and in my prime
Making deals, working overtime.
On the road, it feels so sublime,
Singin' a song with lots of rhymes.

Chorus:

Everybody's got an inclination
To get in touch with transportation
So roll your sleeves up and your windows down
And keep on rolling 'till you hit the next town.

(music slows, focus on spoken sales vignette)

Richard (to audience): The art of the sell. It's different for everyone. The key to sales? Know thy audience!

Richard (to Garrett): Well, hello there, my friend! You must be the owner of this fine establishment.

Garrett: Yup! My name's Garrett Wilson, what can I do you for?

Richard (with a slightly affected voice): Well, now, wait just a second. I recognize that accent. Where are you from?

Garrett: Eldorado, 'riginally, just east of Johnston City. You know the place?

Richard (thinks for a second): Well, suuure I do! my family went camping down there every summer, to that forest just outside of town, what was it called?

Garrett: You mean the Shawnee Forest?

Richard: Yeah, that's it!

Garrett: Well boy howdy! You know that little stream that runs through there?

Richard: Of course! The one, you know, with the water? -

Garrett: Yeah! I used to go there all of the time as a kid.

Richard: Great memories down there, in the Shawnee Forest.

Garrett: Now you didn't come here to talk about Eldorado, did you?

Richard: You are too quick for me! Come here, take a sip of this.

(Richard offers Garrett a bottle of his beer)

Garrett: Well, now that's some mighty fine beer. Where'd you get this?

Richard: You see Garrett, I'm here to make you an offer. I'm selling this here beer for you to offer in your bar.

Garrett: Oh I don't know about that!

Richard: Take another sip. Doesn't that just take you right back to that creek in Shawnee Forest?

Garrett (peacefully): Oh, you've convinced me. Where do I sign?

(Richard takes out paperwork, hands it to Garrett, and goes to call Dennis. Music speeds up.)

Richard:

Hey Dennis, grab a corkscrew
Pop a bottle of your finest champagne.
Heya Dennis, you know your homebrew?
It's gonna take us to **the** bank.

Chorus:

Anybody with imagination
Can use it to get compensation
So roll your sleeves up and your windows down
And just keep rollin' till you hit **the** next town.

(music slows, focus **on** another spoken sales vignette)

Richard (to audience): Easy as pie They can't resist me!

Richard (to Jane): ... and tell me that's not **the** best beer you've ever tasted.

Jane: It's up there. What's his secret?

Richard: Top fermented for three weeks with cloves, and our special ingredient, love.

Jane: Ha! Well we'd be happy to start carrying this. In fact, my brother-in-law owns a bar as well, and I wonder if I can't convince him to get in **on** this venture.

Richard: That would mean a lot to me.

Jane: Yeah, let me bring this to my office and hammer out some details. I'll send my husband to get you a drink and keep you company for a bit.

Richard: Ok, thanks.

(Jane exits. Richard opens a bottle of **the** beer. Michael enters)

Michael: Jane tells me you're going to be supplying us with a new ale around here.

Richard: That's right, and **the** best in **the** tri-state area at that.

Michael: Well I don't know if I believe that, but she certainly seems to like it. And she's in charge, you know what I mean?

(Laughs)

Michael (cont'd): You look awfully familiar. Do I know you?

Richard: I don't believe we've met.

Michael: Hm, well you do look familiar. Have you ever done anything in manufacturing?

Richard: I don't believe so. Where do you work?

Michael: **The** Hastings and Fitz plant, just outside of town.

(Richard goes pale and music suddenly pauses)

Michael (cont'd): You ok?

Richard: Yes, well, tell Jane that she can send **the** info **the** address I gave here. I've actually got to get--

Michael: Oh, now hold **on** a second. I know where I know you from!

Richard: Yeah?

Michael: Don't tell me. You're **the** snake who sold Allen Wetzler that floor wax! You know we had to get **the** whole factory relaid because of that crap! It cost us thousands of dollars!

Richard: I'm not sure that was me. Also, I told you that **the** Superwax wasn't good with old--

Michael: Oh wait till I tell my wife about this. Jane! Jane!

(Richard slips away)

Michael: Come back here you little prick!

(music speeds up)

Richard:

On the road got to move along
Never in one place for very long.
On the road, that's where I belong,
Where no one sees you doing wrong.

Chorus:

Everybody's got some bad affiliations
That often lead to hasty relocations

So rolls your sleeves up and your windows down
And just keep rollin' till you're out of this town!

10. Fermentation (Reprise)

Dennis

The song of Act I, Dennis sings this after his wife and he receive an offer on the bar. His wife, passionate about the bar and assuming Dennis feels the same, throws out the offer. Dennis is considering selling the bar to raise money for the brewing company, and with recent prospects for serious financial success, the company is starting to get to his head. This is the darkest we've seen of him yet.

I understand what she must think.
A terrible thing, to lose a dream.
Why walk away if she doesn't have to?

What she doesn't know, I might presume
What the future holds, I might assume
Why shield your face if opportunity will slap you?

The thoughts turn over in my mind
Fermenting in their own good time.

(chorus)

In the dark, stewing
Sealed tight, brewing,
Under pressure that nobody knows
Around and around, slowly it flows

I don't need to be tied down
To be used like a cog, to be leashed like a dog
I don't need to be confined
I can do what I want... My future is mine.

I understand that to invite success
Is to shut the door to many other things.
Why not have it all if you don't have to?

What I still can't tell, is who is who
The friends to keep, the friends to lose
Why tell a joke if they won't laugh too?

I ponder the races of future days,
Casting fermenting memories away.

In the dark, stewing
Sealed tight, brewing,
Under pressure that nobody knows

Around and around, slowly it flows

I don't need to be tied down
To be used like a cog, to be leashed like a dog
I don't need to be confined
I can do what I want... My future is mine.

(bridge)

I don't need to be tied down
To be used like a cog, to be leashed like a dog
I don't need to be confined
I can do what I want
I can do what I want
I can do what I want...
My future is mine!