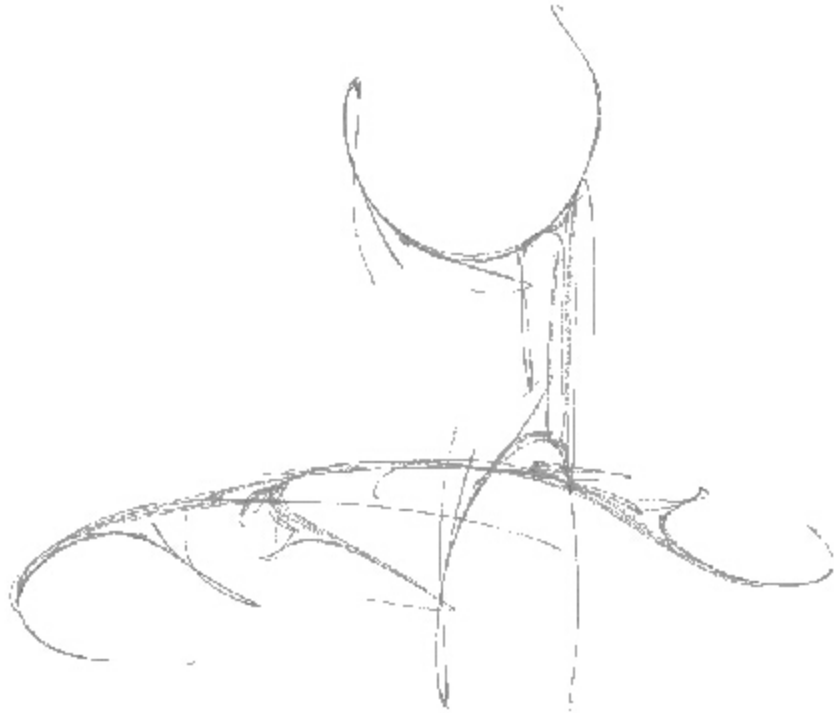


*Closed Casket*

by

Jesse Glass



xPress(ed)

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email: [info@xpressed.org](mailto:info@xpressed.org)

The first version of this play  
was written in 1975. It was subsequently recorded in 1979 by VEC, Holland  
and is still available from Rod Summers/VEC, Florynruwe 52C, 6218 CE  
MAASTRICHT, The Netherlands for 10 euro. A revised Closed Casket appeared  
in Gargoyle Magazine (1978), and Benzene (1980). This xPress(ed) edition  
contains new material and some revisions of the old.

Think peace.

Jesse Glass

Closed Casket  
a one act play  
by Jesse Glass

Cast of Characters:

Three Voices  
An army  
A soldier

On stage are three coffin-like boxes wired for sound in which three male actors lie. Hanging above the boxes is a screen on which a series of slides & colored lights are projected. A child's face, a summer day, scenes of war, scenes of love, crows and canaries, rotting corpses and first communions would all be perfect material for the slide show that takes place on the screen as the dialogue proceeds.

1<sup>st</sup> voice. The sky is a ripped tent. You are dead.

2<sup>nd</sup> voice. We are dead.

3<sup>rd</sup> voice. Because I am dead let the world weep mud for me.

2) Mud & stones.

1) Mud & stones & bits of steel.

3) Let the bits of steel become small buildings in my chest.

2) Magnetic & beautiful.

(from offstage reveille is played)

1) Weep weep world. The sky is a ripped tent. Weep music. Wail mud from your throat trumpets.

3) Our heads were torn apart by a girder that exploded.

2) Human faces were painted on it.

1) After I died I heard it ticking.

3) I became a clown riding on a wall.

2) We all had mushroom soup.

1) It rolled to the ground down a step of air.

3) It was god's bowel movement.

2) It was god's bowel movement.

1) It was god's bowel movement.

3) Because I am dead I am a sleeping child.

2) But we dream.

1) Because I am dead I am a clown in a well.

3) But we move in our sleep. Like an old man calling "Mother! Mother!" in the night.

2) We all had mushroom soup.

1) God shit a mushroom on us.

3) Mother! Mother! I am a clown in a well. Without a helmet! Without my most precious gun!

2) It seeded the throat of the town.

1) Out came a tumor,

2) Of smoke. A tumor of fire & smoke that froze our feathers in blocks of dried blood.

1) Oh Christ! That was your blood wasn't it?

2) Yes.

3) My most precious gun.

1) Our guns were mirrors.

2) We shot ourselves. Yes.

(Soldiers run across the stage.)

3) Because I am dead the world should stop. Make the children quit playing. Stop.

1) Children walk on shredded feet.

2) The clowns wear helmets here. They cannot make us happy anymore.

(Soldiers march across the stage.)

3) The clowns are children. I think I hear one counting: 1,2. 1,2. 1,2. 1,2. 1,2.

1) A game.

2) We lost.

(The sound of a distant explosion.)

3) Is that someone calling us? I don't believe anyone knows our names.

1) A clown called me dead once. Then he threw three pretty balls in the air & juggled them until he passed out.

2) I hate mushroom soup mother.

3) I became a clown like them. I made children laugh to death.

2) We lost.

1) A game...a game.

3) We can still be clowns. We can still give a show.

1) My most precious gun—a mirror.

2) I don't want to see myself. I have no face.

3) Shrapnel becomes cities. Human progress.

1) Your blood...

2) The blood of Christ.

1) Razorblade in her cunt. Glass in her breasts. Steel springs up her anus.

2) Cut you...ah, got you!

3) Got us.

1) We lost.

2) 1,2 1,2 1,2, 1,2.

1) We lost.

2) The what?

3) War.

1) I vomited blood. She laughed at bombs. No she said, no bombs—just me. Just us.

2) Repeat that.

1) She laughed at bombs. I believed her.

3) The taste of copper. Have you ever tasted the stock of a gun?

1) Mmmm. Mirrors.

2) Children with their black whips; young girls walk on shredded feet.

3) I'm not dead! I'm alive!

1) Fuck you.

2) Why are you dead? Why are we dead?

3) I think I might need to go to the bathroom. I think I'm thirsty.

(A soldier walks by playing a harmonica.)

1) The children of the world become clowns with blood makeup. Music is an ulcer on my hand.

2) What's that sound?

3) An ulcer is bleeding.

2) We ride the air like bullets. Like music.

1) This world is a diseased fish. I...

3) Hush! She was wearing a blue dress. We folded her like linen in our arms.

1) Razorblade in her cunt. Glass in her tits. Shrapnel up her anus.

3) Ugh! Blood!

2) Her breasts were the size of mushrooms. There was a small village on her inner thigh.

1) My most precious.

3) Oh Christ! This is our blood. Remember? Whose blood is this?

1) Where did you put that mushroom?

2) We are clowns in a well. Our tricks are stained with blood.

3) Roll the dice—Ugh! They're frozen tumors.

1) Step this way. Watch your step. Step up.

2) 1,2 1,2 1,2 1,2.

1) It seeded the throat of the town.

2) I yelled Mother! Mother! Then it happened.

3) We rolled to the ground down a step of air.

1) Exploding girders carved us into clowns.

2) It was god's bowel movement.

3) God moved his bowels right here.

1) God shits atomic barium.

2) Shat.

3) I'm still alive.

1) You don't have a face.

3) I'm still alive.

1) You don't have a head.

2) Shat.

3) Human faces were painted on it.

1) I seem to recall...it ticked didn't it?

2) We all had mushroom soup.

(A soldier enters & sits on a casket.)

3) What's that?

2) This is not funny.

1) The clowns wear helmets here.

2) You bleed too much to be a clown.

3) A clown called me dead once.

1) You passed out, right?

2) A game...a game.

3) Fuck you.

(The soldier lights a cigarette & crosses his legs. Then he sniffs the air looks down at the coffins & moves away.)

1) We can still be clowns. We can still give a show!

2) She laughed at bombs. No bombs she said—just you & me. Just us.

3) Can a soul scream?

1) War. War.

2) Fuck. Fuck.

1) War.

2) Fuck.

1) War.

2) Fuck.

1) Waaaaaaaaaar!

2) Fuuuuuuuuuuck!

3) The taste of copper. Blood begets clowns. War makes you into a ghost, you know that?

1) She laughed at bombs. I stopped playing & got my whip. She said no...

2) This is not funny.

3) Why are we laughing?

1) Because we stink.

2) The mushroom did it.

3) Mud & stones.

1) The sky ripped open like tearing flesh—We were born in a collapsed bigtop.

(Silence.)

2) Strike up the band!

3) Stars! Ears! Bricks landed in cages on my head. They sang like canaries there.

1) We stink. This is useless.

2) We rolled to the ground. Her breasts grew in my face like frozen girders.

3) I threw my dice.

1) They rolled to the ground.

2) My most precious I said. My most precious...

3) Ugh! Blood!

2) We had our movements then.

1) God's bowels seeded the throat of the town.

2) Ah. Useless but beautiful. I'm still alive.

3) We had too many roads to walk on, then.

1) I stepped on a mine.

2) I have no lips left, but I think I can sing.

3) Clap your hands like cymbals. Somewhere there is joy!

2) Never. Never.

1) We stink. This is useless.

3) I found some dice. I rolled them. I thought: "this is useless."

2) Shat.

1) Shrapnel up her anus.

3) I looked in the mirror over her shoulder. She said "no bombs." Her shoulder was dark. There was a birthmark on her back.

2) Tumor.

3) She said: "My most precious, the children become soldiers here."

1) We lost.

(Explosion offstage.)

2) Is that someone calling me? It sounds like my mother.

3) She called you....Did she touch?...

1) Stop. This isn't funny.

2) Shhhhh. The baby is asleep!

3) No! It's dead.

1) We were good. Children laughed at us. I wanted to go to heaven.

2) Human progress.

1) I picked up a mirror & held it to her face.

3) I don't want to see myself she...

2) Whimpered, yes I remember. No.

3) I hate mushroom soup. Why do you feed us mush...room...

1) I did my job well. Once upon a time.

2) But then it was dark. & then it was red. & then white. &...

1) A clown called me dead once. Those balls were real.

3) War is my mother waxing the floor.

2) War, I saw her go to the bathroom when I was little. It was a movement.

1) Where did god go?

2) God's shredded feet.

3) Indelible makeup. Bruised mirrors.

2) Atomic barium painted our faces white.

1) What faces?

2) No more. Never again. Alack. Alas.

3) I yelled mother! mother! mother!

2) Alack. Alas. Alack. Alack. Alack.

1) Mud & stones. A game & a game.

3) Until he passed out, right?

1) Razorblade in her breast. Barium up her cunt. Glass in her lips. She said...oh my precious. She whispered: children die like clowns here. Toys fall like tears.

2) Our guns were mirrors. We shot ourselves.

3) I hate mushroom soup. I hate fish. I hate barium. I hate games.

1) Repeat that.

2) Do you love?

3) Never again. Alack alack & alack. Oh my most precious...

1) We are clowns yet. Somewhere is a big top.

3) Fuck you.

1) We are phew! Stinking clowns.

2) A good stinking game.

3) But we move in our sleep.

2) The taste of copper is god's pleasurable tongue. War makes you into a ghost, you know that?

1) A game-playing ghost—the worst kind.

3) Ho Ho Ho. This is not funny.

2) Somebody—bury us quick!

3) Ahem. Ahem. A new clown. Resurrect the New Clown.

1) That walks on all fours.

2) Like god—right?

3) Her skin was dark. Her eyes like a circus big top. I crawled in, then.

(The sound of a series of explosions offstage.)

2) Falling falling. More mushrooms.

3) Toys fall like tears.

1) A game...a game...

2) Bury me deep in popcorn at the show. I want to be laughed under by machines.

3) Ahem. Ahem. A good sleep & a yawning laugh.

1) Can a soul scream?

2) Human faces were painted on it.

3) She said no...

1) Bury us deep, please?

3) Ho ho ho.

2) We were good. Mother, we were good.

1) I said mother once, remember?

2) A four-legged god. Blood.

3) How many legs do you have?

2) None. All gone. After the resurrection.

1) Blood. Oops!

3) oops. Oops. I picked up a mirror & held it to...

1) We were gods. No. We were clowns.

2) War cut our toys into tears. We were once children.

3) Ho. Ho. Ho.

2) No! Shhh. The baby wants to die.

1) How about your...

2) Arms? Legs? Eyes? Ears? None. Gone. Few.

3) But then it was dark. & then it was red. & then white. &...

All) We rolled to the ground. We threw our dice. Our tricks were stained with blood.

1) She laughed at bombs. I stopped playing & got my whip. Her back was red. She said no...

2) She coughed no.

3) She screamed no!

1) The taste of copper. The sky was a copper bowl. I tapped it & it echoed/ god god god.

2) Fuck you.

3) Too many roads.

1) I stepped on a mine.

2) This is useless.

3) Pretty bricks sing us into clay. Someday our lungs will be kittens.

2) In the laps of children.

1) We killed them.

2) Burned them up.

3) I have no lips left, but I think I can sing for them.

All) Ho ho ho. Ahem Ahem Alack Alack Alas Alack Ahem.

1) There is still joy!

2) Burned them up.

1) She said: "no bombs." Children suck rifles here...my most precious.

3) I looked. Ah—useless—but beautiful.

2) Ahem.

1) Four legs. Blood. Where are my fingers?

3) A game—remember?

2) This isn't funny.

1) Somewhere there is a big top.

2) We are dead.

3) I am a sleeping child. I sleep after I move my bowels. My tumor is a city.

1) Do you sleep in your helmet?

3) I have no head.

2) Without my most precious gun.

1) Dream! You there—dream!

3) Blocks of dried blood. Where are those feathers?

2) Let shrapnel congeal in a beautiful city.

1) Dream sleeping child.

3) Your toys are broken.

2) 1,2 1,2 1,2 1,2.

1) We will ride the air like bullets. Our souls bounce like napalm.

2) A good game. Ahem.

3) My lung wants to be a kitten. I itch.

1) War.

2) The what?

3) Why are you dead?

1) She was wearing a blue dress. I vomited blood.

2) Never. Never.

3) Too many roads. Too many.

1) Strike up the band!

2) We stink. This is useless.

(Soldiers with shovels in hand line up on either side of the coffins.)

3) Because I am dead let the world weep mud for me.

2) Because I am dead the world should stop. Make the children quit playing.

Stop.