

# Job Pilgrim

*A dramatized oratorio*



Libretto and music by

**VIVIEN ARNOLD**

## Dramatis Personae

The play takes place in a room in a private hospital

Job Pilgrim	An historian/philosopher/academic
Hope Hart	His wife
Sophia Wise	A hospital visitor
Christof	Orderly/doorkeeper

The Nay-sayers:

Dr Oliver Goodlife	An epicurean
Dr Ada Fairway	A humanist
Dr Ivor Brain	A scientist

Doctor Death	A doctor/patient
Rev Luke Shaw	A churchman
Martha Goodbody	Nurse
Will Judge	A student

Pilgrim Chorus	Colourfully dressed motley group of gypsies, tradesmen, priests and nuns of various religions, circus people, tramps, hippies, hari krishna devotees, a whirling dervish etc with ribbons, tambourines, rose petals etc
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# Job Pilgrim

(a dramatised oratorio in 2 Acts)

## Libretto

### ACT 1

*Lights up on chorus*

### Prologue

**#1 Prologue** *Sophia and chorus sing*

*Blackout*

*Lights up*

**Scene 1:** *A hospital room. Bed, bedside cabinet and small wardrobe/locker, two easy chairs, desk and upright chair.*

*Enter Job (carrying a jacket), Martha, Christof (with a suitcase) and Sophia (with a carpetbag)*

Martha            This is your room, Mr Pilgrim. You can unpack your things after we've done these admission forms

Job (*mutter*s)    I can't believe I'm here!

Martha            Oh I'd like a dollar for everyone who says that.. You'll soon get used to it. Now sit yourself down there while we fill them in. Can I call you Job (*mispronounced*)

Job                Job

Martha            Job. These modern names!....

*Job sits on the bed.*

Martha            I've got your personal details from your wife. I just need to ask a couple of questions. First, Job, where are you?

Job                Confused....Very unhappy...

Martha            No. No. I mean physically. What's the name of this place?

Job                Oh I see. It's Judge Mann Hospital....

Martha            Close...

Job                ...No . You're right. Judge is the name of the student who.... who... This is the Hugh Manne Hospital.

Martha            That's it. The Hugh Mann Memorial Mental Hospital. And what's today's date?

Job                I've no idea. All days are the same. I've lost count. Is it the 1<sup>st</sup>? Of April?  
(*mutter*s) It should be.

Martha Close enough. It's the 3<sup>rd</sup> .

Job (*anxious*) What happened to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>?

Martha Short-term memory is unreliable when you're sick.

Job I can remember some things as if they just happened.

Martha That's the way of it.

Job The way of what?

Martha Mental illness

Job (*receiving this with pain*) How did this happen? (*pulling himself together*) What did you say the date is?

Martha April 3<sup>rd</sup>

Job (*keening*) A month ago I was giving the Cardinal Mannix memorial lecture....

Martha (*polite*) Were you? It can seem to arrive in the blink of an eye, but when you look back, you see it's been simmering for ages.

Job (*confused*) Sorry? What has?

Martha (*patiently*) Mental illness. Shall we get back to the questions?...Who is the Prime Minister?

Job Will Burnham Woods

Martha And your next of kin?

Job My wife, Hope Hart.

Martha Hart?

Job She kept her maiden name.

Martha Are her contact details the same as yours?

Job Whose?

Martha Your wife's

Job Yes.

Martha Good. Now you're all finished.

Job (*automatically*) Have finished

Martha Sorry?...

Job                    Now you have finished...

Martha (*confused*) Yes. As I said.

Job                    I'm not dead yet. Just pedantic.

Martha (*still nonplussed*) D'you have any razor blades?

Job                    What?

Martha                Razor blades

Job (*nonplussed*) Probably. Hope threw some things in the bag. (*mutters*) Pandora's box. Perhaps some Hope will still be in there...

*Martha searches in the carpet bag and finds a packet of blades and a razor. She hands them to Christof*

Martha                We'll have to take these. Christof will get you an electric one

Job (*fretful*)        I never use electrics. I don't like them.

Martha                Well we could give you the blade each morning and have a nurse sit with you while...

Job (*tetchy*)        No! No! It's fine. I don't want to waste anyone's time.

Martha(*patient*) Let's see, shall we? Once your doctor's done her assessment, she may give permission. I have to take your shoelaces...

Job                    Shoelaces?

Martha                Just regulations. To comply with insurance conditions

Job (*angrily*)        I'll be a shuffling unshaven derelict!

*(Christof kneels to remove the laces from his shoes)*

Martha                In here, we accept people as they are.

Job                    Wrong. It's not who we are; it's what we've become.

Martha                Perhaps. And I need all your drugs – prescribed and over-the-counter.

Job                    I can manage them myself.

Martha                No doubt, but the policy of the hospital is that we administer all drugs - for your own safety...

Job                    And no doubt to comply with legal requirements

Martha (*ruefully*) True

Job                    So first you remove my dignity and now my ability to cope with this... hell....

Oliver            So you can leave...

Job                ...Whenever I want

Ada (*briskly*)    Get out now. Life's too short.

Oliver            We can help Hope look after you....

Ada                Of course

Oliver            Only too pleased....

Job                No! No. I need to be here – not just for her, for my soul's sake too

Ivor (*disgusted*) Oh for God's sake...

Job (*becoming increasingly distressed*) Yes. And for God's sake. For me, this is a spiritual thing, not mental.

Ivor                What do you think you mean by that?

Job                Ideally, when I'm well, God is the web, the energy, the space, the light. God is in the vast net of relationships that animates everything. Like quantum physics. That's what I think.

Ivor                That's totally unscientific! Where's the proof?

Job (*collapsing after this effort*) There's never any proof. But I did experience it...especially when I was writing the book. Now I've lost it. I'm in absolute darkness...my soul....

*He panics again and collapses onto the bed head in hands. The others crowd round, concerned.*

*Brown out to strobe. Slow strobe to a stop. Spot up on Sophia*

### **Scene 5 - The same**

#### **#6 Chorus and Sophia sing**

*Spot fades. Lights up*

### **Scene 6 - The same**

Oliver (*sitting by Job*) Feeling better now? Shall I call the nurse?

Ivor (*briskly*)    What's the medical diagnosis?

Ada                Hope said anxiety depressive....something...

Ivor                Has he had a second opinion?

Ada                I don't know. Job, have you?

Job                    Not now....not now.

Ada (*to the others*) Best leave him be.

Ivor                    Suffice it to say... Job, I must just say this: maybe for your own good. You should try to see it for what it is - mental illness.

Job                    For most people.....

Ivor                    All this spirituality stuff isn't helping...

Ada                    The medics can cure this. Put your trust in them.

Oliver                  Are you taking the medication?

Job (*distracted*) Yes...yes

Oliver                  Well then... You're in safe hands.

Ada                    They know what they're doing

Ivor                    Medical degrees **and** experience

*(Job sits with his head in his hands. They mime to each other that they should go.)*

Oliver                  So we'll be off now. But we'll drop in over the next few days.

Ada                    Is there anything we can bring?

*(Job is beyond answering. Exeunt Oliver, Ada and Ivor)*

*Lights to 1/2. Spot on Job*

### **Scene 8 - The same**

**#7 Job sings 'I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.'**

*Brown out*

*#7 Segues to:*

### **Scene 9 - The same**

*Lights up on choir/quartet*

**#8 quartet (or full choir) sings "If you want what visible reality can give you"**

*Lights dim*

### **Scene 10**

*Lights up to ¾*

*Enter Dr Death*

Dr Death        Hello there.

Job                Who are you?

DD                Part of the establishment.

Job                I'm not up to any more....

DD                Oh I quite understand. New patients are always a bit overwhelmed. I just wanted to say welcome and if there's anything you need, you only have to ask.

*(Job is beyond speech)*

DD                You're in safe hands here. Some people have been here for months and see it as home

Job                I don't want...

DD                That's what they all say. But it's really quite pleasant. You'll get used to the routines. The nice little classes. Yesterday there was one on anxiety. Everyone described their symptoms and they were written down on a whiteboard. The psychologist is doing a PhD so he got his assistant to copy them down for his research. One lady got a bit distressed. She said writing them down made them more real and she was worried that some of the symptoms she hadn't experienced, might be catching. Rather silly of her don't you think? I mean we all know about the fears and phobias people experience here. That the food is poisoned. That your wife's out to play while you're away. That the diagnosis is wrong. That the medication is useless. That you'll have to have ECT. And even that won't work. That the doctors are just playing with your mind....

Job                Who are you?

DD *(ignoring him)* That you'd be better off dead...

Job                Are you a doctor?

DD                Would you be better off dead, Job?

Job                Stop! I'll call the nurse!

DD                She can't help you. None of them can.

Job *(heading for the door)* Martha! Christof!

DD                There're ways, even without medication or shoe laces. Where there's a will....

*(Enter Christof)*

Christof        Doctor Death! Please go back to your room.

*(DD shrugs and leaves with a smile)*

Job *(confused)* Doctor Death? He's a doctor?



Christof Yes. And a patient. Don't worry about him, Mr Pilgrim. He can be a nuisance but he's ultimately harmless.

Job What did you call him? Doctor Death?

Christof He's not important.

Job (*unconvinced*) But is he a doctor or a patient?

Christof He's both. The medical profession isn't exempt you know.

Job What kind of a doctor?

Christof I don't discuss patients

Job Was he..is he a psychiatrist?

Christof Job, I don't know. We're here to help patients get better, not to write their biographies. The only thing that's important is the present. Now. And right now I must get back to helping Martha with the medications. Sophia's here. I'll get her to come and sit with you.

*Exit Christof. Job sits on his bed with his head in his hand. He reaches for the Hopkins book and reads*

Job No, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;  
Not untwist -- slack they may be -- these last strands of man  
In me or, most weary, cry 'I can no more!'. I can;  
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be. (*Hopkins*)

*During this Sophia enters . She stands looking at Job*

Sophia Job, where are you?

Job Not that again! The Hugh Mann Memorial...

Sophia No! Job, where are you?

Job Desperate. I've lost...(chokes)

Sophia Yes?...

Job ... my way. I've lost my God

Sophia Your God?

Job Yes. My God

Sophia: Ah!. Ah. Your God

Job: What do you mean?

Sophia Now is the time to re-imagine.... who is your God?

Job What do you mean?

## **Prologue - The same**

*Choir enters dancing from various points, including through the audience. The basic dance is 2 steps forward and 1 step back. Where there are steeper steps some jump down and turn to assist others. Rose petals are scattered from baskets. Fruit is handed out. Banners and ribbons are waved. Meanwhile a core choir sings on stage and in the boxes.*

### **#17 choir sings Wanderer, Worshipper**

*segue to*

### **#18 Man never desired - Sophia sings**

*Sophia places a copy of The Four Quartets on the table*

## **Scene 1**

*Exit Sophia and Christof passing Martha followed by Rev Shaw. Martha and Christof have a mimed conversation about Rev Shaw who lurks outside the doorway)*

Martha            Mr Pilgrim, you said you'd like to speak to the chaplain. He's here. Would you like to see him?

Job                What denomination is he?

Martha            I haven't the slightest. Aren't they all supposed to be on the same tack?

Job                I'm not so sure about that. And I can't handle fundamentalism just now

Martha            This one's new. I haven't clapped eyes on him before. He isn't wearing a dress, if that's any help.

Job (*catching sight of Shaw who carries a copy of Why There is Almost Certainly A God*)  
Too late.

*(Job indicates he should come into the room)*

Shaw(*hearty*)    Ah Mr Pilgrim, I'm Luke Shaw. Nurse tells me you'd like to see me

Martha            I'll leave you to it

*Exit Martha*

Shaw             Is now a good time?

Job                Well perhaps...

Shaw (*suddenly uncertain*) Oh sorry. Whenever....

Job                I have some visitors coming ....

Shaw             By all means. I'll drop in next time

Shaw                    It's just a matter of time – like the discovery of electricity.

Ivor                    Oh come on! That's entirely different. There're endless numbers of experiments that have clearly demonstrated the existence of electricity and its effects. The great thing about the scientific method is that its results are predicted and then tested. Which theologians are doing that? And didn't they spend years trying to weigh the soul - to no avail whatsoever. Couldn't prove a thing.

Shaw                    Well perhaps I picked a bad example... Here's another I've just read (refers to book): Richard Rohr. "One reason so many theologians are now interested in the Trinity is because they're finding both physics and cosmology are affirming and confirming our use of the old Trinitarian language - but with a whole new level of appreciation. Reality is at root relational, and all the power is in the relationships themselves! Not in the particles or the planets, but in the space in between the particles and planets. It sounds a lot like what we called Holy Spirit."

Ivor (*now rather taken aback*) No true scientist would accept that comparison. They are totally different paradigms. .

Shaw (*carrying on regardless*) And no good Christians would have denied the Trinitarian Mystery, but until our generation none were prepared to see that the shape of God is the shape of the whole universe! You see the cosmos as a machine, dependent on certain principles. I see it more as an evolving work of art. A beauty and a joy of itself.

Ivor (*dismissive*) Different paradigms I tell you.

Shaw                    A paradigm is just a view point. It's not the view itself. We must remember that it's only one world we're talking about.

Ivor                    Indeed and the burden of proof still pertains. We need the scientific method, not some sloppy orientation

Shaw                    Well what about scientist-theologians like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin?

Ivor                    Chardin was disregarded by theologians and scientists alike. Neither fish nor fowl.

Shaw (*into his stride*) And Jacob Boehm's principles? How they align with theoretical physics?

Ivor                    Chalk and cheese

Ada (*reasonably*) But you have to admit, Ivor, that particle physics has put the cat among the pigeons. The theory on Nothing teeming with matter and anti-matter coming from Nothing and returning to Nothing borders on the mystical

Ivor                    That's a red herring

Oliver (*attempting to lighten the tone*)  
You're getting very culinary, Ivor.

Shaw (*reading from the book again*) "As you say, we once considered great science, the "enemy" of religion. But now it's helping us see that we're standing in the middle of awesome Mystery. For me the only response to that is immense humility. Funnily enough,

Job (*wistfully*) ..... together?....

Hope Mmm..

Job ....Well at least both trust that somewhere in the silent nothingness, there's something that speaks of values and possibility. Something much closer to us than Michelangelo's picture of an old man God. God inside **us**

Hope For both our sakes I certainly hope so.

Job That's a prayer.

Hope Is it?

Job Thanks... for telling me all those thoughts.

Hope And here's something else, something I want to thank you for: Job, you never objectify me like so many men do - to women in general. They dress them up in uniforms as goddesses or whores - to control them. You've always encouraged me to dance in my underwear.

Job Have I?

Hope: Yes.  
(*pause*)

Job (*smiling*) That was for my sake as well as yours! What now, Pandora?

Hope You haven't called me that in a while.

Job Something I've always liked - your constant hope

Hope (*suddenly*) D'you think we do know each other well?

Job What does knowing someone mean? We know what we admire, what annoys us, and about intimate preferences - you like Vegemite and I like Promite sort of thing -, and we share a history. But I don't know what it's like to be you.

Hope We can sympathise and empathise.

Job But our souls. Our core?

Hope Do we even know that in ourselves?

Job Sometimes we're forced to glimpse it.... in break-downs...

Hope Or in dreams...

Job But it's never shared, not essentially

# Faith Re-found

## A canata

by

***Should any choir want to undertake this work without the accompanying play, this script is offered as an alternative.***

Narrator: Just as Milton suggested in Pilgrim's Progress, in our personal pilgrimages, we encounter doubt and despondency. When this happens we are prone to re-visit our faith - how was it conceived and born; if we lose it, how can we re-find it? And if we do find it, will it be the same, or different?

### **#1 Wonders happen - choir**

Narrator: The loss of faith is often experienced as a loss of meaning, a fear of death, which leads to depression and suffering. Many poets, philosophers and artists have experienced this and written about it in their works. For instance Gerard Manly Hopkins wrote several sonnets about his acute depression, and the psalms and other passages in the Bible show it to be a common enough condition, though nonetheless painful.

### **#3 Oh the mind has mountains - solo**

### **#4 In my distress - choir**

Narrator: To begin the pilgrim journey of re-discovery means to re-examine, re-assess, re-imagine our faith, our image of God. Sometimes we cling to old concepts that need radical re-appraisal.

## **#6 We must not portray You - choir**

Narrator: This early work is cerebral. Our natural instinct is to try to think ourselves out of the hole. To help us, the poet Rumi suggests remembering something fundamental as a starting place.

"If you want what visible reality can give you, you're an employee; if you want the unseen world, you're not living your truth. Both wishes are foolish. but you'll be forgiven for forgetting that what you really want is love's confusing joy."

## **#8 If you want what visible reality can give you - choir**

Narrator: Yet this is merely a first step. Little relief is to be had by recognising that we are looking for joy. We are only too aware that it is missing. We sense there is some mystery around all this. As the poet Rilke says:

"And yet though we strain against the deadening grip of daily necessity  
I sense there is this mystery: all life is being lived. Who is it living it then?  
Is it the things themselves or something playing inside them like an unplayed melody  
on a flute? God are you the one who is living life?"

## **#9 And yet tho we strain - solo**

## **#10 Is it the things themselves - choir**

Narrator: With this glimpse of a new way of visioning God comes a frustration at the grinding difficulty of largely continuing in the dark, as He remains elusive. As the psalmist puts it: "How long O Lord, will you forget me forever?"

## **#11 How long oh Lord - choir and solo**

Narrator: And, as the writer of Lamentations writes, we cry out again of the Abyss:  
"Arise, cry out in the night." only to discover that no-one can hurry this process. It is a matter of watching and waiting.

## **#15 Arise cry out in the night - solo**

## **#16 Watch and Wait - choir**

Narrator: It's also comforting to remember that you are one among many who have trudged this journey, fallen by the wayside in despair only to struggle up and try again

## **#17 Wanderer, Worshipper - choir**

## **#18 Man never desired anything so earnestly - solo and choir**

Narrator: Sometimes the very people we would expect to understand, outwardly religious people, appear to be pointing somewhere else:

Rilke again:

"I have many brothers in the south who move, handsome in their vestments  
through cloistered gardens.... And I dream often of their Titians where God  
becomes an ardent flame. But when I lean over the chasm of myself, it seems my  
God is dark and like a web...This is the firmament I grow out of.... deep silence"

# #1 Prologue Act 1

For Lindsay

Sophia (Spoken)

As once the winged energy of delight carried you over childhood's dark abysses  
now beyond your own life build the great arch of unimagined bridges

The score consists of three systems. The first system has three staves: two vocal staves (treble and bass clef) and one piano accompaniment staff (grand staff). The vocal staves contain rests for the spoken text. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with a *pp* dynamic marking. The second system is identical to the first. The third system shows the piano accompaniment with a *mf* dynamic marking and includes three 'Ped.' (pedal) markings with wedge-shaped symbols.

8

Won - ders hap - pen if we can suc -  
Won - ders hap - pen

The score consists of three systems. The first system has three staves: two vocal staves (treble and bass clef) and one piano accompaniment staff (grand staff). The vocal staves contain rests. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with a *mf* dynamic marking. The second system shows the vocal entry with the lyrics 'Won - ders hap - pen if we can suc -' in the treble staff and 'Won - ders hap - pen' in the bass staff. The piano accompaniment continues. The third system shows the piano accompaniment with two 'Ped.' (pedal) markings with wedge-shaped symbols.

# #3 O the mind has mountains

GM Hopkins

NB The drone commences earlier as Job recites 'No worse there is none'

16/4

O the mind, mind has moun - tains

Drone

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef, 16/4 time, with a key signature of two flats. It begins with a dotted quarter note on G2, followed by quarter notes on F2, E2, D2, and C2. The lyrics 'O the mind, mind has moun - tains' are written below the notes. The bottom staff is a drone line, also in bass clef, 16/4 time, consisting of a continuous series of quarter notes on G2, with a slur over the entire line.

2

cliffs of fall. Fright - ful, sheer, no-man - fath om'd-

Detailed description: This system contains the second two staves of music. The top staff continues the vocal line from the first system. It starts with a dotted quarter note on G2, followed by quarter notes on F2, E2, and D2. The lyrics 'cliffs of fall. Fright - ful, sheer, no-man - fath om'd-' are written below. A glissando (gliss.) is indicated above a quarter note on G2. The bottom staff continues the drone line with quarter notes on G2.

3

- Hold them cheap\_\_\_\_\_ may who ne'er hung there.

Detailed description: This system contains the third two staves of music. The top staff continues the vocal line. It starts with a quarter note on G2, followed by quarter notes on F2, E2, and D2. The lyrics '- Hold them cheap\_\_\_\_\_ may who ne'er hung there.' are written below. The bottom staff continues the drone line with quarter notes on G2.

4

Nor does long our small dur - ance deal withthat steep or deep.

Detailed description: This system contains the fourth two staves of music. The top staff continues the vocal line. It starts with a quarter note on G2, followed by quarter notes on F2, E2, and D2. The lyrics 'Nor does long our small dur - ance deal withthat steep or deep.' are written below. The bottom staff continues the drone line with quarter notes on G2.



# #4 In my distress

♩ = 90

In my distress, O lord, I call'd to you and you

In my distress, O Lord, I call'd to you and you

The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is a bass line in bass clef. Both are in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. The lyrics are written below each staff.

♩ = 90

Ped. Ped.

The piano accompaniment for the first system is shown in two staves (treble and bass clef). It features a steady accompaniment with chords and single notes. Pedal markings are present at the end of the first and second measures.

5

ans wer'd me, from deep in the world of the dead, I

answ er'd me from the world of the dead I

The second system continues with two staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' above it. The bottom staff is a bass line. The lyrics are written below each staff.

Ped. Ped.

The piano accompaniment for the second system is shown in two staves. It continues the accompaniment from the first system. Pedal markings are present at the end of the first and second measures.

# #6 We Must Not Portray

crotchet = 100

Flute

Sophia

SOPRANO  
ALTO

TENOR  
BASS

Piano

We

Ah - -

Ped.

Detailed description: This system contains the first five staves of the musical score. The Flute staff has a treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, then eighth notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, and D4. The Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass staves are mostly empty, with a whole note chord of G4, B4, and D5 in the Soprano and Alto parts at the end of the system. The Piano part has a grand staff with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature, with a whole note chord of G4, B4, and D5. The word 'We' is written below the Soprano and Alto staves. 'Ah - -' is written below the Tenor and Bass staves. A 'Ped.' marking is at the end of the Piano staff.

6

must not por-tray You in king's robes You drif - ting

Ah - - Ah - - Ah - -

Ped. Ped. Ped.

Detailed description: This system contains the next five staves. The Flute staff starts with a measure number '6' and continues with a melodic line: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4, quarter note F#4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4, quarter note C#4, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. The Soprano staff has the lyrics 'must not por-tray You in king's robes You drif - ting' under the notes. The Alto and Tenor staves have 'Ah - -' written below. The Bass staff has 'Ah - - Ah - - Ah - -' written below. The Piano part has a grand staff with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature, with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Three 'Ped.' markings are placed below the Piano staff.

# #13 Nightmare(piano) (and incidental throughout as needed)

Nb This is the basic score for the nightmare sequence but there may need to be additional (or less) bars of the sustained C chord before the glissandi bars (to fit in with the action on stage)

Keyboard=organ

pp

Ped.

10

fff

Ped.

use thumb nail

13

gliss.

gliss.

14

gliss.

gliss.

tremolo

pp

# #34 Don't go back to sleep

Rumi

Flute

♩ = 100

Choir

Sops and tenors

The breeze at

The breeze at

Piano

♩ = 100

Ped. Ped.

5

Fl.

Choir

dawn has sec - rets to tell you. Don't go back to sleep

dawn has sec - rets to tell you. Don't go back to sleep.

Pno.

Ped. Ped. Ped.