Romulus, My Father

By Nick Drake
BOY:
Shh.
(Whispers) Do they just fall out of the hive?
Nothing's happening.
(Whispers) Just wait, Raimond.
They think it's the sun.

DOOR CREAKS:
For luck.
(Blows)
Wait on, boy.
Concentrating.
Whoo-hoo! (Laughs)
See you later, Jack.
Night, Mick.
Why do they all call you Jack?
That's my new Australian name.
What do you mean?
Maybe 'Romulus' is too hard for them to say.

WOMEN GLIGGLE
Those girls keep looking at you.
They are just nice people.
They like to be friendly.
(All laugh)

Muti!
(Kisses)
It's so nice to be home.
You haven't come home for ages.
Im sorry, darling.
Ive been so busy in Melbourne.
Doing what?
And...just a little spray of this please, sir.
This?
Mm-hm.
Mmm.
And here.
Do I smell good?
Yep.
Yep? Are we ready to go, then?
Go where?
Aren't you taking me to dinner
in some fine restaurant, young man?
How's school?
Good.
Guess what?
Women smile at Papi.
A lot.
Really?
Yep.
I smiled at him once too, you know.

DOOR OPENS:
And look...
..here we all are.
Here we are.
Morning, Muti.
Morning.
SWING MUSIC PLAYS
Good.
Kick, kick, back.
(Laughs)
Whoo! (Laughs)
(Both pant and moan)
Cristal.
I miss you.

CHRISTINA:
in secret,
because if my parents had found out,
I would have been in big strife.
Because you were too young?
Yep.
And your father was not German,
he was Romanian.
And he was poor.
It was not allowed.
Why not?
It was a bad time.
We were crazy about each other.
And I'll tell you a secret.
He loved me so badly,
when I tried to leave him...
..he shot himself.
What?
Took a pistol, pointed it
to the side of his head
and then he just pulled the trigger
and... Bang!
But he missed! (laughs)
The bullet just scratched his nose.
Bombs falling on our heads
out of the sky every night
and your poor crazy father
shoots himself in the nose.
(Laughs) Oh.
(Whispers) You think you can just
come here whenever you feel like it.
You don't write, nothing.
I shouldn't have to write.
You treat this place like a hotel.
Every time you come, Christina,
you cause trouble.
Yes, I always do or say
something wrong.
You had no right
to tell that story.
I love that story.
Why?
Because it reminds me...
Because you want him to think
I'm crazy fool.
No!
Shooting myself.
I love that story because
it reminds me we were happy.
Why you do this?
All that matters is your feelings.
Look where they got you, Christina.
You and your bloody feelings.
Who cares about my feelings?
Well, go back to bloody Mitru, then.
(Whistles)

ROMULUS:
(Continues whistling)
Rai?
Coo-ee!
Hi, Vacek.
Here you are. Got you some eggs.
(Urinates)
Coo-ee!

**WOMAN:**
you don't want a cuppa, Tom?
No, no, I'm right.
We want you to eat until
you're as full as a goog.
Full as a tick, Id say.
(Both chuckle)
And how's your mother, Rai?
Oh, she's gone back to Melbourne.
When she comes to stay,
she and Papi sleep in the same bed.
Ah, yeah.
But she never stays very long.
I reckon we should live together
all the time.
Well, sometimes what you reckon and
what you get ain't the same thing.
So, it's just you
and your father again, then?
And Jack and Orloff.
Oh. And would the bird like tea too?
Yes, please, Miss Collard.
And cake?
Yep, he likes his cake.
Here, Jack.
Oh, well. (Laughs)
(Both chuckle)
(Children laugh and call out)
(Whistles piercingly)
Hora!
Hello, Fritz.
Hup, hup. Up. Hey!
Whoa! (Laughs)
(Laughs)
APPLAUSE ON RADIO

**MAN ON RADIO:**

**ALL:**
Welcome to 'The Dulux Show'.
Im thinking of sending him
to St Joseph's.
Well, that's good. Good education.
Steam engine.
Expensive.
Yes, but I have an idea.
Oh, yes.
Ohh!
I have to tell you something...
about Christina.
They've moved in together,
some place in Melbourne
and they're coming up here
to live in Maryborough.
Why?
Mitru's got himself
a job at the post office.
Im ashamed.
He's my brother, but Im ashamed.
Don't be. Hora, don't be.
RADIO PROGRAM CONTINUES PLAYING
It will be alright, huh?
Raimond, they've got
a new egg board in Castlemaine.
Yeah?
Shall we sell eggs?
CHICKENS CLUCK AND SQUAWK
Go, you stupid chicken. Come here!
Go, go, go, go, go.
Go, go, go.
(Squawks)
Holy moley!
There's billions of them.
They're all over the place.
Now you need to wash off
all the shit.
(Laughs)
(Raimond mimics racing car)
Come on, come on.
Go, go, go, go, go.
(All cheer and laugh)
(Whistles)

ROMULUS:
Those eggs are sending you through boarding school.
SPLAT!
Sorry.

RAIMOND:
Papi!
Look! Papi!
Papi?

HORA:
Tell me you're not going to agree to this.
Raimond needs to see his mother.
Yes, of course,
but is it right that she comes here in front of you and your son...
No matter what she's done,
we're still family.
..with my brother, to sit at your table, under your roof?
(Speaks Romanian)
These things don't change.
Tell me you're joking.
She's my wife.
But does she behave like your wife?
You just keep forgiving her, Gaita, no matter what it costs.
What more can I say?
You've said enough.
So, where are we all going to sleep?
Raimond.
You, Muti and Mitru can have the bedroom.
Be quiet and finish your dinner.
That's very kind of you, Rai, but I'll sleep in the spare room.
Bet you don't know which star's which.

MITRU:
That's the Southern Cross.
I knew it.
Orion?
Mm-hm.
That bright one there's Venus.
Oh, she's beautiful.
I bet you don't know
which one is Constellation Mitru.
Oh, yeah? Which one's that?
Just the most handsome constellation
in the whole universe.
There's no such thing.
Oh, yes, there is.
Just 'cause you don't know
about it...
Muti reckons that you can tell
what's going to happen by the stars.
CLANGING, LOW VOICES
I don't think so.
Not me, anyway.
I know you and Muti
are living together in Maryborough.
I don't reckon
the stars knew about that.
No.
I mean, why would they be interested?
True.
Very true. (Laughs)
We need to talk about
what's going to happen.
Nothing's going to happen.
That's what's going to happen now.
We need to decide what to do.
What's different? Nothing's changed.
You're with other man.
You've always been with other men.
So why did you marry me, then?
Not because I loved you.
If you don't love me,
then why don't you divorce me?
I'm not going to divorce you,
Cristal.
Why? Why not?
Because you need me.

MITRU:
Could you please
take me to the station?
(Slams door)
MOTORBIKE ENGINE REVS
I wish things could be
how they used to be...
...when we were friends.
MOTORBIKE APPROACHES
ENGINE REVS LOUDLY

ENGINE RATTLES:

ENGINE SPUTTERS:
CRASH!
My darling.
How long do you reckon
you're going to stay?
As long as you need me, darling.
What about Mitru?
Will he be alright without you?
Do you like Mitru?
He's a kind man.
Don't you think?
I think Papi's better.

KNOCK AT DOOR:
Whoo-hoo!
Hi, Hora.
Hi.
What did you get? What did you get?
What did you get?
Oranges! Can I have one now?
Of course you can.
I'm going to have one too.
They're for Raimond's
school lunches.
(Sings softly in German)
(Barks)
What are you doing?
Hora?
What are you doing?
Raimond. Rai.
GUNSHO Why are you shooting the chooks?
Raimond!
Hora, what are you doing?
Raimond, be quiet.
GUNSHO Hora, stop!
Hora! Stop.
GUNSHO Please, Hora, stop it!
CHICKENS CLUCK AND SQUAWK
No, Hora, please don't.
(Grunts)
Hora! Stop.
Stop.
Hora! Stop it.
Stop it, stop it, stop it!
They're sick, alright?
They're all sick.
CHICKENS FLAP AND SQUAWK

DULL THUDDING:
MUSIC PLAYS ON RADIO
How could you do that?
I had no choice.
You enjoyed it.
You are insane.
You buried the chickens alive.
I don't have to put up with this.
Why don't you leave, then?
We don't need you.
And who'll look after
Raimond then, huh? You?
Where will the money come from?
Who'll cook and clean?
We'd find a way.
Then find a way.
You buy the food.
Cook dinner from now on.
Be a mother for once.
Giving me orders in my own house?
I won't let the boy starve.
Who are you? Who are you?
If you don't leave this house,
leave me and Raimond alone,
I'm going to take a stick
and I'm going to break
every bone in your body.
I hate this place!
I hate it so much.
But I keep coming here, 
over and over again. 
And I'm buried alive 
like the fucking chickens!
CRASH!

**DOOR SLAMS:**
(Raimond whistles)

**DOOR OPENS:**

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH
Fritz?
FOOTSTEPS RECEDE, DOOR CLOSES

**METAL CLINKS:**
Ahh.
How are you doing for money?

**HORA:**
And Christina?
Listen,
I have a friend in Melbourne. 
Corinna.
You remember Corinna?
She has a cousin back home -
good woman.
Young, hard-working,
beautiful
and good character.
She'd make someone a good wife.
If she's so bloody good,
why don't you marry her yourself?
(Laughs)
Huh!
(Gasps)
Hmph! Hey, listen to this.
The time you enjoy wasting
is not wasted time.
(Laughs)
The time you enjoy wasting
is not wasted time.
Bertrand Russell.

**DOG BARKS:**
Can't you stay longer?
I have to find a job.
Why?
Because none of us has any money.
Go on.
Thank you.
(Chuckles) Ah!
Watch out.
Not too much.
OK.
(Both shout and whoop indistinctly)
Whoo!
RADIO SIGNAL BUZZES,
MUSIC PLAYS FAINTLY
Hey, it's from Muti.
Aren't you going to open it?
It might be important.
Later.
But I just wanted...
I said later.
Don't argue with me, Raimond.
Raimond.
Yeah?
Where's my razor?
What razor?
The one that was in the box
in my trunk.
Maybe Hora borrowed it.
Raimond.
Don't lie to me.
Even if you do something stupid
like...burn down the house,
you tell the truth.
Always.
You tell the truth, you don't get
into trouble, you understand?
I don't know where it is.
(Screams)
Ow! No!
Stop it! Stop it!
No, Papi. Don't.
(Squeals) Don't!
Get off!
Your mother and Mitru...
..are going to have a baby.
(Sniffs)
(Breathes heavily)
Hi, Mitru.
How are you?
Good.
Packed all his clothes in there.
Put the bathers in there as well,
just in case you take him swimming.
But be careful,
'cause he's just learning.
Would you like to hold her?
She's very beautiful.
Yes, she is beautiful.
Just like her mother.

DOOR OPENS:
(Starts engine)
Do you want a glass of milk?
No, thanks.
No?
Something else to drink?
No, thanks.
A beer?
(Laughs) No.
And maybe we can go
for a walk later, huh?
Into the town, have a look.
Would you like that?
Yeah.
Yeah? OK.
This is from Papi.

BABY WAILS:
Shut up!
Susan.
Susan.
(Cries)
Shh, shh, shh.
Muti?
I think she's hungry
and she might have a dirty nappy.
What do you think I should do?
(Whistles tune)
Hello, Julie.
Hi, Mitru.
Hello, my girl. How is she?
Oh, she was just a bit stinky.
Oh, she's a stinky monkey, eh?
You're my stinky girl. Mwah!
Oh, you're a good boy.
Here we are. Come on.
Hello, my darling.
How are you?
Have you had a good morning?
(Baby cries)
Hey, bubba, hang on a minute.
You're OK, hmm?
Nice and clean now, eh?
Look, that's better.
Here we are. That's a good girl.
There we are. Look.
All better. Mm-hm?
Yeah. There.
Yes. Good. That's it, eh?
Yes, oh, that's better, huh?
Eh? OK, go to Mummy.
Alright, darling, see you soon.
I love you so much. Be good.
(Baby wails)
What you got there?
Hmm? Where?
You got yourself
a little girlfriend.
None of your business. Really.
Show me.
Come on.
Hey!
(Chuckles)
Oi, oi, oi. Come on,
she's too pretty for you.
You know who that is? Huh?
The girl I was telling you about,
remember? Corinna's friend.
Lidia. Lidia Danescu.
Hmm? (Chuckles)
Stupid.
(Laughs)

ROCK MUSIC PLAYS IN DISTANCE
# I'm gonna keep a-shakin'
Im gonna keep a-movin', baby
# Don't you cramp my style
Im a real wild child
# Come on, baby, shake all night long
# Shake until the meat
come off of the bone
# 'Cause I'm a wild one
# Ooh, yeah, I'm a wild one
# I'm gonna keep a-shakin'
Im gonna keep a-movin', baby
# Don't you cramp my style
'Cause I'm a real wild child...

WOMAN:
# Yeah!#
I said turn that fuckin' row down.
MUSIC VOLUME DECREASES
Honest to God, driving me INSANE.

RAIMOND:
Um... who was that singing?
Jerry Lee Lewis.
He's from Ferriday, Louisiana.
They call him 'the Killer'.
Why?
'Cause he kills people, I guess.
Who are you when you're at home?
Im Raimond Gaita
from Frogmore, Victoria.
You don't understand beauty,
that's your problem.
Darling, that money was for rent.
How am I supposed to feed
the baby and Rai, all of us, huh?
I earn eight pounds a week,
Christina. Eight pounds.
Eight pounds! And you spend!
pounds on a dress!
She looks great, though.
What's great is
we will be kicked out - again -
because I cannot afford
to pay the rent!
We wouldn't be
if you had a better job.
What where you thinking?
We never have anything.

MAN:
Ah, there he is.
How are you?
For you.

HORA:
Tell me, huh?
Tell your brother.
Ah, it's fine.
Hmm?
Tell me.
(Sighs)
(Baby cries)
I have to go.
Thank you for the food.
(Whispers) I'm sorry. Sorry. I'm sorry...
Please don't leave me...
Please don't leave me.
(Mutters)
Shh.
I won't leave you.
I love you so much.

PLAYS LOUDLY:
(Turns down music)

ROMULUS:
What are you doing?
Nothing.
Come on. Give me a hand.
Can I go to the movies?
We've got work to do.
Aw.
You'll be measured as a man
by your work,
not by the movies you see.
A man's work is his dignity.
Come on.
Hey!
Papi!
Who's she?
Raimond, give me that.
Why has she written you letters?
Go home.
Why is she sending you kisses?
I said go home, Raimond! Now.
Cheeky little bugger.

MUSIC PLAYS LOUDLY

**SONG:**

**Song:**

got the message Im alive
#Im a wild, Im a wild one
#Ooh, yeah, Im a wild one
#Im gonna keep a-shakin'
Im gonna keep a-movin', baby...#

Turn it off!
(Turns music up louder)
(Turns off power)
You don't love Muti
and you don't love me!
Never believe that I don't love you.
(Squawks)
Surprise.
Oh, happy birthday, darling.
Happy birthday.
Muti, my birthday's not till Sunday.
Oh, well, it's nice to be early.
We get to spend some time together.
Hmm? Mwah!
Where's Susan?
She's at home with Mitru.
Is everything alright, darling?
Yep.
So everything's really alright?
Cristal.
My love.
Oh!
Can I give you a hand with all that?
No, thank you.
Everything's under control.
Imagine, in America
they have machines,
labour-saving devices
to do these things.
Still, we settled for here.
And here we are.
There's more to life than cooking.
Raimond was conceived in a graveyard
and look at him. Full of life.
(All crunch their food)
It's delicious.
Y... Mmm.
No peeking.
There we are.
You spelled my name wrong.
Oh, sorry. (Laughs)
It's R-A-l.
(Christina sings in German)
(Trails off singing)
Happy birthday, darling.
Now you can blow out the candles.
And make a wish.
And don't tell anyone what you wish.
Or it will never come true.
Muti! What are you doing?

**KNOCK AT DOOR:**
(Knocks louder)
Do you want a cup of tea?
Muti?
(Panicked) Papi!
Papi!
What's the matter?
What's the matter?
Arghh!
What's wrong with her?
How many you take?
How many you take?
How many? How many you take?
OK, stay with your mother.
Talk to her.
Don't let her go to sleep, OK?
Where are you going?
Talk to her, don't let sleep, OK?!
Keep talk.
Muti.

RAIMOND:
a time...
..a long time ago...
Wake up!
..there was a tree.
It had leaves
and they were all new and green.
It had...silver branches
and a bird would come every day
and sing in the tree.
It would sing and sing and sing.
It was...it was a bloody good singer,
this bird,
but...but it was only small and brown
and...and then this woman,
this beautiful woman
used to come and listen to it
and...and...um...and...
..and they were very happy.
And that's the end of the story.
Muti, are you awake?
Open your eyes!
Muti! Muti!
Come on. Come on!
Wake up.
RAPID FOOTSTEPS APPROACH
(Grunts with strain)
What do I do?
Stay here, Raimond.
(Pants)
Thanks, Tom.
Orloff, down.
She's going to be OK.
I wanna be with her.
No, Raimond, you can't.
I can. She needs me.
BABY SCREAMS:
A little more. A little more.
No, no, no. Come on.
(Screams)
OK.
(Susan continues screaming)
(Soothingly) Hey.
Ill do it. You go.
I can do it. I can do it.
I can do it.
I can do it. Thanks.
Thank you.
Here, just a little bit.

SUSAN:
Come on. Come on, Susan.
Mummy. Mummy.
(Wails)
Come on.
Come on.
Mummy! (Sobs)
She wants you to feed her. Here.

CLATTERING:
(Christina moans and pants)
(Man grunts)
(Christina moans)
Oh! (Cries out)
(Cries out in pain)
(Christina whimpers) Stop! Stop!
Stop it!
(Man grunts) Shut up!
(Susan cries)
Shh. Shh.
(Mitru yells)
(Christina screams)
(Hammers on door)
Hey!
HEY!
Stop it! Get off her!
(Hammers on door) Get off her!
(Mitru continues yelling)
(Christina screams)
Stop it. Stop it!
Muti!
Hey.
(Kisses)
Have they found the car?
Muti.
Have they found the car?
What car?
The one that hit him?
No, darling.
Mummy, Mummy.
Cristal, Ill have more soon.
Anything else you need or...?
Could you just stay
for a little bit longer?
No, we have to go.
OK.
Ive gotta go, Muti.
You go.
Ive gotta go to school.
It's alright.
(Chuckles)
What?
'Bye, Papi.
Go on.

DOOR OPENS:
Excuse me. Gaita.
How smart you look.
I got a job
as a shoe polisher in a factory.
Can you imagine?
Your mother ending up
as a factory worker.
Where's Susan?
She's in a home.
A good home, just un...
...until things get a little better.
But she sometimes visits
and stays with me.
You haven't written to me for ages.
Im sorry.
Let's cheer this place up.
Hmm?
CROONER BALLAD PLAYS
Come on.
I don't want to!
Darling, I've been thinking I'd like
to come home to you and your father.
I really miss you.
I'd like to try again.
Raimond.
Please.
Please.
I have to go in now.
'Bye, Muti.
'Bye.
Excuse me, sir.
Um...if my moth..
..if my mother calls for me again,
could you please tell her
that I don't want to see her
for the time being?
Mm-hm.
(Shouts inaudibly)
(Susan cries)
(Weeps)
Papi.
If you touch the metal
with your fingertip,
it turns to dust.
But here it is
in the heart of the fire.
Hey.
Gaita...
..eat your soup.

**HAMMERING:**

HAMMERING SEGUES INTO BELL RINGING
The bloody house is falling down.
Remember the letters in my trunk...
..with the photographs?
That was Lidia.
She's a good person,
good woman.
I think if I ask her
to come out here,
that she would maybe come here
and stay.
And...we could adopt Susan
and she could come
and live here as well.
We would have to fix up the house...
...make it nice, you understand?
But she lives on
the other side of the world.
And you haven't even met her.
Yes, but I am sure
she's a good person.
A boy needs a mother.
Come on, Orloff. Good boy.
Give.
Here you go...
Hora!
She's married. Hey, listen to me.
(Romulus grunts and roars)
She's already married.
(Grunts)
Look at me.
Gaita!
Hey!
(Roars)
So Lidia was just tricking him.
METALLIC HAMMERING
Come on.
Why didn't she tell him she was
already married to someone else?
Why would someone do that
to someone else?
I don't know.
But he sent money
for her whole family to come out.
Gaita.
Gaita!
Come on, stop it. Hey.
(Snarls)
Arggh!
Papi!
(Squeals) Papi, it's me.
It's me. It's me.
(Whistles)
(Sobs quietly)
Listen, I have to get us some money.
I can't stay off work any longer.
Can I come with you?
No, Fritz, not possible.
Working in a factory 6 hours a day,
what would I do with you?
Hmm?
Will you be OK?
Yeah.
Things change, but our life is
what our thoughts make it.
No, keep it.
It's yours if you want it.

JERRY LEE LEWIS RECORD PLAYS
SONG ENDS, TURNTABLE CLICKS
You're a really good driver.
Could you turn...
could you turn right here, please?

**MAN:**
There you go.
Papi?
(Whispers) Papi?
Papi.
Papi?

DISTANT BRASS BAND PLAYS
'THE SILVER STARS ARE IN THE SKY'

**NURSE:**
BAND CONTINUES PLAYING
'THE SILVER STARS ARE IN THE SKY'
'THE SILVER STARS ARE IN THE SKY'
CONTINUES PLAYING
(Fires shot)
CAR ENGINE IDLES
Raimond.
Raimond, wake up.
What's happening?
Let's get out of this bloody place.
How did Mitru die?
He hopped on his bike
and he rode to Pioneer Tower...
...and he climbed
all the way to the top.
And then he jumped off.
But you know what he did first?
He put a knife in the ground,
pointing up,
just to make sure.
Just to make bloody sure.
(Both urinate)
We sleep here.
Papi! (Voice echoes)
(Faintly) Over here.
Start the engine.
Remember?
For luck.
(Blows)