

FIRE IN THE BELLY

by Ken Bradbury



GREEN ROOM PRESS

greenroompress.com

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Green Room Press. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Green Room Press. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Green Room Press. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Green Room Press.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: *Produced by special arrangement with Green Room Press.*

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Green Room Press.

Fire in the Belly
by Ken Bradbury

Fire in the Belly

by Ken Bradbury

When I first met Bob, he was galloping around the stage wearing a cowboy hat and boots and was carrying a woman on his back while singing, “The Cowboy and the Farmer should be Friends!”

Bob is a painter by trade ... church steeples, houses, barns, schools ... museums. During the day he’s dressed in pure painter’s white but when nighttime falls, he puts on a beard, ragged pants, a soiled shirt, dips his feet into a bucket of mud and goes onstage as one of Abraham Lincoln’s friends from New Salem, Illinois ... or at times he dyes his hair black and bellows a volley of the powerful poetry of Vachel Lindsay ... or bears the soul of a lonely Illinois farmer, or cries as a son bringing his mother to her birthplace before she dies.

You see, Bob is a perfectionist ... a wild, uninhibited, outright crazy perfectionist. Whether he’s clinging to the top of a courthouse bell tower painting the strip that’s too dangerous for his employees to reach, or strutting down Michigan Avenue in Chicago looking for the theatre in which he’s to perform that night, Bob goes all the way.

In the Lincoln play, he portrays Jack Kelso, a rugged, woolly, devil-may-care heathen. Not satisfied with the artificial effects of makeup, Bob mixes his own brand of mud from his

back yard every night, totes it 40 miles in his painting truck ... and when he walks onstage, his legs are covered with the messy gook halfway to the knee. When asked if this ever causes him a problem when it comes time to dance, Bob answers, "Heck yes! It's a mess! But it's real!"

Bob has a serious condition that he calls Fire in the Belly. After a long day in the hot sun painting a house, he'll look at young actor, tired from a day of sleeping too late, square in the eye and say, "I can't believe I'm having this much fun!" then walk onstage to wrestle Abraham Lincoln to a draw.

Fire in the belly. That's Bob's motto. You gotta have fire in your belly. An enthusiasm for what you're going right here, right now. A burning desire to live life to the fullest ... a love of life that carries you higher and higher, greeting each new day with a grin ... and a thanks for the simple act of being alive. Fire in the belly. Bob says you gotta have the fire in your belly.

Bob doesn't know Marie, but he should. Put into a wheel chair by MS as a young woman, Marie is now in her seventies, lifts concrete blocks up to her husband as he works as a builder, and could beat most of us in a foot race. Marie's cure? Complete trust in God and Fire in the Belly ... a totally unreasonable, illogical feeling that life is so very, very good.

Helen Keller tells us, "We may have found a cure for most evils; but it has

found no remedy for the worst of them all—the apathy of human beings.” It is so easy to go through life without making any effort to truly live it ... to get that fire in your belly for enjoying life and living it to the fullest.

Apathy is a killer ... a killer of ideas, of hopes and of dreams. The world has no lack of good fights to fight and it has no lack of resources to solve our problems. What we lack is the simply desire and enthusiasm to fight the fights and to solve those problems.

John Glenn returned to space this year with the crew of Discovery. After their shuttle landed at Cape Canaveral, it took a long time before the astronauts emerged to take their traditional walk-around of the spacecraft on the runway. The reason? The 77-year-old Glenn was having gravity problems and was feeling wobbly.

Watching the news that night, we all noticed that Glenn was a bit unsteady as he walked around the craft. The next day at a news conference Glenn was asked if he had considered not making the customary walk. He answered simply, “If I would have been on my hands and knees, I was going to do it.”

John Glenn has fire in his belly.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” An enthusiasm to great each day as a gift from God, to try when you know you may not win to climb a mountain simply because it’s there.



GREEN ROOM PRESS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

FIRE IN THE BELLY

by Ken Bradbury.

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

GREEN ROOM PRESS, INC.

customerservice@greenroompress.com

www.greenroompress.com