



Organizational Aesthetics 1(1): 81-96

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Cow Going Abstract

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Cast of Characters

Alison – a dairy cow

Shecky – a duck

Jimmy – a farm hand

Faith – an elephant

Doubt – an elephant

Tenacity – an elephant

Cow Going Abstract*

(It's morning on the farm. Alison and Schecky enter the milking barn.)

SCHECKY: It's a cold one this morning.

ALISON: I'll say.

SCHECKY: Are you going to do the dance?

ALISON: What dance?

SCHECKY: Your "Cold Hands" dance. *(demonstrates)*

ALISON: You would think that Jimmy might have the common courtesy to warm his hands up before placing them on someone's private parts.

SCHECKY: Private? You get your teats hooked up to that machine twice a day. And we can all watch. Not that I do.

ALISON: Not that you wouldn't.

(Jimmy enters.)

JIMMY: Good morning, cows. Alison, always ready for your morning milking.

(Jimmy hooks Alison to the milking machine. She responds to his cold hands with her "dance.")

SCHECKY: Nice. She'll be performing here all week, two shows daily.

JIMMY: Easy girl. It's just the milking machine.

ALISON: It's just your cold hands. Simple common courtesy would say that you might warm your hands and as to that machine - I'd like to see you apply freezing steel to your private parts.

JIMMY: Just a nice wake up to start the day.

ALISON: I'm trying to do my job here. I provide the milk that makes this whole farm run. And what do I get in return - everywhere I turn, Jimmy with his cold hands, Schecky with his jokes, grain that's starting to mold, pastures filled with mud pits.

SCHECKY: You tell 'em sister!

ALISON: It's not easy, this cow's life.

SCHECKY: *(sings (in the style of Muddy Waters))*

First thing in the morning, again mid afternoon
The machine organization, milks me till I'm dry
Winter into summer, July around to June
No way out for me, milked until I die.

I've got the cash cow blues
They're sucking the life out of me
Come walk a mile in my shoes
And tell me who you'd rather be.

Non stop frustration, picking at my soul
Pressure from above me, complaints from below
Want to rise above it, stuck down in a hole
Gray turns to blackness, no no no no no.

* title inspired by the triptych by Roy Lichtenstein

Oh, I've got the cash cow blues
They're sucking the life out of me
Come walk a mile in my shoes
And tell me who you wanna be.

Come walk a mile in my shoes
And tell me who you wanna be.

(Jimmy finishes the milking and unhooks Alison from the machine)

JIMMY: There you go. Now go have a nice day in the pasture. See you tonight, girl.

(Jimmy exits.)

ALISON: Why do I do this? What kind of life is this?

SCHECKY: I don't know, what kind of life is this?

ALISON: That wasn't a joke, Schecky.

SCHECKY: There's no punch line?

ALISON: No.

SCHECKY: Then, I've got nothing. You tell me, why do you do this?

JIMMY *(from off to the side)*: You're a cow, Alison. Getting milked is what cows do.

ALISON: But can't there be more?

JIMMY *(from off to the side)*: You're a cow. And nothing more. Good cows don't even ask questions like this.

SCHECKY: That's a little harsh.

ALISON: He's got a point.

SCHECKY: Sure, he's got a point. And his point is that he wants you to get milked twice a day and that's it. No thinking, no adventure. Just get milked, eat and chew your cud.

ALISON: Cud. Mmm, I like some good cud.

SCHECKY: So there you go, there's your purpose in life - in search of good cud.

ALISON: I like that. In search of good cud. I didn't even know I was looking.

SCHECKY: I was joking.

ALISON: Oh. But I do feel like I am looking for something.

SCHECKY: You want something more than being milked twice a day, something more than your life here on the farm?

ALISON: I think I do.

JIMMY *(from off to the side)*: You're just a cow. You belong on the farm. Go chew some cud and forget these silly thoughts.

ALISON: But I am just a cow.

SCHECKY: And I'm just a duck. But sometimes, you gotta say what the . . .

ALISON: I'm not following you.

SCHECKY: It's risky business.

ALISON: What is?

SCHECKY: I'm trying to not work blue. Look, you got a choice. You can listen to Jimmy and spend the rest of your life getting milked by some guy with cold hands. Or you can do something about it.

ALISON: What can I do?

SCHECKY: What can you do.

ALISON: That's what I said.

SCHECKY: You can find your purpose. You said you were looking for something. You need to honor that looking.

ALISON: But I don't know what I'm looking for.

SCHECKY: If you knew, it would be easy.

ALISON: I'm not really getting this.

SCHECKY: I may be wrong about this, but it sounds to me like you don't have a sense of purpose. Or at least you're not clear on why you're doing what you're doing and

what else you might be doing. You don't have a personal vision of what you'd like your life to be, you don't have a credo that you live by – unless "I like good cud" is your credo. Somehow that doesn't seem like quite enough. But maybe for you.

ALISON: I do like good cud.

SCHECKY: Is that enough for you?

ALISON: No. I don't think so.

SCHECKY: So you need to find what is. You need to discover what you're about.

ALISON: I need to find myself?

SCHECKY: And you're not going to do that on the farm.

ALISON: You're saying I should leave the farm?

SCHECKY: Yes I am.

ALISON: That sounds scary.

SCHECKY: It's risky business all right.

ALISON: Where would I go?

SCHECKY: Where do you want to go? Where have you always dreamed about going?

Where is that special place that you've never been to, but somehow holds a place in your heart of hearts?

ALISON: I don't know.

SCHECKY: There must be someplace. Or something that you have some attraction to.

You don't have to know why, just some place that has some deep connection for you.

ALISON: Well, maybe there is a place. I've always had thoughts about Paris.

SCHECKY: The eternal city, the city of light. The Eiffel tower, the Louvre, the banks of the Seine.

ALISON: I was thinking chocolate. It's funny, I don't even know what chocolate is, I've never had any. But I heard some people talking about chocolate once and from the way they spoke it sounded better than cud.

SCHECKY: Better than cud?

ALISON: Yeah, better than cud. And the chocolate came from Paris.

SCHECKY: So you should go to Paris. In search of chocolate.

ALISON: How will that teach me about my purpose?

SCHECKY: I don't know, I'm just a duck.

ALISON: Okay. We'll go to Paris.

SCHECKY: You'll go to Paris

ALISON: And you'll come along?

SCHECKY: I'm afraid not. Do you know what they do to ducks in France?

ALISON: No.

SCHECKY: They force feed you and make your liver enlarge until you die and then they eat it. And frankly, my liver's got enough problems, if you know what I mean.

ALISON: I thought that was what they did to geese?

SCHECKY: I'm not taking any chances. Sometimes I get mistaken for being a goose.

ALISON: Really? I wouldn't have thought.

SCHECKY: But you know me.

ALISON: I can't go to Paris on my own.

SCHECKY: Sure you can. On your own is the only way you can get where you need to go.

JIMMY (*from off to the side*): A cow traveling alone to France? You'll get lost. You don't speak the language. No one will milk you. You'll be lonely. You're just a cow.

ALISON: I can't go to Paris on my own.

SCHECKY: Not if you're thinking that way.

ALISON: How am I supposed to think?

SCHECKY: You've got a choice. You can listen to that voice inside you that always tells you why you can't do things. Or you can just go do the things.

ALISON: I don't speak French.

SCHECKY: A good looking cow like you, you'll have no problem.

ALISON: I'll get lost.

SCHECKY: You get out to pasture and back everyday. I've never seen you get lost.

JIMMY (*from off to the side*): It's not the same thing. You're just a stupid cow from Alberta. You've never been outside of Alberta. You don't know what the outside world is like.

ALISON: I've never been outside of Alberta.

SCHECKY: All the more reason to go.

ALISON: You really think I could go to Paris?

SCHECKY: I think you have to go to Paris.

ALISON: I don't know.

SCHECKY: You can stay here. Jimmy's cold hands every morning. (*sings*) "They're sucking the life out of me."

ALISON: Okay. You're right. I'll go.

SCHECKY: And remember what Elvis said.

ALISON: My aim is true.

SCHECKY: Bon voyage, "my aim is true".

(*Schecky exits. Alison journeys to France. Alison arrives in the streets of Paris, where she encounters Faith.*)

FAITH: Bonjour, ma cher.

ALISON: I'm sorry, I don't speak French.

FAITH: Pas de problème. How can I help you?

JIMMY (*from off to the side*): You're a stupid cow from Alberta who's lost in the streets of Paris. You've got no idea what you're even looking for or why you're here. What can this elephant possibly do to help you?

ALISON: I think I'm lost.

FAITH: You think you're lost? What do you feel? Do you feel lost?

JIMMY (*from off to the side*): And she's nuts. The last thing you need is an insane French elephant. I can just see the headlines – Canadian cow killed in bizarre elephant incident!

ALISON: I'm not sure I'm following you.

FAITH: You don't need to follow me, honey. Oh no, that wouldn't do at all. And I'm not going to follow you. We'll walk together. If that's alright with you.

ALISON: But I don't know where I'm going.

FAITH: Do any of us? I mean for certain? Some may think so, but I'm not sure they really do.

ALISON: Do all French talk like you?

FAITH: (*laughs.*) No, most speak French.

ALISON: That wasn't what I meant.

FAITH: I know. But you're talking from your head and I never really know how to answer questions from the head. Talk from your heart, or from your gut and I'll know how to answer.

ALISON: I'm not sure what you mean.

FAITH: Listen to that voice inside you.

JIMMY (*from off to the side*): Hearing voices inside your head makes you certifiably nuts. Run! Now, while you've got the chance! Run screaming away from here!

FAITH: Not that voice.

ALISON: I don't know what voice you mean.

FAITH: One of your other voices. You'll know which one.

(*Schecky enters*)

SCHECKY: Listen to me.

ALISON: Schecky! But you said you wouldn't come to France.

SCHECKY: And I didn't.

ALISON: But I'm in France.

SCHECKY: And I'm in your head. Or your heart. Or where ever.

FAITH: What are you looking for?

ALISON: I came here to find the best chocolates in the world.
SCHECKY: And discover your purpose.
ALISON: Shhh, let's just leave that out for now.
SCHECKY: That's the important part.
FAITH: You should listen to the duck.
SCHECKY: Yeah, listen to the duck.
ALISON: If Schecky is in my head, or my heart, or where ever; how can you hear him?
FAITH: It's an elephant thing, I don't think you would understand.
ALISON: Okay, Schecky. What's your purpose?
SCHECKY: I've always wanted to open a bakery.
ALISON: And . . . ?
SCHECKY: But I couldn't raise the dough.
FAITH: Ba-duh, bum (*making the sound of a drum punctuation*).
SCHECKY: It's your purpose that we're looking for. So maybe we should get on with it.
FAITH: You want to find the best chocolates in the world. And you've come to Paris. Let me ask you, what makes you worthy of the best chocolates in the world?
ALISON: What do you mean?
FAITH: What do you offer the world in return for its best chocolates? This isn't just a take, take, take thing. If you want the best chocolates you have to offer up something worthy in return.
ALISON: I didn't know that. (*Pause*) I'm not very wealthy.
FAITH: I'm not talking about money. What do you have, something from deep inside you, that you offer to the world?
ALISON: I don't know.
FAITH: Listen to the voice in your heart.
SCHECKY: I got nothing.
FAITH: Nothing?
SCHECKY: Nothing, nada, not a thing.
FAITH: But you would be willing to give it to the world, once you figure out what it is?
ALISON: Oh, yeah, sure.
FAITH: Don't be so hasty. It's quite a thing to agree to give something when you don't know what that something is.
ALISON: I know,
FAITH: But you do know that you have something to offer the world.
ALISON: I think I do.
FAITH: Think?
ALISON: I believe I do.
FAITH: And you will offer that to the world?
ALISON: Yes. I will.
FAITH: That's good enough for me.
ALISON: Okay. (*Pause.*) So where do I go from here?
FAITH: Well first, you need to dress properly.
ALISON: What do you mean?
FAITH: That costume isn't you at all.
ALISON: It's what I wear on the farm.
FAITH: Exactly. You've let the farm dictate your costume for you. You need to dress yourself. Maybe not a complete costume change, but something better than that.
ALISON: This is all I have with me.
FAITH: Traveling light? As an elephant, it's not something I'm familiar with.
SCHECKY: You always bring a trunk.
FAITH: Ba-duh, bum (*making the sound of a drum punctuation*). I might have something that would work for you.

(*Faith and Schecky go through a collection of scarves and cloaks, trying them on Alison and rejecting them until they find the perfect scarf.*)

FAITH: That is it. That scarf is you.
ALISON: I think it is. I think it really is. How did you know?
SCHECKY: You've got to have faith.
FAITH: And luckily I am here.
ALISON: Well, it is just perfect. It is so me. I feel like I could go anywhere with this scarf. But I still don't know where to go. Where do I go from here?
FAITH: To find the best chocolates in the world, I suggest we visit a chocolatier.
ALISON: We?
FAITH: You won't find him by yourself. After all, you are lost. And even if you did, I have a feeling you might find yourself in need of some assistance.
ALISON: There must be many chocolatiers in Paris.
FAITH: Well yes. Not as many as you might guess, but several. But not just any chocolatier will do. Luckily for you, I know the chocolatier that we should visit.
JIMMY (*from off to the side*): She's hooked you and now she's reeling you in. "come with me to the magic chocolatier."
ALISON: Who is this chocolatier?
FAITH: He's my brother.
JIMMY (*from off to the side*): Oh that's good – it's a family thing, just like the mafia.
FAITH: Are you still listening to him?
ALISON: It's hard not to.
FAITH: Bring him along, my brother would love to meet him.
ALISON: Really?
FAITH: Yes, I think so.
ALISON: Let's go, then.

(Alison, Faith, and Schecky (with Jimmy entering to join them on the journey) journey through Paris to Doubt's chocolate shop.)

FAITH: Hi, Brother.
DOUBT: I was wondering if you'd come by today.
FAITH: But you weren't sure.
DOUBT: Not like you'd be.
FAITH: This is - honey, I realize I don't know your name.
ALISON: It's Alison. Pleased to meet you, Doubt.
SCHECKY: I call her "my aim is true."
DOUBT: Pleased to meet you, Alison, my aim is true.
ALISON: You can hear Schecky, too?
FAITH: It's an elephant thing.
JIMMY: If hearing voices in your head isn't enough of a sign that you're going crazy, hanging around with elephants – elephants for crickey's sake – elephants that can hear the voices in your head!
DOUBT: I can hear that one, too.
ALISON: Sorry. He doesn't mean to be so negative.
DOUBT: Of course he does. That's his job.
ALISON: What do you mean?
DOUBT: He's your critic. It's his job to criticize things, to be negative.
SCHECKY: To doubt?
DOUBT: No, not to doubt. He's always very positive about what he knows. There's no doubt in you, is there?
JIMMY: No. No doubt at all. I know this whole trip is nuts and talking to you just makes me sure.
ALISON: I see.
DOUBT: Do you?
ALISON: No, not really.

DOUBT: So you're starting to. Just there you doubted yourself. Not in a negative way, just in way that was open to exploration and questioned the surety of what you were thinking. That's doubt.

ALISON: Okay.

DOUBT: So you come in search of chocolate?

ALISON: I heard that the best chocolates in the world are in Paris.

DOUBT: So you came.

FAITH: She followed her belief.

ALISON: Do you have the best chocolates in the world?

DOUBT: I don't know

SCHECKY: You would say that, wouldn't you?

DOUBT: What do you mean by the best? I have some very good chocolates.

FAITH: Excellent chocolates. You do the family proud.

DOUBT: But not even my clients would agree on what are the best of my chocolates.

Some like the champagne truffles. Some are simply gaga over the milk chocolate mints. And yet others come from miles for my pepper chocolates.

JIMMY: Pepper chocolates! That just proves it, this guy is nuts and this whole trip has just taken a sharp turn into disasterville.

ALISON: Sorry.

SCHECKY: Why don't you get rid of this clown - no one wants you around.

DOUBT: If only it were so easy, but somehow I don't think it is.

FAITH: I think you could get rid of him if you really wanted to.

ALISON: I'd like to get rid of him. I didn't invite him along on the trip.

SCHECKY: I was invited.

JIMMY: Didn't invite me? You didn't have to invite me. I go everywhere with you.

Let's face it, Alison - most of the time I am you. You are me. We are one.

ALISON: Oh.

FAITH: It doesn't have to be that way. You can get rid of him. I know you can.

SCHECKY: Send the miserable bugger packing.

JIMMY: Just try. You haven't got what it takes. I am so much a part of you, you wouldn't know who you were if I weren't around.

ALISON: I don't want you around anymore, Jimmy.

JIMMY: Nice try, but I'm not going anywhere.

ALISON: Go away.

JIMMY: Ha! We are like twins joined at the hip. And the surgery to separate us isn't approved.

ALISON: Oh, I don't know.

DOUBT: Sometimes when you can't get away from something, your best option is to go towards it instead.

FAITH: Sort of a jujitsu move.

DOUBT: It works for me. Sometimes.

ALISON: So what are you suggesting?

DOUBT: Embrace him. Embrace your critic.

ALISON: I feel like I've been doing that my whole life.

SCHECKY: Like this. (*hugs Jimmy*) I love you, man.

JIMMY: Get away from me you stupid duck.

ALISON: Okay. (*hugs Jimmy*) I love you.

JIMMY: Oh, get off it. You don't and we both know it. You may love being me, reveling in the negativity, criticizing everything - "oh your hand are so cold", "you don't care about us cows", "nothing on this farm works right", "the grain is all moldy"

ALISON: Okay, yes I do do that. And I even like it. A little.

JIMMY: I'm a guilty pleasure. Only before now you never felt guilty about it.

FAITH: Go with it, girl.

JIMMY: (*sings (in the style of a Dixieland rag)*)

Guilty pleasure
I'm a, guilty pleasure
Guilty pleasure
Doing the negativity rag.

Walking right in,
Tearing it down.
Just saying no,
Wearing your frown.

Guilty pleasure
I'm a, guilty pleasure
Guilty pleasure
Doing the negativity rag.

You can't do it,
Neither can they.
No, no, no, no,
Is all you say.

(Alison joins in on the last refrain.)

Guilty pleasure
I'm a, guilty pleasure
Guilty pleasure
Doing the negativity rag.

I'm a Guilty pleasure
We're doing the negativity rag.

ALISON: Yeah, I know that song. But I don't have to sing it. Good-bye, Jimmy.

JIMMY: You can't get rid of me that easily.

ALISON: I may not get rid of you, but I don't have to listen to you. So get out of my face and give me some space.

JIMMY: I'll be back.

(Jimmy slinks away to the edge of the stage.)

FAITH: Good job, my aim is true.

DOUBT: So, you are interested in chocolates. What kind of chocolate are you looking for?

ALISON: I don't know.

DOUBT: Good. And what do you have to offer the world in return?

ALISON: I don't know. Exactly. But I do know that I have something to offer the world.

DOUBT: Also good. Perhaps you should sample some? This is a milk chocolate mint, very popular with many of my clients.

(Alison takes the chocolate and tries it.)

ALISON: Incredible. This is what I have been searching for.

SCHECKY: Got it in one!

DOUBT: It is better than the chocolate you have back home?

ALISON: We have chocolate back home? I mean, of course we must. It's just that I've never had chocolate before and it never occurred to me that I could have gotten chocolate in Alberta. But this is so good.

DOUBT: Try this. It's a dark chocolate ganache truffle.

(Alison tries the truffle.)

ALISON: Oh my. This is fantastic. It's, it's, it's beyond words.
DOUBT: Which one is better?
ALISON: I don't know. They are both so good, but so different.
DOUBT: Try this. It's strawberry and crème fraîche.

(Alison tries the chocolate.)

ALISON: Oh, this is so good, too.
DOUBT: Which is best?
SCHECKY: It's all good!
ALISON: I don't know.
DOUBT: So this might be a little harder than you thought.
ALISON: I thought finding the chocolates would be the hard part. I was wrong.
FAITH: Chocolates are everywhere. Finding them is easy. Finding *your* chocolate is not so easy. But worth the effort.
ALISON: Oh my. I really thought this would be the end my journey.
FAITH: Instead, it's just the beginning.
ALISON: I don't know where to go from here. Chocolates are everywhere.
FAITH: Chocolates are everywhere.
DOUBT: Chocolates are everywhere.
SCHECKY: What is a cow to do? Chocolates are everywhere. *(Pause.)* No one is going to break into song, a quick rendition of "chocolates are everywhere"? *(Pause.)* I guess not.
DOUBT: I've never said this before, but I think I have to say it now. *(Pause.)* The best chocolates are in Brussels.
FAITH: Oh my! You are a Parisian, you are French. And you say the Belgique make better chocolates?
DOUBT: If I'm being completely honest, yes. Not all of the Belgique chocolates are better, but the very best are better than our best. Brussels is where you need to go.
FAITH: If he says this, it must be true.
ALISON: So I should go to Brussels? But I don't know anyone in Brussels or anything about Brussels.
FAITH: You must go where your journey takes you.
DOUBT: And we know someone in Brussels.
FAITH: Yes, we do. Our sibling, Tenacity lives in Brussels. We will go with you.
ALISON: You will?
FAITH: Of course. You clearly need us, so we will go. Isn't that right, Doubt?
DOUBT: But I have the chocolate shop here. My clients depend on me. *(Pause.)* Yes, of course we will go with you.
FAITH: We will leave immediately.
DOUBT: To Brussels it is then.

(Doubt, Faith, Alison and Schecky travel to Brussels with Jimmy lurking in the background, where they encounter Tenacity.)

FAITH: Tenacity!
TENACITY: Sister, Faith! And brother, Doubt! Oh, it's been too long. What brings you to my fair city?
FAITH: It was Doubt's idea.
DOUBT: Our new friend, Alison is in search of the very best chocolates.
TENACITY: And you had to search farther than your own shop?
DOUBT: For Alison, yes.
TENACITY: So you do not like my brother's chocolates?
ALISON: Oh, no they were wonderful.

DOUBT: But they did not speak to her. They did not call her. She appreciated them for what they were, but . . .

FAITH: They didn't do it for her. Everyone must find their own best chocolate.

TENACITY: And what better place to find them than Brussels? The capitol of Europe, the city of Horta, the city of chocolate.

FAITH: And what better guide than you, Tenacity? That is, if you will help us?

TENACITY: How could I say, no?

ALISON: Thank you.

TENACITY: Thank me when we're done.

JIMMY (*from the side of the stage*): Oh please, all this sanctimonious, thank me when we're done, it's an honor, great journey – what a giant load of crap. You're talking about looking for some chocolate.

ALISON: Sorry about that. You can just ignore him.

SCHECKY: I say, let's gird our loins for the adventure and have at it!

TENACITY: The duck, I like. And yes, let's gird our loins. Let's have a look at you, Miss Alison. Oh no, this won't do at all. You are just not dressed right. We'll get rid of this. And this. The scarf I like. And you'll need something a little more ...

DOUBT: Fashionable?

FAITH: Authentic?

TENACITY: Exactly. Let's see what we have around.

(*Tenacity, Faith and Doubt produce replacement options, try them on Alison, reject them, try on something else, and finally arrive at something that they and Alison like.*)

FAITH: I believe that's it. Alison, honey how does that feel?

ALISON: I like it.

SCHECKY: What about me? Don't I get some new threads?

FAITH: I'm afraid not.

TENACITY: This is a journey that Alison will have to take alone.

ALISON: I thought you and Faith and Doubt we're coming with me. You said you'd guide me?

TENACITY: I will, we will. But the duck can't come. Him either.

SCHECKY: I come all this way and now I don't get to come along?

FAITH: Sorry, Shecky.

SCHECKY: I get no respect.

DOUBT: Take that one with you.

SCHECKY: Come on, Jimmy, let's get out of here. I know where I'm not wanted.

(*Shecky and Jimmy exit.*)

ALISON: Okay, let's go.

TENACITY: Lead on and we'll be right behind you.

ALISON: Aren't you supposed to be guiding me?

TENACITY: I guide best from behind.

FAITH: It really won't work unless we're following you.

ALISON: But I don't know where to go.

TENACITY: Chocolates are everywhere.

DOUBT: You're going to sing aren't you?

FAITH: We'll sing as we search for chocolates. It'll help the time go by.

TENACITY: (*sings (in the style of the roaring 20's) and as they sing, they search for chocolates throughout Brussels.*)

Bittersweet, semi-sweet, I don't care.
 Try one and I know you'll find,
 Heart shaped samplers are divine.
 Chocolates are everywhere.

(Tenacity, Faith, Doubt and Alison join in on the chorus)

Chocolates are my business,
Chocolates are everywhere.
Chocolate is my passion,
Chocolates are everywhere.

(Faith takes the following verse)

Take it with you here and there
wrapped in foil, silver and gold
it's the treat that never grows old.
Chocolates are everywhere.

(Doubt takes the following verse)

Try a truffle if you dare
The inside's filled with ganache,
That's what gives it such panache.
Chocolates are everywhere.

(Tenacity, Faith, Doubt and Alison join in on the chorus)

Chocolates are my business,
Chocolates are everywhere.
Chocolate is my passion,
Chocolates are everywhere.

(Alison takes the following verse)

This one's good, this one's fair,
Okay, excellent, tastes like pie,
Anymore and I think I'll die
Chocolates are everywhere.

ALISON: Oh, enough. How can there be so many chocolates in one city?
TENACITY: There's other cities and they all have their chocolates, too.
ALISON: I give up. I'll never find the best chocolate.
FAITH: Don't give up, dear. It just may take a little longer.
TENACITY: Come on, there's a whole quarter of town we haven't even been to yet.
ALISON: I really have to stop and rest.
DOUBT: Perhaps your chocolate isn't here.
ALISON: I am so tired of looking.
FAITH: You have to believe it's the looking that matters more than the finding.
TENACITY: You can't just give up.
ALISON: I don't know if I can taste any more chocolates. They're all starting to taste alike. I think I'm getting a little burnt out.
DOUBT: What do you want to do?
ALISON: I don't really want to give up.
TENACITY: There's no question of that.
ALISON: And I do believe I will find my chocolates. Someday.
FAITH: Amen, sister.
ALISON: But not today. And maybe not here.
DOUBT: So what do you think?
ALISON: I don't know. *(pause.)* Maybe somebody should sing another song.
FAITH: You could sing.
ALISON: I don't feel like singing.
FAITH: Maybe later.
DOUBT: What do you feel like?

(Pause.)

ALISON: I feel like going home.
FAITH: Okay.
TENACITY: Okay.
DOUBT: Okay.
ALISON: Okay? That's it, "okay"?
FAITH: If that's what you feel like, then that's what you should do.
ALISON: But I haven't found my chocolate. I haven't completed my journey. I'm not done.
TENACITY: No, you're not done. You're just going home.
ALISON: But I'll never find my chocolate without you guys. You're my guides.
TENACITY: Don't worry, we won't abandon you.
FAITH: You can't get rid of us that easily.
ALISON: You'll come home with me?
FAITH: We'll always be with you. Whenever you need us.
ALISON: I can call and book some tickets to Calgary.
DOUBT: You don't need to do that.
ALISON: But you're coming with me?
FAITH: We'll be with you when you need us. Like Schecky. Or even Jimmy.
ALISON: Oh. *(pause)* I see. But I don't know if my head is big enough. It's already got a duck and a farm hand in it. I don't know if there's room for three elephants, too.
FAITH: Don't worry, dear. There's room. There's room in your head and in your heart.
ALISON: Oh. Okay.
DOUBT: Good-bye, my aim is true.
FAITH: Au revoir ma cher.
TENACITY: Good-bye, Alison.
ALISON: Good-bye. And thank you. Oh, I don't want to leave you. I mean I want to go home, but I've had so much fun and you've been so good to me. This is hard.

(Faith, Doubt, and Tenacity exit. Alison makes her way back to Alberta, where she meets Schecky and Jimmy at the airport.)

SCHECKY: Welcome home.
JIMMY: You didn't find the chocolates, did you? You travel half way around the world, only to come home empty handed.
ALISON: Get lost, Jimmy.
JIMMY: Am I right? Where are the chocolates?
ALISON: I said, get lost.

(Jimmy exits.)

SCHECKY: So at least you've learned how to get rid of him.
ALISON: He was right. I didn't find the chocolates. I mean, I found chocolates, but not the best chocolates, not my chocolates.
SCHECKY: You went to Paris and Brussels, you tasted a lot of chocolates, you met some pretty interesting elephants – it sounds like not such a bad trip to me.
ALISON: I did fail.
SCHECKY: Failure, schmailure.
ALISON: No, Schecky. Listen to me for a minute. This is not Jimmy talking, this is me. I went to Paris because I didn't know my purpose in life. It was never about the chocolates. Faith asked me what I had to offer the world. I didn't know. I still don't know. I'm back in Alberta and I don't know any more than I did when I left.
SCHECKY: You got some nifty new threads.
ALISON: These?

SCHECKY: Yeah, those. And if I didn't know you so well, if I didn't live half my life in your head, I wouldn't recognize you. You're not the same cow you were when you left.

ALISON: Yes I am. What do you mean?

SCHECKY: You dress differently, you walk differently. You tell Jimmy to take a hike. And they're here.

(Faith, Doubt, and Tenacity poke out from the side.)

FAITH: Bonjour, ma cher.

ALISON: Oh, you're here!

TENACITY: You can't get rid of us so easily.

(Faith, Doubt and Tenacity fade off.)

SCHECKY: It's getting down right crowded in that head of yours.

ALISON: Sorry about that.

SCHECKY: Better than being empty headed. And the elephants are pretty fun room mates. A lot better than Jimmy was. Hey, how can you tell if an elephant's been in your head?

ALISON: I don't know.

SCHECKY: Look for the footprints in your cerebral cortex. Hah! I tell you, they really put the grey in the grey matter. Thank you, I'll be here all week, two shows nightly, don't forget to tip your waitress.

ALISON: You haven't changed.

SCHECKY: You didn't used to let me use my "A" material.

ALISON: That was you're "A" material?

SCHECKY: What a tough crowd. I get no respect.

ALISON: So how am I different?

SCHECKY: You've started the journey.

ALISON: But I didn't get anywhere.

SCHECKY: It's about the journey, not the destination. The journey never ends. Faith, Doubt, Tenacity – back me up here.

(Faith and Doubt enter.)

DOUBT: The duck's telling you the truth.

FAITH: Trust him, darling.

ALISON: I don't know. I feel I failed.

FAITH: You tried. You're still trying. Do you feel different than when you left?

ALISON: Yeah. Yeah, I do.

DOUBT: There you go.

ALISON: That's it?

DOUBT: It's a start.

FAITH: Give yourself credit.

SCHECKY: You're on your way. Before you weren't. Now you are.

ALISON: Okay. I'm on my way. Home.

SCHECKY: And the old farm won't know what hit them.

(Tenacity enters with chocolates.)

TENACITY: Check out these. They come from right here in Alberta.

(Alison tries one of the chocolates.)

ALISON: Oh my.

TENACITY: Try another.

ALISON: I don't need to. This is it.

FAITH: That's it? The best chocolate in the world?

ALISON: Yes. At least for me.

DOUBT: Are you sure?

ALISON: I'm sure. This is it. This is the chocolate I was looking for. What is it?

TENACITY: That's a "cinnamon ginger" by Bernard Callebaut.

ALISON: I declare Bernard Callebaut's cinnamon ginger, the best chocolate in the world. For me.

FAITH, DOUBT, AND TENACITY: Hurrah! (*and general celebration.*)

DOUBT: Do you know now what you have to offer the world?

ALISON: What do you mean?

FAITH: You've found your chocolate. Now you have to pay the price. You have to give the world what you have to offer it in exchange for your chocolate.

SCHECKY: Can't she just charge it on the credit card?

FAITH: You know, Alison. You know what it is.

ALISON: No I don't. I still don't.

FAITH: Yes you do, ma cher. Tell us. Tell us what you have to offer the world.

TENACITY: Feel the chocolate. Reach down inside and feel how the chocolate makes you feel. Let that feeling come out. What is it?

ALISON: It's warm and velvety and there's the unexpected bite of the ginger. And the knowing richness of the cinnamon.

TENACITY: Can you give that to the world?

ALISON: I don't know.

FAITH: You have to let yourself have it first. You have to give yourself the chocolate. Only then can you turn and give it to the world.

TENACITY: Enjoy that feeling. Let it takeover your whole self. From the tip of your nose to the end of your tail.

DOUBT: Let it flow through all four of your stomachs. Feel it in your gut. Feel it in your heart. Know it in your head.

FAITH: Do you have it? Do you feel it everywhere in yourself?

TENACITY: Can you give that to the world?

FAITH: Can you share that with us?

ALISON: Yes. Yes, I think I can.

JIMMY (*entering from off to the side*): Now I've seen everything. Feel the chocolate? Give me a break. This mumbo jumbo has just gone from the ridiculous to out where the buses don't run.

ALISON: Well Jimmy, maybe I need to go out where the buses don't run. I don't think I've ever been there and maybe it's time I went.

FAITH: Feel the chocolate!

TENACITY: Be the chocolate!

ALISON: And Jimmy, I'd be honored if you came with me. You've been a big part of my life and I just can't imagine taking this next part of the journey without you.

JIMMY: Now you're just talking nuts.

ALISON: Some chocolate has nuts. Mine doesn't.

JIMMY: What? What does that mean?

SCHECKY: I think she's got you there.

DOUBT: What does it mean to you? Are you the nut?

ALISON: What do you say, Jimmy, it's going to be a great journey?

JIMMY: Do I have a choice?

FAITH: Not really.

JIMMY: It's really gotten crowded in here. There used to be a lot of room before you elephants moved in. I liked it better then.

SCHECKY: You used to get your own way then.

JIMMY: And you didn't talk so much.

ALISON: Come on, Jimmy. Be one of the gang. I need you.

JIMMY: I don't know about this. Maybe you're trying to trick me.

ALISON: Jimmy. Look at me. Am I trying to trick you?
FAITH: She looks genuine to me.
JIMMY: I don't get it. Why do you all of a sudden want me?
DOUBT: She's sharing her chocolate with herself.
JIMMY: What?
DOUBT: You're part of her and she has to accept that part.
TENACITY: She's got to love herself before she can give that love to the rest of the world. Are you willing to be loved?
JIMMY: I don't know. I don't know what that means.
FAITH: It could be nice to learn.
ALISON: So what do say, Jimmy?

(Pause.)

JIMMY: Okay. Okay, I'll come along. *(Jimmy joins Alison and is congratulated by the others.)* So I'm here, what do we do now?
SCHECKY: Now, we go on. So did you hear about the dyslexic, agnostic, insomniac?
DOUBT: No, what about the dyslexic, agnostic, insomniac?
SCHECKY: He lies awake at night wondering if there's a dog.
FAITH: Ba-duh, bum *(making the sound of a drum punctuation)*.
SCHECKY: Be sure to tip your waiters and waitresses! Thanks for coming, you've been a great crowd!

(end of play.)

About the Author(s)

Steve Taylor is an associate professor in the School of Business at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Worcester, Massachusetts, USA. His research focuses on the aesthetics of organizational action and reflective practice. Recently his academic work has focused on theorizing what business can learn from the arts and management as craft. He is the author of the book *Leadership Craft, Leadership Art*. Steve is also a playwright whose work has been performed in England, France, Poland, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Italy, Australia, and the USA.