

Ellen Ruth Harrison

ALL ONE CAN IMAGINE

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for soprano and violin

Sefiros *
Bone-frame *
Shade threaded thru shade
So I beat this song
All the threads of my roads
Stones blossom *

Texts by Jakob Stein



This artist was awarded an Individual Excellence Award for 2014.

I wish to thank Jakob Stein for giving me permission to set these evocative poems. Their striking imagery resonates deeply with me. Although the music has a mournful quality to it, as does much of my work, it is tinged with longing as well. And with longing comes hope for "all one can imagine."

My thanks also go to Don Bogen, Poetry Editor of *The Cincinnati Review*, for commissioning three of these songs (*) and for inviting me to be part of the journal's poetry and music project.

Duration: circa 13 minutes
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Sefiros

In every room one
tree the same tree

in every abandoned chamber of names

charred limbs & leaves read
by black flame

ash-scrolls of the cinder tree

ash-fruit sustains me

Shade threaded thru shade

rings hooked thru rings in a ring
made of rings

concealed in the concealed

in the bone-frame the death-tree

mobile immobile, above
& below, the hollow of death

on her throne

I saw her figure cast on the Wall

widow queen turning
away from my turning away

All the threads of my roads
tied to one knot
cinder of light

impossible impassable

Bone-frame

my tree of death

& the knowledge of death
as yet untasted

but bone-known & written in skeletal verse

till all roll down the tunnel-lines
of scrolls

to final Jerusalem

So I beat this song

against stone walls or doors that open
on nothing

to wall after wall till all singing is done

Stones blossom

slow blooming of stone in stone-rain
across the sand garden

of all our long wandering

after such error even
the desert a river of riches

all one can imagine

until the black plume
the bottomless chasm

the blazing gate

All One Can Imagine

Sefiros

in memory of Cathryn Long

Jakob Stein

Ellen Ruth Harrison (2014)

♩ = 63

p In e - very room one

p dolce

5 *mp*
tree the same tree

mp *mp*

11 *mp* *mf*
In e - very room one tree the same tree

mp

16 *mp* **Poco più mosso**

in e-very a - ban-doned cham - ber of

20 **A tempo** *f* *mf*

names charred limbs & leaves read by black flame

26 *mp*

ash - scrolls of the cin - der tree ash - fruit sus - tains me

32 *mf*

Bone-frame

♩. = 96

f

Bone - frame

p *f* *mp*

7 *mp* *sub. f* *p*

f

13 *mp*

my tree of death

sub. f *f* *sub. p* *mf*

The musical score is written for two staves. The top staff contains the vocal line with lyrics, and the bottom staff contains the piano accompaniment. The piece is in 6/8 time and consists of 13 measures. The tempo is marked as ♩. = 96. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a vocal line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a piano accompaniment starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the vocal line with dynamics of mezzo-piano (*mp*), mezzo-forte (*sub. f*), and piano (*p*), while the piano accompaniment features a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third system (measures 13-13) begins with a tempo change to ♩. = 76 and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic for the vocal line, with lyrics 'my tree of death'. The piano accompaniment includes dynamics of mezzo-forte (*sub. f*), forte (*f*), mezzo-piano (*sub. p*), and mezzo-forte (*mf*), with triplets in the final measures.

21 *mf*

& the know-ledge of death as yet un - tast - ed

p mp p mp

25 ♩ = 96 ♩ = 76 *f*

but

f mp

30

bone-known & writ - ten in ske-le-tal verse

mp mf

37 **poco rit.** **Tempo I** ♩ = 96

mp mf

41

45 $\text{♩} = 76$ *mp*

till all roll down the tunnel-lines of

f *p*

49 *mf*

scrolls

mf *mp* *mf*

52 *mp*

to final Jerusalem

mp

56 *f*

p *f*

Shade threaded thru shade

♩ = 66

f

Shade thread-ed thru shade rings hooked thru rings in a ring made of

3

mp *mf*

rings con - cealed in the con - cealed in the

6

mp *mp*

bone - frame the death - tree mo - bile im - mo - bile,

9

mf *f*

a - bove & be - low, the hol - low of death on her

8
12

throne I saw her fig-ure cast on the Wall

16

20

$\text{♩} = 56$

mp

wid - ow queen turn-ing a - way

sul tasto

mp *f* *ppp*

23

from my turn - ing a - way

25

wid - ow queen turn - ing a - way

27

turn - ing

29

p wid - ow turn - ing a - way

ppppp

31

turn - i

33

ng

35

So I beat this song

$\text{♩} = 72$

mp

Meno mosso $\text{♩} = 66$

7

mp

So I beat this song _____ So I beat this song

mf *p* 3

12

mf *mp*

So I beat this song _____ So I beat this song

mp 3

16

mf *mp*

I beat this song a-against stone walls _____ So I beat this song _____

mf

21

mf *mf*

26

I beat a-against stone walls or doors that o-pen on noth ing

f *mf*

30

So I beat this song

So I beat this song

mp *f* *sub. p*

35

to wall af-ter wall till all sing-ing is done

f *mf* *f*

39

So I beat this song

mp *p* *mp*

All the threads of my roads

$\text{♩} = 76$

f

All the threads_ of my roads_

f *mp* *mf*

6

All the threads_ tied to one knot

mp *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

11

tied_ to one knot

mf *mp* *p*

on

6 6 6

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-5) features a vocal line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a piano accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *mp*, and *mf*. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the vocal line with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The third system (measures 11-15) includes a vocal line with dynamics *mf*, *mp*, and *p*, and a piano accompaniment with dynamics *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 76.

15 *mf* *f* *mf* 3
 tied tied tied to one knot cin-der of

mf *mf* *p* *mf* *mf* 5 3

20 *f* *mp*
 light

on
mf 6 *mp* 6

23 *p*
 im - pos-si-ble im

pp 3 3 *pp*

27 *pp*
 poss i-ble im-pos-si-ble im-pass-a-ble

col legno battuto
 fingernail *gliss.*

Stones blossom

poco rit. . . . A tempo

♩ = 54

mf

Stones — blos — som — slow

ord.

p dolce

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is the vocal line in 4/4 time, starting with a whole rest for two measures, then singing 'Stones — blos — som — slow' with a melodic line. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a whole rest for two measures, then playing a series of chords and eighth notes. The tempo marking 'poco rit.' is above the vocal line, and 'A tempo' is above the piano line. Dynamics include 'mf' above the vocal line and 'p dolce' below the piano line.

5

bloom-ing of stone in stone - rain

ord.

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth staves of music. The top staff continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'bloom-ing of stone in stone - rain', featuring triplet markings over the notes. The bottom staff continues the piano accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The tempo marking 'poco rit.' is still present. Dynamics include 'mf' above the vocal line and 'p dolce' below the piano line.

7

a-cross the sand gar-den a-cross the gar den the sand gar den

II

mp

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth staves of music. The top staff continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'a-cross the sand gar-den a-cross the gar den the sand gar den', featuring triplet markings. The bottom staff continues the piano accompaniment with chords and eighth notes, including a second ending marked 'II'. The tempo marking 'poco rit.' is still present. Dynamics include 'p' above the vocal line and 'mp' below the piano line.

9 *mp* *mf*
 of all our long wan - - - der-ing

13 *mf* *mf*
 wan - der-ing af ter such er - ror e-ven the de- sert

16 *mp* *p* *sub mf* *p*
 a ri - - - - - ver of

18 *f* *p* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp*
 rich - es all

21 *f* *p*

— one can i-ma - gine un-til the black plume

26 *mp*

— the bot-tom-less cha-sm the black plume—

31 *p* *f*

the bot-tom-less the blaz-ing gate

34 *mf* *p*