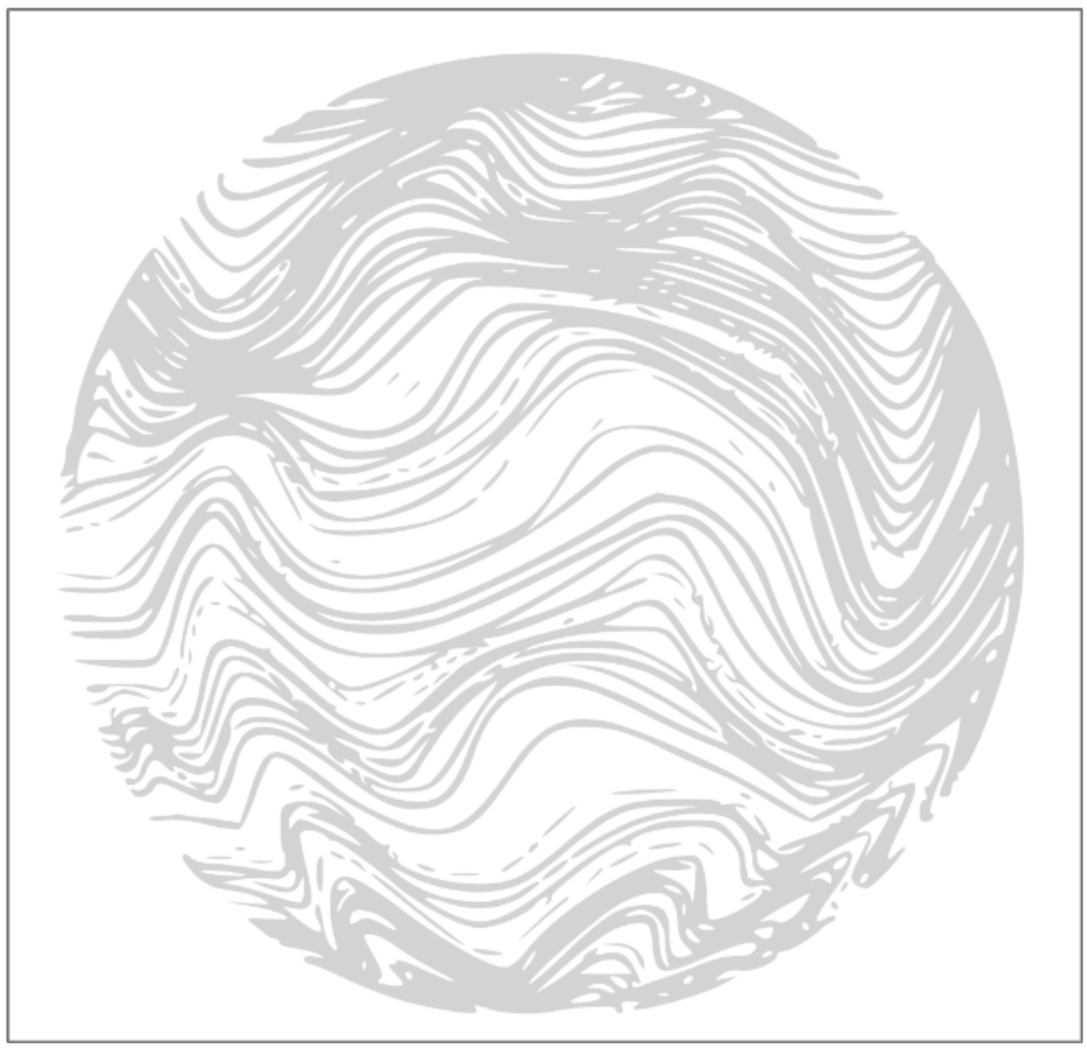
Full Score in C

Katharina S. G. Mueller (2025)

Planet

for voice, alto flute, trumpet, and ensemble



Duration ca 10’

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About the Piece

In the winter of 2024, I was approached by the director of the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, Dr. Tim Weiss, with the invitation to write a piece for solo singer and ensemble featuring a setting of one of my poems. I was delighted by the commission and immediately wanted to set the text of a recent poem of mine, spoken by the voice of Mother Earth in an address to the children of humanity. Soon into the composition process, however, I found a strong reluctance to appoint one human voice and one human language (English) as the representative of a speaking planet. It is a lack of thorough understanding that defines every harmful relationship we have with our planet. To create a work that pretends easy mutual intelligibility in human-land relationships felt like an unacceptable reduction of the problem. Thus, the text of the poetry is represented only incompletely, by its melodic contours and syntactic rhythms, but not by clear diction. The role of vocal soloist is shared between a vocalise soprano part, an alto flute, and a trumpet with cup mute. The ensemble of strings, clarinets and percussion embodies the greater gestural motions of a large planetary body in its grave endeavor to convey its meaning to human kind. My gratitude is owed to Tim Weiss for premiering the work with the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble and soprano soloist Katherine Jolly.

Text

"Planet" is based on the following poem by the same title:

your instinct, yes, was wrong
each step plausible,
defensible in itself, but
what a misdirection
which you have named *progress*.

you who try to scrape me off,
fearing the wildness of your borning cry
when you first wailed your need of a mother:
the word "naive" does not cut deep enough.

I am not a mother, though like her
I am home and maker both,
the great Creator, whom once you loved,
and now strip and outsrip,
your '*be all, end all'* manifesto
from *and* to *and*: a headlong hurtle:
a modus operandi: on and on away from me:
engineering all-at once power: all-at-once
destruction.

I am not a mother.
this, my body, you cannot abandon.
I am only air, you think, as you breathe;
I am only water, as you drink, thinking
I am just the savor-sweet things
as you eat, and eat, and eat; I am
cool and heat and every ground you tread,
you unbury, where you lay your dead, every
shelter, each speeding machine which
you so made to keep estranged from me:
that is my body: soil, salt, and sea.
mine is every charge and current.

and for all that howling earns me —
your ears so numb to wind and water voices
that scream the murder of a mother —
you cannot then wonder
when in washes death.
in burns death.
in rages death.
death, who drowns, rots, parches, starves to
death what should have grown again.

and all you have to say for yourselves
is that you are sad, afraid, lonely.
you are lively, you are lovely,
as a child not even yet born,
as innocent as unaware that
you will always need me.
for such a thing as flesh cannot simply
quit flesh and wash itself clean of the body.

all that scraping (yes, it hurts)
yet you are not the only one
who can create as the cook,
chemically assembling, world destroying.
stand in the hurricane path, the glacier flow;
I will show you a heavy promise.
I will not be dying.
I will only change.
I still, forever, have plenty of energy to give.

Instrumentation

Alto Flute
Bb Trumpet
High Voice

Bb Clarinet 1
Bb Clarinet 2
Bb Clarinet 3
    3 doubles Bass Clarinet
Contrabass Clarinet

QT Violin
QT Viola
QT Cello
QT Contrabass

Violin
Viola
Cello
Contrabass

Percussion (2 Players)
    Seed Rattle
    Rain Stick
    Paper Snare (Paper on Felt)
    Brake Drum
    Steel Pan
    Gong
    Bass Drum
    Wood Boards (On Bass Drum)

Contact composer Katharina S. G. Mueller at katya.mueller.24@gmail.com with any questions

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1 **Shivering** 2 ♩ = 66 4

your instinct, yes, was wrong. each step plausible, defensile in itself, but

Clarinet in B♭

Clarinet in B♭

Bass Clarinet in B♭

Contrabass Clarinet in B♭

Alto Flute

Trumpet in B♭

ad lib.
dark to bright [ɒ] to [ɑ] to [a]
non vib. *vib.* *fall off note (half step)* *ad lib.* *fall*

Voice

ɒ e ɒ e'ɒ → a ya'a e'ɒ → o ɒ e'ɒ yɒ e ɒ → o e

1 **Shivering** 2 ♩ = 66 4

QT Violin

QT Viola

QT Violoncello

QT Contrabass

Violin

Viola

I

Violoncello

Contrabass

Percussion I

Bass Drum

Percussion II

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6

10

11

what a misdirection, which you have named *progress*.

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

sighing

non vib.

vib.

react to bass drum hit

ya ye a nn na ya yu

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

m.s.p.

ord.

like distant thunder

l.v.

12

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

non-vib. → *vib.*

non-vib. → *wide vib.*

non-vib.

→ o

ord. → *m.s.p.*

ord.

Gong

with superball = groaning

19 ♩ = 80 Sliding

you who try to scrape me off, fearing the wildness of your borning cry,

Cl.

flz. *ord.*

ppp

Cl.

flz. *ord.*

ppp

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

p

pp ***mf***

cup mute

Tpt.

p

grace note on beat

fp

reverse doit

*sub**p***

Voice

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

grace note before beat

chromatically-articulated gliss down = shuddering

p ne p mo p → a → i a'i a i a a → i

19 ♩ = 80 Sliding

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

ppp ***p*** ***ppp***

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

ppp ***p*** ***ppp***

Vla.

ppp ***p*** ***ppp***

Vc.

p ***ppp***

Cb.

Perc. I

l.v.

mf ***pp***

Seed Rattle

p

Rain Stick

p

Perc.

23

Cl.

Cl.

fp *ppp*

B. Cl.

fp *ppp*

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

continue pitchless air sound

Tpt.

*sub**p***

mp *pp* *mp* *ff*

Voice

chi i mi shi_ di e i e i e ma'i o

QT Vln.

mp

QT Vla.

mp

QT Vc.

mp

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

fp *ppp*

Vla.

fp *ppp*

Vc.

fp *ppp*

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

28

when you first wailed your need of a mother: the word "naive" does not cut deep enough.

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

continue pitchless air sound

pp *sub* ***p***

Voice

mf ***pp*** ***mf***

Be ig we she a ta nu___ kai ma_____ a

28

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

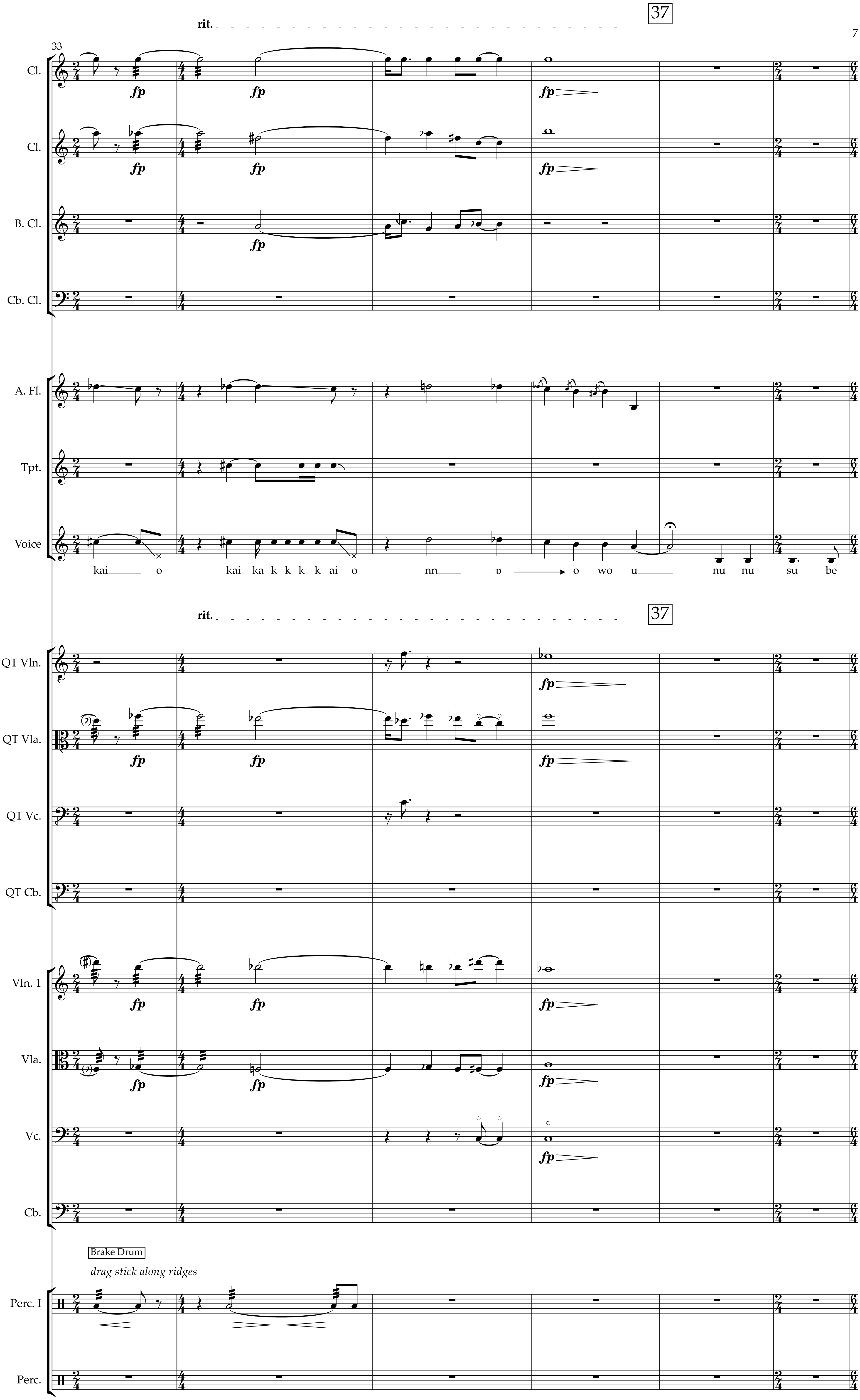
Perc. I

Perc.

Bass Drum

with brush = wind

pp ***mf***


rit.
37
33
Cl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Cb. Cl.
A. Fl.
Tpt.
Voice
kai o kai ka k k k k ai o nn ɒ o wo u nu nu su be
rit.
37
QT Vln.
QT Vla.
QT Vc.
QT Cb.
Vln. 1
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Brake Drum
drag stick along ridges
Perc. I
Perc.

39 **A ♩ = 80 Shifting**

I am not a mother, though like her, I am home and maker both,

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

echo singer

ad lib.
faster than ensemble

slide tastefully between all notes
for glisses, be chromatically thorough

Voice

a e p i rrr me ai yi me kai a'a ot

39 **A ♩ = 80 Shifting**

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Gong

with superball

Perc. I

Perc.

accel.

47 ♩ = 92 A Very Large Engine

the great Creator, whom once you loved, and now strip and outstrip,

44

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

echo singer

Tpt.

Voice

voiceless (stage whisper)

na'hi me kri___ ye at lɒ i ya lu a ha ne tla ch na e tesh

accel.

47 ♩ = 92 A Very Large Engine

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Gong

with superball

Paper on Felt

Perc. I

Wood (on B.D.)

Br. Dr.

Perc.

your *'be all, end all'* manifesto from *and* to *and:* a headlong hurtle:

48

Cl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Cb. Cl.
A. Fl.
Tpt.
Voice
QT Vln.
QT Vla.
QT Vc.
QT Cb.
Vln. 1
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Perc. I
Perc.

mf *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

rrr ai e a ai yp p

3

Gong
strike side

pp *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

accel.

a modus operandi: on and on away from me: engineering all-at-once power: all-at-once

52

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

lead accel

mf

Tpt.

lead accel

Voice

lead accel

accel.

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

p

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

pp *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *f*

♩ = 144 58 ♩ = 72 Tremendous

56

destruction.

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

pp

Cb. Cl.

pp

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

♩ = 144 58 ♩ = 72 Tremendous

QT Vln.

ff f ff mf f ff

QT Vla.

ff f ff mf f ff

QT Vc.

ff f ff mf f ff

QT Cb.

ff f ff mf

Vln. 1

ff f ff mf f ff

Vla.

ff f ff mf f ff

Vc.

ff f ff mf f ff

Cb.

ff mf f ff

Perc. I

6 6 6

Perc.

damp

pp

65

I am not a mother. this, my body, you cannot abandone.

63

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

in a strong speaking voice

not mi ei ta yi esh te non a tsu no te'i

65

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

I am only air, you think, as you breathe; I am only water, as you drink, thinking

I am just the savor-sweet things as you eat, and eat, and eat; I am

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

ye kshi do mo u e ka ru in ta we nu o na i re ha yi u o te lo

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

76

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

ti'i a na chi te su u ai u

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

87

shelter, each speeding machine which you so made to keep estranged from me:

83

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

ni si ki me u

87

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

90

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

e e i ye i a i ge da i ba a me e we i me a ak o ak

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

96 ♩ = 88 Volatile

and for all that howling earns me -- your ears so numb to wind and water voices

Cl.

Cl.

ff

B. Cl.

ff

Cb. Cl.

ff

A. Fl.

ff

Tpt.

ff

Voice

do no is she i mei ba_____ si_____

96 ♩ = 88 Volatile

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

ff

QT Vc.

ff

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

f

Vla.

f

Vc.

f

Cb.

f

Gong

l.v.

Perc. I

Perc.

102

that screams the murder of a mother -- you cannot then wonder

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

to u ru sa ro a

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Gong

l.v.

Perc. I

Perc.

108 ♩ = 72 **Tectonic, Streaming Down**

when in washes death. in burns death. in rages death.

Cl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Cb. Cl.
A. Fl.
Tpt.
Voice

a i wa i

108 ♩ = 72 **Tectonic, Streaming Down**

QT Vln.
QT Vla.
QT Vc.
QT Cb.
Vln. 1
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Perc. I
Perc.

monstrous

ff *fff*

114

death who drowns, rots, parches, starves to death what would have grown again.

113

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

wail

a

p

e

p

114

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Gong

l.v.

Perc. I

Perc.

Steel Drum

121

and all you have to say for yourselves is that you are sad, afraid, lonely.

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

speak quickly into flute

speak quickly into flute

A. Fl.

i am not a mo-ther, though like her I am home and ma-ker both, the great Cre-a-tor, whom once you loved

i am not a mo-ther, mine is a bo-dy you can-not a-ban-done. my bo-dy, ev' ry sin-gle thing you see

naturally decay to nothing

naturally decay to nothing

Tpt.

p

p

Voice

yɒ o ɒ yɒ e a yɒ

i ye a o a e'a ha yɒ

121

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc. II

123 ♩ = 80

you are lively, you are lovely, as a child not even yet born,

Cl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Cb. Cl.

ppp pp

A. Fl.
Tpt.
Voice

echo trumpet
echo singer
p

p p ya p a p p

123 ♩ = 80

QT Vln.
QT Vla.
QT Vc.
QT Cb.

hum pitch of B Major (any octave)
stagger breathe
pp

hum pitch of B Major
triad in your preferred octave

Vln. 1
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Perc. I
Perc. II

131

as innocent as unaware that you will always need me.

130

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

fpp

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

a'a ɒ a ɒ e i yi ka e i a ɒ

131

hum pitch of B minor

QT Vln.

ord.

hum your played pitch

QT Vla.

ppp *fpp* *fpp* *ppp*

hum pitch of B minor

QT Vc.

hum pitch of B minor

QT Cb.

ord.

hum your played pitch

Vln. 1

ppp *fpp* *fpp*

ord.

hum your played pitch

Vla.

ppp *fpp* *fp* *p*

hum pitch of B minor

Vc.

ppp

hum pitch of B minor

Cb.

ppp

Perc. I

Perc. II

Cl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Cb. Cl.
A. Fl.
Tpt.
Voice

ka da'a_ me ma___ a___ e i yi a e___ yi a

136

QT Vln.
hum your played pitch
p
pp
hum pitch of B Major
QT Vla.
hum your played pitch
ppp
pp
hum pitch of B Major
QT Vc.
hum pitch of B Major
QT Cb.
hum pitch of B Major
hum your played pitch
continue to hum

Vln. 1
ppp
pp
Vla.
hum your played pitch
ppp
pp
continue to hum
Vc.
hum your played pitch
p
pp
hum pitch of B Major
Cb.
hum your played pitch
p
pp
hum pitch of B Major

Perc. I
Perc. II

143

148 ♩ = 80

all that scraping

(yes, it hurts)

yet you are not the only one

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

143

148 ♩ = 80

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

150

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

A. Fl.

Tpt.

p

Voice

we p i p

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

pp

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Perc. I

Perc.

Bass Drum

pp

155

stand in the hurricane path, the glacier flow; I whill show you a heavy promise.

160

I will not be dying.

Cl.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

jet whistle

A. Fl.

Tpt.

Voice

hu me ni ta

155

160

QT Vln.

QT Vla.

QT Vc.

QT Cb.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

l.v.

Gong

Perc. I

Perc.

161 162 163 164

I will only change. I still, forever, have plenty of energy to give.

Cl. Cl. B. Cl. Cb. Cl.

fpp *fpp* *ppp* *p* *pp*

A. Fl. Tpt.

ppp *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Voice

wp a o

161 162 163 164

QT Vln. QT Vla. QT Vc. QT Cb.

fpp *fpp* *fpp*

Vln. 1 Vla. Vc. Cb.

ppp *p* *pp*

ppp *p* *pp*

Perc. I Perc.