

VERNAL SENTIMENT

For Mezzo-soprano, Alto Saxophone and Piano

Poem by

THEODORE ROETHKE (1908-1963)

Music by

BRUCE TRINKLEY

Vernal Sentiment
from *Open House* (1941)

*Though the crocuses poke up their heads in the usual places,
The frog scum appear on the pond with the same froth of green,
And boys moon at girls with last year's fatuous faces,
I never am bored, however familiar the scene.*

*When from under the barn the cat brings a similar litter,
Two yellow and black, and one that looks in between,
Though it all happened before, I cannot grow bitter:
I rejoice in the spring, as though no spring ever had been.*

Theodore Roethke (1908-1963) taught English and coached the varsity tennis team at the Pennsylvania State College from 1936 to 1943 and again for one year in 1948 after a period at Bennington College, Vermont. From 1948 until his death in 1963, the poet lived in or near Seattle and taught at the University of Washington, where he was given the title of Poet in Residence. He suffered a fatal heart attack on August 1, 1963, while visiting with friends at the Bloedel estate on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

Beginning with the publication of his first book, *Open House*, in 1941, Roethke had a highly successful career that brought him a Pulitzer Prize (for *The Waking* in 1953) and two National Book Awards (for *Words for the Wind*, which won six other poetry awards in 1958, and *The Far Field*, published posthumously in 1964). His work has gained world-wide recognition, with translations of poems into many languages.

Seasons: Inside-Outside was composed during residencies at The Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences in Rabun Gap, Georgia; Ucross Foundation in Wyoming; and Dorland Mountain Arts Colony in Temecula, California.

2. Vernal Sentiment

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from *Open House* (1941)*

The musical score is written for Mezzo-soprano, Alto Saxophone, and Piano. It begins with a 12/8 time signature and a tempo of *Andante grazioso* at 72 beats per minute. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *mp*, and *p*, as well as performance instructions like *poco rit.*, *a tempo*, *con pedale*, and *sempre legato*. The lyrics are: "cro - cus - es poke up their heads in the u - su - al pla - ces, _____ The".

6 *mf*
frog scum ap - pear on the pond with the same froth of green, _____ And
mf

8 *p hushed*
boys moon at girls _____ with last year's fat - u - ous fa - ces, _____ I
p hushed

8 *mf* *pp*

11 *mf gently*
nev - er am bored, _____ how - ev - er fa - mil - iar the scene. _____ When from
gently
mf

11

14

un - der the barn the cat brings a sim - i - lar lit - ter, _____ Two

mf

16

yel - low and black, and one that looks in be - tween, _____

16

Sva

18

mp cresc. *f* *marcato, joyfully*

Though it all hap-pened be-fore, _____ I can - not grow bit - ter: _____ I re -

mp cresc. *mf* *f*

18

mp cresc. *f*

21

joice in the spring, _____ as though no spring _____ ev - er had been. _____

marcato, joyfully *dim.* *dim.*

21

dim.

24

_____ I re - joice in the spring, _____ as though no spring _____

mp *p*

mp

24

mp

27

ev - er had been. _____

poco rit.

p *poco rit.* *pp*

27

p