

AUTUMN SONGS

Four Lyrical Pieces for String Quartet

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The four movements of *Autumn Songs* are adapted from choral and vocal works in *Mountain Laurels: A Choral Symphony*, written to celebrate the Centenary of State College, Pennsylvania in 1996 and based on poems by central Pennsylvania poets.

The poems may be included in the printed program or may be read aloud before each piece is performed.

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1. Tango (Dinner in the Courtyard)

Emily Grosholz

from *The River Painter* (1984)

When summer tears the maple leaves
to lace, and blue shows through the green
like those imagined distances,
weaving through all things close at hand,
then sunset looms for hours upon
the scarlet tenements of day,
unraveling curtains, windowpanes
ablaze. The house is close, I say,

and move the table underneath
the arches of the maple tree.
Not even the curious neighbors know
if I am host or stranger here,
nor if this roof of leaf and air,
the little courtyard of the world, is home.

2. Idyll

Theodore Roethke

from *Open House* (1941)

Now as from maple to elm the flittermice skitter and twirl,
A drunk man stumbles by, absorbed in self-talk.
The lights in the kitchens go out; moth wings unfurl;
The last tricycle runs crazily to the end of the walk.

As darkness creeps up on the well-groomed suburban town,
We grow indifferent to dog howls, to the nestling's last peep.
Dew deepens on the fresh-cut lawn;
We sit in the porch swing, content and half asleep.

The world recedes in the black revolving shadow;
A far-off train blows its echoing whistle once;
We go to our beds in a house at the edge of a meadow.
Unmindful of terror and headlines, of speeches and guns.

3. Arioso (Poem with a Moon)

John Balaban

from *Blue Mountain* (1982)

One summer evening at an oak edged pond,
I saw shoals of frogs, or small toads, spawning,
bloated red, glued in pairs, rolling,
roiling the shallows under a full moon
which, oiled, sleek, dripping in the trees,
cast shadows from my hand onto the water.
Tonight, spring night, by your house the peepers trill,
and the moon, as you sit at your desk, looks in
to see if your face is still shadowed by mine.

4. Toccata (Night Journey)

Theodore Roethke

from *Open House* (1941)

Now as the train bears west,
Its rhythm rocks the earth,
And from my Pullman berth
I stare into the night
While others take their rest.
Bridges of iron lace,
A suddenness of trees,
A lap of mountain mist
All cross my line of sight,
Then a bleak wasted place,
And a lake below my knees.
Full on my neck I feel
The straining at a curve;
My muscles move with steel,
I wake in every nerve.
I watch a beacon swing
From dark to blazing bright;
We thunder through ravines
And gullies washed with light.
Beyond the mountain pass
Mist deepens on the pane;
We rush into a rain
That rattles double glass.
Wheels shake the roadbed stone,
The pistons jerk and shove,
I stay up half the night
To see the land I love.

1. Tango (Dinner in the Courtyard)

Tempo di tango ♩ = 112
poco stringendo

Violin 1
mp

Violin 2

Viola
poco stringendo
mp
poco stringendo

Violoncello
mp
mf

5 *poco rit. e dim.*

a tempo

sempre legato
mp

pizz.
mp
pizz.

mp

10

pp

14

ppoco cresc.

pizz.

arco

mp

mf

arco

18

passionately

rhapsodically

22

cresc.

pizz.

arco

mf

rhapsodically

mf

rhapsodically

mf

arco

cresc.

mf

26

molto dim.

pp

pp

p

pizz.

pp

molto dim.

30

p

pp

p

pp

p

mp

poco cresc.

arco

V

34

mp

pp

mp

mp

pp

arco

V

38

allargando

a tempo

pizz.

42

cantando

mp poco cresc.

mf

dim.

p

mp

46

rit.

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

calando

calando

calando arco

save bow

save bow

2. Idyll

Andante espressivo ♩ = 72

Violin 1 *arco* *molto legato* *poco rit.*

Violin 2 *pizz.* *sfz* *arco* *mp* *molto legato*

Viola *pizz.* *sfz* *mp* *arco*

Violoncello *pizz.* *sfz* *mp* *arco*

5

9

12 *poco agitato*

mf *f* *mf*

poco agitato *mf* *f* *mp*

poco agitato *mf* *f* *mp*

poco agitato *mf* *f* *mp*

15 *poco agitato*

mp

p *mp*

p *mp*

p *mp*

18 *poco marcato*

mf *mp* *p* *quietly*

poco marcato *mf* *mp* *p*

poco marcato *mf* *mp* *p*

poco marcato *mf* *mp* *p*

21

pp

pp

mp

pp

pp

24

p

mp

rubato ed espressivo

27

pp

pp

pp

pp

30

mp *sfz* *arco*
pizz. *secco*
mp *f*
mp *sfz* *arco*
pizz. *secco*
f
sfz

33

dim. *mp* *sfz* *arco*
pizz. *mf* *mp*
mp *sfz* *arco*
pizz. *mf* *mp*
dim. *mp* *sfz* *mp*

35

p *pp* *pp*
pp *pp*
p *pp*
p *pp*

3. Arioso (Poem with a Moon)

Largo pensoso $\bullet = 52$
cantando

Violin 1 *mp*

Violin 2 *p*

Viola *p*

Violoncello *p*

3 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

2

p

cantando
mp

6

2

9

mp *poco agitato* *mf* *poco agitato* *mp* *dolce* *calmato e legato*

12

15

16

cresc. *f* *mf dim.* *mp*

cresc. *f* *mf dim.*

cresc. *f* *mf dim.*

cresc. *f* *mf dim.*

cresc. *f* *mf dim.*

Andante espressivo ♩ = 96

18 *sempre legato*

mp *sempre legato* *mp* *sempre legato* *mp* *sempre legato* *mp* *sempre legato*

p sempre *p sempre*

22

p *pizz.* *p* *pizz.* *p*

26 *poco rit.*

p *p* *p* *poco rit.*

a tempo
dolcissimo

Musical score for measures 30-33. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The first two staves are for the violin and viola, and the last two are for the cello and double bass. The music is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *dolcissimo* (very soft). The first two staves have a *mp* dynamic marking. The third staff has a *mp* dynamic marking and the instruction *arco* (arco). The fourth staff has a *mp* dynamic marking. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves.

Musical score for measures 34-37. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The first two staves are for the violin and viola, and the last two are for the cello and double bass. The music is marked *poco rit.* (poco ritardando). The first two staves have a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The third staff has a *pp* dynamic marking. The fourth staff has a *pp* dynamic marking. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves.

4. Toccata (Night Journey)

Allegro marcato ♩ = 84

Violin 1 *f* *simile*

Violin 2 *f* *simile*

Viola *f* *simile*

Violoncello *pizz.* *f*

5

mf

mf

mf *pizz.* *arco*

mf

11

pizz. *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *mp*

15

(♩ = 126)

piu marcato

ff *mf*

piu marcato *ff* *mp*

piu marcato *ff* *mp*

arco *piu marcato* *ff* *mp*

pizz.

21

p *mp cresc.*

p *mp cresc.*

p *mp cresc.* *pizz.*

arco *pizz.* *arco* *p* *mp cresc.*

28

with mounting excitement

ff

mp
with mounting excitement

ff

mp
with mounting excitement

ff
arco

mf
with mounting excitement

ff

mp

33

simile

simile

simile

39

excited wonder

ff dim.

mf

ff dim.

mp

ff dim.

mp

ff dim.

mp

45

50

55

Presto

59

ff

ff

ff

ff

Musical score for measures 59-64. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The first two staves (treble clefs) contain melodic lines with slurs and accents, marked with a forte-forte (*ff*) dynamic. The last two staves (bass clefs) contain accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern, also marked with *ff*.

65

mp cresc.

f

mp cresc.

f

mp cresc.

ff

mp cresc.

ff

Musical score for measures 65-70. The score continues in the same key signature and time signature. Measures 65-66 are marked *mp cresc.* in all staves. At measure 67, the first two staves change to *f* and the last two staves to *ff*. The accompaniment in the bass clefs becomes more active with slurs and accents.

71

sub. mp cresc.

ff

sub. mp cresc.

ff

sub. mp cresc.

ff

sub. mp cresc.

ff

Musical score for measures 71-76. The score continues in the same key signature and time signature. Measures 71-72 are marked *sub. mp cresc.* in all staves. At measure 73, the first two staves change to *ff* and the last two staves to *ff*. The score concludes with a double bar line at measure 76, with various fermatas and accents in the final measures.