

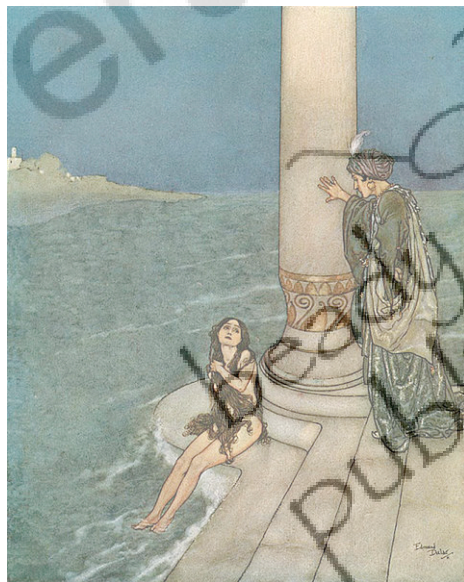


CAROL BARNETT

VOICES

for Mezzo-Soprano and Guitar

Text by Nancy Cox




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For Nancy Cox and Tim Burris

Premiered October 9, 1983 by Nancy Cox, soprano, and Tim Burris, guitar
at Viterbo College Recital Hall, La Crosse, WI

c. 17 minutes

- I. Identity Poem #1
- II. Even Feminists Falter
- III. Love Poem for Tim (à la Neruda)
- IV. Identity Poem #4
- V. The Mermaid's Meditation
- VI. I Didn't Know

PROGRAM NOTE:

Voices was composed thanks to the Minnesota Composers Forum's Composers Commissioning Program, and first performed by the author of the poetry, Nancy Cox. On a whim, I picked these particular poems out of Nancy's oeuvre because they all began with "I." Her blend of fantasy and reality appealed to me, and I made frequent use of word painting: "waves" of notes for water and wind, for example, and sharply plucked minor seconds for the mermaid's painful steps.

IDENTITY POEM #1

I am the forest, full
of dark places,
keeping my secrets.
I am cool, tranquil, and known
for my silences.
A haven, and a place
where things rot.
My leaves whisper ancient words
and flash sun-reflections.
I smooth my jagged edges with moss
and open myself to the wind.
I hold moonlight.
I die and renew daily.
In dim unexpected hollows,
I grow exquisite
red blossoms.

EVEN FEMINISTS FALTER

I am waiting here
for my fairy godmother to arrive.
I know she hears me
and is just being stubborn
(or busy –
there must be a very long waiting list).

I need, fairy godmother, someone
to figure the income tax
build a fence
plant trees
scrape the garage
and advise me about auto mechanics.

It's true, fairy godmother,
that you don't have to
clean the cinders off me anymore,
and it's true that I hustled up
my own invitation to the ball,
but I'm sick and tired
of having to do everything.

If you won't arrive soon,
to make me beautiful
and lead me off to dance,
at least, fairy godmother,
the very least you could do
is send over the prince to cut the grass.

LOVE POEM FOR TIM à la Neruda

I anchor myself in your body,
man of wood, fine-grained and dry.
The veins of forests
flow through your arms.
The buds of future springs
lie curled in your heart.
The words we plant in each other
sprout.

I drift in the light of your body,
man of sand-dune and ocean.
My boats moor at your side.
In sleep we sail together;
each night takes us farther
from shore.

I fall into your body,
man of music,
into the tight gold of its singing
vibrations,
into your hills of yellow grass,
your sky of eyes,
into your oceans of deep sound.
I fall into your body –
and do not drown.

IDENTITY POEM #4

I am the mermaid
who saved the prince.
He thinks it was that other woman.

I am not alone:
at night my sisters
rise to the surface of the waves.
They sing to me
of knives and blood.

I love and I wait
without knowing
of anything else to do.

I walk with the prince
in the garden
and cannot speak.
The slicing pain
in my strange new feet
never stops,
but I dance.

I grieve for the days
of water,
the days when I did not know
the game of excuses,
betrayal,
the burden of walking,
the sweat of unexplained hope.

To be foam on the sea
will be just as good
as loving and waiting
and dancing and grieving
and having no home
and no tongue.

I DIDN'T KNOW

I didn't know
it would be so easy
to cough up the apple.

Ever since I decided
to stop waiting
for the prince to come,
to stop lying here so
sweetly composed,

ever since I threw open
that silly glass lid
and got up by myself,
(putting to flight
a flock of sympathetic birds
who sat and peered at me
daily),

ever since I figured
I can make it
to the neighboring kingdom
without a horse
or a prince,

I've been stomping around
in this forest
trying to find my way out.

It's all right –
my castle is around here
somewhere.

*poems by Nancy Cox
used with permission*

For Nancy Cox and Tim Burris.

VOICES

NANCY COX

CAROL BARNETT

IDENTITY POEM # 1

(♩ = c.52)

The musical score is written for voices and piano. It consists of six staves. The first two staves contain the vocal melody and piano accompaniment for the first line of the poem. The next two staves contain the vocal melody and piano accompaniment for the second line. The final two staves contain the vocal melody and piano accompaniment for the third line. The piano part features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and uses a variety of chords and textures. The vocal line is written in a simple, clear style with lyrics underneath. The tempo is marked as ♩ = c.52. The score is marked with a piano (p) dynamic.

I am the for-est, full of dark plac-es,
Keep-ing my se-crets. I am cool,
tran-quil, and known for my si-lenc-es.

poco più mosso
(♩ = 63)

A ha-ven, and a place where things

poco più mosso
(♩ = 63)
legato

rot. _____ My leaves _____ whis-per an-cient words _____ and

f
flash _____ sun _____ re-flec-tions. _____

mp
I smooth _____ my jag-ged edg-es with moss _____

poco a poco accel.

mp

f (♩=c.80)

and o-pen my-self to the wind.

f (♩=c.80)

poco meno (♩=c.76)

P I hold moon-light.

poco meno (♩=c.76)

dim.

I die and re-new

pp

dai-ly, dai-ly.

TEMPO I
(♩ = c. 52)

In dim un-ex-pect-ed

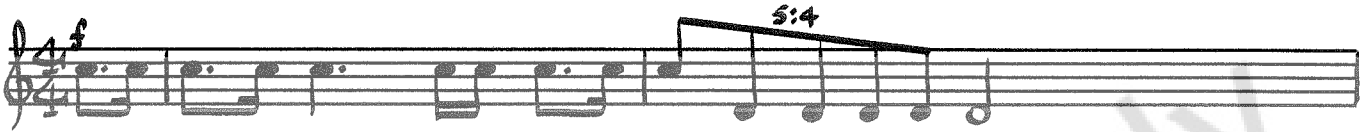
TEMPO I
(♩ = c. 52)

hol-lows, in dim un-ex-pect-ed hol-lows,

I grow ex-qui-site red-blos-soms.

EVEN FEMINISTS FALTER

risoluto (♩=100)



I am wait-ing here for my fair-y god-moth-er to ar-rive. _____

confidently



I know she hears me and is just being stub-born (or bus-y- there

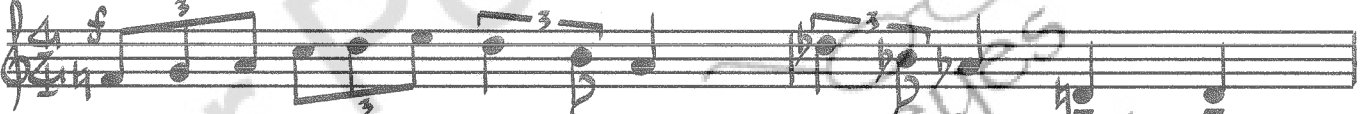
less confident

wistfully freely



must be a ver-y long wait-ing list.) _____ I need, fair-y god-moth-er, _____

lively (♩=108)



some-one to fig-ure the in-come tax _____ build a fence plant trees _____

molto rit...

(?) with distaste



scrape the ga-rage and ad-vise me a-bout au-to me-chan-ics.

freely

pleased with herself
lively (♩=112)



It's true, fair-y god-moth-er, that you don't have to clean the cin-ders

(scoop)

seductive



off me an-y-more, and it's true that I hus-tled up my own in-vi-

risoluto
poco meno
ff (♩=92)

ta-tion to the ball, _____ but I'm

subdued
meno (♩=69)
mp

(scoop)

sick and tired of having to do ev-ry-thing. _____ If you

won't arrive soon, to make me beau-ti-ful and lead me off to dance, _____

poco rit... *meno mosso*
pp

_____ at least, fair-y god-moth-er, _____ the ver-y least you could do

lively (♩=144)
f marc.

_____ is send o-ver the prince to cut the grass.



LOVE POEM FOR TIM à la Neruda

barcarolle
(d. = c. 44)

I an-chor my-self in your bod-y, man of wood, fine-grained and dry.

The veins of for-ests flow

through your arms.

The buds of fu-ture springs lie curled _____ in your heart. _____ The

words _____ we plant in each oth-er _____ sprout. _____

drift in the light _____ of your bod-y, _____ man of sand-dune _____ and

o-cean. _____ My boats moor at your

side. _____ In sleep we sail _____ to-gether;

each night takes us far _____ ther _____ from _____

shore. _____

mp

mf

mf

p

cresc.

f

mp
I fall _____ in-to your bod-y, _____ man of

mf
mu-sic, _____ in-to the tight gold of its sing-ing vi-bra-tion(n) _____

f *cresc.* _____ (s), _____ in-to your hills of yel-low-grass, _____ your

f *mf* *poco rit.*
sky _____ of eyes, _____ in-to your o-ceans of _____

f *mf* *poco rit.*

deep _____ sound. _____

meno mosso *p* *meno mosso*

I fall in-to your bod-y — and do not drown. _____

meno mosso *p* *meno mosso*

(n) _____

IDENTITY POEM # 4

(♩ = c. 54)

P ³

I am the mer-maid who saved the

sul pont.

P

prince. —

He thinks it was that oth-er

³

P

wo-man. —

P

P

I am not a-lone: _____ at

poco cresc. *dim.*

night _____ my sisters rise _____ to the surface of the waves. _____

mp *f* *cb.*

They sing to me _____ of knives _____ and

molto *sf* *sul pont.*

blood. _____

mp *nat.*

P

I love and I wait

with-out know-ing of an-y-thing else to do.

legato

P

mp

I walk with the

mp

mf *cresc.*

prince_ in the gar-den and can-not speak. The slic-ing pain in my

mf *cresc.*

sub. P

strange new feet nev-er stops, but I dance.

p *mp*

poco rit.

a tempo

mp

Musical staff with notes and rests, including a fermata over a whole note.

I grieve _____ for the days of

a tempo

nat. obs.

mp

Musical staff with notes and rests, including a fermata over a whole note.

poco a poco dim.

wa-ter, _____ the days when I did not know the game of ex-cus-es, _____ be-

Musical staff with notes and rests, including a fermata over a whole note.

poco a poco dim.

tray-al, _____ the bur-den of walk-ing, _____ the sweat of un-ex-plained hope. _____

Musical staff with notes and rests, including a fermata over a whole note.

poco a poco dim.

Musical staff with notes and rests, including a fermata over a whole note.

Musical staff with notes and rests, including a fermata over a whole note.

First system of musical notation. It consists of a piano staff and a vocal staff. The piano staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes. The vocal staff starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes markings for *tasto* and *nat.* (natural). The system concludes with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic.

Second system of musical notation. It includes a piano staff and a vocal staff with lyrics. The piano staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The vocal staff lyrics are: "To be foam on the sea _____ will be just as good as lov-ing & wait-ing &". The system concludes with a *poco a poco dim.* (poco a poco diminuendo) marking.

Third system of musical notation. It includes a piano staff and a vocal staff with lyrics. The piano staff continues with a *poco a poco dim.* marking. The vocal staff lyrics are: "danc-ing & griev-ing & hav-ing no home _____ and no tongue. _____".

Fourth system of musical notation. It includes a piano staff and a vocal staff with lyrics. The piano staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. The vocal staff lyrics are: "danc-ing & griev-ing & hav-ing no home _____ and no tongue. _____".

Fifth system of musical notation. It includes a piano staff and a vocal staff with lyrics. The piano staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes a *dim.* marking. The vocal staff lyrics are: "danc-ing & griev-ing & hav-ing no home _____ and no tongue. _____".

Sixth system of musical notation. It includes a piano staff and a vocal staff with lyrics. The piano staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes a *ritard...* (ritardando) marking. The vocal staff lyrics are: "danc-ing & griev-ing & hav-ing no home _____ and no tongue. _____".

Seventh system of musical notation. It includes a piano staff and a vocal staff with lyrics. The piano staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a *ritard...* marking. The vocal staff lyrics are: "danc-ing & griev-ing & hav-ing no home _____ and no tongue. _____". The system concludes with the instruction **ATTACCA**.

THE MERMAID'S MEDITATION

l'istesso tempo, ma rubato

meno mosso

molto tasto

pp *3* *p* *ppp* *nat.* *p* *3*

broad *pp* *p* *molto*

f *mf* *mp* *poco a poco rit. al fine*

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

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. It includes performance markings for *molto tasto*, *p*, *ppp*, and *nat.*. The second staff continues the melodic line, marked *pp* and *p*, ending with a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff is a chordal accompaniment in treble clef, marked *f* and *mf*, with a *broad* instruction. The fourth staff is a chordal accompaniment in treble clef, marked *mp*, with a *poco a poco rit. al fine* instruction. The fifth staff is a chordal accompaniment in treble clef, marked *p* and *pp*. The score concludes with three empty staves.

I DIDN'T KNOW

(dec. 50)

*hesitant**mp*

I didn't know it would be so eas-y to cough up the ap-ple. _____

poco marcato

Ev-er since I de-cid-ed to stop wait-ing for the prince to

legato

come, _____ to stop ly-ing here _____ so sweet-ly com-

mf

posed, _____

mf

mp *cresc.*

ev-er since I threw o-pen that sil-ly glass lid _____ and got

mp *cresc.*

mp

up by my-self, _____ (put-ting to flight a flock of sym-pa-thet-ic birds _____ who sat and

f *sub. mp* *mp*

f

peered at me dai-ly), _____

p *mf*

cresc.
mp *3*
ev-er since I fig-ured I can make it to the neigh-bor-ing

mp *cresc.*
King-dom with-out a horse — or a prince, —

f *ff* *dim.*
I've been stomp-ing a-

mp *intense* *cresc.* *3*
round — in this for-est — trying to find my way out. —

f *dim.* *mp* *5*
f *mp*

ritard. *a tempo*
spoken-bravely

ritard. *a tempo*

It's all right-my cas-tle's a-round here

some-where.

p *tamb.* *nat.*