Its Day

tenor, string orchestra & seven obbligato instruments

Samantha Fernando

October 2014 (revised May 2015)

Commissioned by Aldeburgh Music. First performed on Sunday 26th October 2014 at Snape Maltings. Revised Spring 2015.

Instrumentation

Tenor
Flute
B♭ Clarinet
Oboe
Bassoon
F Horn
Harp
Timpani
Strings

Score in C

Its Day

Music by Samantha Fernando

Text by Benedict Morrison

I.	Reflection I	flute, harp
II.	Verse I	tenor, strings
III.	Reflection 2	tenor, clarinet and bassoon
IV.	Verse 2	tenor, strings and timpani
V.	Reflection 3	tenor, timpani
VI.	Reflection 4	tenor, oboe and horn
VII.	Verse 3	tenor, flute, harp, timpani, strings
VIII.	Reflection 5	tutti

Duration: c. 16 minutes

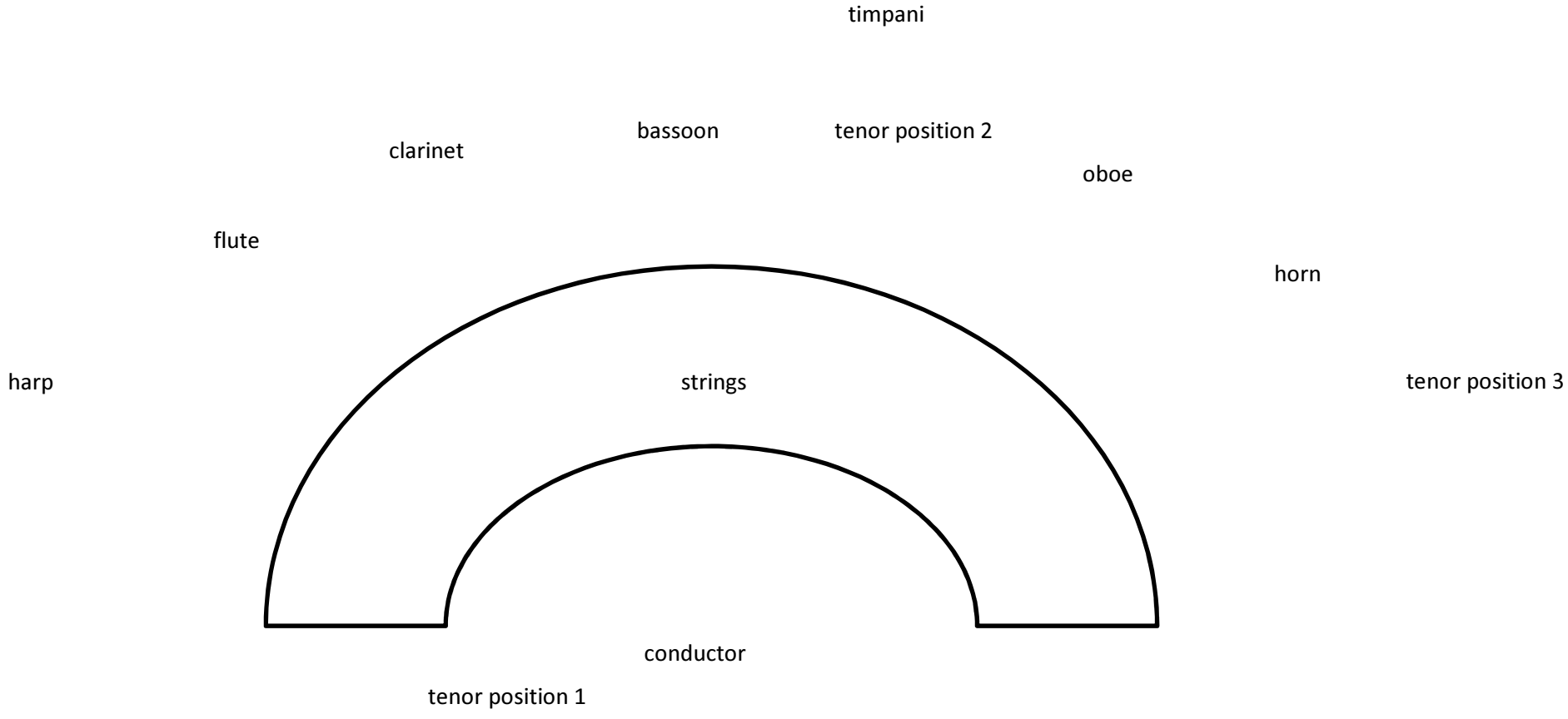
Performance notes

- Notes within repeat signs and brackets, should repeat given figure for the duration of the arrow.
- The narrations should be recited with speech rhythms in mind. Within the given freedom, the tenor must try to convey an intelligible text to the audience.
- Text in bold denotes point of coordination with the ensemble.
- Cross noteheads for the tenor are suggested rhythms.
- The timpani player will need a superball beater for Verse 2 and 3.

Stage Directions

Where possible, players stand when performing reflections 1-4.

Reflection I	Tenor is seated at the front (1)
Verse I	Tenor stands at the front (1)
Reflection II	Tenor stand next to clarinet and bassoon (2)
Verse II	Tenor stands at the front (1)
Reflection III	Tenor stand next to the timpani (2)
Reflection IV	Tenor stands next to oboe and horn (3)
Verse III-end	Tenor stands at the front (1)



Programme Note

The time taken to read a poem is a single, exact datum; but musically speaking there are two times, one for the poem as action and one for the poem as reflection…'action' at its most realistic implies a maximum clarity of comprehension, whilst reflection at its most 'ideal' means sacrificing at least part of the 'message' in favour of non-rational resonances.

Pierre Boulez

This work is as much an exploration of the relationship between music and text as it is a meditation upon the 'nocturne' theme of this programme. I have explored Benedict Morrison's words as 'action' and 'reflection', to use Boulez's terminology above. The words are communicated via narrated passages which are interspersed with four instrumental Reflections upon the text. These Reflections sometimes involve the singer but unlike the verses, there are few words; the focus is on the sound of the voice. In this way the dual role of the singer has been fragmented: at times acting as a communicator of the words and at others as a musical instrument.

Its Day

The sun's collapse. The beast's list, lilt, and fall. Dandelion-down, parcelled life, caught in the red remaining light, totters on the breeze. The sun gives a final scarlet gasp. The eyes' blacks deepen, colours fade. The hazing horizontal of the distance wavers as the sun's remaining tip is lost. A sudden cold. The sky is pinker for a sigh, before the blaze is drowned in grey.

The dark is charcoal solid, in streaks that meet at seams of double depth. The eyes' coronas' white's unseeable in all this dark. Days of blind-eyed bliss, once, when eyes were sealed and mouth was locked on milk. The air gallops in draughts of black, punctured here and there by blurs of moonlight. Beneath the subtle light, erupting in a slop of red, caught in savage starglow, a violence on the greys that fill the world, the solid flow of the drowsy tongue oozes onto soil as though colour were water and this a desert. Clouds suffocate the moon. Darkness stiffens.

A break. A hesitation of light. A disappointment always. The unpeopled world may seem indifferent, but frame by frame, the world assumes a clarity, shaking off its cold and looking up. A name is called. The frantic world looks down. And the naming of the day revives the pomegranate-purple to a slow convulsion of its tide. Stilts across the land in spotlight strides. A name is said. A naming of the day. The dark is done with, and there will, perhaps, be other days.

Benedict Morrison

Reflection I

Samantha Fernando

♩ = 100

Flute

← length of flute breath

f *pp*

5 5 5 5

♩ = 100

Harp

D♮ C♯ B♮ | E♭ F♯ G♯ A♮

← length of flute breath

f

3

Fl.

← length of flute breath

f

Hp.

mf

4

Fl.

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

p *f*

Hp.

5

Fl.

espress.

p *mf* *p* *mp*

Hp.

mp

p

6

Fl.

increasingly frenetic

3

ad lib. C♯ grace notes

mf

fff

Hp.

mf

fff

7

Fl.

p

5

Hp.

p

5

8

Fl.

5

ff

Hp.

5

9

Fl.

Hp.

(bisbigliando D♯/E♭)

ff

fff

Verse 1

♩ = c.66

spoken expressively but calmly

Tenor/Narrator

The sun's col-lapse. The beast's list, lilt, and fall.

Harp

♩ = c.66

poco sul tasto

Violin I

pp *suspended*

Violin II

poco sul tasto

pp *suspended*

Viola

poco sul tasto

pp *suspended*

Violoncello

poco sul tasto

pp *suspended*

Double Bass

*

pp *suspended*

*ad lib. vary bow position between mst-st-norm-sp-msp until bar 16. Ad lib. dynamics between ***pp*** and ***mp***

T. Solo

Dan - de - li - on - down, par-celled life, caught in the red re-main-ing light, tot - ters on the breeze.

Vln. I

gliss.

p ***pp***

Vln. II

gliss.

p ***pp***

Vla.

p ***pp***

Vc.

p ***pp***

Db.

gliss.

p ***pp***

14

T. Solo: The sun gives a fi - nal scar-let gasp. The eyes' blacks dee- pen, co-lours fade. The haz - ing

Vln. I: gliss. gliss. gliss.
mp p mp p

Vln. II: gliss. gliss. gliss.
p pp mp p

Vla.
mf p mp pp

Vc.
mf p mf

Db.
mp p mp

19

T. Solo: ho - ri - zon - tal of the dis - tance wa-vers as the sun's re - main - ing tip is lost. A sud-den cold.

Vln. I: gliss. div. gliss.
mp pp p

Vln. II: gliss.
mp p mp pp pp p pp

Vla.
p pp

Vc.
pp p pp

Db.
pp (sim.) p

24

T. Solo

The sky is pin - ker for a sigh, be - fore the blaze is

II

(touched 4th)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pp p mp pp

27

T. Solo

drowned in grey.

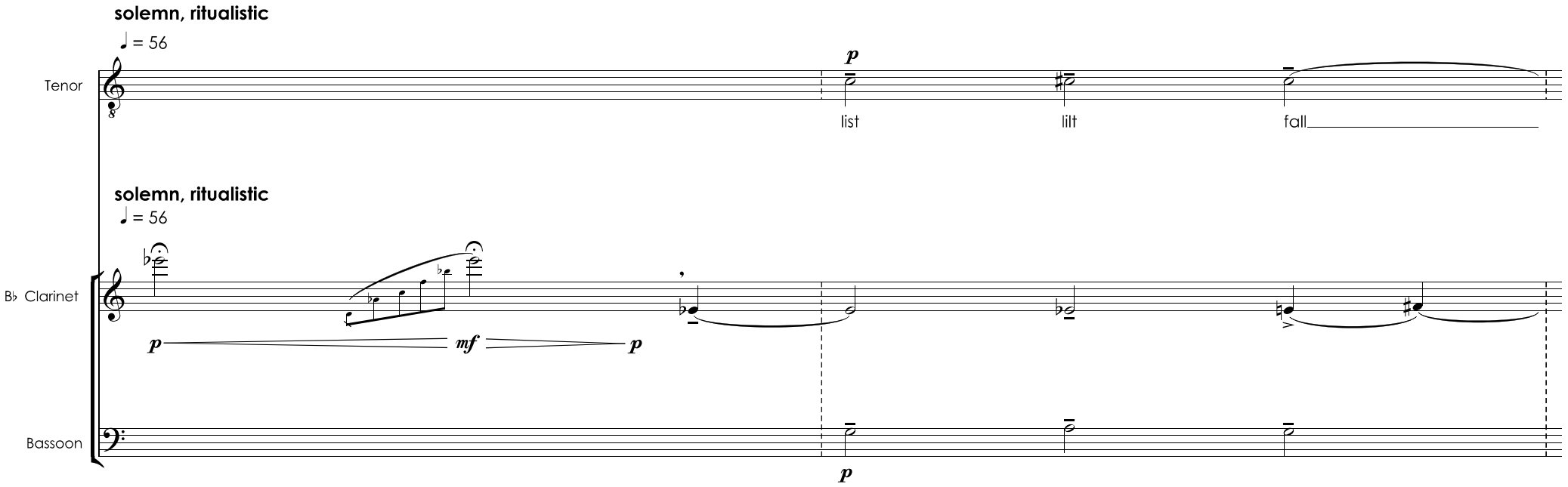
(tutti)

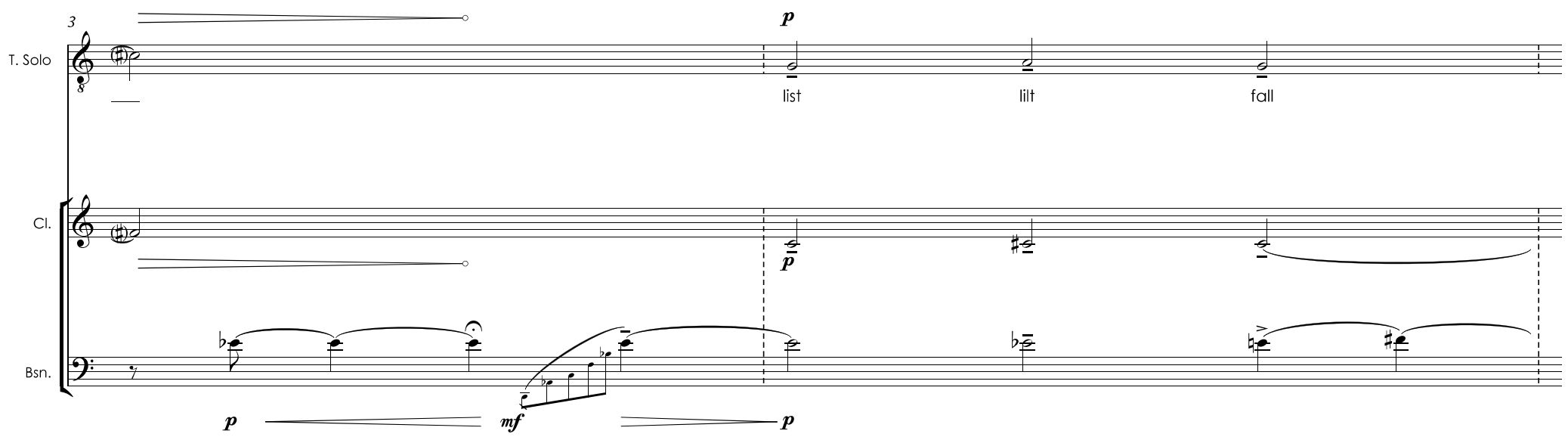
(sim.)

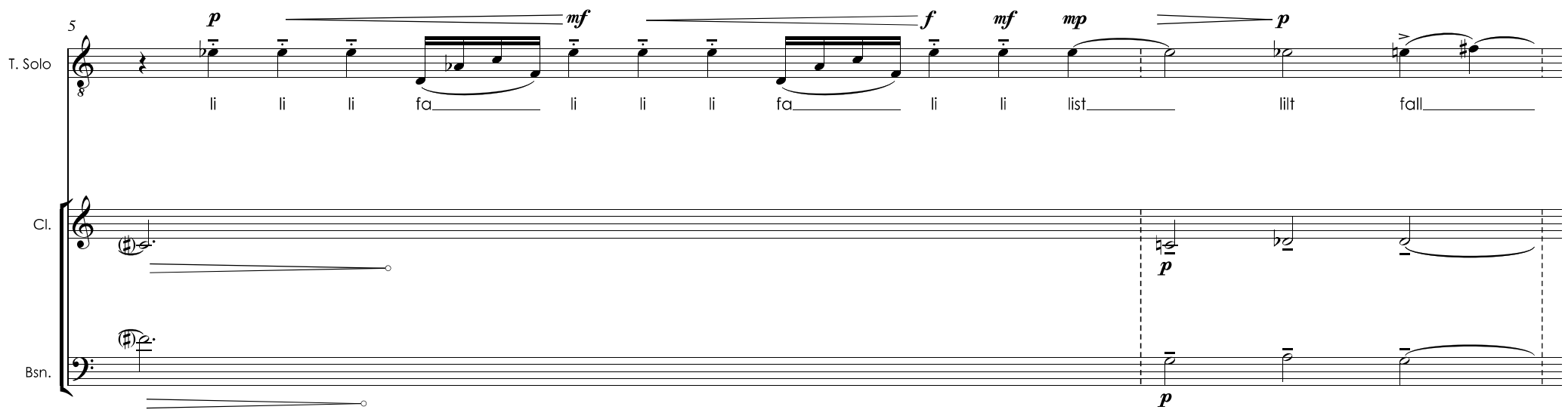
ppp

Reflection 2

'List, lilt, fall...'







7

T. Solo

accel.

mf

mp

f

fa - (ah ah ah) all

fa - (ah ah ah ah) all

Cl.

accel.

mf

mp

f

Bsn.

mf

mp

f

9

T. Solo

A tempo

sub. p (warm)

list lilt list lilt list lilt fall.

Cl.

A tempo

sub. p (warm)

Bsn.

sub. p (warm)

10

T. Solo

Cl.

dolciss.

pp

ppp

Bsn.

Verse 2

senza misura

1

2

♩ = 76

Tenor Solo

The dark is charcoal solid,
in streaks that meet at
seams of double depth.

Timpani

p

superball beater- continuous circular motion

p

Harp

D♯C♯B♮ | E♭F♯G♭A♭

p

senza misura

1

♩ = 76

Violin I

pp *sffz* *pp* *sffz*

Violin II

pp *sffz* *pp* *sffz*

IV

pp

subtle irregular bow changes

Viola

div.

pp *sffz* *pp* *sffz*

Violoncello

pp *sffz* *pp* *sffz*

sul pont.

pp

Contrabass

pizz.

p

arco, sul pont.

pp

subtle, irregular bow changes

7

3 4 5

Ten.

*The eyes' coronas' white's unseeable in all this **dark**.*

*Days of **blind**-eyed bliss,*

Timp.

Hp.

D♭

fast, scuttling

bisbig.

ad. lib. length of silence

p *ff*

Vln. I

Vln. II

pp *sffz*

Vla.

sotto voce, fast, scuttling

p

Vc.

sotto voce, fast, scuttling

p

Cb.

p

10

6

T. Solo

once, when eyes were sealed
*and mouth was locked on **milk**.*

Timp.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

pp sffz

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

7 **Swiftly**

♩ = c.126

13

T. Solo

The air gallops in draughts of black,

Timp.

p

Hp.

A♯

mp

7 **Swiftly**

♩ = c.126

Vln. I

p

Vln. II

p

Vla.

p

Vc.

p

Cb.

p

8

17

T.Solo

punctured here and there by blurs of moonlight.

Timp.

Hp.

8

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

(non div.)

Vc.

p *sffz* *p* *sffz*

Cb.

mf *p* *mf* *p*

9

20

T.Solo

Timp.

Hp.

8va

mp

V

Vln. I

div.

mp

Vln. II

mp

Vla.

mp

Vc.

Cb.

10

11

24

T.Solo

*Beneath the subtle light, erupting in a slop of **red**,*

caught in savage star glow,

Hp.

D♯C♯B♮ | E♮F♯G♮A♯

Vln. I

poco a poco cresc.

Vln. II

poco a poco cresc.

Vla.

poco a poco cresc.

Vc.

mf

cresc.

Cb.

mf

cresc.

* loudest point of crescendo
is reached after the word 'world'
dim. must begin before fig.13

29

12

T.Solo — *a* **violence** *on the greys that fill the world,*

Timp. — *ff* * *dim.*

Hp. — *ff* * *dim.*

Vln. I — *ff* * *dim.*

Vln. II — *ff* * *dim.*

Vla. — *ff* * *dim.*

Vc. — *ff* * *dim.*

Cb. — *ff* * *dim.*

13

14

31

T.Solo

the solid flow of the drowsy tongue oozes soil as though colour were water and this a desert.

Clouds suffocate the moon.

Darkness stiffens.

Reflection 3

Distant

♩ = 56 (𝅗𝅥 = 28)

Tenor

Timpani

p poco cresc.

Dark

p poco cresc.

Char - -

(superball beater for F only,
normal beater for A)

mp p pp ppp p

mp p pp ppp p

ad lib. superball cresc.→dim. throughout

5

T.

Timp.

p light

coal

clouds

p still

length of breath

blind

mp p pp ppp p

mp dim.

repeat with diminuendo to silence, laisser vibrer

9

T.

Timp.

ppp floating

pp

black

black

black

p

mp p pp ppp p

p pp

Reflection 4

Oboe
Tenor
F Horn
♩ = 66
p
vocalise
('huh')

5
Ob.
T. Solo
Hn.
mf
3

8
Ob.
T. Solo
Hn.
mp
dark
mp

12
Ob.
T. Solo
Hn.
dark - ness stif - fens dark - - ness.
p
mp

15
Hn.
p
mp
f
p

Verse 3 & Reflection 5

♩ = c.66

Flute

Oboe

B♭Clarinet

Bassoon

f *p*

mf *p*

F Horn

superball beater

Timpani

mf

pp

Tenor/Narrator

Harp

D♯ C♯ B♮ | E♮ F♯ G♯ A♮

mf

♩ = c.66

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

sul tasto

Violoncello

pp *mp* *pp*

pp *mp* *pp*

pp

sul tasto

Double Bass

pp *mp* *pp*

sfp *mp* *pp*

pp

5

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

mf p

Hn.

Timp.

pp p

T. Solo

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

sul tasto

pp

Vc.

Db.

mp pp

8

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

T. Solo

Hp.

D♮C♯B♭ E♮F♮G♮A♭

Vln. I

Vln. II

sul tasto

pp

Vla.

Vc.

cresc.

Db.

pp

mp

pp

11

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

p espress.

mp

p

Hn.

Timp.

p

mp

T. Solo

Hp.

p

5

5

sul tasto

Vln. I

pp cresc.

Vln. II

cresc.

Vla.

cresc.

p

pp

Vc.

p

pp

Db.

3

pp

mp

13

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

mp

p

Bsn.

mp

p

mp

p

Hn.

Timp.

p

T. Solo

Hp.

p

5

5

Vln. I

Vln. II

p

pp cresc.

mp

Vla.

cresc.

p

Vc.

cresc.

mp

Db.

pp

p

16

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

mp

Bsn.

mp

mp

mf

mp

mp

mf

mp

Hn.

Timp.

mp

T. Solo

Hp.

A♮D♯

mp

5

5

Vln. I

mp

pp cresc.

Vln. II

cresc.

Vla.

6

6

6

6

6

6

6

cresc.

mp

Vc.

3

p

mp

p

6

mp

p

Db.

3

19

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

mf *p*

p *pp*

p *pp*

Bsn.

mf

mf *mp*

p

Hn.

Timp.

mp

T. Solo

Hp.

mp

5

5

Vln. I

mf

dim.

Vln. II

mf

dim.

Vla.

mf

pp

Vc.

3 3 3

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *dim.*

Db.

3

p

dim.

23

overblow

overblow

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

T. Solo

A break. A hes-i - ta tion of light. A dis-ap-point-ment al- ways.

Hp.

poco sul tasto

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

31

overblow

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

T. Solo

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*ad lib. vary bow position between mst-st-norm-sp-msp until bar 43. Ad lib. dynamics between ***pp*** and ***mp***

espress.

norm.

The un-peopl-ed world may seem in-dif-fe-rent, but frame by frame, the world as-sumes a cla-ri-ty,

gliss.

36

Fl.

mf p mp mf mf fff

3

ad lib. C♯ grace notes

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

superball beater

Timp.

mp p mf

T. Solo

3 3

shak - ing off its cold and look-ing up. A name is called. The fran-tic world looks down.

Hp.

Vln. I

gliss. gliss.

mp p mp p

Vln. II

gliss. gliss.

p pp mp p

Vla.

mf p mp pp

Vc.

3 3

mf p mf

Db.

mp p mp

41

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

norm.

p *mf* *p*

T. Solo

And the na-ming of the day re-vives the pom-e-gra-nate - pur-ple to a slow con-vul- sion of its tide. Stilts a-cross the land in

Hp.

f

Vln. I

gliss. *gliss.*

div.

mp *pp* *p*

Vln. II

gliss.

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

Vla.

p *pp*

Vc.

pp *p* *pp*

Db.

(sim.)

pp *p*

46

overblow

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

T. Solo

spot - light strides.

Hp.

II
(touched 4th)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

cresc.

50

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

con sord.

Timp.

T. Solo

Hp.

F♮G♮B♭

E♭

D♭

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

cresc.

dim.

55

Fl.

overblow

(no overblow)

p mf p

pp

Ob.

Cl.

ppp p

Bsn.

f p

5

p

Hn.

3

mp

p

Timp.

3

mp

p

pp

T. Solo

p

A name is said.

Hp.

bisbig.

p mp p mp p

pp mp pp

Vln. I

dim.

p

Vln. II

dim.

p

pp

Vla.

3

p

pp

pp

Vc.

3

p

3

pp

3

p

3

pp

Db.

3

p

3

pp

3

p

3

pp

60

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

T. Solo

A na - ming_ of the day. The dark_____ is done with, and there will, per - haps, be oth - er

Hp.

(tutti)

Vln. I

Vln. II

(sim.)

Vla.

(sim.)

Vc.

Db.

64

Fl.

mf

Ob.

Cl.

pp *ppp*

Bsn.

pp *ppp*

Hn.

pp *ppp*

Timp.

T. Solo

mf *ppp*

days.

Hp.

p

Vln. I

pp *sffz*

Vln. II

pp *sffz*

Vla.

(div.)

pp *sffz*

Vc.

pp *sffz*

Db.

pp *sffz*