

Lines composed in response to a challenge to write a sonnet, op. 3

A Song for solo voice (low) with piano accompaniment

Poetry by Clarke Fraser

Music by Alan Fraser

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Notes

My father is a medical geneticist by profession, an artist by nature. His love of music, his sensitive photography and occasional forays into poetry all left their mark on me, and it gave me special pleasure to set these words:

*I saw two larvae spin, through sun splashed hours
Their living threads, one golden and one red.
Each wandered independent through the flowers
And chose to go wherever fancy led.
Then, quite by chance fate crossed their paths, and they
Their threads entwined in multicoloured skein
No longer took at random each their way
But wove a fabric neither could attain
Alone: each the other gave of strength and joy.
And so the crimson cocoon that they wove
Did golden joy and scarlet love alloy
Until, unique creation two in one
A glowing butterfly ascended towards the sun.*

(“and this from a geneticist!” my father comments.)

Not all dynamics have been indicated: the piano part and melodic line should ebb and flow dynamically as feels natural. Even when pianissimo the harmonic underpinnings should have a rich glow and not suffer from lack of colour; the moving parts like gossamer threads amongst the chordal flowers. Special care should be taken with the repeated stressed, staccatoed, phrased quarter note figure. The second note of the group should barely sound, like the echo of a bell; otherwise it risks sounding banal or trite. Pianists please take special care to voice extremely: long notes drawn out, *dehors*, while the moving 16ths whisper far underneath in dynamic - they are merely suggested.

The song evolved from an initial idea to portray the spinning of thread with two contrapuntal strands, the melodic line reminiscent of Mahler’s *Blicke mir...* With my penchant for modulation, the voice’s entrance, the wonder of seeing, had to be in a totally new harmonic realm. I indulged in some alliterative play at ‘sun-splashed’, then let the texture fall into seeming aleatory at ‘wandered’. When fate crossed their paths I created quasi-canonic strands between the voice and piano, and at ‘no longer took’ I managed to include a reference to my father’s initials (F.C.F.)! When I got to ‘wove’ it seemed about time to recapitulate some material, and then there was a natural growth to the ecstatic ‘joy’. Joy falls to stasis, a moment of contemplation and wonder at that miraculous transformation. As the butterfly ascends I wanted it to ascend through a series of cosmos’ as well, thus by the time we reach the penultimate chord which serves as dominant (and actually stands *on* the dominant no less!), it is difficult to predict in advance to what tonic we’ll resolve. As a final touch, the last three piano notes quote the opening of Menotti’s *Amal and the Night Visitors*, one of Dad’s and mine favorite operas...

- AFF, March 23 1996

Lines composed in response to a challenge to write a sonnet, Op. 3

a song for solo voice (high) with piano accompaniment

a double dedication: to my father and to Kemal Gekic

Poetry by F. CLARKE FRASER

Music by ALAN FRASER
Novi Sad, October 1995

The musical score is written for a high solo voice and piano accompaniment. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-2) shows the vocal line with a measure rest and the piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 3-4) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 5-6) shows the vocal line with a measure rest and the piano accompaniment. The fourth system (measures 7-8) shows the vocal line with a measure rest and the piano accompaniment, ending with the instruction *sempre*. The score is written in 3/2 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#).

7

9 *mp* *
a tempo I saw two lar—vae spin through sun splashed

sotto voce
pp

11
 hours their li—ving threads, ⁵/₂ one gol—den and one

13
 red. Each wan—dered in—de

15

pen— dent 'mongst the flowers, and

S^{va}

17

ritardando - - - - - *a tempo*

chose to go wher- e- ver fan- cy led.

ritardando - - - - - *a tempo*

19

Then, quite by chance fate crossed their paths and

21

they, their threads en- twined in mul- ti- co- loured

23

skein no lon— ger took at ran— dom each their

25

way, but

dim.

27

wove a fab— ric nei— ther could at— tain a

pp

30

lone: each the o— ther gave of strength and

cresc.

cresc.

32 *f* joy.

34 of strength and joy.

36 of joy.

38 of

40

joy.

42

sostenuto

And so the crim-son co-coon that they wove did

rallantando *sostenuto* *poco a poco cresc.*

45

gol— den joy and scar— let love al— loy, un—

a tempo

47

til, u— nique cre— a— tion two in

49

one, a glow—ing but— ter— fly as—

51

ritardando - - - - -

cen— ded towards the

gradual ritardando

52

a tempo

a tempo sun. as— cen— ded towards the

54

sun.

poco rit.