

# *Snow Angel*

A Song Cycle for Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Flute, Clarinet,  
Violin, Violoncello, and Percussion

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By

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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The dissertation committee for Bonnie McLarty certifies that this is the approved  
version of the following dissertation:

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## Abstract

*Snow Angel* is a song cycle for two singers and instrumental sextet that presents the rediscovery and reclamation of personal identity and agency following trauma through the words of Kansas poet Wyatt Townley. *Snow Angel* represents my current compositional style, synthesizing classical and vernacular idioms to portray a first-person, female perspective of the assault and recovery. The work makes use of the dialog and interactions between the soprano and mezzo-soprano to voice the victim's thoughts and feelings as she processes the experience.

The musical material of *Snow Angel* supports the concept of the cycle through motivic and harmonic means. Throughout the course of the work, recurring musical gestures reappear in different contexts. The first nine songs, though linked, are independent enough to be excerpted for performance independent of the cycle, while the final song is essentially a remix of motives from the other songs and functions as an open-ended postlude that closes the cycle while looking forward to a new beginning.

## Acknowledgements

For the women who have inspired and challenged me.  
For the women who have lived through violence and those who did not.  
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Bonnie McLarty

# Snow Angel

*A Song Cycle*  
*with text by Wyatt Townley*

<i>Black Wedding Train</i>	2
<i>Shelter</i>	12
<i>Song of Myself</i>	17
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*Instrumentation:*

Soprano

Mezzo-Soprano

Flute

Clarinet

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Percussion: Vibraphone, Kick Drum, Snare, High-hat,  
Ride Cymbal, Brake Drum (or similar resonating object)

*duration c. 35 minutes*

# Snow Angel

Wyatt Townley

Bonnie McLarty, 2019

## i. Black Wedding Train

Dark, ominous, non-rubato  $\text{♩} = 120$

Mezzo-soprano

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Brake Drum

**A**

7 rit.....With pulsing rhythm, like a heartbeat  $\text{♩} = 132$  *mf*

M-S. be -

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln. *ppp* sul tasto non vib. ord. *mf* > quasi marcato, quite detached

Vc. *pp* sul tasto non vib. ord. *mf* > quasi marcato, quite detached

Pno. *ppp* sotto voce

Br. Dr.

16 B

M.S. - hind \_\_\_\_\_ my back \_\_\_\_\_ the back - yard a black wed - ding train \_\_\_\_\_ made of cat - shit weeds and

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *downbeats colla voce*  
*mf* *sfz*

Vln *downbeats colla voce*  
*mf > simile* *sfz*

Vc. *downbeats colla voce*  
*mf > simile* *\*line up with vocal consonant "k" at the end of "back"* *sfz*

Pno

Br. Dr.

26

M.S. \_\_\_\_\_ mud \_\_\_\_\_ in its \_\_\_\_\_ folds \_\_\_\_\_ *not too heavy*

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *mp* *mf*

Pno

Br. Dr.

34 **C** with increasing intensity

M.S. boys\_\_ cir - cle a girl face - down in the dan - de - li - ons the ants *f*

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *mp* *f*

Vln. *sfz* *p* *mf* *f*

Vc. *p* *mf* *f*

Pno. *sfz* *p* *mf* *f*

Br. Dr.  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$

42 **D** string.....

M.S. bear wit - ness to her fist - - - ed si - lence\_\_\_\_\_

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *fp* *mp* *mf* *f*

Vln. *fp* *mp* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *f*

Pno. *fp* *mp* *mf* *f*

Br. Dr.  $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Time stands still ♩ = 72

Pulse returns ♩ = 132

49 *molto f* and the zip - per's long *ff* scream  
*mp* singer screams the word on generic high pitch followed by downward slide *espressivo, haunting*

*molto f* *più f* *sfz sfz* *mp*

*molto f* *più f* *sfz sfz* *bell tolls* *ff* *p*

*molto f* *più f* *sfz sfz* *8va* *Vib.* *mp*

Br. Dr. *mp*

57

*pp* *pp*

*pp* *pp*

*pp* *pp*

*pp* *pp*

*pp* *pp*

63

M.S.

Fl. *p* *mp*

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno *p* *pp* *8va*

Vib. *p* *pp* *8va*

**F** mournful but still moving forward

69 *mp*

M.S. birds fall out of the sky night falls rain then years be-hind the

Fl. *pp*

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno *p* *8va*

Vib. *pp* *8va*

76 G

M.S. *bride*

Fl. *pp cresc. poco a poco*

Cl. in Bb *pp cresc. poco a poco*

Vln

Vc.

Pno *pp cresc. poco a poco*

Vib. *pp cresc. poco a poco*

83 *gradually becoming more aggressive*

M.S.

Fl. *p cresc. poco a poco*

Cl. in Bb *p cresc. poco a poco*

Vln *p cresc. poco a poco*

Vc. *p cresc. poco a poco*

Pno *dry, little to no pedal*

Vib. *To Dr.*



89 with strength **H** *f*

M.S. birds fall

Fl. *molto f* *mp*

Cl. in Bb *molto f* *mp*

Vln. *molto f* *fp*

Vc. *molto f* *fp*

Pno. *molto f* *fp*

Dr. *molto f*

8ba. -----

2co. -----

94

M.S. out of the sky night falls rain then years

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *mp sub.* *mf*

Dr. high hat *pp* hick drum *pp*

100 **I** *mf* *mp*

M.S. black wed - ding train so heav - y black wed - ding train shush - ing 'n'

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln *mf* *mf* *p*

Vc. *mf*

Pno *mf-p*

Dr. *mf* *mf* *p* *p*

To W. Bl. W. Bl. Dr.

106 *mp* *mf*

M.S. shush - ing an' shush - ing and clank - ing tin cans and trash bags

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln *p* *mp* *mf-p*

Vc. *p* *mp* *mf-p*

Pno *p* *mp* *mf-p*

W. Bl. *p* *mp* *mp* *p*

To W. Bl. Dr. W. Bl. Dr. W. Bl. To Dr.

**J** unrelenting  
*f*

M.S. *mf*  
 black wed - ding train so heav - y black wed - ding train

Fl. *mf*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f* *p sub.* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p*

Dr. *f* *mf* *p sub.* *n*

**K**

M.S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *mp cresc. poco a poco*

Vln.

Vc.

Pno. *p cresc.* *mp cresc. poco a poco*  
*ppp* *p 8va. ↓* *dry* *8va. ↓*

Dr. *p cresc. poco a poco* *snare*

123 *f* *mf*

M.S. get off get out dis-band the choir this wed-ding train\_

Fl. *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln

Vc. *mf*

Pno *mf*

Dr. *mf* To W. Bl.

128 Strict time to the end ♩ = 132

M.S. is trimmed with ra-zor wire

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb

Vln *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno *mf* *mp*

W. Bl. *p* mute strings in front of dampers with RH palm W. Bl.

## 2. Shelter

Delicate and childlike  $\text{♩} = 48$

*p*

Soprano  
the small - est room in the house is mine its

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violoncello

Piano

Vibraphone  
*hard yarn mallets, a sound between glockenspiel and toy piano*  
*2-note slurs indicate 2nd note should be played with much less force, as if a rebound of the first note*  
*p*  
*2nd.*

---

7

S.  
lock shines from where I sit eve - ry - thing is shin - ing\_

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vc.

Pno

Vib.  
*(2nd.)* *p*

13 **A** *mp*

S. the ti - ny hex - a - gons that march with linked el - bows at my feet will car - ry me a -

Fl. *mp* *p*

Cl. in Bb

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

21 **B** *mp cresc. poco a poco*

S. - way a - way from my small days

Fl. *mp* *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vc. *n* *pp*

Pno *bell-like* *pp* *ped.*

Vib.

28

S. *mf*  
 and big sec - rets big as the back - yard a gang of boys in a ring

Fl. *pp*

Cl. in Bb *pp sub.*

Vc. *pp* *pizz.* *p*

Pno *p sub.*

Vib. *(ced.)*

34

S. *f*  
 big - ger than this room big - ger than a moth - er and a fa - ther

Fl. *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mf* *mp* *mf* *n*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *f* *arco* *pizz.*

Pno *mf* *sfz* *mp*

Vib. *(ced.)*

**C** Slower, defeated ♩ = 80

39 *mp*

S. whose ears were four hel - mets four be - ing the end

Fl. *pp* *n*

Cl. in Bb

Vc.

Pno. *pp sub.*

Vib.



rit. .... Nearly motionless ♩ = 66

**D** Delicate and brittle, like glass ♩ = 80

47 *p*

S. boom of child - hood ov - er and out

Fl. *pp*

Cl. in Bb *pp* *n*

Vc.

Pno. *pp* *p* *pp*

Vib. *pp* *p* *pp*



53 *poco rit.*..... *a tempo, simply* *p* *delicately*

S. and I have found my - self at home at an - y age in the world's small - est rooms where I can turn a

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *pp* *sul tasto* *arco* *pp* *n*

Vc. *pp* *n*

Pno

Vib. *p* *(3♩.)*



61 *As at first* ♩ = 48 *poco rit.*.....

S. lock like a cor - ner of this\_ page

Fl. *p* *pp* *n*

Cl. in Bb

Vc.

Pno

Vib. *p* *pp*

### 3. Song of Myself

#### *Singer Dialog*

A.

SOPRANO: You're okay. (6x)

MEZZO: No you're not. (3x) No you're not okay.

B.

SOPRANO: You're okay. (7x)

MEZZO: No you're not. (3x) No you're not okay.

No you're not okay you're not okay.

No you're not okay (Soprano joins without pause)

C.

**BOTH SINGERS IN UNISON:** *you're not okay you're not okay.*  
(Soprano immediately continues without breathing)

SOPRANO: You're not okay you're not okay. (growing more insistent)

No you're not okay you're not okay.

You're not okay you're not okay.

You're not okay, okay?

MEZZO: (Agreeably) Okay, you're not okay.

SOPRANO: Okay, you're not okay.

MEZZO: You're okay (pause) you're not okay.

SOPRANO: You're (pause) okay you're not okay.

MEZZO: Okay.

#### *Ensemble Cues*

→ Instrumental players are silent.

→ As soon as the soprano says "You're okay" one time, each instrumental player begins to speak the text of the poem\* from beginning to end, staggering entrances by 1-3 seconds (suggested order: piano, percussion, cello, clarinet, violin, flute). Each player should use their natural speaking voice and should deliver the text at a comfortable, natural pace, pausing to breathe as appropriate.

→ When both singers speak in unison, this is the cue for all instrumental players to begin a very slow crescendo, growing louder and more insistent (but not faster) as they speak the text. If players reach the end of the poem, they should start over again at the beginning without a pause.

## D.

(Dialog becomes an argument, growing more intense, but not rushed.)

SOPRANO: You're okay.

MEZZO: *You're not okay*

SOPRANO: (almost interrupts) you're okay.

MEZZO: (*insistently*) *You're not okay*

SOPRANO: (more insistently) you're okay, okay?

MEZZO: *Okay,*

SOPRANO: (interrupts, switches roles) you're not okay

MEZZO: *you're okay. You're okay*

SOPRANO: (almost angrily) you're not okay.

MEZZO: *You're okay you're okay. Okay?* (addresses instrumentalists, loudly)

→ Instrumental players growing louder and more insistent that they be heard, beginning to compete with the singers in volume. If an instrumental player finds they have reached the end of the poem, they should restart the poem without pause.

→ In response to this "okay" from the mezzo, instrumental players abruptly drop from almost yelling to loud whispers, regardless of where they are in the poem's text. Over 3-12 seconds, instrumental players gradually switch from whispering the text of the poem to creating the instrumental sounds indicated in section E (see below).

## E. (guided improvisation; duration: approximately 35-55 seconds)

***ALL MEMBERS OF THE ENSEMBLE: this section is shaped by the cellist, who will execute four audible gestures—three long sustained scratching sounds that begin quietly, crescendo to a loud dynamic, and then fade away, with a pause between each "scratch." These three gestures are followed by a final sustained scratch that starts abruptly ff and gradually fades to silence.***

SOPRANO: inhales and exhales loudly, with a cadence that suggests a panic attack or the aftermath of intense weeping.

MEZZO turns away from the soprano, silent; mid-way through the section, begins to quietly let air through almost-closed teeth, in a "shhhhh" sound.

FLUTE/CLARINET staggered entrances; long breaths of air through the instrument with a sense of swelling and fading interspersed with periods of silence.

VIOLIN alternating periods of silence with quiet unpitched sounds (white noise effects such as bowing directly on the bridge/clicking/tapping sounds).

CELLO bow moves between regular and extreme ponticello on open fourth string using heavy bow pressure/overpressure, with the goal of achieving a growling effect rather than a pitch. Execute four audible gestures—three long sustained scratching sounds that begin quietly, crescendo to a loud dynamic, and then fade away, with a pause between each "scratch." These three gestures are followed by a final sustained scratch that starts abruptly ff and gradually fades to silence.

PIANO scratches two lowest strings (or lowest within easy reach) with fingernail while holding down damper pedal; may also scratch/tap metal or wood parts of the instrument.

PERCUSSION scrapes brake drum or similar unpitched sounds at a *pp* to *mp* volume.

F. *As cello fades, all instrumentalists fade also; piano continues to hold down damper pedal. Soprano's breathing calms. Once soprano is breathing normally again, singers resume dialog.*

G.

MEZZO: (calmly, in a normal speaking voice, somewhat subdued)

*You're okay. (6x)*

SOPRANO: (spoken in a quasi-whisper) No you're not. (3x)  
No you're not okay.

MEZZO: *You're okay. (7x)*

SOPRANO: No you're not. (3x) No you're not okay.  
No you're not okay you're not okay.  
No you're not okay (Mezzo joins without pause)

**(SIMULTANEOUSLY)**

**SOPRANO: you're not okay you're not okay.**

**MEZZO: you're okay you're okay**

(Soprano immediately continues without breathing)

→ As soon as the mezzo says "You're okay" one time, each instrumental player begins to whisper "you're okay" repeatedly, staggering entrances by 3-5 seconds (suggested order: piano, percussion, cello, clarinet, violin, flute). Each player should whisper as audibly as possible but without straining and should deliver the text at a comfortable, natural pace, pausing to breathe as appropriate.

H.

SOPRANO: You're not okay you're not okay. (growing more insistent but not louder)  
No you're not okay you're not okay.  
You're not okay you're not okay.  
You're not okay, okay?

MEZZO: (Agreeably) Okay,

SOPRANO: (Interrupts) you're not okay. Okay, you're not okay.

MEZZO: *You're okay*

SOPRANO: (pause) you're not okay.

MEZZO: (No pause) *You're okay*

SOPRANO: (pause) you're not okay.

MEZZO: *Okay.*

# I.

MEZZO: *You're okay*  
SOPRANO: *You're not okay*  
MEZZO: *(quietly confident) you're okay.*  
SOPRANO: *(more quietly) You're not okay*  
MEZZO: *(more insistently) you're okay, okay?*  
*Okay,*  
SOPRANO: *(whispers) you're not okay*  
MEZZO: *you're okay. You're okay*  
SOPRANO: *(almost inaudible) you're not okay.*

MEZZO: *(reassuring) You're okay (brief pause) you're okay.*  
*(longer pause) Okay?*

→ Instrumental players' whispers gradually fading. By the final "okay?" spoken by the Mezzo, everyone else should be completely silent.

## THE END

### ***\*Poem text for instrumentalists to read:***

*You're okay. (6x)*  
*No you're not. (3x) No you're not okay.*  
*You're okay. (7x)*  
*No you're not. (3x) No you're not okay (2x)*  
*you're not okay.*  
*No you're not okay*

*You're not okay you're not okay.*  
*No you're not okay you're not okay.*  
*You're not okay you're not okay.*  
*You're not okay, okay?*

*Okay, you're not okay.*  
*Okay, you're not okay.*  
*You're okay (pause) you're not okay.*  
*You're (pause) okay you're not okay.*

*Okay*  
*You're okay.*  
*You're not okay*  
*you're okay.*  
*You're not okay*  
*you're okay, okay?*

*Okay, you're not okay you're okay.*  
*You're okay you're not okay.*  
*You're okay you're okay. Okay? (start again from the top of the poem)*

## 4. Mal de Débarquement

Lilting  $\text{♩} = 96$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

Soprano *mp*  
 It's not as if the world \_\_\_\_\_ swirled \_\_\_\_\_ diz - zy from the

Flute *p*

Piano *p*  
*pedal ad lib.*

8

S. spin \_\_\_\_\_ like a girl \_\_\_\_\_ in the grass who'd been twirl - - - ing too \_\_\_\_\_

Fl. *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*

Pno

13 **A** Slightly unbalanced  $\text{♩} = 96$  *mf*

S. long \_\_\_\_\_ It's an in - side job \_\_\_\_\_

Fl. *p*

Pno *mp* *mf sub* *mp*  
*with subdued hints of stormy weather* *wet sound*

18

S. Not \_\_\_\_\_ vis - u - al \_\_\_\_\_

Fl. *pp*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

Pno *mp* *mf*

23 B Rolling along ♩ = 96

S. *vis - cer - al.*

Fl. *p* *pp*

Pno *mp* *p*

29 C

S.

Fl. *mf* *mp*

Pno *mf* *p* *mf*

36

S. The day un - rolls. Un - der - foot it's a tilt - ing Ti - tan - ic while the

Fl. *p*

Pno *p* *mp*

41

S. sky stays put.

Fl. *mp*

Pno

45 **D** accel.....disoriented, queasy  $\text{♩} = 108$  *mf*

S. The room sways.

Fl. *f.t. get ugly* *f*

Pno *beginning with clarity, dissolving into indistinct watery blur* *p*

50 *fall off* *f*

S. Rugs rise.

Fl. *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

Pno *f*

53  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

S. and sub - - side un - der our chairs.

Fl. *mf*

Pno *p f* *p mf*

56 *mf cresc. poco a poco* *a hint of jazz*  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

S. The waltz we've fal - - len in - to climbs the

Fl.

Pno *p* *mf cresc. poco a poco*



60

S. *mp* **E** numb *mp*  
o - - cean's churn - ing stairs. Just talk - ing while

Fl. *p*

Pno *ff* *pp sub.* *n* *pp*

65

S. rock - ing\_ is more than I can man - age long since the ship's a - shore.

Fl.

Pno *pp*

tempo primo, but with a sense of distance and disconnection

72 *mp*

S. What did you say? You're wav - - - ing.

Fl.

Pno *mf* *mp* *p*

78

S. You're mov - ing your lips.

Fl. *pp*

Pno *pp*

## 5. Behind the Shirt

Assertive ♩ = 132 *mf* *f* Simultaneously forthright and mysterious ♩ = 108 *mf* *espresso*

Mezzo-soprano  
 My nip - ples have eyes. They are watch - ing out for my heart.

Flute  
*mf* *f* *thinly* *p* *3* *3*

Clarinet in Bb  
*mf* *f* *thinly* *p* *3* *3*

Piano  
*mf* *sfz* *p* *3* *3* *mp* *8va* *8va*

Drum Set

8 *with attitude* *3* *3* *endearingly blunt*

M.S.  
 boun - cers at the door. They're not pick - y. They don't see shit, can't count

Fl.  
*playful* *3* *3* *mf*

Cl. in Bb  
*mp* *mp* *playful* *3* *mf*

Pno  
*mp* *3* *playful* *3* *mf*

Dr.

15 **A** *rit.* *Waltz gone wrong* ♩ = 108 *simply*

M.S.  
 fin - gers in front of them. They strain a - gainst the shirt for a view, nos - es through a chain - link

Fl.  
*mp* *3*

Cl. in Bb  
*mp* *3*

Pno  
*mp* *p* *mf*

Dr.  
*h-hat* *3* *3* *snare* *3* *3* *kick* *mp*

21 *carefree*

M.S. fence. They've had e-nough of the

Fl. *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Pno *mf*

Dr.

28 **B** *dramatic* *f*

M.S. backs of things\_ bras, the in-sides of hands\_ and mouths.

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *f*

Pno *f*

Dr. To Vib.

35 *cheerfully* *Straight time* *Now serious* ♩ = 84

M.S. They need space, they need air\_ Chuck the blouse\_ and un-der-wear\_

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *p*

Pno *ped.*

Vib.

rit..... a tempo but freely, shimmering ♩ = 84

42 **C**

M.S. *p* intimate blooming *mf*  
 Their ti - ny fac - es wrin - kle a - ges young - er than the stars they

Fl. *pp* hollow, outer-space shimmer

Cl. in Bb *pp* hollow, outer-space shimmer

Pno *pp* hollow, outer-space shimmer *pp* *p*

Vib. *pp* hollow, outer-space shimmer

8va

8ba

Vib. b

Moving forward ♩ = 108

48 returning to the present moment *mp*

M.S. wait for. Till then, they tough - en up.

Fl. *p* *p* *3*

Cl. in Bb *p* *p* *3*

Pno *p* *3* *mf sub.*

Vib. To Dr. Dr. *3*

8va

8ba

54 *f* brassy *molto accel.*

M.S. pre - tend to guard the door.

Fl. *mf* *molto cresc.* *ff*

Cl. in Bb *mp* *molto cresc.* *ff*

Pno *mp* *molto cresc.* *ff*

Dr. *ff*

8va

8ba

# 6. Leaving Home

With a folk-like fiddle feel ♩ = 96

Soprano

Mezzo-soprano

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

*mf* confidently, unrefined

Violoncello

Piano



6

S.

M-S.

*mf* bright tone, unrefined quality

Like a girl slip - ping out of her clothes I'm leav - ing home, this mo - bile home: head, shoul - ders, knees and\_ toes,

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

*mp*

Vc.

Pno

10 A

S. \_\_\_\_\_

M-S. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ knees and toes... and eyes and ears and mouth and \_\_\_\_\_ nose.

Fl. \_\_\_\_\_

Cl. in Bb \_\_\_\_\_

Vln. \_\_\_\_\_  
*mf*

Vc. \_\_\_\_\_  
*p* \_\_\_\_\_ *mf*

Pno. \_\_\_\_\_  
*mp*  
 LH: mute strings in front of dampers (except for D5)

And.

16 B

S. \_\_\_\_\_

M-S. \_\_\_\_\_  
*mp*  
 I combed my hair: \_\_\_\_\_ I leave my comb be-

Fl. \_\_\_\_\_  
*p*

Cl. in Bb \_\_\_\_\_  
*p*

Vln. \_\_\_\_\_  
*pp* *p*

Vc. \_\_\_\_\_  
*pp*

Pno. \_\_\_\_\_  
*mf mp* *p*

And.

C

S. 

M.S. *mf with increasing confidence*  
 -hind; a girl slip - ping out of her clothes. Wher - ev - er I have gone \_\_\_\_\_ the bo - dy goes.

Fl. 

Cl. in Bb 

Vln 

Vc. 

Pno 

D

S. 

M.S. Breath\_ by breath it writes its poem- head, shoul - ders, knees and\_ toes\_ knees and toes\_

Fl. 

Cl. in Bb 

Vln 

Vc. 

Pno 

**E**  
*f with increasing confidence*

S. *f*  
Wher - ev - er I have gone — the bo - dy goes. Breath — by

M.S. *f*  
Wher - ev - er I have gone — the bo - dy goes.

Fl. *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln *f-mp*

Vc. *f-mp*

Pno



S. *mf*  
breath it writes its poem — head, shoul - ders, knees and — toes, — knees and toes. —

M.S. *mf*  
Breath by breath it writes its poem — head, shoul - ders, knees and — toes, — knees and toes.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno *mf*



66 F *mf*

S. Two breasts\_ new hips\_ an old sto - ry I sup -

M-S. Two breasts\_ new hips\_ I sup -

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *mp*

Vln. *pp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Pno. *f* *mf*



73

S. -pose all books must end\_ but what a tome\_ this girl slip - ping out of her clothes.

M-S. -pose all books must end\_ but what a tome\_ this girl slip - ping out of her clothes.

Fl. *mf* *p*

Cl. in Bb *mf* *p*

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

**G** with purpose

S. *f* or is it prose? What fin-ally held it up was chrome

M-S. *f* It's po-e-try in mo-tion- and

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *p* < *mp*

Vln. *f* *mp* *mf-p* aggressive

Vc. *f* *mp* *mf-p* aggressive *mf-p* *mf-p* *mf-p* *mf-p* *mf-p*

Pno. *f*

**H**

S. *mf* richly expressive as yo-ga al-ways fin-i-shes with

M-S. *mf* richly expressive head, shoul-ders, knees and toes, knees and toes, as yo-ga al-ways fin-i-shes with

Fl. *f* *pp*

Cl. in Bb *f* *pp* warmly *mp*

Vln. *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f* *p*

Pno. *mf* *f*

71

S. corpse pose. we drop the bo - dy; a drape of bones.

M-S. corpse pose. we drop the bo - dy; a drape of bones.

Fl. warmly *p*

Cl. in Bb warmly *n mp*

Vln warmly *n mp*

Vc. warmly *mp*

Pno warmly *mp*

76

S. —

M-S. Like a girl slip - ping out of her clothes

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *p mf*

Vln *mp mf*

Vc. *p mf*

Pno

I

81

S. *mf* head, shoul - ders, knees and toes, *f* knees and toes. **J**

M-S. *mf* head, shoul - ders, knees and toes, *f* knees and toes.

Fl. *mp* *f*

Cl. in Bb *mp* *f-mp*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *mf*



87

S.

M-S.

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *mp* strum string with fingernail

# 7. Snow Angel

Like sun on snow ♩ = c. 92-96

Musical score for the first section of "Snow Angel". The score includes parts for Soprano, Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Violin, Violoncello, Piano, and Vibraphone. The tempo is marked "Like sun on snow ♩ = c. 92-96". The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 and then to 3/4. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. The Flute part features a melodic line with a *mp* dynamic and a *p* dynamic, with fingerings 5 and 6 indicated. The Clarinet in Bb, Violin, and Violoncello parts provide harmonic support with *p* dynamics.



Musical score for the second section of "Snow Angel", starting at measure 8. The tempo is marked "Freely, take time ♩ = 72" and "A in tempo, slightly faster ♩ = 96-108 ♩ = ♩ throughout". The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and then to 6/8. Dynamics include *mp*, *pp*, and *p*. The Soprano part has lyrics: "she's no - where eve - ry - where your moth - er's hems". The Flute part features a melodic line with a *pp* dynamic and a *p* dynamic, with fingerings 5 and 6 indicated. The Clarinet in Bb, Violin, and Violoncello parts provide harmonic support with *ppp* and *p* dynamics. The Vibraphone part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a *p* dynamic.

15 B the weather shifts

S. catch in the bran - ches - beaks of birds peaks of hous - - es.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

(*ad.*)

22

S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

**C**  
*mf*

S. 27  
 Now the sky lets out\_ the wea - ther she held back\_\_\_\_\_

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*8va*

*mp*

**D**

S. 33  
 the wea - ther she held back an av - a - lanche of bliz - zards\_\_\_\_\_

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

*mf*

*f*

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

*f*

*mp*

*f*

40 *f* E Unleashed ♩ = c. 120-132 *ff*

S. thun - der and snow, thun - der and snow.

Fl. *ff* *f* *mf*

Cl. in Bb *ff* *mf*

Vln. *mf* *ff* *f* *mf*

Vc. *ff*

Pno. *ff* *f* *mf* *mf*

Vib. *ff* *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

47 F

S.

Fl. *mf* *p* *mp* *p*

Cl. in Bb *mp* *pizz.* *pp* *pp*

Vln. *mp* *p* *pp*

Vc.

Pno. *mp* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Vib. *mp* *p*



53 *with intensity*  
*mp*

S. She's mid - air all o - ver town un - der - foot in ev - ery yard.

Fl. *pp* *ppp*

Cl. in Bb *pp*

Vln

Vc.

Pno *pp* *mp* *p*

Vib. *pp* *mp* *pp*

58 *mf*

S. She's in your hands. Make a snow - ball, throw as hard and

Fl. *pp* *mp* *ppp*

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno *p* *ppp* *mp*

Vib. *p* *mp* *ppp*

65

S. *far as death*

Fl. *mp* *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln. *mp* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *f*

Pno *mf*

Vib. *mp* *mf*

G

70

S. *floating*  
*mf*  
*Lie*

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

Vib.

H

77

S. down, make an an - - - gel.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln. *p* *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno

Vib. *p* *ced.*

83

I

S. a sense of relief, exhaling

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *mf* *mp* *p*

Vln.

Vc.

Pno *mp* *mf* *mp* *pp*

Vib. *pp*

90 *mp* **J**

S. She's be - hind your back as you op - en and close

Fl. *pp* *p*

Cl. in Bb *pp* *pp*

Vln. *p* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *p*

Pno *legato*

Vib.

96 **K** *mp*

S. your arms, your legs... your throat. Fold her in, let her

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb

Vln.

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

102

**L**

*mf* *f*

S. out mid - breath in a cloud. For - - give the

Fl. *mp* *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mp*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *mf* *f*

Vib.

108

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

S. ghost that lives in - side your coat

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *n* *mp*

Pno. *mf* *mp*

Vib. *p*

116 do not slow down N

S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

125 rit.....

S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

# 8. After You Died

With deep feeling, almost religious ♩ = 48-54

*mp* *mp*

Mezzo-soprano *mp*  
 Af - - ter you\_ died\_ I breathed\_ the

Flute *p*

Clarinet in B♭ *p*

Violin *p*

Violoncello *p*

Piano *p* *chorale-style* *pp*  
*pedal ad lib.*

Vibraphone *p* *bell-like*

**A**

M.S. *mf*  
 long black sleeve of night\_ down\_ my throat and pulled it down my

Fl. *p* *mp* *p*

Cl. in B♭ *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. *mf* *mp* *p*

Vc. *mf* *mp* *p*

Pno *mp* *p*

Vib. *p*

B

12

M.S. spine down my legs closed my eyes and went un - der

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *mp* *mf* *p sub.*

Vln. *mp* *mf* *p sub.* *pp*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *p sub.* *pp*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p sub.* *pp*

Vib. *p*

18  $\text{♩} = 66-72$  *mp*

M.S. the cov - ers breathed it down a - gain and a - gain

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln. *mp* *mf* *p*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *p*

Pno. *pp* *mp* *mf*

Vib. *p*



23 C ♩ = 48-54

M.S. as if its star - - ry but - tons could stub a path to you

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *pp*

Vib. *pp*

28

M.S. *pp* *hushed* *mp* *p*  
 I kept breath - ing breath - ing breath - ing

Fl. *pp*

Cl. in Bb *pp*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *pp*

Pno.

Vib.

34 D *mp* *freely*

M.S. down the dark si - lence you left in which I am

Fl. *mp* *colla voce* *pp*

Cl. in Bb *mp* *p* *pp* *colla voce*

Vln. *mp* *pp* *colla voce*

Vc. *mp* *pp* *colla voce*

Pno

Vib. *p* *with some resonance (pedal may be used as needed)* *3* *ped.*

39 *p*

M.S. trail - ing the hems of your last breath

Fl. *p* *3* *n*

Cl. in Bb

Vln.

Vc.

Pno *p* *3* *n*

Vib. *8<sup>va</sup>* *pp* *3* *ped.* *p* *n*

# 9. In Extremis

With serene calm ♩ = 116-120

*mp* simply, with little vibrato

*p* match the mezzo for tone/inflection/shaping

echo with little to no vibrato, slightly breathy,

Soprano: You do not have to be good. \_\_\_\_\_

Mezzo-soprano: You do not have to be good. \_\_\_\_\_ You do not have to

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Vibraphone: steady pulse, very subtle shaping, medium-soft yarn mallets

*p*



S. You do not have to eat what is giv - en. \_\_\_\_\_

M-S. eat what is giv - en. \_\_\_\_\_ You do not have to get

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib. (300)

10 *p* *mp* **A** *p* *mp*

soprano: gradually emerge from beneath mezzo to take over main melody

S. You do not do not do not do not do not do not You do not have to qui - et down or change your

M-S. up. You do not have to qui - et down or change your gown.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib. (x2)

14 **B** *mp* *mp* *mp*

S. gown. You have on - ly to breathe take the

M-S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *mp*

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib. (x2) *mp*

20

S. whole room in - to the hall - ways of your lungs and let it out

M-S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

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

(*red.*)

35

C

S.

M-S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

the house re - ar - ranged one breath at a time

(*red.*)

30 D *p* as at first, but as if glowing

S. Then do it a - gain. *voice grows fuller mp and more expressive*

M-S. *p* Just breathe. You do not have to be

Fl. *smooth watercolor sound with subtle swell and ebb shaping of sustained notes pp*

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno. *smooth, blurred watercolor sound with subtle swell and ebb shaping pp p pp*

Vib. *p (sc.)*

35 *voice grows fuller and more expressive* E *mf*

S. You do not do not do not have to You do not have to get up.

M-S. good. You do not have to eat what is giv - en.

Fl. *smooth, blurred watercolor sound with subtle swell and ebb shaping of sustained notes*

Cl. in Bb *pp*

Vln *smooth, blurred watercolor sound with subtle swell and ebb shaping of sustained notes pp*

Vc. *smooth, blurred watercolor sound with subtle swell and ebb shaping of sustained notes pp*

Pno. *p*

Vib. *(sc.)*

41 *cresc. poco a poco* **F**

S. — *mf* You do not have to qui - et down *cresc. poco a poco* or

M-S. You do not have to get up. You do not have to qui - et down

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco*  
(*rit.*)

Vib. (*rit.*)

47 **G** *f* warmly, with an expansive sense of space

S. change your gown — You have on - ly to

M-S. your gown your gown your gown — You have on - ly to breathe —

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln. *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *mf*  
(*rit.*)

Vib. (*rit.*) *mf*

53 H

S. breathe \_\_\_\_\_ take the whole\_ room\_ in - to the hall - - ways

M-S. take the whole\_ room\_ in - to the\_ hall - ways

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc. *mp dim. poco a poco*

Pno *mp* *mf*

Vib. *mp* *mf*

(*rit.*)

(*rit.*)

54 I serenely centered *mp*

S. \_\_\_\_\_ of your lungs\_\_\_\_\_ and let it out the house re - ar -

M-S. of \_\_\_\_\_ your\_ lungs\_\_\_\_\_ and let it out

Fl. *hold for as long as possible, until sound and/or breath runs out*

Cl. in Bb *hold for as long as possible, until sound and/or breath runs out*

Vln *p*

Vc. *p dim. poco a poco*

Pno *poco dim.* *mf* *mp*

Vib. *mp* *dim.*

(*rit.*)

(*rit.*)



64

S. *- ranged one breath at a time. Just breathe.* *p*

M-S. *Just breathe.*

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc. *pp*

Pno *p*

Vib. *p*  
(*rit.*)

69 **J**

S.

M-S.

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln *p*

Vc. *pp* *ppp* *p*

Pno *mf* *mp* *dim. poco a poco*

Vib. *pp*  
(*rit.*)

*unspoken (Then do it a - gain.)*

74

S. \_\_\_\_\_

M-S. \_\_\_\_\_

Fl. \_\_\_\_\_

Cl. in Bb \_\_\_\_\_

Vln \_\_\_\_\_ *ppp*

Vc. \_\_\_\_\_ *pp* *n*

Pno \_\_\_\_\_ *p* \_\_\_\_\_ *ppp*

Vib. \_\_\_\_\_ *ppp* \_\_\_\_\_ *p* \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*

*play evenly and quietly for as long as possible during continuous diminuendo, then continue playing "action" after notes no longer sound*

(*Rec.*)



79

S. \_\_\_\_\_

M-S. \_\_\_\_\_

Fl. \_\_\_\_\_

Cl. in Bb \_\_\_\_\_

Vln \_\_\_\_\_

Vc. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno \_\_\_\_\_

(*Rec.*)

Vib. \_\_\_\_\_ *fading to a memory of sound*

(*Rec.*)

# 10. Postlude: The Back of Beyond

Very freely, linger on long notes ♩ = 60-69 ♩ = ♩ throughout

Soprano

Mezzo-soprano *mp*  
 Mov - ing still still mov - ing mov - ing still Mov - ing still still mov - ing

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Violin *follow the voice* *p*

Violoncello *follow the voice* *p*

Piano

Drum Set

Strict time ♩ = 96 A *mf*

S. *mf*  
 Mov - ing still still mov - ing mov - ing still

M-S. *mf*  
 mov - ing still still mov - ing still

Fl.

Cl. in B♭ *pp cresc.*

Vln. *più p* *pp*

Vc. *più p* *pp*

Pno. *mp* *mf-p* *p* *p >* *p >*  
*dry* *with pedal*

Dr.

15

S. *mov - ing still still mov - ing mov - ing still still*

M-S. *mov - ing mov - ing still mov - ing mov - ing still mov - ing mov - ing*

Fl. *p mp*

Cl. in Bb *mp*

Vln *mp cresc. mf mp*

Vc. *mp cresc. mf mp*

Pno *mp mf mp*

Dr.

22

**B**

S. *mov - ing still*

M-S. *mov - ing still still mov - ing mov - ing still*

Fl. *mp p dim.*

Cl. in Bb *p mp*

Vln *p cresc. poco a poco*

Vc. *p cresc. poco a poco*

Pno *p somewhat dry cresc. poco a poco*

Dr. *mp*

38 *cresc.*

S. still mov - ing mov - ing still mov - ing still

M-S. *cresc.* Mov - ing still still mov - ing

Fl. *mp cresc.*

Cl. in Bb *mp cresc.*

Vln. *mp cresc.*

Vc. *mp cresc.*

Pno. *mp cresc.*

Dr. *mf cresc.*

31 *f* **C** *mp* Simply ♩ = 108

S. still mov - ing mov - ing still *mp*

M-S. mov - ing still still mov - ing mov - ing still

Fl. *mf* *pp*

Cl. in Bb *mf cresc.* *ppp* *pp*

Vln. *mf cresc.* *ppp*

Vc. *mf cresc.*

Pno. *mf cresc.* *p* *8va*

Dr. *f* *To Vib.* *Vib.* *p*

*wet pedal*

36 *mp*

S. still mov - ing — mov - ing still still — be - ing — still

M.S.

Fl. *p*

Cl. in Bb *p*

Vln. *pp* *p*

Vc. *ppp* *p*

Pno. *mp* *p*

Vib. *pp*

(*cel.*)

43 **D** *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

S. be - ing and be - ing still — still mov - ing — and be - ing —

M.S. still be - ing — and be - ing still — still mov - ing and be - ing

Fl. *mp*

Cl. in Bb *mp*

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

Vib.

**E**

49

S. *f*  
be - ing still

M-S. *f*  
moved be - ing moved and be - ing still

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

Vib.

**F**

55

S. *mf* *f*  
and be - ing moved be - yond

M-S. *mf* *f*  
and still be - ing moved be - yond

Fl. *mf*

Cl. in Bb *mf*

Vln. *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Vib. *mf*

62 G *f* *mf*

S. — be - ing — and mov - ing be - yond — be - yond — be - - ing —

M-S. — be - ing — moved — and mov - ing be - yond — be - - ing —

Fl. *mp* *p*

Cl. in Bb *mf* *mp* *p*

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

68

S.

M-S.

Fl. *pp* *p cresc.*

Cl. in Bb *pp* *mp* *f*

Vln *mp* *mf* *f*

Vc. *pp* *mp* *f*

Pno *f* *sed.*

Vib. *sharp and dry* *p cresc. poco a poco* *mf* *f*



**H**

S. *mf* *f* *mf cresc.*

M-S.

Fl. *mf* *f* *mf cresc.*

Cl. in Bb *f* *mf cresc.*

Vln *mf* *pizz.* *arco*

Vc. *mp sub.* *cresc. poco a poco*

Pno *mp sub.*

W. Bl. To W. Bl. W. Bl. *mf*

resonant *ff*

S. *ff* *ff*

M-S. *ff*

Fl. *f* *ff* *f*

Cl. in Bb *f* *ff* *f*

Vln *ff* *f*

Vc.

Pno *ff*

To Dr. *f*

Dr.

mov - ing be - yond

be - yond

(Ed.) *8ba. > . 1* *8ba. . . 1*

83

I

S. be - yond mov - ing be - yond

M-S. be - - - - - ing be - yond be - yond

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Dr.

Br. Dr.

*f* low chiming sound

*let ring*

*8ba...1*

allarg..... Slightly calmer ♩ = 96

87

S. be - ing be - yond be - yond

M-S. be - ing be - yond be - ing be - ing be - yond

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno

Vib.

To Vib.

*mf*

*mf*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*f-mp*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

**J**

S. *be - ing be - yond be - yond be - ing be - yond*

M-S. *be - yond be - ing be - yond*

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *p dim.*

Vln

Vc.

Pno *pp* (ped.)

Vib.

**K** *mp*

S. *- yond be - ing be - ing be - yond*

M-S. *and be - ing back and be - ing*

Fl.

Cl. in Bb *pp pp*

Vln *pp ppp*

Vc. *dim. poco a poco*

Pno *pp dim. poco a poco* (ped.)

Vib.

102 L

S. and be - ing back be - ing still

M-S. back back be - yond

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc. *pp* *n*

Pno. *n*

Vib. *n* *p*

110

S. *p* mov - ing mov - ing mov - ing mov - ing mov - ing

M-S. still

Fl.

Cl. in Bb

Vln

Vc.

Pno. *p* *pp*

Vib. *n* *pp* *ppp*

take time ♩ = 48

## Appendix A: Text

All poems published in Wyatt Townley's 2018 collection *Rewriting the Body*.<sup>1</sup>

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I.

### BLACK WEDDING TRAIN

behind my back the back-  
yard a black wedding train  
made of catshit weeds and mud

in its folds boys  
circle a girl  
facedown in the dandelions

the ants bear witness  
to her fisted silence  
and the zipper's long scream

birds fall out of the sky  
night falls rain then years  
behind the bride

black wedding train so heavy  
shushing and clanking  
tin cans and trash bags

get off get out disband the choir  
this wedding train  
is trimmed with razor wire

II.

### SHELTER

the smallest room  
in the house  
is mine  
its lock shines

from where I sit  
everything is shining

the tiny hexagons  
that march with linked elbows  
at my feet  
will carry me away

from my small days  
and big secrets big  
as the backyard

a gang of boys  
in a ring bigger  
than this room bigger  
than a mother and a father  
whose ears were four helmets

four being the end boom  
of childhood over and out  
and I have found myself

at home at any age  
in the world's smallest rooms  
where I can turn

a lock like a corner  
of this page

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<sup>1</sup> Wyatt Townley. *Rewriting the Body*. (Nacogdoches, TX: Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2018).

III.  
SONG OF MYSELF

*(text only, see right for original graphic rendering)*

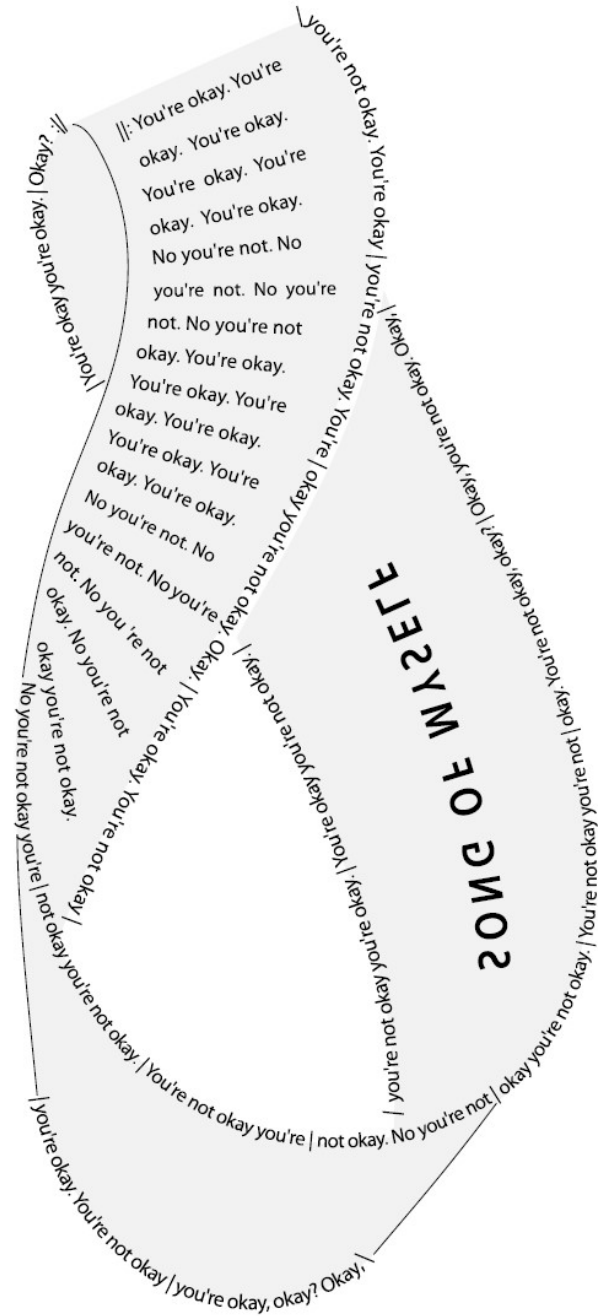
You're okay. You're  
okay. You're okay.  
You're okay. You're  
okay. You're okay.  
No you're not. No  
you're not. No you're  
not. No you're not  
okay. You're okay.  
You're okay. You're  
okay. You're okay.  
No you're not. No  
you're not. No you're  
not. No you're not  
okay. No you're not  
okay you're not okay.

No you're not okay you're  
not okay you're not okay.  
You're not okay you're  
not okay. No you're not  
okay you're not okay.  
You're not okay you're not  
okay. You're not okay, okay?  
Okay.  
You're okay. You're not okay

you're okay. You're not okay  
you're okay, okay? Okay,

you're not okay you're okay.  
You're okay you're not okay.

You're okay you're okay.  
Okay?



IV.  
MAL DE DÉBARQUEMENT

It's not as if the world  
swirled, dizzy  
from the spin, like a girl

in the grass who'd been twirling  
too long. It's an inside job.  
Not visual: *visceral*.

The day unrolls. Underfoot  
it's a tilting Titanic  
while the sky stays put.

The room sways. Rugs  
rise and subside  
under our chairs. The waltz

we've fallen into  
climbs the ocean's  
churning stairs. Just talking

while rocking is more  
than I can manage  
long since the ship's

ashore. What did you say?  
You're waving. You're  
moving your lips.

V.  
BEHIND THE SHIRT

My nipples have eyes.  
They are watching out

for my heart, bouncers  
at the door. They're not

picky. They don't see  
shit, can't count fingers

in front of them. They  
strain against the shirt

for a view, noses  
through a chain-link fence.

They've had enough  
of the backs of things—

bras, the insides  
of hands and mouths.

They need space, they  
need air. Chuck the blouse

and underwear. Their  
tiny faces wrinkle, ages

younger than the stars  
they wait for. Till then,

they toughen up, pretend  
to guard the door.

VI.  
LEAVING HOME

Like a girl slipping out of her clothes,  
I'm leaving home, this mobile home:  
head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes...

and eyes and ears and mouth and nose.  
I combed my hair; I leave my comb  
behind, a girl slipping out of her clothes.

Wherever I have gone, the body goes.  
Breath by breath, it writes its poem—  
head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Two breasts, new hips, an old story. I suppose  
all books must end—but what a tome,  
this girl slipping out of her clothes.

It's poetry in motion—or is it prose?  
What finally held it up was chrome  
and head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

As yoga always finishes with corpse pose,  
we drop the body, a drape of bones  
like a girl slipping out of her clothes—  
head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

VII.  
SNOW ANGEL

She's nowhere everywhere.  
Your mother's hems  
catch in the branches, beaks

of birds, peaks of houses.  
Now the sky lets out  
the weather she held back—

an avalanche of blizzards,  
thunder and snow, thunder  
and snow. She's mid-air all over

town, underfoot in every yard.  
She's in your hands. Make a snowball,  
throw as hard and far as death. Lie

down, make an angel. She's behind  
your back as you open and close  
your arms, your legs...your throat.

Fold her in, let her out mid-breath  
in a cloud. Forgive the ghost  
that lives inside your coat.

VIII.  
AFTER YOU DIED

I breathed

the long black sleeve of night  
down my throat and pulled it  
down my spine down my legs

closed my eyes and went under  
the covers breathed it down  
again and again as if its starry buttons

could stub a path to you

I kept breathing down the dark  
silence you left  
in which I am trailing

the hems of your last breath



IX.

IN EXTREMIS

*after Mary Oliver*

You do not have to be  
good. You do not have to

eat what is given. You do  
not have to get up.

You do not have  
to quiet down or change

your gown. You have  
only to breathe—take

the whole room  
into the hallways

of your lungs and let  
it out—the house

rearranged one breath  
at a time. Just breathe.

Then do it again.

X.

THE BACK OF BEYOND

*(text only. see page 72 for original graphic  
rendering)*

moving still

still moving

moving still

still moving

moving still still

moving moving

still still

moving moving

still still moving

moving still still

moving moving still

still moving moving

still still moving moving still

still moving moving still still being

still being and being still

still being and being still moving

and being moved being still

being moved and being still

and being moved and still being moved

beyond being and moving beyond

moved beyond being and moving beyond

moving beyond

beyond being

being beyond

beyond being

being beyond beyond

being being

beyond beyond

being beyond and

being back

being beyond

and being back

back beyond

being still

moving

THE BACK

moving still  
still moving  
moving still  
still moving  
moving still still  
moving moving  
still still  
moving moving  
still still moving  
moving still still  
moving moving still  
still moving moving

still still moving moving still  
still moving moving still still being  
still being and being still  
still being and being still moving  
and being moved being still  
being moved and being still  
and being moved and still being moved  
beyond being and moving beyond  
moved beyond being and moving beyond

moving beyond  
beyond being  
being beyond  
beyond being  
being beyond  
being being  
beyond beyond  
being beyond and  
being back  
being beyond  
and being back  
back beyond  
being still  
moving

OF BEYOND

## Appendix B: Overview

### Concept and Background

*Snow Angel* is a song cycle for soprano, mezzo-soprano, and instrumental sextet that presents the rediscovery and reclamation of personal identity and agency following trauma through the words of Kansas poet Wyatt Townley. The work depicts a first-person, female perspective of the assault and recovery, using the dialog and interactions between the soprano and mezzo-soprano to voice the victim's thoughts and feelings as she processes the experience. The form of the work is largely derived from the poetry. The first nine poems can be divided into three subgroups of three songs each, followed by a tenth song that functions as a postlude for the entire cycle. A complete performance of *Snow Angel* takes approximately thirty-five minutes. Performance of *Snow Angel* does not require any special technology or equipment aside from the performers and their instruments.

The choice of topic, instrumentation, and musical language of *Snow Angel* represents my current compositional style, which synthesizes classical and vernacular idioms, and my research interests, which are centered around creating community through the process of composing and performing music. I am interested in creating works that present opportunities for dialog between members of the ensemble with each other and with the audience, particularly when the work features the voices of women and minorities, groups of people who have historically lacked both agency and authentic representation within classical music.

In this project, I prioritized story-telling and shared experience over virtuosic display, novel timbres, or experimentation with extended techniques. I chose to work within the song cycle medium for its narrative and community-minded possibilities. In composing *Snow Angel*, I created a collection of thematically-linked art songs that tells a powerful story when performed as a complete cycle with the full complement of instruments, yet is also effective when parts of the work are excerpted as subsets or single pieces and performed with a reduced instrumentation by a variety of female voice types.

## Survey of Related Research

*Snow Angel* features a standard chamber sextet commonly referred to as “Pierrot,” which is comprised of the following instruments: flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion. The Pierrot ensemble’s economy of scale and expressive range allow for fine-tuned coordination between players without the need for a conductor, while retaining an expansive timbral palette. Like Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), most movements of *Snow Angel* feature subsets of the larger ensemble.<sup>2</sup> This serves to keep the combination of timbres fresh and maintain a balance of instruments throughout the work.

In preparation for the creation of this work, I researched works for voice(s) and chamber ensemble written in an idiom informed by both classical and vernacular elements. Ample precedent for informal crossover between genres exists in the repertoire of the preeminent Pierrot ensemble Eighth Blackbird, whose recent projects include collaborations with non-classical composers and songwriters. One such project, the genre-bending cantata *Olagón* (2016), features a dissonant, complex “new music” aesthetic juxtaposed with folk material.<sup>3</sup> My own approach to blending genres is more similar to composer Missy Mazzoli’s; her *Still Life With Avalanche* (2008), also commissioned by Eighth Blackbird, combines grooves, timbres, and gestures derived from diverse influences into a unified language within the work.<sup>4</sup>

A key innovation of *Snow Angel* is the introduction of a second singer into the typical Pierrot instrumentation. This expansion allows the voice to better match the versatility of the other instrumental families (strings, winds, percussion/piano) within the ensemble. Existing works for expanded Pierrot or similar chamber ensembles sometimes augment the vocal element. *Olagón* uses pre-recorded voices in addition to the *sean-nós* singer; Julia Wolfe’s *Believing* (1997) for the Bang On A Can All-stars—

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold Schoenberg and Albert Giraud. *Dreimal Sieben Gedichte Aus Albert Girauds Pierrot Lunaire*. (Vienna: Universal-Edition, 1914).

<sup>3</sup> Iarla O Lionaird and Dan Trueman, *Olagón* [Cantata]. (Chicago: Cedille CDR90000-174, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Missy Mazzoli. *Still Life With Avalanche*. (G. Schirmer, Inc., 2008).

essentially a modified Pierrot ensemble—requires each instrumental performer to sing in addition to playing.<sup>5</sup> However, in these works, the additional singers are a secondary or background effect. The most direct precedent for *Snow Angel* may be George Crumb’s *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970), which features two solo singers and expands the range of available vocal colors without using the types of extended techniques that would preclude performance by most classically-trained singers.<sup>6</sup> However, in Crumb’s work, the boy soprano does not join the rest of the ensemble until the last movement, while in *Snow Angel*, the presence of two dedicated solo vocal lines across multiple movements creates a more equal partnership between the vocal and instrumental parts and adds another layer of musical conversation to the work.

Although the instrumentation differs, the most influential work I researched in preparation for this project is Julia Wolfe’s cantata *Anthracite Fields*.<sup>7</sup> Her layering of the text in various movements shaped my handling of the third and tenth songs in *Snow Angel*, which both feature repetitive text fragments shaped into a meaningful poetic structure.

### **Text Selection and Formal Structure**

*Snow Angel* features ten poems selected from *Rewriting the Body*, the newest collection of poetry by Kansas Poet Laureate Emerita Wyatt Townley.<sup>8</sup> *Rewriting the Body* explores the intersection of the physical and spiritual realms and examines the relationship between the inner self and the outer world, specifically as these connections relate to the reality of living with the aftermath of a traumatic

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<sup>5</sup> Julia Wolfe. *Renegade Heaven*, “Believing.” Bang on A Can All-Stars. (New York: Cantaloupe Music, CA-21001, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> George Crumb. *Ancient Voices of Children; [a Cycle of Songs on Texts by García Lorca]*. (New York: C.F. Peters, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Julia Wolfe. *Anthracite Fields*. Bang on A Can All-Stars, Trinity Wall Street Choir, Julian Wachner. (New York: Cantaloupe Music, CA-2111, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Townley. *Rewriting the Body*. (Nacogdoches, TX: Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2018).

experience, a topic which is both timely and timeless. Townley's writing is consistently direct, and thought-provoking. She recounts her own journey through trauma with a raw, deeply personal honesty and an economy of words that is well suited to musical treatment. I chose to set Townley's poetry because her writing resonates with my experience and her style leaves space for the music to interact with the words.

The poems in *Rewriting the Body* are divided into four sections, the last of which consists of a single long poem with the same title as the book. The poetry featured in *Snow Angel* is drawn from the other three sections, in almost the same order as they appear in the book, although Townley was agreeable to any ordering of the poetry I deemed appropriate. While most of the poems I selected have a traditional, linear structure, two of them have a graphically-oriented layout and structure instead; this unconventional format shapes my setting of the poetry. Though Townley's book engages several topics—marriage, children, and growing old—I selected the poems that address the experience of being assaulted, the rediscovery of personal agency, and the coming to terms with oneself and with loss. The opening songs of *Snow Angel* progress through time in a chronological manner, while the rest of the work is decidedly less linear, a story arc that I believe accurately reflects the unpredictable, multi-dimensional nature of post-traumatic recovery.

The first three poems come from the first section of Townley's book, under the heading "Open House." These poems deal directly with the experience and immediate aftermath of a violent sexual assault. The next two poems are found in the second section of the book, "Meanwhile You," and the rest are taken from the third section, "When the Diving Board Ends." The fourth song of *Snow Angel* evokes a sense of disorientation as the protagonist struggles to regain her footing, which she does in the fifth song. During the remaining songs, she moves forward towards recovery as she reclaims ownership of her physical body, embraces loss and grief, and steps forward into the future.

## Harmonic Language and Motivic Unity

*Snow Angel* is representative of my compositional language, which typically incorporates elements of vernacular folk styles into traditional classical genres and forms. Harmonically, I often use a combination of open fifths, and moderately dissonant intervals, such as sevenths and major seconds, and extended quasi-tonal or modal harmonies generated through combinations of seconds, thirds, and fourths. Some of my works also employ polychordal tertian extensions, resulting in harmonies that resemble those used by Charles Griffes<sup>9</sup> or Olivier Messiaen<sup>10</sup>. Rhythmically, the vernacular influence in my music often results in music with a relatively fixed, present pulse underneath a fluid, constantly-shifting meter.

While the songs within *Snow Angel* may function as independent pieces, they are linked by a collection of motives that unify the cycle, sometimes foreshadowing or recalling another movement, at other times transformed through the course of the work before merging into a single musical statement during the final song. The following analysis examines the harmonic and motivic material of each song, detailing the ways in which the musical material supports the poetry, provides a subtext, and connects the songs with each other.

## Black Wedding Train

The first poem, “Black Wedding Train,” is a blunt narration of a gang rape. As a composer, I wrestled with the challenge of crafting the music to accompany such a horrific narrative. Rather than seeking an equally horrific sound, I drew inspiration from folk ballads such as “Culloden’s Harvest” in which a tragic event is recounted through a simple haunting melody with a spare instrumental accompaniment or perhaps none at all, the bleak pain conveyed by an unaccompanied singer.<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Griffes. *Roman Sketches: For the Pianoforte, Op. 7*. (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc. 1917).

<sup>10</sup> Olivier Messiaen. *Préludes Pour Piano*. Paris: Durand. 1930

<sup>11</sup> Deanta. *Celtic Legacy* “Culloden’s Harvest.” (New York: Narada, 63916. 1995).

resulting musical material of the song consists of a melodic line that avoids melisma or stepwise motion in favor of angular leaps and unadorned declamation.

The instrumental accompaniment is comprised of two musical ideas—an ominous pop-inspired groove with an asymmetrical meter (Fig. 1) and a restless pulsing heartbeat figure (Fig. 2)—that alternate before eventually merging at the climax of the movement in mm. 80-98. The harmonic language is largely in a modal C minor key. The tension of the “heartbeat motive” is generated by the addition of an A-flat, which inserts two dissonant intervals—a semitone and a tritone—into the otherwise open-fifths sonority of the two-note figure. In this first movement, repetition of the figure accelerates to match the rising panic of the protagonist as depicted by the text. In addition to functioning as the primary motive on which the first movement is built, this heartbeat motive appears throughout the cycle. During the final two movements it returns, transformed, as a representation of renewed vigor and joy. This movement features the mezzo-soprano and all instrumental players.



Fig. 1: “Black Wedding Train,” “ominous pop groove,” mm. 1-4.



Fig. 2: “Black Wedding Train,” “heartbeat motive,” mm. 16-17.



## Shelter

The second song is a retelling of the same story, this time as a memory rather than as it happens. The text of “Shelter” suggests a certain child-like affect, along with a sense of disassociation and inability to process the event properly. The narrator recounts the horrific memory with detached calm from a hidden safe space. The movement derives its unsettling quality from the mismatch between the tone and content of the poem. The soprano represents this aspect of the narrator’s psyche, singing a syllabic melody whose mid-range tessitura and major-mode quality are undermined by a slightly unsettled quality that arises from the deliberate use of a raised fifth scale degree (Fig. 3) and the sporadic appearance of large dissonant leaps. This melody is supported by a single line in the vibraphone, which often doubles the melody, mimicking the timbre of a toy piano.

In the poem, the narrator starts in the present moment, shifts to the past, and then back to the present. This is reflected in a series of modulations during the middle section, along with the appearance of the heartbeat motive from “Black Wedding Train,” although in a subdued manner, reflecting the disconnected character of the text. When the narrator returns to the present moment, the song returns to the original key (A-flat Major) and character of the first four measures of “Shelter.”



Fig. 3: “Shelter,” raised 5<sup>th</sup> scale degree, mm.1-6.

## Song of Myself

“Song of Myself” is one of two pieces in the cycle that feature text from a graphically-constructed poem. The text is arranged around a mobius strip with a musical “repeat sign” as its final

punctuation. I interpreted this sign literally, repeating the text of the poem twice within the song, with a contrasting middle section that features guided non-verbal improvisation.

Within the cycle, this piece is also unique in that it features no pitched material. The two singers act out the inner monologue of a person on the verge of a panic attack, while the instrumentalists all contribute their voices to the spoken drama. In the middle section of the work, the soprano breathes dramatically as if experiencing a panic attack while the mezzo soprano and instrumentalists create a sound world of creaks, groans and wind sounds, the sort of soundscape that evokes an abandoned building, perhaps populated by uneasy ghosts of the past. This piece contains a subtle nod to the heartbeat motive in the pacing of the audible quick in-out breaths of the soprano.

### Mal de Débarquement

“Mal de Débarquement” (“Land Sickness”) uses the smallest subset of instruments in the cycle, featuring soprano, flute, and piano in an abstract and unbalanced trio that depicts the nausea, disorientation and loss of equilibrium experienced by a person who, after a long voyage at sea, sets foot on land. Everything about the trio is unbalanced, from the shifting meter, to the instrumentation (the flute has too little to do, while the piano is overbearing), to the phrasing and formal structure. The piece ostensibly starts in G Major, but the sonority never appears, as it is already destabilized by a lowered seventh scale degree on the first beat of the first measure (Fig.4).

The image shows the opening of the piece "Mal de Débarquement" for Soprano, Flute, and Piano. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and begins with a 3/8 time signature that changes to 2/4 in the second measure. The Soprano part starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and the lyrics "It's not as if the world". The Flute part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Piano part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction "with pedal throughout". The first measure of the piano part features a G7 chord with a lowered seventh scale degree (F#) on the first beat.

Fig. 4: “Mal de Débarquement,” opening G7 chord, mm. 1-3.

The musical material attempts to find an even groove, but is thwarted by sudden metric shifts, modulations, and dissonant chords that interrupt the motion of the song. In m. 25, the piano manages to settle into a rhythmic groove, but the groove is disrupted shortly after the singer's entry by an insistent rolling figure in the piano (m. 45) that features simultaneous diatonic and chromatic figures in a watery blur (Fig. 5). The song never achieves a sense of resolution. It stumbles and jolts along to the final chord, a minor-mode extended chord a tri-tone away from the opening key of the piece.

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano (S.), Flute (Fl.), and Piano (Pno). The score is in 3/4 time and begins at measure 45, marked with a 'C' in a box. The tempo is indicated as '♩ = 108'. The Soprano part has a rest. The Flute part has a melodic line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the instruction 'f.t. get ugly'. The Piano part features a complex, rolling figure with simultaneous diatonic and chromatic lines, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction 'beginning with clarity, dissolving into indistinct watery blur'. The piano part includes triplets and various articulations.

Fig. 5: “Mal de Débarquement,” diatonic-chromatic piano figure, mm. 45-47.

## Behind the Shirt

“Behind the Shirt” exhibits the frequent meter changes, modulations, dissonant extended chords, and unorthodox chord progressions of the previous song, but the two pieces are a study in contrast. In “Behind the Shirt,” the singer seems to handle the shifting musical landscape with ease. This piece functions as the turning point of the cycle, in which the narrator regains control of her personal storyline. The song is largely playful and humorous, benefiting from Townley’s witty wordplay and unique depiction of female breasts. The music depicts the whimsical character of the poem through brief, agile wind gestures, the use of a swinging jazz waltz, and quick, extreme registral shifts in the piano.

In mm. 42-50, the song briefly turns serious. Here, two important motives appear. The first is the flute’s five-note descending gesture in mm. 42-43 (Fig. 6). This gesture is the primary motive in the

seventh song, “Snow Angel,” and its presence here in the serious moment of an otherwise humorous piece foreshadows the more serious, dramatic nature of the cycle’s last four songs. The second important motive is the melodic material of the mezzo’s melody in mm. 44-48 (Fig. 6). The contour and pitch content of the line, which contains a chromatic sequence of thirds, is a compressed transformation of the melodic material from the stable sections of the second movement, “Shelter,” where the soprano sings “the tiny hexagons...will carry me away” (mm. 14-22) and later “and I have found myself at home at any age” (mm. 54-57). The compression from fourths to thirds decreases the disjointedness of the line and evokes a shimmering outer-space quality when placed in the extreme high register of the piano. The piece returns to the present moment and closes with a confident gesture and loud dynamic, the first piece in the cycle to do so.

The musical score for "Behind the Shirt" (mm. 42-47) is presented in five staves. The vocal line (M.S.) begins at measure 42 with a mezzo-soprano part. The lyrics are: "Their ti - ny fac - es wrin - kle a - ges young - er than the stars". The vocal line is marked with dynamics *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The instrumental accompaniment includes Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. in Bb), Piano (Pno), and Vibraphone (Vib.). The piano part features a prominent five-note chromatic sequence in the right hand, marked with a fermata and a dynamic of *pp* (pianissimo). The vibraphone part also features a similar five-note chromatic sequence, marked with a dynamic of *pp* and the instruction "hollow, outer-space shimmer". The score includes various performance markings such as *pp*, *mf*, *8va*, and *8va* (reduced).

Fig. 6: “Behind the Shirt,” five-note and compressed “Shelter” motives mm. 42-47.

## Leaving Home

The melody for the first stanza of this poem appeared fully formed in my head the first time I read the text. The poem takes the form of a villanelle—a nineteen-line poem consisting of five groups of three lines followed by a quatrain, featuring a distinctive rhyming scheme. The primary refrain of “Leaving Home” is drawn from a children’s song, “head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.” The musical style and harmonic language are inspired by Appalachian-style folk tunes. The melody alternates between Aeolian and Dorian modes and often centers around two different pitches a fourth (or fifth apart), recalling the treatment of the final and reciting tone in the church modes. The text speaks of taking action, of leaving, of moving forward. This shift in tone and outlook is reflected in the relentless pulse of the song and in the appearance of both singers—this is the first pitched duet in the cycle. The mezzo sings the first three stanzas alone. When the soprano joins the mezzo for a repetition of the third stanza, they sing in a sort of bi-tonal canon at the interval of a fourth (Fig. 7). This diatonic bitonality will occur more prominently later in the cycle.

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Soprano (S.) and Mezzo-Soprano (M-S.). The score is for measures 34-40. The Soprano part begins at measure 34 with a rest, then enters at measure 35 with the melody. The Mezzo-Soprano part also begins with a rest at measure 34 and enters at measure 35 with a lower melody. The lyrics are: "Where - ev - ver I have gone\_ the bo - dy goes. Breath\_ by". The Soprano part is marked *f with increasing confidence* and the Mezzo-Soprano part is marked *f*. The time signature is 4/4.

Fig. 7: “Leaving Home,” canon at the fourth, mm. 34-40.

## Snow Angel

This song is the dramatic apex of the cycle. The five-note motive presented briefly in “Behind the Shirt” is the main motive of the “ghost” who appears throughout the song, wafting through the air and releasing a winter storm before being folded into the coat of the narrator. The motive is the first melodic material of the piece, appearing in m. 2 (Fig. 8), and the last notes of the song, which fades to silence after twenty-two repetitions of the motive following the singer’s final line. The character and texture of musical material accompanying the “ghost” motive is determined by the text. The opening material

(“She’s nowhere everywhere”) is delicate and ethereal, gradually increasing in volume and texture as the ghost floats through the landscape and arriving at a dramatic *fortissimo* climax when the sky releases the blizzard in m. 43, following the words “thunder and snow.” The heartbeat motive is also present, though transformed to a rising single-note gesture, mainly in the piano and cello parts. This rising two-note gesture returns later in the cycle.



Fig. 8: “Snow Angel,” “ghost motive, mm 1-3.

The choice of key areas in the piece is directly influenced by the dramatic arc of the text. The song opens in E-flat Major, with all instruments staying completely within the key except for the flute’s ghost motive, which contains an A-natural. The shift to E-flat minor in m. 21 signals the coming change in weather. The music modulates to G minor in m. 43. This is the key of the “ghost” motive, which now takes over all the instrument parts. The key center remains stable until just before the words “She’s in your hands.” At this point, a short transition modulates to an ambiguous G major area before arriving solidly in A minor on the word “death.” After a brief instrumental interlude, the text turns inward. This character change is reflected by a shift to the key area of E-flat minor, followed by a return to E-flat major for the act of embracing and forgiving the ghost. At the end of the piece, the ghost motive fades away and does not return until the final movement, when it reappears as a major-mode flourish.

### After You Died

The form and melodic contour of the eighth song, “After You Died,” is structured as a series of breathing motions. The piece exhales (mm. 1-6), inhales (mm. 7-9), exhales (mm. 10-14), inhales (mm.

15-17), and exhales (mm. 17-18), followed by a much longer inhalation (mm. 18-27), then an exhalation (mm.28-34), a final inhalation (mm.35) and a final long exhalation (mm. 38-end). The key signature remains constant throughout, with triadic, consonant harmonies predominating. The sparkling shimmer from “Behind the Shirt” has become even more consonant, absorbing a hint of the “ghost” motive and evoking the peeling of bells (Fig. 9). Though it forms the underlying material of the opening accompaniment, the “1-2-pause” rhythm of the heartbeat motive is almost unrecognizable (Fig. 10). In this piece the heartbeat has slowed to the point of stopping, barely beating at all by the closing measures of the song, when it appears as slow, repeated pulsing in the piano and vibraphone lines (Fig. 11). This is the final solo piece of the cycle; the last two songs are both duets.



Fig. 9: “After You Died,” peeling of bells, mm. 34-35.

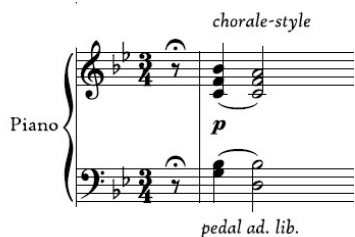


Fig. 10: “After You Died,” slow “heartbeat” motive, m.



Fig. 11: “After You Died,” slow “heartbeat” motive becomes steady pulsing, mm. 39-44.

## In Extremis

“In Extremis” refers to being in extreme circumstances, usually at the point of death. The message of the poem is powerful and validating. When I read the poem, I could hear the opening melodic line sung in repeated quarter notes, quite loudly. However, this poem is Townley’s homage to Mary Oliver (1935-2019), an American poet and keen observer of the natural world. In Mary Oliver’s poem “Wild Geese,” which Townley quotes, Oliver offers permission to let “the soft animal of your body love what it loves.”<sup>12</sup> Reading Oliver’s poem changed the way I heard the lines of “In Extremis.” As a result, I altered the mood of final version of the song from bluntly defiant to transcendent and quasi-religious. The entire work is a steadily pulsing movement, created from the heartbeat motive without its signature pause, so that the pulse becomes reassuring rather than stress-inducing or ominous. The rising second from “Snow Angel” also appears here throughout the melodic line (Fig. 12). The text does not repeat on the page, but the final lines of the poem read “Just breathe. Then do it again,” which I took as permission to repeat the text as if it were the process of breathing. The bitonality of the duet from “Leaving Home” reappears here, with the soprano and mezzo-soprano singing in a canon, this time at the fifth (mm. 49-56). At the end of the second time through the poem, the text is left unfinished. The soprano sings the penultimate line, which is then repeated by the mezzo-soprano. The piano takes over the melody to play “just do it again,” and the piece gradually becomes quieter until only a “memory of sound” (mm. 81-83) remains.

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Soprano (S.) and Mezzo-Soprano (M.S.). The Soprano part is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a 3/4 time signature. It features a melodic line of repeated quarter notes with dynamic markings of *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The lyrics under the Soprano part are: "You do not do not do not do not do not do not" and "You do not have to qui - et". The Mezzo-Soprano part is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It features a melodic line of repeated quarter notes with dynamic markings of *p* and *mp*. The lyrics under the Mezzo-Soprano part are: "up \_\_\_\_\_", "You do not have to qui - et", and "down \_\_\_\_\_".

Fig. 12: “In Extremis,” rising major second interval, mm. 10-12.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Oliver. “Wild Geese” in *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*. (New York: Penguin Press. 2017).



### The Back of Beyond

This piece is constructed through a graphic arrangement of text fragments, but unlike “Song of Myself,” which wraps endlessly around itself, the shape of this poem on the page is that of a galaxy which simultaneously evolves and transforms while remaining in place. Unlike the rest of the songs that make up this cycle, this piece is intended for performance only as the postlude to a complete performance of *Snow Angel*, as it is constructed entirely of motives, harmonies, and rhythms from the other nine songs. Measures 1-8 come from “Leaving Home,” followed by the heartbeat motive m. 9. However, any dark undertones associated with this reappearance of material are quickly undermined by the merging of the material from “Black Wedding Train” and “Leaving Home” in mm. 11-31 (Fig 13). The entire song is a similar synthesis and transformation of musical motives. The most striking example of this occurs in mm. 75-85, in which both the “ghost” motive from “Snow Angel” and the asymmetrical pop-heartbeat material from “Black Wedding Train” are transformed into an ecstatic climax in C Major. The cycle ends with the transformed and modified heartbeat motive, which forms the final material of the soprano melody.

Fig. 12: “The Back of Beyond,” “heartbeat” motive in piano line, “Leaving Home” motive in vocal part, mm. 6-13.

## **Instrumentation and Optional Performance Staging**

The instrumentation of the *Snow Angel* song cycle is determined by its narrative arc. The events of the opening song fragment the identity of the protagonist. The instrumentation reflects this. Except for the unpitched third song, there is at least one performer who is silent, until the final two songs, in which the victim has found her center again.

This piece may be performed in a traditional concert format, but very minimal staging is encouraged, where possible. During “Black Wedding Train,” optional staging should consist of the mezzo-soprano facing the audience as expected with the soprano facing away from the audience with her back to the mezzo-soprano for the duration of the song. Prior to the opening measure of “Shelter,” the soprano should turn to face the audience, while the mezzo-soprano should slowly sit down on the floor or in a chair with her head down and her arms around her legs (on the floor) or chest (in a chair). Minimal staging in a similar style may be improvised by the performers for the remaining songs, if desired. *Snow Angel* may also be performed as a song cycle for two voices with piano accompaniment. However, it will be necessary to include additional performers on the speaking parts during “Song of Myself.”

## **Conclusion**

Given the current cultural and political climate, the topic and text of the cycle—a first-person, female account of sexual assault and the recovery process—is especially timely. The work gives female performers the opportunity to portray the experience of strong character who survives a horrific event and finds her path and her voice. The Lawrence Opera Theater will present the Kansas premiere of *Snow Angel* on August 11, 2019 at 2:30 p.m. The versatility of performance options is intended to facilitate future successful performances in a variety of venues and formats.

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- "Black Wedding Train"
- "Shelter"
- "Song of Myself"
- "Mal de Débarquement"
- "Behind the Shirt"
- "Leaving Home"
- "Snow Angel"
- "After You Died"
- "In Extremis"
- "The Back of Beyond"

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