

Pietà

for reader, cello, and SATB choir

Carlotta Ferrari 2018

The day my brother died a silence grew.
It grew upon the corners of the room,
Upon the curtains shut, upon the floor.
It grew beyond the door ajar—dim blue
I stood before, not ready in myself.
How should one enter, or think even
To prepare dumb feet for the inevitable?
“Go in,” mother whispered. So I did.

The room was not so much a thing,
Or age a span, for the house now
Seemed old as it was empty,
Though kind as never did it speak.
Could walls but talk. They did not breathe,
But fostered me, the younger always;
And whether honestly or not, I believed
Myself less wise and worthy of this thing.

I took my place in silence at his head.
Sheets draped across his body. Naked feet.
A stain of mother’s sweat still visible, tears
Beaded earlier that morning on his hair.
Could walls have seen, or dystrophy flex.
But they did not; her tears now fell alone.
I was not let to see, though see them now,
In my imagining, a man, for what they are.

I was made to go to school, made to leave
To let my parents to their private rite of grief,
While brother, living still, yet crooked his neck
Like shepherd’s staff toward them,
Bent cheek for kisses. Tiny at first, then each one
Grown larger to the room and to the door,—
Eyes too bleared from love to see.
But one more kiss—one more was all their wish.

Had I the sweat from off his brow
I would know then what I know now—
How mother wept in silence;
How father was this room:
The bulk ward of his chest pulled tight, in—
His broken arms both broad and thin,
His heart, at once heavy and wren,
Gathering unto himself wife and son.—
Yet in—yet in, the dead and dying.

—Darcy Blahut

Le jour où mon frère est mort, un silence est né.
Il est né depuis les coins de la pièce,
Sur les rideaux fermés, sur le plancher.
Il croisa au delà de la porte fermée—bleu pâle
J'étais debout, devant, hésitant.
Comment entrer, où même penser
À préparer pour l'inévitable mes pieds silencieux?
"Allez" chuchota ma mère. J'y allai.

La chambre n'était pas tout à fait une chose,
Ou l'âge une gamme, car dans cet instant la maison
Sembla vieille, vidée,
Tandis douce car elle ne parla pas.
Si seulement les murs pouvaient parler. Ils ne respiraient pas,
Mais me nourrissaient, toujours le cadet;
Et honnêtement ou non, je me croyais
Moins sage et moins digne de cette chose.

Je pris ma place silencieusement à sa tête.
Les draps recouvraient son corps. Pieds nus.
Visible, une tâche de sueur venant de ma mère, des larmes
En gouttelettes depuis le matin sur ses cheveux.
Si seulement les murs pouvaient voir, ou la dystrophie fléchir.
Mais ils ne le faisaient pas; ses larmes tombaient seuls.
On ne me permettait pas de voir, mais je les vois maintenant,
Dans ma tête, un homme, leur vérité.

On me força d'aller à l'école, me força de partir
De donner à mes parents leur rite de deuil privé,
Tandis que frère, toujours vivant, courbait son cou
Comme une houlette vers eux,
Offrait la joue pour se faire embrasser.
En premier petits, chaque baiser
Devenu large à la chambre et à la porte—
Les yeux floutés par l'amour, ne pouvant voir.
Mais encore un baiser—seulement un autre, leur unique désir.

Si j'avais la sueur de son front
J'eus su là ce que je sais maintenant—
Comment ma mère pleura en silence;
Comment père était cette chambre:
L'essentiel de sa poitrine retiré—
Ses bras cassés à la fois larges et minces,
Son cœur à la fois lourd et oiselet,
Cueillant à lui femme et fils.—
Pourtant dedans—pourtant dedans, les morts et les mourants.

—Translation: Michael Bowden

Andante doloroso

Narratore ————— Le jour où mon frère est mort, un silence est né. —————

S *p*
The day my broth - er died the day a

A *p*
The day my broth - er died the day a

T *p*
The day my broth - er died the day a

B *p*
The day my broth - er died the day a

Violoncello

6 ————— Il est né depuis les coins de la pièce, —————

S
si - lence grew. It grew up - on the cor - ners of the room,

A
si - lence grew. It grew up - on the cor - ners of the room,

T
si - lence grew. It grew up - on the cor - ners of the room, up -

B
si - lence grew. It grew up - on the cor - ners of the room,

Vc.

14 ————— Sur les rideaux fermés, sur le plancher. —————

S
up - on the cur - tains shut, up - on the floor. It

A
up - on the cur - tains shut, up - on the floor. It

T
on the cur - tains shut, up - on the floor.

B
up - on the cur - tains shut, up - on the floor.

Vc.

S
grew be-yond the door a - jar, dim blue I stood be - fore not read - y in my -

A
grew be-yond the door a - jar, dim blue I stood be - fore not read - y in my -

T
8 It grew be-yond the door a - jar, dim blue I

B
It grew be-yond the door a - jar, dim blue I

Vc.

Il croisa au delà de la porte fermée—bleu pâle J'étais debout, devant, hésitant.

S
self. *mf* I stood be - fore not read - y in my - self.

A
self. *mf* I stood be - fore not read - y in my - self.

T
8 stood be - fore not read - y in my - self. *mf* I stood be - fore not read - y in my -

B
stood be - fore not read - y in my - self. *mf* I stood be - fore not read - y in my -

Vc.

Comment entrer, où même penser

S
f How should one en - ter, or think e - ven to pre-pare how should one en - ter,

A
f How should one en - ter, or think e - ven to pre-pare how should one en - ter,

T
8 self. *f* How should one en - ter,

B
self. *f* How should one en - ter,

Vc.

À préparer pour l'inévitable mes pieds silencieux?

S or think e - ven to pre - pare *mp* to pre - pare to pre - pare *p* to pre - pare to pre - pare

A or think e - ven to pre - pare *mp* to pre - pare to pre - pare *p* to pre - pare to pre - pare

T or think e - ven to pre - pare *mp* to pre - pare to pre - pare *p* to pre - pare

B or think e - ven to pre - pare *mp* to pre - pare to pre - pare *p* to pre - pare

Vc.

(whispering) "Allez" chuchota ma mère. J'y allai.

S (soprano solo, speaking) Dumb feet for the inevitable?

A

T

B

Vc.

S *mp* The room was not so

A (alto solo, whispering) "Go in," mother whispered. So I did. *mp* The room was not so

T *mp* The room was not so

B *mp* The room was not so

Vc. *mf* *espressivo*

La chambre n'était pas tout à fait une chose, Ou l'âge une gamme,

77

S much a thing, or age a span,

A much a thing, or age a span,

T 8 much a thing, or age a span,

B much a thing, or age a span,

Vc. repeat *ad libitum*, following the reader

87

S Though kind as nev-er did it speak.

A Though kind as nev-er did it speak.

T 8 (*tenor solo, speaking*) for the house now seemed old as it was empty, Though kind as nev-er did it speak.

B Though kind as nev-er did it speak.

Vc. *p*

car dans cet instant la maison Sembla vieille, vidée, Tandis douce car elle ne parla pas.
 Si seulement les murs pouvaient parler. Ils ne respiraient pas, Mais me nourrissaient, toujours le cadet;
 Et honnêtement ou non, je me croyais Moins sage et moins digne de cette chose.

100

S Could walls but talk.

A Could walls but talk.

T 8 Could walls but talk.

B Could walls but talk.

Vc. *pizz.*

S *pp*
They did not breathe, but fos-tered me, the young-er al-ways

A *pp*
They did not breathe, but fos-tered me, the young-er al-ways

T *pp*
They did not breathe, but fos-tered me, the young-er

B *pp*
They did not breathe, but fos-tered me, the young-er

Vc. (arco) *pp*

S

A

T *s*
al-ways

B
al-ways (bass solo, speaking) And whether honestly or not, I believed Myself less wise and worthy of this thing.

Vc. *mp*

Je pris ma place silencieusement à sa tête. Les draps recouvraient son corps. Pieds nus.
Visible, une tâche de sueur venant de ma mère, des larmes En gouttelettes depuis le matin sur ses cheveux.
Si seulement les murs pouvaient voir, ou la dystrophie fléchir. Mais ils ne le faisaient pas; ses larmes tombaient seuls.
On ne me permettait pas de voir, mais je les vois maintenant Dans ma tête, un homme, leur vérité.

S

A

T *s*

B

Vc.

repetition *ad libitum*
(follow the reader)

S *mf*
I took my place in si-lence at his head.

A *mf*
I took my place in si-lence at his head.

T *mf*
I took my place in si-lence at his

B *mf*
I took my place in si-lence at his

Vc. *mf*

S *f* Sheets draped a - cross his bod - y. Na-ked feet. *mp* Na - ked feet.

A *f* Sheets draped a - cross his bod - y. Na-ked feet. *mp* Na - ked feet.

T *f* head. Sheets draped a - cross his bod - y. Na-ked

B *f* head. Sheets draped a - cross his bod - y. Na-ked

Vc. *f*

S *mp* A stain of moth-er's sweat still vis - i - ble,

A *mp* A stain of moth-er's sweat still vis - i - ble,

T *mp* feet. A stain of moth-er's sweat still vis - i - ble,

B *mp* feet. A stain of moth-er's sweat still vis - i - ble,

Vc. *p*

(soprano solo, speaking)

S tears
 Beaded earlier that morning on his hair. Could walls have seen, or dystrophy flex. But they did not; her tears now fell alone.
 I was not let to see, though see them now In my imagining, a man, for what they are.

A

T

B

Vc.

(alto solo, speaking)

A tears
 Beaded earlier that morning on his hair. Could walls have seen, or dystrophy flex. But they did not; her tears now fell alone.
 I was not let to see, though see them now In my imagining, a man, for what they are.

(tenor solo, speaking) [tenor and bass enter as in a canon]

T tears
 Beaded earlier that morning on his hair. Could walls have seen, or dystrophy flex. But they did not; her tears now fell alone.
 I was not let to see, though see them now In my imagining, a man, for what they are.

(bass solo, speaking)

B tears
 Beaded earlier that morning on his hair. Could walls have seen, or dystrophy flex.
 But they did not; her tears now fell alone. I was not let to see, though see them now
 In my imagining, a man, for what they are.

Vc.

On me força d'aller à l'école, ————— me força de partir —

(rhythmical declamation)

S I was made to go to school, made to leave

(rhythmical declamation)

A I was made to go to school, made to leave

(rhythmical declamation)

T I was made to go to school, made to leave

(rhythmical declamation)

B I was made to go to school, made to leave

Vc.

De donner à mes parents leur rite de deuil privé,

S to let my par-ents to their pri-vate rite of grief,

A to let my par-ents to their pri-vate rite of grief,

T to let my par-ents to their pri-vate rite of grief,

B to let my par-ents to their pri-vate rite of grief,

Vc. *mf*

S *mp* while broth-er, liv - ing still, yet crooked his neck *mf* like

A *mp* while broth-er, liv - ing still, yet crooked his neck *mf* like

T *mp* while broth-er, liv - ing still, yet crooked his neck *mf* like

B *mp* while broth-er, liv - ing still, yet crooked his neck *mf* like

Vc.

S shep-herd's staff to - ward them, bent cheek for kiss - es.

A shep-herd's staff to - ward them, bent cheek for kiss - es.

T shep-herd's staff to - ward them, bent cheek for kiss - es.

B shep-herd's staff to - ward them, bent cheek for kiss - es.

Vc.

256 Tandis que frère, toujours vivant, courbait son cou Comme une houlette vers eux, Offrait la joue pour se faire embrasser.
 En premier petits, chaque baiser Devenu large à la chambre et à la porte— Les yeux floutés par l'amour, ne pouvant voir.
 Mais encore un baiser—seulement un autre, leur unique désir.

repetition *ad libitum* (follow the reader)

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(soprano solo) Tiny at first, then each one Grown larger to the room and to the door,—
 Eyes too bleared from love to see. But one more kiss—one more was all their wish.

280

(alto solo) Tiny at first, then each one Grown larger to the room and to the door,—
 Eyes too bleared from love to see. But one more kiss—one more was all their wish.

(tenor solo) Tiny at first, then each one Grown larger to the room and to the door,—
 Eyes too bleared from love to see. But one more kiss—one more was all their wish.

(bass solo) Tiny at first, then each one Grown larger to the room and to the door,—
 Eyes too bleared from love to see. But one more kiss—one more was all their wish.

S *mp*
Had I the sweat from off his brow I would know then what I know now

A *mp*
Had I the sweat from off his brow I would know then what I know now

T *mp*
Had I the sweat from off his brow I would know then what I know now

B *mp*
Had I the sweat from off his brow I would know then what I know now

Vc. *mp*

Si j'avais la sueur de son front
J'eus su là ce que je sais maintenant—

S *mf*
How moth-er wept in si -

A *mf*
How moth-er wept in si -

T *mf*
How moth-er wept in si -

B *mf*
How moth-er wept in si -

Vc. (follow the text) *mf*

Comment ma mère pleura en silence; Comment père était cette chambre:
L'essentiel de sa poitrine retiré— Ses bras cassés à la fois larges et minces,
Son coeur à la fois lourd et oiselet, Cueillant à lui femme et fils.—

S
lence; how fath-er was this room:

A
lence; how fath-er was this room:

T
lence; how fath-er was this room:

B
lence; how fath-er was this room:

Vc. (follow the text)

S
A
T
B
Vc.

f
the bulk ward of his chest pulled tight, in... his

f
the bulk ward of his chest pulled tight, in... his

f
the bulk ward of his chest pulled tight, in... his

f
the bulk ward of his chest pulled tight, in... his

f

S
A
T
B
Vc.

bro - ken arms both broad and thin, his heart, at once

bro - ken arms both broad and thin, his heart, at once

bro - ken arms both broad and thin, his heart, at once

bro - ken arms both broad and thin, his heart, at once

S
A
T
B
Vc.

heav - y and wren, gath-er-ing un-to him-self wife and son.

heav - y and wren, gath-er-ing un-to him-self wife and son.

heav - y and wren, gath-er-ing un-to him-self wife and son.

heav - y and wren, gath-er-ing un-to him-self wife and son.

Pourtant dedans—pourtant dedans, les morts et les mourants.

S

A

T

B

Vc.

Pourtant dedans—pourtant dedans, les morts et les mourants.

S

A

T

B

Vc.

mp Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing. *p* Yet in, yet in, the

mp Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing. *p* Yet in, yet in, the

mp Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing. *p* Yet in, yet in, the

mp Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing. *p* Yet in, yet in, the

mp *p*

S

A

T

B

Vc.

dead and dy - ing. *pp* Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing.

dead and dy - ing. *pp* Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing.

dead and dy - ing. *pp* Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing.

dead and dy - ing. *pp* Yet in, yet in, the dead and dy - ing.

pp