

MOTHER

Seán Doherty
2020

SATB and Piano /
String Orchestra,
and Piano (opt.)

TEXT

Mother

Your love was like moonlight
turning harsh things to beauty,
so that little wry souls
reflecting each other obliquely
as in cracked mirrors...
beheld in your luminous spirit
their own reflection,
transfigured as in a shining stream,
and loved you for what they are not.
You are less an image in my mind
than a luster
I see you in gleams
pale as star-light on a gray wall...
evanescent as the reflection of a white swan
shimmering in broken water.

Lola Ridge (1873–1941)

PROGRAMME NOTE

This is a poem about reflections: the sun's reflection in the moon, a child's reflection in a mirror, a swan's reflection in the water, starlight reflected on a wall. The speaker describes her mother as one who gives an ethereal beauty to a child's image of themselves, not just returning their image but transfiguring and magnifying it. These reflections are imperfect: the mirror is cracked, the water is moving, the wall is grey. It is as if our memory is foggy, our recollections are impressionistic. Though we cannot remember exactly we retain the sensation of a mother's love. I have sought to heighten these many imperfect reflections in this piece, by including many reflections in musical time and space.

Duration: *c.* 6 mins

12

mp *mf*

souls re - flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked mir - rors...

souls re - flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked mir - rors...

souls re - flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked mir - rors...

souls re - flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked mir - rors...

(8)

mp *mf*

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

17

f *mp sub.* *poco rit.*

be - held, be - held, be - held your lu - min - ous spi - rit

be - held, be - held, be - held your lu - min - ous spi - rit

be - held, be - held, be - held your lu - min - ous spi - rit

be - held, be - held be - held your lu - min - ous spi - rit

loco *f sub.* *mp sub.* *poco rit.*

f sub. *mp sub.* *mp sub.* *mp sub.* *mp sub.* *mp sub.* *mp sub.*

♩ = 45

22

mp

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own_ re - flec - tion,

mp

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own_ re - flec - tion,

mp

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own_ re - flec - tion,

mp

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own_ re - flec - tion,

♩ = 45

(8)

p

div. *p*

p

div. *p*

p

p

26

mf

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own re - flec - tion trans -

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own re - flec - tion trans -

mf

their own_ re - flec - tion, their own re - flec - tion trans -

re - flec - tion, their own_ re - flec - tion, their own re - flec - tion trans -

(8)

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

42 *mf*
 i - mage in my mind than a lus - - - - - ter I see you in gleams
 i - mage in my mind than a lus - - - - - ter I see you in gleams
 i - mage in my mind than a lus - - - - - ter I see you in gleams
 i - mage in my mind than a lus - - - - - ter I see you in gleams

(8) *mf*
 Musical accompaniment for the first system, including piano, guitar, and bass parts.

47 *f* *gliss.* *poco rit.*
 pale as star light on a gray wall...
 pale as star light on a gray wall...
 pale as star light on a gray wall...
 pale as star light on a gray wall...

(8) *f* *poco rit.*
 Musical accompaniment for the second system, including piano, guitar, and bass parts.

52 ♩ = 45

p e - van - es - cent as the re - flec - tion *mp* of a white swan

p e - van - es - cent as the re - flec - tion, *mp* as the re - flec - tion of a white swan

p e - van - es - cent as the re - flec - tion, *mp* as the re - flec - tion of a white swan

p e - van - es - cent as the re - flec - tion *mp* of a white swan

♩ = 45

(8)

p *mp*

p *mp* div.

p *mp*

p *mp*

p *mp*

p *mp*

56

mf shim - mer - ing in bro - ken wa - ter, *p* in

mf shim - mer - ing in bro - ken wa - ter, *p* in

mf shim - mer - ing in bro - ken wa - ter, *p* in

mf shim - mer - ing in bro - ken wa - ter, *p* in

(8)

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

60 *pp* rit.

wa - - - - ter, in wa - - - - ter.

wa - - - - ter, in wa - - - - ter.

wa - - - - ter, in wa - - - - ter.

wa - - - - ter, in wa - - - - ter.

(8) *mp* *p* *pp* rit.

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

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

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

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

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