

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

Mother

Lola Ridge

SEÁN DOHERTY (b.1987)

Largo ♩ = 50

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Largo ♩ = 50

Piano (opt.)

pdelicato

5

pespress. *mp* *gliss.* *p*

Your love was like moon - - - light turn-ing

pespress. *mp* *p*

Your love was like moon - - - light turn-ing

pespress. *mp* *p*

Your love was like moon - - - light turn-ing

pespress. *mp* *p*

Your love was like moon - - - light turn-ing

(8)

mp

9 *mf* *p*
 harsh things to beau - ty, so that lit - tle wry_ souls re -

mf *p*
 harsh things to beau - ty, so that lit - tle wry souls re -

mf *p*
 harsh things to beau - ty, so that lit - tle wry_ souls re -

mf *p*
 harsh things to beau - ty, so that lit - tle wry souls re -

(8)

13 *mp* *mf*
 flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked_ mir - rors...

mp *mf*
 flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked_ mir - rors...

mp *mf*
 flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked_ mir - rors...

mp *mf*
 flect ing each o - ther o - blique - ly as in cracked mir - rors...

(8)

17 *f* *mp sub.*
 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
fsub. *mp sub.*
 8

21 *poco rit.* $\text{♩} = 45$ *mp*
 their own_ re - flec-tion, their own_ re-
 their own re - flec-tion,
 their own_ re - flec-tion, their
 their own re - flec-tion,

poco rit. $\text{♩} = 45$ *p*
 (8)

33 *f* *mf* *pp* **Tempo primo**

loved you for what they are not.

loved you for what they are not.

loved you for what they are not.

loved you for what they are not.

(8) *f* *mf* *pdelicato* **Tempo primo**

38 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

You are less than an

You are less than an

You are less than an

You are less than an

(8) *mp*

42 *mf*

i-mage in my mind than a lus - - - ter I

mf

i-mage in my mind than a lus - - - ter I

mf

i-mage in my mind than a lus - - - ter I

mf

i-mage in my mind than a lus - - - ter I

(8)

46 *f* *gliss.*

see you in gleams pale as star - - - light on a

f

see you in gleams pale as star - - - light on a

f

see you in gleams pale as star - - - light on a

f

see you in gleams pale as star - - - light on a

(8)

50 *poco rit.* ♩ = 45 *p*

gray wall... e - van - es - cent as the re -

gray wall... *p* e - van - es - cent as the re - flec - tion,

gray wall... *p* e - van - es - cent as the re - flec - tion,

gray wall... *p* e - van - es - cent as the re -

poco rit. ♩ = 45

(8)

54 *mp*

flec - tion of a white swan shim - mer - ing in bro - - ken -

mp

as the re - flec - tion of a white swan shim - mer - ing in bro - - ken -

mp

as the re - flec - tion of a white swan shim - mer - ing in bro - - ken -

mp

flec - tion of a white swan shim - mer - ing in bro - - ken -

(8)

58 *mf* wa - - - ter, *p* in wa - - - -

mf wa - - - ter, *p* in wa - - - -

mf wa - - - ter, *p* in wa - - - -

mf wa - - - ter, *p* in wa - - - -

(8) *mf* *mp*

61 *pp* -ter, in wa - - - ter. *rit.*

pp -ter, in wa - - - ter.

pp -ter, in wa - - - ter.

pp -ter, in wa - - - ter.

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