

Unbecoming:  
Songs for Dancing  
(2003)

for Chorus and Percussion

Mark Winges

# Unbecoming: Songs for Dancing (2003)

for Robert Geary and the San Francisco Chamber Singers

**Text:** Denise Newman

**Music:** Mark Winges

**Procession:** first nature

For a Time I

A Vision

The Sweet

A Vision Returned

For a Time II

Reflected Steps

Stolen Time

**Recession:** rising as honey light

**Soprano Solo**

**Chorus (SSAATTBB)**

**Percussion I:**

vibraphone

2 log (slit) drums (low / high)

3 wood blocks (low / medium / high)

vibraslap

castanets

small snare drum

bongos

2 cowbells (low / high)

hi-hat

flexatone (shared with percussion II)

rain stick (shared with percussion II)

**Percussion II:**

marimba

crotales

temple blocks

maracas

tambourine

medium suspended cymbal

medium triangle

bowl gong

2 tom-toms (low / high)

floor tom

bass drum

flexatone (shared with percussion I)

rain stick (shared with percussion I)

**Total duration: ca. 34 minutes (including pauses)**

Accidentals apply only to immediate pitches, excepting tied or repeated notes.

Headless notes are to be spoken unvoiced. They must project clearly, regardless of the overall dynamic.

Glissandi must be evenly spaced and should occupy the full duration between the indicated pitches.

Normal (English) words are notated in the Gill Sans font. Purely vocal sounds are notated in a phonetic font using the following symbols:

Phonetic symbol	as in English
ɑ	<b>p<u>a</u>lm</b>
a	<b>l<u>a</u>mb</b>
æ	<b>h<u>a</u>d</b>
e	<b>sp<u>a</u>de</b>
ɛ	<b>s<u>e</u>d</b>
ɜ	<b>bi<u>r</u>d (stressed)</b>
ə	<b>broth<u>e</u>r (unstressed)</b>
i	<b>se<u>e</u>d</b>
ɪ	<b>sl<u>i</u>d</b>
o	<b>fl<u>o</u>at</b>
ɔ	<b>p<u>a</u>w</b>
ʌ	<b>m<u>u</u>d</b>
u	<b>bo<u>o</u>t</b>
eɪ	<b>p<u>a</u>il</b>
aɪ	<b>p<u>i</u>le</b>
ɔɪ	<b>to<u>y</u></b>

Phonetic Symbol	as in English
l	<b>l<u>a</u>w</b>
r	<b>r<u>a</u>w</b>
m	<b>m<u>o</u>ther</b>
n	<b>n<u>o</u></b>
ŋ	<b>s<u>i</u>ng</b>
t	<b>t<u>o</u></b>
p	<b>p<u>a</u>lm</b>
d	<b>d<u>o</u>g</b>
g	<b>g<u>o</u></b>
k	<b>c<u>a</u>t</b>
f	<b>f<u>o</u>r</b>
v	<b>f<u>i</u>ve</b>
θ	<b>b<u>a</u>th</b>
h	<b>h<u>a</u>t</b>
s	<b>s<u>e</u>w</b>
ʃ	<b>s<u>h</u>e</b>
R	(rolled "r") as in German <b>r<u>e</u>in</b>
!	tongue click

## Procession: first nature

first nature, not idle, natal  
made in death's shade  
she rises arms raised  
rises out of her sleeping mother  
bone of her bone  
skin of her skin  
rises over the horizon  
and away

## For a Time I

(two stanzas sung simultaneously)

for a time  
it is made  
light  
golden  
opening  
for a time  
on the make  
honeying  
over  
unspoken

biting what comes to them as the rivulet enters the river  
the one is more powerful  
going forward she lets herself be bitten  
naturally in shade shy lips of the fern unfurling  
tip to tip, so long as  
bit by bit, unless—

## A Vision

(no text)

## The Sweet

so suckles the sweet with longing  
honeyman comes mouthing lips aglow  
ever so fleshly for a time the snap dragon is its snap  
opening sky of day rolling over pillows  
and pillows of petals sweet brides collapsing

at last at rest for a time fields opening seeds floating  
he comes dressed in grass  
the old habit of wanting: what's in it for me?  
mown down in good moaning  
happy as honey

## **A Vision Returned**

(no text)

### **For a Time II**

(two stanzas sung simultaneously)

for a time  
swollen sacks  
stuck  
in traffic  
will  
crack  
for a time  
at bottom  
rotting  
trapped

too sweet it snaps off makes three  
all longing to fall beneath the trees  
suckling the nubs the body's a thief  
for a time on tipsiest toes there they go  
off to make a living stuck in amber  
for a time each to his own  
come garbage day

### **Stolen Time**

watched from above by a stone  
stolen time what was once a deal  
now dear such counting causing  
numbers to run out

before I die, am done  
unbecome me in bits  
wild bird grass wisps  
a weedy ride a feeding frenzy  
sing or sink  
stuck at this brink  
broke rhythm  
sunk

### **Recession: rising as honey light**

bone of her bone  
skin of her skin  
rising as honey light  
over amber backs  
slumped  
in death's shade  
she rises  
out of their broken bodies  
black eyes of night  
following

# Unbecoming: Songs for Dancing

for Robert Geary and the San Francisco Chamber Singers

Denise Newman

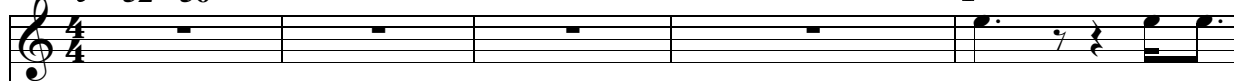
Mark Wings

**sparse, deliberate, 1. Procession: first nature\***

$\text{♩} = 52 - 56$

*p*


Soprano Solo



first na - ture

enter imperceptibly, 1 by 1;  
stagger breathing where necessary *p*

Soprano



Soprano

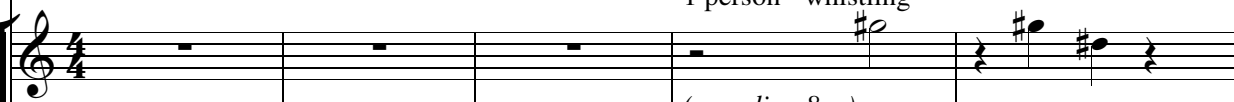


1 person - whistling

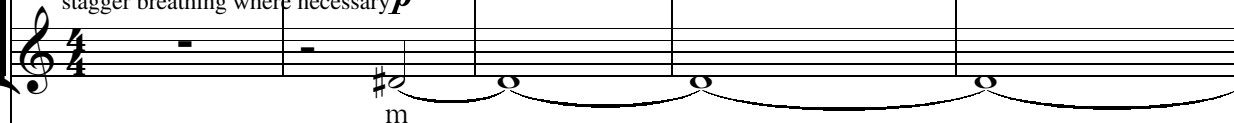
(sounding 8va)

other altos: enter imperceptibly, 1 by 1;  
stagger breathing where necessary *p*

Alto

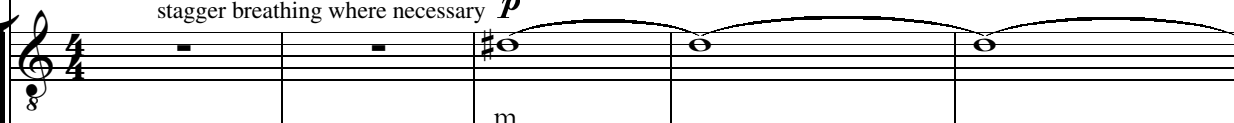


Alto



enter imperceptibly, 1 by 1;  
stagger breathing where necessary *p*

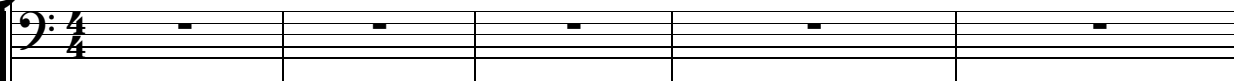
Tenor



Tenor



Bass



Bass




\*if possible, the chorus should be placed as follows: soprano solo on stage; sopranos, altos and tenors divided along two side aisles, or in the rear of the hall; basses divided offstage right and left.

**sparse, deliberate,**

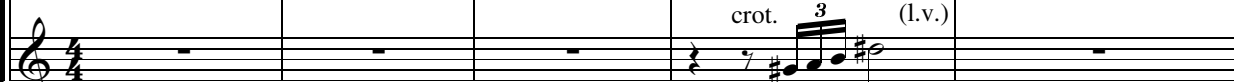
$\text{♩} = 52 - 56$

vib. - motor slow

Percussion 1



Percussion 2



accidentals apply only to immediate pitches, excepting tied or repeated notes

6

Sop. Solo

not i - dle na - tal n

Sop.

Sop.

Alto

Alto

Ten.

Bass

whispered

made in death s made in death s

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a choir and percussion ensemble. It consists of seven staves. The Soprano Solo part (top) has lyrics 'not i - dle na - tal n'. The Soprano and Alto parts have long, sustained notes. The Tenor part has long, sustained notes. The Bass part has lyrics 'whispered' and 'made in death s made in death s'. The Percussion 1 part has a few notes. The Percussion 2 part has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure.

10 *mp*

Sop. Solo

a n

*pp* sing this pattern 3 times\*

Sop.

she ri - ses arms raised

*pp* sing this pattern 3 times\*

Alto

she ri - ses arms raised

*pp* sing this pattern 3 times\*

Ten.

she ri - ses arms raised

*mp*

Bass

shade a

\*slightly faster than 52 - 56. Repeat phrase as indicated, then continue immediately.  
Do not coordinate, either within a section or between voice parts.

Perc. I

log dr. (soft mallet)

Perc. 2

rain stick