

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD



ERIC SHANFIELD

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poems by Patricia Lockwood

for Pat Swoboda and Eliza Bagg

Soprano

Bass

⇒ Each song is preceded by a brief spoken phrase by the soprano. The bass should begin playing immediately thereafter without pause.

⇒ Between the first and second songs the bass retunes II from D down one half-step to C#. This should be done as quickly and unobtrusively as possible.

The Ten-Year-Old-World sets two poems by Patricia Lockwood, a young poet best known for her astonishing *Rape Joke*. However setting that famous work seemed both impossible and foolhardy, so instead I chose to set two contrasting texts: *He Marries the Stuffed-Owl Exhibit* is a brutally sad lyric clothed in tattered wonder, while its companion *When the World Was Ten Years Old* wears its wonder more lightly, though looking forward toward a darkness mirrored in the instrumentation of soprano and contrabass. *The Ten-Year-Old World* was composed in 2014, rewritten in 2016, and is dedicated to Pat Swoboda and Eliza Bagg.

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD
poems by Patricia Lockwood

He Marries the Stuffed-Owl Exhibit

At the Indiana Welcome Center

He marries her mites and the wires in her wings,
he marries her yellow glass eyes and black centers,
he marries her near-total head turn, he marries
 the curve of each of her claws, he marries
the information plaque, he marries the extinction
 of this kind of owl, he marries the owl
that she loved in life and the last thought of him
in the thick of her mind
 just one inch away from the bullet, there
 he marries the moths
who makes holes in the owl, who have eaten the owl
almost all away, he marries the branch of the tree
that she grips, he marries the real-looking moss
and dead leaves, he marries the smell of must
that surrounds her, he marries the strong blue
 stares of children, he marries nasty smudges
of their noses on the glass, he marries the camera
that points at the owl to make sure no one steals her,
so the camera won't object when he breaks the glass
while reciting some vows that he wrote himself,
he screams OWL instead of I'LL and then ALWAYS
LOVE HER, he screams HAVE AND TO HOLD
and takes hold of the owl and wrenches the owl
away from her branch
 and he covers her in kisses and the owl
thinks, "More moths," and at the final hungry kiss,
"That must have been the last big bite, there is no more
of me left to eat and thank God," when he marries
the stuffing out of the owl and hoots as the owl flies out
under his arm, they elope into the darkness of Indiana,
Indiana he screams is their new life and WELCOME.
They live in a tree together now, and the children of
Welcome to Indiana say who even more than usual,
and the children of Welcome to Indiana they wonder
where they belong. Not in Indiana, they say to themselves,
the state of all-consuming love, we cannot belong in Indiana,
 as night falls and the moths appear one by one, hungry.

When the World Was Ten Years Old

He Fell in Love with Egypt

Just as he fell in love with the dinosaurs,
just as he would fall in love with the moon—
no women in the world yet, he was only ten
years old. A ten-year-old is made of time,
the world had forever to learn about Egypt.
He entered encyclopedias and looted every
fact of them and when he had finished looting
there he broke into the Bible. He snuck
into his mother's room and drew thick lines
around his eyes and those were the borders
of Egypt. He carefully wrote in stiff small
birds, he carefully wrote in coiled snakes,
he carefully wrote in flatfooted humans.
The ten-year-old world needed so much
privacy, he learned to draw the door-bolt
glyph and learned to make the sound
it made. I am an old white British man,
decided the ten-year-old world, I wear a round
lens on my right eye, the Night. When the sun shone
on him it shone on Egypt, all the dark for a while
was the dark in the Pyramids, the left lung
of his body was the shape of Africa
and one single square breath in it Egypt.
They never found all the tombs, he *knew*. Anyone
might be buried in Egypt, thought the ten-year-old
world in love with it, I will send my wind down
into my valley, and my wind will uncover the doors
to the tombs, and I will go down myself inside them,
and shine light on all the faces, and light on the rooms
full of gold, and light on even the littlest pets, on the mice
and the beetles of the ten-year-old kings, and shine light
on even their littlest names.

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD

1. HE MARRIES THE STUFFED-OWL EXHIBIT

Patricia Lockwood

Eric Shanfield

Spoken: "At the Indiana Welcome Center" ♩=138

Soprano

Contrabass

f

He mar-ries her

5

mites and the wi-res in her wings, he mar-ries her yel-low glass. eyes.

10

and black cen - ters, he mar-ries her near - to - tal head turn,

15

he mar-ries the curve of each of her claws, ———

20

he mar-ries the in - for - ma - tion

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 1. HE MARRIES THE STUFFED-OWL EXHIBIT

2

25

plaque, he mar-ries the ex-tinc-tion of this kind of

30

ow - l, he mar-ries the ow-l that she loved in life, and the last thought of

35

him in the thick of her mind just one inch a - way from the bul-let,

41

pizz.
mf

there he mar-ries the moths that make holes in the ow - l,

47

who have eat-en the owl al - most all a - way, he mar-ries the

arco
+

52

branch of the tree_ that she grips, _____ he mar-ries the real - look - ing

57

moss and dead leaves, _____ he mar-ries the smell of must that sur

64

rounds her, _____ he mar-ries the strong blue stares of chil - dren, _____ he mar-ries

71

nas - ty smud-ges of their no-ses on the glass, _____

76

he mar-ries the ca - mera that points to the owl _____ to

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 1. HE MARRIES THE STUFFED-OWL EXHIBIT

4

81 3x

make sure no_ one steals_ her, so the

86

ca - mera won't ob - ject when he breaks the glass,

92

while re-ci-ting some vows that he wrote him - self, he screams

ff

pizz.

ff p sub.

98

OWL in-stead of I'LL and then AL-WAYS LOVE HER, he screams HAVE AND TO

ff

103

HOLD he screams HAVE AND TO HOLD he screams HOLD and takes hold of the ow - l and

p sub.

109 *rit.* *p* *a tempo* ♩=138

wren - ches the ow - l a - way from her branch

p *p* arco sul pont.

115 *p*

and he co-vers her in kiss-es and the

120 *mp* *mf*

ow - l thinks, "More moths," and at the fi - nal hun - gry

mp *mf* norm.

125

kiss, "that must have been the last big bite,

130 *f*

there is no more of me left to

f

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 1. HE MARRIES THE STUFFED-OWL EXHIBIT

6

135

eat and thank God," when he mar - ries the stuff - ing out of the

140

ow - l and hoots as the ow - l flies out un - der his arm, they e-lope

pizz. *mf*

145

in - to the dark - ness of In - di a - na, In - di - a - na he screams is their

f

152

new life and WEL - COME. They live in a tree to -

p *f* *p sub.* *ff*

157

ge - ther now, and the chil - dren of Wel - come to In - di a - na say

163 *f* *mf*

who e - ven more than us - ual, and the chil - dren of Wel - come to In - di -

mf *mf*

168 *mp*

a - na they won - der where they be - long. Not in In - di - a - na,

mp

173 *p*

they say to them-selves, the state of all - con - sum - ing love,

mf *p*

arco

rubato
179 *p mezzo voce* **in tempo** *mp*

we can - not be - long in In - di - a - na, as night falls

mp

pizz.

185 *p*

and the moths ap - pear one by one, hung - ry.

p

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD

2. WHEN THE WORLD WAS TEN YEARS OLD

Patricia Lockwood

Eric Shanfield

Spoken: "He Fell in Love with Egypt" ♩=96

Soprano

Contrabass

Tuning:

arco 6 6 6 6

3

5

8

11

f *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

Just as he

fell in love with the di - no - saurs, -

just as he would fall in love with the moon.

14

no wo - men in the world yet, he was on - ly ten years

17

old.

20

A ten-year-old is made of time, the world had for-ev - er

23

to learn a-bout E - gypt.

27

He en-tered en - cy - clo - pe - di-as and loot - ed ev - ery fact of them.

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 2. WHEN THE WORLD WAS TEN YEARS OLD

10

30

and when he had fin-ished loot-ing there he broke in-to_ the Bi-ble.

33

ff

35

mf He snuck in - to his mo - ther's room.

sul pont.

37

and drew thick lines a - round his eyes. and

39

those were the bor - ders of

41

E - - - gypt.

norm. *mp*

43

mp

He care - ful - ly wrote in stiff small

45

birds,

47

he care - ful - ly wrote in coi - led snakes,

49

mf

he care - ful - ly wrote in flat - foot - ed

mf

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 2. WHEN THE WORLD WAS TEN YEARS OLD

12

51

hu - mans...

f

53

mf

The ten - year-old world need - ed so much

56

pri - va-cy, he learned to draw the door - bolt glyph and

59

learned to make the sound it made...

f

63

f

I am an old white Brit - ish man,

67

de - cid - ed the ten - year - old world,

70

(no accents) pizz.

ff *mp*

75

I wear a round lens on my right eye, the Night...

p

80

When the sun shone on him it shone on E - - - gypt...

mf *mp*

85

all the dark for a while was the dark in the Pyr - a - mids,

pp

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 2. WHEN THE WORLD WAS TEN YEARS OLD

14

89

the left_ lung of his bo-dy was the shape of Af-ri-ca_

93

They ne - ver found all the tombs, he knew.

96

A - ny - one might be bu - ried in

99

E - gypt. thought the ten - year - old world in love with it,

102

I will send my wind down

105

in - to my val - ley, and my

p

108

wind will un - co - ver the doors to the tombs,

pp

111

pp sotto voce al fine, with a sense of awe

and I will go down my self in - side them,

flaut.

pp

114

and shine light on all the fa - ces,

pp

117

and light on the rooms full of

pp

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD WORLD - 2. WHEN THE WORLD WAS TEN YEARS OLD

16

120

gold, and light on ev-en the lit-tl-est

3 3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 120, 121, and 122. The vocal line starts with a whole rest in measure 120, followed by a half note 'and' in 121 and a half note 'light' in 122. In measure 123, there is a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note 'on' in 124, and a triplet of eighth notes 'ev-en' in 125, a quarter note 'the' in 126, a triplet of eighth notes 'lit-tl-' in 127, and a quarter note 'est' in 128. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand.

123

pets, on the mice and the beet-les of the ten-year-old

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 123, 124, and 125. The vocal line has a whole rest in measure 123, followed by a quarter note 'on' in 124, a quarter note 'the' in 125, a quarter note 'mice' in 126, a quarter note 'and' in 127, a quarter note 'the' in 128, a quarter note 'beet-' in 129, a quarter note 'les' in 130, a quarter note 'of' in 131, a quarter note 'the' in 132, a quarter note 'ten-' in 133, a quarter note 'year-' in 134, and a quarter note 'old' in 135. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern.

126

kings, and shine light on

Detailed description: This system contains measures 126, 127, and 128. The vocal line has a half note 'kings,' in measure 126, a whole rest in 127, and a half note 'and shine light on' in 128. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern.

129

ev-en their lit-tl-est names.

3 3

norm.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 129, 130, and 131. The vocal line has a quarter note 'ev-' in 129, a quarter note 'en' in 130, a quarter note 'their' in 131, a quarter note 'lit-' in 132, a quarter note 'tl-' in 133, and a quarter note 'est' in 134. In measure 135, there is a whole rest. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. A 'norm.' marking is placed above the piano line in measure 131.

132

rit.

pizz.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 132, 133, 134, and 135. The vocal line has whole rests in measures 132, 133, and 134. In measure 135, there is a whole rest. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. A 'rit.' marking is placed above the piano line in measure 132, and a 'pizz.' marking is placed above the piano line in measure 135.