

# EMBRYODEL

## ERIC SHANFIELD



## EMBRYODEL

Eric Shanfield | 2008 | 14'

poem by Dean Young

Mezzo-soprano

Oboe

B♭ Clarinet

2 Violins

The instruments should be arranged on stage thus: VLN. 1 – OBOE – SOP. – CLAR. – VLN. 2

Score in C.

All grace notes to be played before the beat.

Glissandos last the length of the note as written.

Although it is the composer's preference that Embryodel be performed in its entirety, *Dear Friend* may be performed separately.

The title of the book by the poet Dean Young is *Embryoyo*. Setting three of its poems to music, I couldn't resist my own little portmanteau.

This piece takes my approach of setting vocal melodies against unison accompanying lines to its natural conclusion: one continuous non-repeating line. I wanted to go as far as I could in this direction before retreating or finding some other way forward, so each of its three movements does a different thing with this approach. The first movement, *An Excitement of Windows*, gradually unravels one long continuously unfolding melody, while in the second movement, *Bronzed*, that single line splits in two, the vocal melody moving against one repeating cell that gathers changing harmonies until it eventually merges again with the voice. The big final movement, *Dear Friend*, is longer and more elaborate than the first two combined. Unison vocal lines alternate with instrumental interludes until they finally break free into a limited polyphony, before returning inexorably again by different paths to the beginning.

EMBRYODEL | Poems by Dean Young

*1. An Excitement of Windows*

It's fun to break stuff.  
I broke a Plymouth once although  
that was not as satisfying  
as breaking a refrigerator shelf  
which set off a cataclysm  
then a profound stillness  
whereas the car produced a raspy  
whirl then a leaky resignation.  
The stillness after something breaks,  
after it falls to fortress pieces,  
spills its metropolitan innards,  
knocks over other things which may then  
get in their own breaking mood, perhaps  
burning an acre or two, may be  
the empirical correspondent  
to the realization and acceptance  
of death. Just once,  
I'd like to take a hammer to a diamond  
and see. Ka-ching, wine glass hits  
the stone, advantageously,  
in regards to metaphor formation,  
full of red wine.  
Plink, the little thingie snaps off  
incapacitating the nuclear power plant.  
Friendship broken like a paper clip  
bent back and forth: expectation, dis-  
appointment, expectation, disappointment.  
An attractive aspect of human composting  
is after the body's frozen in liquid nitrogen,  
it's shattered with a supersonic beam  
into pieces small enough for worms to break  
and a tree on top each year repeats  
mythologically your death  
by losing its leaves,  
a kind of breakdown for the tree.  
There must be a point where a broken thing  
can be broken no more.  
Probably, we need protection from each other.  
In the distance, a cloud of dust.

*2. Bronzed*

That dusty bubble gum, once ubiquitous as starlings,  
is no more, my love. Whistling dinosaurs now populate  
only animation studios, the furious actions of angels  
causing their breasts to flop out in mannerist  
frescos flake away as sleet holds us in its teeth.  
And the bus station's old urinals go under  
the grindstone and the youthful spelunkers  
graduate into the wrinkle-causing sun. The sea  
seemingly a constant to the naked eye is one  
long goodbye, perpetually the tide recedes,  
beaches dotted with debris. Unto each is given  
a finite number of addresses, ditties to dart  
the heart to its moments of sorrow and swoon.  
The sword's hilt glints, the daffodils bow down,  
all is temporary as a perfect haircut, a kitten  
in the lap, yet sitting here with you, my darling,  
waiting for a tuna melt and a side of slaw  
seems all eternity I'll ever need  
and all eternity needs of me.

*3. Dear Friend*

What will be served for our reception  
in the devastation? Finger food, of course  
and white wine, something printed on the napkins.

We were not children together  
but we are now. Every bird knows  
only two notes constantly rearranged.

That's called forever so we wear pajamas  
to the practice funeral, buckeroos  
to the end. We make paper hats  
of headlines and float them away.

My home made of smoke,  
tiny spider made of punctuation,  
my favorite poem is cinder  
scratched into a sidewalk.

My friend's becoming the simplest man,  
he sees a lesson in everything,  
in missing his train,  
in his son hollering from the first branch,  
Dad, guess where I am.

I was with him for my first magpies,  
governmental and acting like hell.  
And the new nickel  
with Washington hard to recognize.

We'd driven by a Rabbit flattened  
by an upset truck, jars of Miracle Whip  
broken over the toll road in heavy snow.

We watched an old lady  
eat a hot dog in a bun  
with a knife and fork.

A few emeralds winged off  
a fruit leaf.

What happens when your head splits open  
and the bird flies out, its two notes deranged?

You got better, I got better,  
wildflowers rimmed the crater,  
glitter glitter glitter.

We knew someone whose father died  
then we knew ourselves.  
Astronomer, gladiator,  
thief, a tombstone salesman.

All our vacations went to the sea  
that breathed two times a day  
without a machine.  
We got in trouble with a raft  
doing what we promised not to.

Further out to be brought further back.

There's my friend in his squashed hat  
trying to determine if a dot  
is a living thing and do no harm.

He's having trouble remembering street names  
but there's still plenty of Thoreau.

All that a human is made of is gold,  
very very little gold.

# EMBRYODEL

## 1. AN EXCITEMENT OF WINDOWS

Dean Young

Eric Shanfield

J=144

Oboe

Clarinet in B<sub>b</sub>

Mezzo-soprano

Violin 1

Violin 2

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

It's fun to break stuff.

It's fun to break stuff.

8

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
I broke a Plymouth once although that was not as satisfying as breaking a re-fri-ger-

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

I broke a Ply-mouth once al-though that was not as sa - tis - fy - ing as break - ing a re - fri - ger -

a - tor shelf

which set off a ca - ta - cly - sm then a pro-found still-ness

## EMBRYODEL - 1. AN EXCITEMENT OF WINDOWS

2

**24**

**25**

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

where - as the car pro-duced a ras-py whirl then a leak - y re-sig - na-tion.

**32**

**35**

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

The still - ness... af - ter some-thing breaks,  
pizz.

**39**

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

af - ter it falls to for - tress pie - ces, spills its me - tro - po - li - tan in - nards, knocks o - ver

46 47

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

o - ther things which may then get in their own break - ing mood,

arco  
mp

52 53

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

per - haps burn-ing an a - cre or two, may be the em - pi - ri - cal cor - re - spon-dent to the

58 62

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

re - a - li - za - tion and ac - cep-tance of death. Just once I'd like to take a ham - mer to a

mp

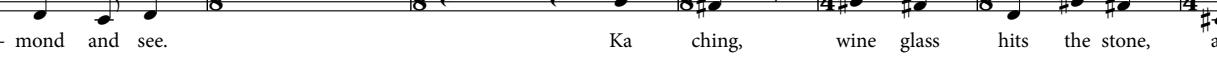
64

Ob. 

Cl. 

M-S. 

Vln. 1 

Vln. 2 

71

74

Ob.

Cl.

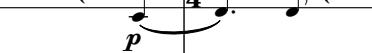
M-S.  
ta - geous - ly,  
in re - gards to me - ta-phor for  
ma - tion,

Vln. 1

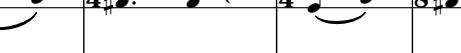
Vln. 2  
(pizz.)

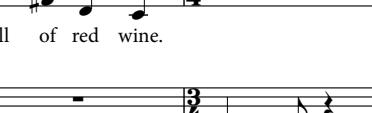
79

**80**

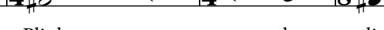
Ob. 

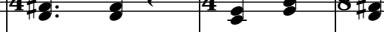
Cl. 

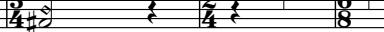
M-S.   
full of red wine.

Vln. 1 

Vln. 2 

Plink, the lit - tle 

arco 

**p** 

## EMBRYODEL - 1. AN EXCITEMENT OF WINDOWS

5

87

93

Ob. Cl. M-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2

*p*

thing-ie snaps off in - ca - pa - ci - ta - ting the nu - cle - ar pow - er plant.

*mp*

*mp*

95

101

Ob. Cl. M-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2

*mf*

Friend-ship bro - ken like a pa - per clip bent back and forth: ex - pec - ta - tion,

*mp*

*mp*

III

*mp*

102

108

Ob. Cl. M-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*f*

dis - ap-point - ment, ex - pec - ta - tion, dis - ap - point - ment. An at - trac - tive as - pect of

I

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

## EMBRYODEL - 1. AN EXCITEMENT OF WINDOWS

6

110

hu - man com - post - ing is af - ter the bo - dy's fro - zen in li - quid ni - tro - gen, it's shat - tered with a

116

120

su - pra - so - nic beam in - to pie - ces small e - nough for worms to break and a tree on top each year re - peats

122

125

myth - o - lo - gic - ally your death by lo - sing its leaves, a kind of break down

129

**130**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
for the tree. There must be a point where a

Vln. 1

Vln. 2  
*p* *f*

136

**139**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
bro-ken thing can be bro-ken no more. Pro - ba - bly we

Vln. 1

Vln. 2  
*p* *mf*

143

**146**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
need pro - tec - tion from each o - ther. In the dis - tance, a cloud of dust.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2  
*p* *p*

# EMBRYODEL

## 2. BRONZED

Dean Young

Eric Shanfield

*p*

Oboe

Clarinet in B♭

Mezzo-soprano

Violin 1

Violin 2

*con sord.*

*sim.*

*p.*

That dus - ty bub-ble-gum, once u - bi - qui-tous\_ as

9

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

star - lings, is no more, my love. Whist - ling di - no-saurs now po - pu-late\_ on-ly a - ni-ma - tion

12

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

stu - di - os,\_ the fu - ri - ous ac - tions of an - gels caus-ing their breasts to flop\_ out in man-ner-ist\_ fres - cos\_

sul pont.

IV

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

*mp*

*sim.*

*mp*

*3*

## EMBRYODEL - 2. BRONZED

9

17

Ob. Cl. M-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2

*sim.* *mf* *mf* *mf*

flake a - way\_ as sleet holds us in its teeth. And the bus\_ sta-tion's old u - ri - nals\_ go

19 22

Ob. Cl. M-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2

*f* *f* *f*

un-der the grind-stone and the youth-ful spe-lunk-ers gra - du - ate in - to the wri-nkle caus-ing sun.. The sea  
*norm.*  
*s'va*

23

Ob. Cl. M-S. Vln. 1 Vln. 2

*sim.*

seem-ing-ly a con-stant to the na - ked eye is one long good-bye, per -  
(8)

## EMBRYODEL - 2. BRONZED

10

27

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

pe - tual - ly the tide re - cedes, beach - es dot - ted with de - bris.  
(8)

31

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Un - to each is gi - ven a fi - nite num - ber of ad - dress - es, di - ties to dart the heart to its mo - ment of sor - row and swoon.  
(8)

*mp*

35

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

The sword's hilt glints, the daf - fo - dils bow down,  
*mf*

39

**42**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
all is tem - po - ra - ry as a per - fect hair - cut, a kit - ten in the lap, yet

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

43

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
sit - ting here\_ with you,\_ my dar ling, wait-ing for a tu - na melt and a side of slaw

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**47**

Ob. *f* *warm*

Cl. *f* *warm*

M-S.  
seems all e - ter - ni - ty I'll e - ver need and all e - ter - ni - ty needs of me.

Vln. 1 *f* *warm* pizz. via sord.

Vln. 2 *f* *warm*

# EMBRYODEL

## 3. DEAR FRIEND

Dean Young

Eric Shanfield

*f*

6

Oboe

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Mezzo-soprano

Violin 1

Violin 2

*f*

What will be served at our re-ccep - tion in the de - va - sta - tion? Fin - ger food, of course

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

and white wine, some-thing print-ed on the nap-kins.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

*sim.*

*f*

14

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

21

26

**28**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**42**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

We were not

**43**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

chil-dren to - ge - ther      but we are now.      Ev - ery bird knows on - ly two notes      con-stant-ly      re - ar-ranged.

## EMBRYODEL - 3. DEAR FRIEND

**51**

Ob. *p sub.*  
Cl. *p*

M-S.

Vln. 1  
*I\**  
*s'va*

Vln. 2  
*p \*harmonic gliss from below*  
*III\**

*p*

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1  
*(8)*  
*IV\**

Vln. 2  
*III\**

**59**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
That's called for - e - ver so we wear pa - ja - mas to the prac - tice

Vln. 1  
*(8)*

Vln. 2

64

Ob. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

M-S. fu - ner - al, buck - er - oos to the end.

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

70

pizz. *mf*

pizz. *mf*

72

Ob.

Cl.

M-S. *mf* We make pa - per hats of head-lines and float them a - way.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

78

arco

arco

81

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

87

89

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2

95

My home made of smoke,

97

Ob.

Cl. *mf*

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

99

ti - ny spi - der made of punc - tu - a - tion, my fa-vorite poem is cin - der scratched in - to a side-walk.

102

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

M-S.

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

**110**

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

**118**

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

My friend's be com-ing the sim - plest man, he sees a les - son in e - very-thing, in

**123**

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

mis-sing his train, in his son hol - ler - ing from the first branch, Dad, guess where I am.

**130**

Ob.

Cl. *mf*

M-S.

Vln. 1 *mf sub.*

Vln. 2

**136**

5 8 5 8 *mp*

**138**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2

**144**

3 8 5 8 2 8 5 8 *mf*

I was with him for my first mag - pies, gov - ern -

5 8 2 8 5 8 *mf*

**147**

Ob.

Cl. *f*

M-S.

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2

**151**

7 8 5 8 4 6 8 4 6 8

men - tal and act - ing like hell. And the new nick - el with

7 8 5 8 4 6 8 4 6 8 *f*

154

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Wash-ing-ton hard to re-cog-nize.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

156

*ff*

*ff*

159

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

We'd dri-ven\_ by a Rab - bit flat-tened by an up - set truck,

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

160

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

*f*

165

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

jars of Mi - ra - cle Whip bro - ken o - ver the toll road in hea - vy snow.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

*mf*

*mf*

## EMBRYODEL - 3. DEAR FRIEND

**171**

Ob. *f*  
Cl. *ff*  
M-S.  
Vln. 1 *f*  
Vln. 2 *ff*

**175**

Ob. *f*  
Cl. *ff*  
M-S.  
Vln. 1 *f*  
Vln. 2 *ff*

**179**

Ob. *mf*  
Cl. *mf*  
M-S. We watched an old  
Vln. 1 *mf*  
Vln. 2 *mf*

183

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
la - dy \_\_\_\_\_ eat a hot - dog in a bun

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

188

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
with a knife\_ and fork.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

III      *p*

193

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
A few em - eralds winged off a fruit leaf. What

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

*p*

**198**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.  
hap - pens when your head splits o - pen and the bird flies out, its two notes de - ranged?

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**204**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**208**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**212**

Ob. *p*

Cl. *p*

M-S.

You got bet - ter, I got bet - ter, wi - ld flow - ers rimmed the cra - ter,

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

**218**

**222**

Ob. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

M-S.

glit - ter glit - ter glit - ter

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

**mf**

**mf**

**223**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

*f*

*f*

*f*

## EMBRYODEL - 3. DEAR FRIEND

**228**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S. *f*

We knew some-one whose fa - ther died then we knew our-selves. A - stro-no-mer, gla - di - a -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**233**

**234**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

tor, thief, a tomb-stone sales-man.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**236**

*mp sub.*

*mp sub.*

*mp sub.*

*mp sub.*

**244**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

All our va - ca-tions went to the sea that breathed

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**248**

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

251

Ob.

Cl.

M-S. two times a day with-out a ma - chine. We got in trou - ble with a raft do-ing what we

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

258

262

Ob.

Cl.

M-S. pro - mised not to.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

266

270

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

## EMBRYODEL - 3. DEAR FRIEND

278

Ob. 

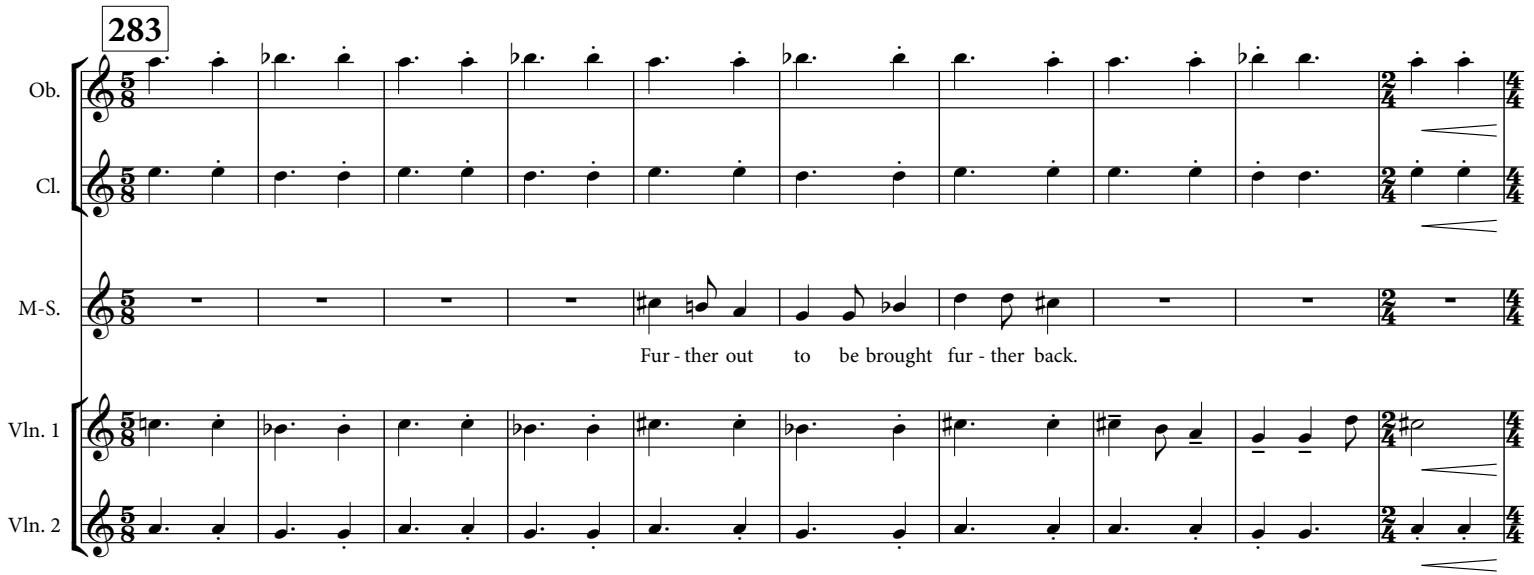
Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

283

Ob. 

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Fur-ther out to be brought fur-ther back.

Ob. 

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**300**

Ob. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *f* *f* *f*

Cl. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *f* *f*

M-S. *f* *f* *f* *f*

Vln. 1 *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *f* *f*

Vln. 2 *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *f* *f*

**307**

**310**

Ob. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *mp*

Cl. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *mp*

M-S. *f* *f* *f* *f* *mp* There's my friend in his squashed hat trying to de -

Vln. 1 *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *mp*

Vln. 2 *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *mp*

**314**

**315**

Ob. *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

Cl. *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

M-S. *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* ter - mine if if a dot is a li - ving thing and do no harm.

Vln. 1 *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

Vln. 2 *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

## EMBRYODEL - 3. DEAR FRIEND

**321**

Ob. *mp ff* *mp ff* *pp* *mp ff* *mp ff*

Cl. *p ff* *p ff* *pp* *p ff* *p ff*

M-S. - - - - -

Vln. 1 *mf ff* *mf ff* *pp* *mf ff* *mf ff*

Vln. 2 *f<ff* *f<ff* *pp* *f<ff* *f<ff*

**327**

Ob. *f sub.* *mp* *ff* *ff* *f sub.*

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

M-S.

Vln. 1 *pizz.* *f sub.* *mf* *mf* *f sub.* *arco*

Vln. 2 *pizz.* *f sub.* *f* *f* *f sub.*

333

Ob.  $p \xrightarrow{5} f$   $f \xrightarrow{5} p$   $p \xrightarrow{5} f$   $\frac{3}{8} \frac{5}{8}$   $mf < ff$   $mf$

Cl.  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $f < ff$   $f < ff$

M-S.  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Vln. 1  $p \xrightarrow{f} f$   $p \xrightarrow{sub-f} ff$   $p \xrightarrow{ff} ff$

Vln. 2  $p \xrightarrow{f} f$   $p \xrightarrow{mp} ff$   $mp \xrightarrow{ff} ff$

338

**340**

Ob. *f sub.*

Cl. *f sub.* *mf*

M-S.

Vln. 1 *f sub.* *mf*

Vln. 2 *f sub.* *mf*

343

**344**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

He's ha-ving trou - ble re - mem - ber - ing street names but there's still plen - ty of Tho - reau.

**348**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

*fp*

*f*

*fp*

*fp*

## EMBRYODEL - 3. DEAR FRIEND

**353**

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

M-S.

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *sim.*

**360**

**361**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**367**

**369**

Ob.

Cl.

M-S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

**375**

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

378

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

387

391

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

All that a hu - man

393

395

molto rit.

Ob.  
Cl.  
M-S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2

is made of is gold, ve - ry ve - ry lit - tle gold.

con sord.

(mf)