

BODY THROUGH WHICH  
THE DREAM FLOWS



ERIC SHANFIELD



# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

Eric Shanfield

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poems by Robert Hass

Soprano

Vibraphone

Pauses between movements should be as brief as possible.

I first became aware of Robert Hass's poetry through John Adams's *Violin Concerto*, whose second movement bears the same title as this work. Although his piece is strictly instrumental and non-programmatic, he had been inspired by the poetry, which led me to seek out first this poem and then to explore Hass's oeuvre more thoroughly. Nevertheless, it was "Cuttings" I returned to in the end, with its eponymous first section.

I have set "Cuttings" nearly in its entirety, omitting only the final section, as I felt "So" made a more natural conclusion. There is neither any overarching structural form nor complex processes underlying any of the songs; I have simply set the poem in a straightforward manner, each song taking its form from the text. As in earlier song cycles I sought to simplify my musical language, accompanying the vocal line with brief, unadorned melodic and harmonic phrases, allowing the singer to convey my interpretation of the narrative.

Originally composed in 2010-2011 for soprano and two cellos, I made this final, definitive version for soprano and vibraphone in 2014. *Body Through Which the Dream Flows* comprises nine brief songs and lasts about ten minutes.

## **CUTTINGS**

by Robert Hass

### **Body Through Which the Dream Flows**

You count up everything you have  
or have let go.  
What's left is the lost and the possible.  
To the lost, the irretrievable  
or just out of reach, you say:  
light loved the pier, the seedy  
string quartet of the sun going down over water  
that gilds ants and beach fleas  
ecstatic and communal on the stiffened body  
of a dead grebe washed ashore  
by last night's storm. Idiot sorrow,  
an irregular splendor, is the half sister  
of these considerations.  
To the possible you say nothing.  
October on the planet.  
Huge moon, bright stars.

### **The Lovers Undressing**

They put on rising, and they rose.  
They put on falling, and they fell.  
They were the long grass on the hillside  
that shudders in the wind. They sleep.  
Days, kitchens. Cut flowers,  
shed petals, smell of lemon, smell of toast  
or soap. Are you upset about something,  
one says. No, the other says.  
Are you sure, the one says.  
Yes, the other says, I'm sure.

### **Sad**

Often we are sad animals.  
Bored dogs, monkeys getting rained on.

### **Migration**

A small brown wren in the tangle  
of the climbing rose. April:  
last rain, the first dazzle  
and reluctance of the light.

### **Dark**

Desire lies down with the day  
and the night birds wake

to their fast heartbeats  
in the trees. The woman beside you  
is breathing evenly. All day  
you were in a body. Now  
you are in a skull. Wind,  
streetlights, trees flicker  
on the ceiling in the dark.

### **Things Change**

Small song,  
two beat:  
the robin on the lawn  
hops from sun  
into shadow, shadow  
into sun.

### **Stories in Bed**

In the field behind her house, she said,  
fennel grew high and green  
in early summer, and the air  
smelled like little anise-scented loaves  
in the Italian restaurants her father  
used to take them to on Sunday nights.  
She had to sit up straight:  
it was the idea of family  
they failed at. She lights a cigarette,  
remembering how the taut veins  
in her mother's neck, how she had studied them,  
repelled. He has begun to drowse:  
backyards, her voice, dusty fennel,  
the festering sweetness of the plums.

### **Monday Morning, Late Summer**

On the fence  
in the sunlight,  
beach towels.

No wind.

The apricots have ripened  
and been picked.  
The blackberries have ripened  
and been picked.

### **So**

They walked along the dry gully.  
Cottonwoods, so the river must be underground.

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 1. BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

$\text{♩} = 100$

Soprano

Vibraphone

*f* *p* *f*

4

Sop. *f*

You count up ev - very - thing\_ you have

Vib. *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

7

Sop. *f*

or have let go.

Vib. *p* *f* *p sub.* *f*

10

Sop. *ff*

What's left is the lost\_ and the pos - si - ble.

Vib. *p* *ff*

BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS - 1.

2

13

Sop. To the lost, the ir - re - trie - va - ble or just out of reach, you say:

Vib.

15

Sop. light loved the

Vib. ben

*mf* *mf*

*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf*

18

Sop. pier, the seed - y string quar - tet of the

Vib.

*p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

21

Sop. sun go - ing down o - ver wa - ter

Vib.

*mf* *f* *pp sub.* *p* *pp* *p*

25 *p*

Sop. that gilds ants and beach flies ec - sta - tic and co -

Vib. *sim.*

29 *pp*

Sop. mu - nal on the stiff - ened bo - dy of a dead grebe washed a - shore by last night's

Vib. *pp*

33 *mp*

Sop. storm.

Vib. *mp* *p*

37 *mf*

Sop. I - di - ot sor - row, an ir - re - gu - lar splen - dor,

Vib. *ben mf*

BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS - 1.

4

40

Sop. *p* is the *mf* half sis - ter of *p* these con - si - der - *mf*

Vib. *mf* *p*

43

Sop. *p* a - tions.

Vib. *mf* *p*

46

Sop. *f* To the pos - si - ble you say no - thing.

Vib. *f*

48

Sop. Oc - to - ber on the pla - net. Huge moon, bright stars.

Vib. *f*



# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 2. THE LOVERS UNDRRESSING

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

♩=126

Soprano *mp*

They put on ri - sing, and they

Vibraphone *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *sim.*

6

Sop. rose. They put on fall - ing, and they fell.

Vib. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *sim.*

12

Sop. They were the long grass on the hill - side that shud - ders in the

Vib. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS - 2.

6

17

Sop. wind. They sleep.

Vib. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

23

Sop. Days, kit - chens.

Vib. *mf* *sim.*

29

Sop. Cut - - flow - ers, shed pe - tals, smell of

Vib. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mp*

34

Sop. le - mon, smell of toast or soap.

Vib. *mf* *mp* *p*

39

Sop. *p* ————— *mf* *p*  
Are you up - set a - bout some - thing, one says.

Vib. *p* *p*

45

Sop. *mp* *mf*  
No, the o - ther says.

Vib. *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*  
dead-strokes

50

Sop. *p*  
Are you sure, the one says. Yes, the

Vib. *sim.*

55

Sop. *mp*  
o - ther says, I'm sure.

Vib. *p* *mf* *mp*  
norm.

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 3. SAD

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

♩=126

Soprano

*mf*

Of - ten we are sad a - ni - mals.

Vibraphone

*mf* *mp* *f*

6

Sop.

*f* *mf*

Bored dogs, mon-keys get - ting rained on.

Vib.

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

12

Sop.

Vib.

*p*

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 4. MIGRATION

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

Lyric Soprano

$\text{♩} = 80$

*p* tenderly

Fan On, Slow Vib.  
soft mallets

*p*  
Ped.

A small brown wren

5

Sop.

in the tan-gle of the climb-ing rose.

Vib.

9

Sop.

*mp* Ap - ril: last

*p*

Vib.

*p* *mp* *p*

BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS - 4.

10

13

Sop. *p* rain, *mf* the first daz - zle

Vib. *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

15

Sop. - - - - -

Vib. *pp*

17

Sop. *pp* almost whispered and re - luc - tance of the light.

Vib. *ppp*

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 5. DARK

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

♩=138

Soprano

Vibraphone

*p*

5

Sop.

Vib.

*mp* *mf*

9

Sop.

Vib.

13

Sop.

Vib.

*mf*

De -

BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS - 5.

12

17

Sop. si - re\_ lies down with the day

Vib.

21

Sop. and the night birds wake to their fast heart - beats

Vib.

*f*

25

Sop. in the trees. The

Vib.

*mf*

29

Sop. wo-man be - side\_ you is breath - ing e - ven - ly. All

Vib.

*mf*

*f*



33

Sop.

day you were in a bo dy. Now you are in a skull.

Vib.

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

37

Sop.

Wind, street-lights, trees flick - er on the ceil-ing in the dark.

Vib.

*ff* *p*

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 6. THINGS CHANGE

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

$\text{♩} = 144$

Soprano

Vibraphone

*mf*

5

Sop. *mf*

Small song,

two beat:

Vib.

10

Sop.

the ro - bin on the lawn hops from sun in - to

Vib.

14

Sop. *p sub.* *mf*

sha - dow, sha - dow in - to sun. \_\_\_\_\_

Vib. *p sub.* *mf*

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 7. STORIES IN BED

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

♩=116

Soprano

Fan On, Med. Vib.

In the field be-

Vibraphone

*f* *mp*

6

Sop.

hind her house, she said,

fen - nel grew high and

Vib.

10

Sop.

green in ear-ly sum-mer, and the air smelled like lit - tle a-nise scent-ed

Vib.

*mf*

*mf*  
Ped.

14

Sop.

loaves in the I - tal - ian res-tau-rants her

Vib.

*sim.*

BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS - 7.

16

17 *rit.* **a tempo**

Sop. *5*  
fa-ther used to take them to on Sun-day nights.

Vib. *mp*

20 *mp*

Sop. She had to sit up straight: it was the i -

Vib.

24 *mf* *mp*

Sop. dea of fam-ily they failed at.

Vib. *mf* *mp* *f*

28 *f* *3* *3* *3*

Sop. She lights a cig - a - rette, re - mem - ber - ing how the taut veins in her mo - ther's neck,

Vib.

31

Sop. *3*  
how she had stu - died them, - re - pelled.

Vib.

34

Sop. *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*  
He has be

Vib. *mp*

38

Sop. gun to drowse: back-yards, her voice,

Vib.

42

Sop. *rit.*  
dus-ty fen-nel, the fes-ter-ing sweet-ness of the plums.

Vib.

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 8. MONDAY MORNING, LATE SUMMER

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

♩=138

*mf*

Soprano

Vibraphone

*mf*

5

Sop.

Vib.

*f*

*p sub.*

10

Sop.

Vib.

*f*

*Red.*

15

Sop.

Vib.

*ff*

*ff*

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a Soprano and Vibraphone part. The first system (measures 1-4) is in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 138. The Soprano part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "On the fence in the sun - light, beach". The Vibraphone part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system (measures 5-8) features a change in time signature to 3/4, then 4/4, and back to 3/4. The Soprano part has lyrics "towels. No wind. The". The Vibraphone part continues with eighth notes. The third system (measures 9-14) is in 3/4 time, with lyrics "a - pri - cots have ri - pened and been picked. The black - ber - ries have". The Vibraphone part includes accents and a dynamic marking of *f*. The fourth system (measures 15-18) is in 4/4 time, with lyrics "ri - pened and been picked.". The Vibraphone part features a dynamic marking of *ff* and a *Red.* marking.

# BODY THROUGH WHICH THE DREAM FLOWS

## 9. SO

Robert Hass

Eric Shanfield

♩=96

Soprano

*p*

Fan On, Fast Vib.

Vibraphone

*p*

They walked a - long the dry gul - ly.

8

Sop.

*pp*

*rit.*

Cot-ton- woods, so the ri - ver must be un - der - ground.

Vib.

*pp*