

A Short, Slow Life

for soprano and orchestra

poem by Elizabeth Bishop

for Suzie LeBlanc and Symphony Nova Scotia

Emily Doolittle 2011

A Short, Slow Life

for Suzie LeBlanc and Symphony Nova Scotia

duration: 8'30"

Instrumentation: 2 flutes

2 oboes (2nd also English horn)

2 clarinets in Bb

2 bassoons

2 horns in F

1 trumpet in C

harp

strings

We lived in a pocket of Time.

It was close, it was warm.

Along the dark seam of the river
the houses, the barns, the two churches,
hid like white crumbs

in a fluff of gray willows and elms,
till Time made one of his gestures;
his nails scratched the shingled roof.

Roughly his hand reached in,
and tumbled us out.

Elizabeth Bishop, mid-1950s

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A Short, Slow Life

for Suzie LeBlanc and Symphony Nova Scotia

Score in C

Elizabeth Bishop

Emily Doolittle

$\text{♩} = 44$ ($\text{♩} = 66$) mp $(3+2+2)$ mf p mp $>$ ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)

soprano

We lived in a pock-et of Time. It was close, it was

flutes 1 and 2 fp mf pp

oboe 1 fp mf pp p mp $>$

English horn

oboe 2/
English horn fp mf pp

B $\flat$ clarinets
1 and 2

bassoons
1 and 2 p

horns 1 and 2

trumpet in C

harp mf mp mf mp

violin 1

violin 2 $pizz.$ pp

viola tr (A) fp mf pp $unmeasured tremolo$

cello fp mf mp pp $unmeasured tremolo$

bass fp mf pp $pizz.$

8 *p* *mf* *mp*

sop warm _____ It was close _____, it was warm _____. A -

(a 1) *mp* < *mf* > *mp* *ppp* *mp* < *mf* > *mp* (a 2)

fl *p* > *ppp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

ob 1 *p* > *ppp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

EH *mp* < *mf* > *mp* *ppp* *mp*

cl (a 2) *p*

bn *mf* *mp*

hn (a 1) *p*

hp *p* *mf* *mp*

(D^b C B^b | E^b F G^b A^b)

vln 1 *pp*

vln 2 (*pizz.*) *p* *mp*

vla *pp* *mp*

vlc *pp* *mp*

db (*pizz.*) *p* *mp*

A

♩ = 88 (old ♩ = new ♩)

17

sop *mf* *pp*
long the dark seam of the riv- er

fl 1 *mf* *pp*

fl 2 *mf* *pp* niente *pp*

ob 1 *mf* *p*

EH *mf* *mp*

cl 1 *mf* *pp*

cl 2 *mf* *p*

bn *mf* *p*

hn *mf*

hp *mf* *mp* *p* laissez vibrer

B $\flat$ A $\sharp$

vln 1 *mf* *pp*

vln 2 *arco* *mf* *pp*

vla *mf* *mp* *pp* niente

vlc *mf* *mp* *pp* niente

db *mf* *mp* *pp*

26

sop

fl 1

fl 2

ob

cl

bn

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

mp

mp

mp

34

sop

fl (a 2)

ob

cl (a 1)

bn

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

pp

pp

pp

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 34 through 41. The soprano part is silent. The flute part (a 2) plays a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked with 'pp'. The oboe part is silent. The clarinet part (a 1) plays a simple melodic line marked with 'pp'. The bassoon part is silent. The violin 1 part plays a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked with 'pp'. The violin 2 part plays a complex melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked with 'pp'. The viola part is silent. The violoncello part is silent. The double bass part is silent.

[illegible]

47

sop

fl 1

fl 2

ob

cl 1

cl 2

bn

hn 1

hn 2

hp

vn 1

vn 2

vla

vcl

db

p

(a 2)

mp

niente

mf

p

arco

p

51

sop

fl 1

fl 2

ob

cl 1

cl 2

bn 1

bn 2

hn 1

hn 2

hp

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

mf

p

niente

B

playful

$\bullet = 58$ (approx. $\bullet = \bullet$)

(3+2)

sop

sop

sop

75

sop *mf* *mp* *f*
 , ah ah

fl 1 *mf* *mp* *f*

fl 2 *mf* *mp* *mp*

ob 1 *p* *mf* *mp* *mp*

EH *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp*

cl 1 *pp*

cl 2 *pp*

bn 1 *p* *mf* *f*

bn 2 *mp* *mf* *f*

vln 1 *pp* *p* *mp*

vln 2 *pp*

vla *pp*

vlc *pp*

db

81 *mf* *p*

sop

fl 1 *mp* *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

fl 2 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

ob 1 *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

EH *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

cl 1 *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

cl 2 *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

bn 1 *p* *f* *p* *mp*

bn 2 *f* *p* *mp*

hn 1 *mp* *p* *mp*

vln 1 *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp* niente

vln 2 *mf* *p* *mp* *pp* niente

vla *mf* *pp* niente

vcl *mf* *pp* niente

db *mf* *pp* niente

a little restless

(3+2+3)

[illegible]

[illegible]

103

sop *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

A - long the dark seam of the riv - er _____, ah _____

fl (a1) *p*

ob 1 *p*

EH *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*

cl 1 *mp* *mf* *p* *p*

cl 2 *p*

bn 1 *mp* *mf* *mp* (a1) *mf*

bn 2 *mp* *mf* *p*

hrt *p* *mp*

tpt *p* *mp*

vln 1 *p* *mp* *pp* *pp*

vln 2 *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*

vla *mp* *mf* *p*

vlc *mp* *mf* *mp*

db *p* *mp* *pp*

111 *mf* *sweetly* *mp* (3+2+3)

sop A - long the dark seam of the riv - er the

fl (a 2) *mf* *pp* *p* *mp*

ob (a 1) *mf* *mp*

cl 1 *mf* *pp*

cl 2 *p* *mf* *pp*

bn *p* *mf*

hn *p* *a 1* *mp*

tpt *p* *p < mp* *pp*

hp *p* *mp*

vln 1 *p* *ppp*

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

slight rubato

light, rhythmic

D

a tempo (♩. = 58)

pp

118

sop *f* *mf* *mp* hous - es, the barns, the two church - es, hid, hid,

fl *mf* *mp* *p*

ob

cl

bn

hp *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

vln 1 *pizz.* *pp*

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

127

sop hid like white crumbs hid like white crumbs, hid like white crumbs,

fl

ob

cl *pp*

bn *pp*

hp *pp*

vln 1 *pizz.*

vln 2 *pp* *pizz.*

vla *pizz.*

vlc

db

137

sop *p* hid like white crumbs in a fluff of grey wil - lows, hid like white crumbs in a fluff of grey wil - lows,

fl

ob

cl

bn

hp *p*

vln 1 *p*

vln 2 *p*

vla

vlc

db

146

sop *mp* hid like white crumbs in a fluff of grey a fluff of grey

fl *mp*

ob *mp*

cl *p* *mp*

bn *p* *mp*

hp *mp*

vln 1 *mp*

vln 2 *mp*

vla *p* *mp*

vlc *p* *mp*

db *mp*

156 *mf* *mp* G.P.

sop
wil - lows, a fluff of grey wil - lows, of wil - lows and elms _____,

fl *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

ob

cl *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

bn *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

hp *mf* *mp*

vln 1 *mf* *mp*

vln 2 *mf*

vla arco *mf* *mp*

vlc arco *mf* *mp*

db arco *mf* *mp*

E

165 *pp*

sop *pp*
hid, hid, hid, hid, hid, hid, hid like white crumbs, hid, hid,

fl *pp*

ob *pp*

cl *p* *pp* *p*

bn *pp*

=

=

178 *p* *mp*

sop
hid like white crumbs in a fluff of grey wil-lows, like white crumbs in a fluff grey wil-lows,

fl

ob

cl *p, poco a poco cresc.*

bn

vln 1 *arco* *p, poco a poco cresc.*

vln 2 *arco* *p, poco a poco cresc.*

vla *p, poco a poco cresc.*

vlc *p, poco a poco cresc.*

db

F*mf*

189

sop

hid white crumbs in a fluff grey a fluff of grey wil-lows, hid like white crumbs till time Time,

fl

(a 2)

mp

5

7

ob

(a 2)

mp

5

cl

mp

cl 2

mp

4

5

bn

mp

hn

(a 2)

mf

tpt

mf

vln 1

mp

8va

vln 2

mp

vla

mp

5

vlc

mp

4

5

db

mp

(3+2)

G.P.
(long)

200

ff *p*

sop
Time, Time, Time
tr (G $\sharp$)..... (end trill)

fl
tr (G $\sharp$)..... (end trill)

ob
f *p*

cl 1
f *p*

cl 2
(continue 3-note tr (D E $\flat$ C))
f *p*

bn
f *p*

hn
(continue 3-note tr (D E $\flat$ C)) transform into unpitched air sound
f *p*

tpt
tr (G $\sharp$)..... end trill transform into unpitched air sound
f *p*

vln 1
f *p*

vln 2
loco
f *p*

vla
(continue 3-note tr (D E $\flat$ C))
f *p*

vlc
tr (E $\flat$)..... end trill
f *p*

db
f *p*

G

freely (unmeasured)

(The soprano has the option to improvise or compose a cadenza here if desired. It could replace and/or extend mm. 210-214.)

210 *p*

sop

Time, Time, Time _____, ah _____ ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

mp *mf* *mp* *mf*

smooth
♩ = 88
(voice still unmeasured)

214 *mp*

sop

Time, Time, Time _____, ah _____ hm _____

mf (voice a tempo) *pp*

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

ppp

224 *pp* (short) *mp* *p*

sop

hid like white crumbs in a fluff of white wil - lows _____, hid _____ like white crumbs in a fluff of white

hp

pp

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

pp *mp* *pp*

233

sop

wil - lows, they hid like white crumbs in a fluff of grey wil - lows till Time made one of his gest - ures; his

fl 1

fl 2

ob 1

ob 2

cl 1

cl 2

bn 1

bn 2

hn

tpt

hp

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

23

H ♩ = 116 continue accel.

241 *f*

sop
nails scratched, nails scratched, his nails scratched, nails scratched,

fl
f

ob
f a 2

cl 1
f

cl 2
f

bn
f (a 2)

hn
f (a 2)

tpt
f

hp
f

vln 1
f loco

vln 2
f continue quarter note rhythm, with interval gradually widening from min. 2nd to min. 3rd (E^b sharpening to E on downbeats, D flattening to D^b on 2nd beats)

vla
f slow gliss

vlc
f continue quarter note rhythm, with interval gradually widening from min. 2nd to min. 3rd (E^b sharpening to E on downbeats, D flattening to D^b on 2nd beats)

db
f slow gliss

250 *ff* *fff*

sop his nails scratched, nails scratched, his nails scratched the shing-led roof.

fl *fff*

ob *fff*

cl 1 *fff*

cl 2 *fff*

bn *fff*

hn *fff*

tpt *fff*

hp *fff*

vln 1 *fff*

vln 2 *fff*

vla *fff*

vlc *fff*

db *fff*

Bb

(until reverberation has died away) *mf* **I** $\text{♩} = 144 (\text{♩} = 96)$ *percussive, a bit rough* *mf*

256

sop and Rough - ly, his hand

fl

ob *mp*

cl *mp*

bn

264

sop reached in,

fl

ob

cl *un poco marcato* *mp*

bn *un poco marcato* *mp*

273

(3+2+2) *f* *mf*

sop Rough - ly his, Rough - ly, Rough - ly,

fl *mf*

ob *mf*

cl

bn

hp *mf*

281

f $\rightrightarrows$ *mf* *f* $\rightrightarrows$ *mf*

sop
Rough - ly his, Rough - ly his hand,

fl
mf

ob
mf

cl
mf

bn
mf

hn
mp

hp

vln 1
mp $\rightrightarrows$ *p* *mp* $\rightrightarrows$ *p*

vln 2

vla
un poco marcato
mp

vlc
un poco marcato
mp

db

(3+2+2)

pochiss. rit.

288 *mf*

sop
Rough - ly his hand, Rough - ly his hand, Rough - ly his hand reached in, and

fl

ob *mf*

cl

bn

hn

tpt *mf*

hp

vln 1 *mp*

vln 2 *mf*

vla

vcl

db *mf*

a tempo

(3+3+1) (3+3+2) (3+3+1)

294 *ff* *p*

sop tumb - led us out .

fl *f* (fl 2) *mp* *p* (fl 1) *mp*

ob *f* (ob 2) *p* *mp* *p* (ob 1) *mp* *p* (cl 1)

cl *f* (cl 2) *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

bn *f* (bn 2) *p* *mp* *p*

hn *f*

tpt *f*

hp *f* *pp* laissez vibrer *mf*

vln 1 *f* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

vln 2 *f* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

vla *f* *p* *mp* *p*

vlc *f* *p* *mp* *p*

db *f*

300

sop

fl

ob

cl

bn

hp

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

mf *mp* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mp* *mp* *p* *mf* *mp* *mp* *p* *mf* *mp* *mp* *p*

(fl 1)

(ob 1)

(bn 1)

305

sop

fl

ob

cl

bn

hp

vln 1

vln 2

vla

vlc

db

mp

p

pp

pp

pp

mp

p

pp

pp

pizz.

pp