

# **A Revisitation of Myth**

*four songs for viola, piano and medium voice*

**Joelle Wallach**

**(1998)**

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by Joelle Wallach

## I Icarus Swims

3

Think of it, love, what if the tales, the price-  
less paintings, all were wrong. What if they lied  
because the old cults thrived on sacrifice  
...and had to say he died.

What if the sun was midwife at a birth,  
melting the wax, letting him plunge naked  
to the christening sea, with infant mirth,  
with joy amphibious. So much is staked

on our courage to recast the myths.  
I love you, sear you, cut you loose to fall...

.....We must save ourselves, and him.  
Imagine it, imagine it, and swim.  
*Luann Keener*

## II Ms Lot

7

Well, if he treats me like a young girl still,  
That father of mine...  
And we're still travelling into the hills –  
But everyone on the road knows he offered us  
To the Strangers when all they wanted was men,  
And the cloud of smoke still over the twin cities  
And mother a salt lick....  
Who's going to want me now?  
Mother did not even know  
She was not to turn around and look.  
God spoke to Lot, my father.  
She was hard of hearing. He knew that....  
What kind of father is that....?  
He offered us to those men. They didn't want women.  
Mother always used to say:  
Some normal man will come along and need you.  
*Muriel Ruyeyser*

## III Hymn to Eros

17

O Eros, silently smiling..., hear me.  
Let the Shadow of thy wings  
brush me.  
Let thy presence  
enfold me, as if darkness  
were swandown.  
Let me see that darkness  
lamp in hand.  
this country become  
the other country  
sacred to desire.

Drowsy god,  
slow the wheels of my thought  
...listen...  
to the snowfall hush of  
thy circling.  
Close my beloved with me  
in the smoke ring of thy power,  
that we may be, each to the other,  
figures of flame,  
figures of smoke,  
figures of flesh  
newly seen in the dusk.

*Denise Levertov*

## IV Abraham and Orpheus

24

Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now:  
You saw your love's face abstract, the weak-kneed stilts,  
You saw and knew, and knew how near "no more"...  
How poised on nothing, weighted on air,  
The touched, seen substance... of care:  
Surround me, be round me, be with me...  
Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now.

Love, love exhausts and time goes round and round,  
Time circles in its idiot defeat,  
And that which circles falls, falls endlessly,  
Falls endlessly, no music shapes the air  
Which did, can, shall restore the end of care,  
For love exhausts ...and time goes round and round,  
I shudder in traffic, buildings stand,  
Will fall, and night will fall, the electric light be snapped  
To spread its yellow genius on the floor,  
And you knew too who knew and knew "no more"  
That love exhausts ...and time goes around.

Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now:  
No longer the grandstand...  
Love sucked me to the moving street below,  
I see the price of care, turning to keep,  
I am a price, I turn to keep, I care,  
But time which circles dissipates all care,  
As you knew too, who lifted up the knife,  
And you, musician in the after-life,  
Drowning in the shadow all love always bears,  
As every solid thing must shadow into light:  
...Abraham and Orpheus, be near, be near.

*Delmore Schwartz*

# A Revisitation of Myth

*four songs for viola, piano and medium voice*

## I Icarus Swims

Luann Keener

Joelle Wallach

$\text{♩} = 69$  Cantabile

**System 1:** Instrumental introduction. Viola (V) and Piano (P) parts. Tempo:  $\text{♩} = 69$  Cantabile. Dynamics: *mp*. The piano part features triplet patterns in both hands.

**System 2:** Vocal entry. Lyrics: "Think of it, love, what if the tales, the price - less". The vocal line (V) enters with a triplet. The piano accompaniment continues with triplet patterns. Dynamics: *mp*.

**System 3:** Continuation of the vocal and instrumental parts. Lyrics: "paint-ings all were wrong. ——— What if they lied, lied — be-cause the". The vocal line continues with triplet patterns. The piano accompaniment features complex triplet and sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics: *mp*.

6 *f* *ben p* *poco f dolce*

old cults thrived on sa - cri - fice, and had to say he died. What <sup>3</sup>if the

*f* *ben p* *poco f dolce*<sup>3</sup>

8

sun was mid - - - wife at a birth melt - <sup>3</sup>ing the

10 *mf* *mp*

wax, let - <sup>3</sup>ting him plunge na - ked to the christ' - ning sea, with in - fant

*f* *ma ben cantabile* *mp*

12 *mf*

mirth, with joy am-phi-bi-ous.

*poco p e poco pensivo*

15 *mp* *mf*

So much is staked on our cou-rage to re-cast the myths.

18 *mf con passione*

I love you, I love you, cut you loose to fall.

*poco f* *mf* *p dolce lontano*

21

*f* *ma ben dolce* *mf* *espr. cantabile* *mp* *dolce cantab.*

24

*mf* *appassionato* *poco* *mf* *poco* *molto espr. dolce*

We must save our-selves and him.

26

*I - ma - gine it, i - ma - gine it, and swim.*

# II Ms Lot

(a whining adolescent tantrum)

Muriel Rukeyser

Joelle Wallach

♩ = 100-104 like angry muttered murmuring

at the tip

*pp* muttering under the breath *mf* espr.

muttering under the breath

*pp* sempre

3

3

*mf*

Well,

*sfz*

*mf*

(*p*) (*sotto voce*)

5 *mp* well, if he treats me like a young girl, still, that fa - ther of mine, Who's *mf*

*p* *mp* *mf*

7 go - ing — to want me now? and we're still tra - vel - ing *mp*

*p* *mp*

*poco f* jangly (L.H.sotto voce murmur)

9 in the hills. Who's go - ing — to want me now? *mf*

*mf* *sfz*



11 *mf* *sfz*

but ev - 'ry one on the road knows he of - ferred us

*mf* *meno f* *mf*

13 *p*

to Stran - gers when all they want - ed was men...

*pizz.* *arco* *mp* *sfz*

15 *sfz* *piangere* *f*

*sfz*

17

*sfz*

*mf*

19

*mp*

And — the cloud of smoke all

*p*

*mp*

*benf*

21

*sfz*

ov-er the twin cit - ies, — And mo - ther — a salt - lick! Who's

*sfz*

ritenuto

23

go - ing to want me now, to want me now,

*mp* *pp* *ritenuto* *p*

25

a c c e l . a t e m p o

a c c e l . a t e m p o

*sfz* *mf* *sfz*

27

sul ponticello *mp jangly* *(p)* *sfz* *ord.*

29

*mp* conspiratorial

God spoke \_\_\_\_\_ to Lot, my fa - - - ther. She

*pizz.*

*mf*

*sfp* (*f*) *mp*

31

could-n't e-ven hear, and he knew: Mo - ther could-n't e-ven hear, she was

*arco sul ponticello*

*mp jangly*

33

not to turn a - round \_\_\_\_\_ and look. He knew! \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

*ord.*

*mf*

*mp*

35 *sfz* *mf* *sfz*

who's go - ing to want me now? Who's go - ing

37 *mf* *mf*

to want me now? Who's go - ing to want me

39 *mf* *mp* *sotto voce* *con sordino* (16th figure at tip of bow) *mf* *espr. cantabile* *sfz* *jangly*

now?

42 *mp* conspiratorial

Now, Mo-ther used to say \_\_\_\_\_ some nor-mal man \_\_\_\_\_ will come some

*mp*

44 *mp* *mf*

day and need you, \_\_\_\_\_ but now \_\_\_\_\_ who's \_\_\_\_\_

senza sordino

*poco f* *sffz*

*mf* *p*

46 *sffz*

go - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to want me now? Who's \_\_\_\_\_

*sffz*

48

go - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to want me now? \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

*mp*

*pizz.*

*mf*

*sfz*

*mp*

*sfz*

50

Who's \_\_\_\_\_ go - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to want me now?

*mf*

*arco*

*mf*

*mp*

52

Who's \_\_\_\_\_ go - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to

*mp*

(non-tremolo)

54

*mp* poco lontano *p* molto lontano

want me now, to want me now, to want me

pizz. con sordino al fine *v* arco *mp* dolce lontano

57

now?

*p* *sotto voce* *mp* *sotto voce*

59

*p* *mp* *espr.* *molto* *ppp* e ben lontano



# III Hymn to Eros

Denise Levertov

Joelle Wallach

♩=66 wistful and yearning, caressing throughout

The first system of the musical score is in 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G#4, a quarter note A#4, and a half note B4. The piano accompaniment starts with a half note G#3, a quarter note A#3, and a half note B3. The tempo is marked as 66 beats per minute, and the mood is 'wistful and yearning, caressing throughout'. The piano part includes triplets and a 'V' marking above the first measure.

*mp espressivo cantabile*

*p legato, leggero e sempre gracioso*

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line has a whole rest, followed by a half note G#4, a quarter note A#4, and a half note B4. The piano accompaniment features a half note G#3, a quarter note A#3, and a half note B3. The tempo remains 66 beats per minute. The piano part includes triplets and a 'V' marking above the first measure.

The third system of the musical score is in 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G#4, a quarter note A#4, and a half note B4. The piano accompaniment starts with a half note G#3, a quarter note A#3, and a half note B3. The tempo is marked as 60 beats per minute, and the mood is 'poch. meno mosso'. The piano part includes triplets and a 'V' marking above the first measure.

*mp dolce*

O — E — ros, si — lent — ly smil — ing, — hear me: — let the sha — dow of thy

9

wings brush me let thy pre - sence en-fold me, as if dark - ness were swan

12

down. Let me see that dark - ness, lamp in hand, this

15

coun - try be-come an - o - ther coun-try, sa-cred to de - sire.

(solo) *mp espr.*

18

*poco f*

Drow - sy god,

21

*fp* *mp* *poco*

slow the wheels of my thought, lis - ten to the snow - fall hush of thy

*sfz* *mp* *poco*

24

cir - cling.

27 *poco f*

Close my be-lov-ed with me in the smoke - ring of thy po - wer that

30 *mp dolce*

to each o-ther we may be fi-gures of flame, fi-gures of smoke,

33 *subito p*

fi-gures of flesh new - ly seen in the dusk.

(solo) *mf dolce espr.*

36

36

39

39

*mp espr.*

Let me — see that

*mp espr.*

42

42

dark - ness lamp in hand, this coun - try be - come an - o - ther coun - try, —

*mp*

45

- drow - sy god, \_\_\_\_\_ slow \_\_\_\_\_ the wheels of my thought, \_\_\_\_\_

48

lis - ten \_\_\_\_\_ Close \_\_\_\_\_ my be - lov - ed with me \_\_\_\_\_

*sfz* *ma dolce espr.*

*sfz* *mf* *f* *ma dolce espr.* *sfz*

51

that to each o - ther we may be fi - gures of flame, fi - gures of smoke, fi - gures of

*mp* *mp dolce* *mp* *espr. cantab.*

54

*subito p* *p e più lontano*

flesh new - ly seen in the dusk. Oh, — E - ros, si-lent-ly smil - ing, —

*p dolce cantabile*

58

*mp* *ma più lontano*

hear me! — O — E —

*(solo)* *(p)* *poco*

*p dolce cantabile*

62

ros, si - lent - ly smil - ing, — smi - ling, — hear — me!

# IV

## Abraham and Orpheus

Delmore Schwartz

Joelle Wallach

♩=104 (♩=52)

First system of the musical score. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a fermata, followed by the instruction *prophetic and declamatory*. The piano accompaniment starts with a *sfz* (sforzando) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

Second system of the musical score, starting with a measure number 3 in a box. The vocal line begins with a fermata, followed by the instruction *poco a poco più dolce*. The piano accompaniment starts with a *fp* (fortissimo piano) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The system includes triplets and a *poco f* (poco fortissimo) dynamic marking.



## poco più mosso

*poco f*

6

Ab - ra - ham and Or - pheus be with me now.

*poco più mosso*

*sfz*

9

You saw your love's face, you saw and knew, and knew how

*mf*

11

near "no more" How poised on no - thing, weight

*poco f*

*mf*

13

ed on air,

*sfz*

*sfz*

*sfz*

15

*mp*

the touched, seen substance of care

*p*

17

*poco mf*

Ab-ra-ham and Or - pheus, be with me now.

*mp*

20 *mp e molto legato*

Ab - ra - ham and Or - pheus, sur - round me, be with me now.

*fp* *mp* *sfz*

23 *p*

Love,

*espr.*

26

love ex-hausts and time goes round and round. Time cir - cles — in id - 'ot de - feat, — cir-cles.

*mf espr.* *sfz*

29 *mp* *poco mf*

end-less-ly falls. — No mu-sic shapes the air which

*sfz* *p*

33 *poco mf*

did, can, shall re-store the end of care, — for love ex-hausts and time goes round and

*mp*

36 *sfz* *pp* *p*

round, I — shud-der in traf-fic, build-ings stand, will fall, and night will fall, e -

*sfz* *p* *pp*

*mf* *p* *sotto voce*

39 *mp*

lec - tric light be snapped to spread its yel - low ge - nius on the floor;

*sf*

*mp*

42 *mp*

and you knew too who knew and knew "no

*poco a poco più lontano*

45 *mf* *poco mf*

more" that love ex-hausts and time goes round and round. Ab - ra - ham and Or - pheus, be with

48

me now.

*poco f dolce espr.*

*mf espr.*

51

You saw and knew, \_\_\_\_\_ and knew how near how

*poco f dolce espr.*

*mf*

*mf*

54

poised on no-thing, weight - ed on air, the touched, seen sub - stance \_\_\_\_\_ of care. \_\_\_\_\_ Ab - ra -

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

57 *poco più agitato* *sfz*

ham and Or - pheus, be with me now. No long - er the grand - stand, love

60 *poco* *mp* *poco più p dolce*

sucked me to the mov-ing street be-low. I see the price of care, turn-ing to keep, I am a

63 *ben dolce mp* *p* *pp*

price, I turn to keep, I care, —

## (A tempo, con moto)

67 *mf*

but time which cir-cles dis - si - pates all care, as you knew

(A tempo, con moto)

70 *mf* *mp*

- - too, drown ing in the sha-dow all love al-ways bears, As ev-'ry so - lid thing

*fp*

73 *mp* *mf*

must sha-dow in - to light: Ab - ra - ham and Or - pheus, Ab - ra - ham and Or -

*fp* *mf espr.*



76

pheus be <sup>3</sup> with me now.

*e più dolce* <sup>3</sup>

*p*

79

*sfz*

*sfz*

82

*sfz*

*mf* <sup>3</sup>

85

*f dolce espr.*

*sf piangere*

*sfz*

89

*mf*

*mf*

*poco a poco*

93

*poco a poco più lontano e dim.*