

Samuel Lord Kalcheim

# On Poetry and the Earth

two poems for actor and  
string trio

*written for the Elsewhere Ensemble*

**TEXTS:****I.*****On the Grasshopper and Cricket***

By John Keats

The Poetry of earth is never dead:  
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;  
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead  
In summer luxury,—he has never done  
With his delights; for when tired out with fun  
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.  
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:  
On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,  
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,  
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

## II.

### *To John Keats, Poet. At Springtime*

By Countee Cullen

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats;  
 There never was a spring like this;  
 It is an echo, that repeats  
 My last year's song and next year's bliss.  
 I know, in spite of all men say  
 Of Beauty, you have felt her most.  
 Yea, even in your grave her way  
 Is laid. Poor, troubled, lyric ghost,  
 Spring never was so fair and dear  
 As Beauty makes her seem this year.

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats,  
 I am as helpless in the toil  
 Of Spring as any lamb that bleats  
 To feel the solid earth recoil  
 Beneath his puny legs. Spring beats  
 Her tocsin call to those who love her,  
 And lo! the dogwood petals cover

Her breast with drifts of snow, and sleek  
 White gulls fly screaming to her, and hover  
 About her shoulders, and kiss her cheek,  
 While white and purple lilacs muster  
 A strength that bears them to a cluster  
 Of color and odor; for her sake  
 All things that slept are now awake.

And you and I, shall we lie still,  
 John Keats, while Beauty summons us?  
 Somehow I feel your sensitive will  
 Is pulsing up some tremulous  
 Sap road of a maple tree, whose leaves  
 Grow music as they grow, since your  
 Wild voice is in them, a harp that grieves  
 For life that opens death's dark door.  
 Though dust, your fingers still can push  
 The Vision Splendid to a birth,  
 Though now they work as grass in the hush  
 Of the night on the broad sweet page of the earth.

"John Keats is dead," they say, but I  
 Who hear your full insistent cry  
 In bud and blossom, leaf and tree,  
 Know John Keats still writes poetry.

And while my head is earthward bowed  
 To read new life sprung from your shroud,  
 Folks seeing me must think it strange  
 That merely spring should so derange  
 My mind. They do not know that you,  
 John Keats, keep revel with me, too.

# On Poetry and the Earth

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*written for the Elsewhere Ensemble*

## I. On the Grasshopper and the Cricket

Poem by John Keats

"The poetry of earth is never dead:.."

Samuel Lord Kalcheim

**Adagio**, ♩ = c. 50

Musical score for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello, measures 1-3. The score is in 4/4 time, with a tempo marking of Adagio, ♩ = c. 50. The Violin part begins with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a half note G4 in measure 2, and a half note A4 in measure 3. The Viola part begins with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a half note G3 in measure 2, and a half note A3 in measure 3. The Violoncello part begins with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a half note G2 in measure 2, and a half note A2 in measure 3. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *con sord.*, and a performance instruction *p espress.* in measure 3. A box containing the text "The poetry of earth is never dead:.." is positioned above the score, with an arrow pointing to the beginning of measure 2.

Musical score for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello, measures 4-6. The score continues from the previous page. The Violin part begins with a half note G4 in measure 4, followed by a half note A4 in measure 5, and a half note B4 in measure 6. The Viola part begins with a half note G3 in measure 4, followed by a half note A3 in measure 5, and a half note B3 in measure 6. The Violoncello part begins with a half note G2 in measure 4, followed by a half note A2 in measure 5, and a half note B2 in measure 6. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *con sord.*, and a performance instruction *p espress.* in measure 6. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 5.

8

*mp espress.*

*mp*

*mp*

3

3

"The Poetry of earth is never dead:  
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge, about the new mown mead..."

11

*p*

*p*

*p*

3

2/4

4/4

2/4

4/4

2/4

4/4

15

*p espress.*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

"...That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead  
In summer luxury,—he has never done  
With his delights; for when tired out with fun  
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed..."

18

3

*mf*

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*

21

*mf*

*p*

25

*p*

*p espress.*

3

28

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

"The poetry of earth is ceasing never: On a lone winter evening, when the frost Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills...	The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever And seems to one in drowsiness half lost, The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills."
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31

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p espress.*

35

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p espress.*

39 rit. . . . . Tempo I

*mf* *p* *p espress.*

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*

"The poetry of earth is never dead:..."

44 rit. . . . . Meno mosso

*mp* *mp* *pp*

*mp* *pp*

*mp* *pp*



## II. To John Keats, Poet, at Springtime

Poem by Countee Cullen

Samuel Lord Kalcheim

**Allegro, ♩ = c. 120**  
*punta d'arco*

Violin *p* 3 3 3

Viola *punta d'arco* 3 3 3 *p*

Violoncello *mf espress*

4

7

11

Musical score for measures 11-14. The score is in 2/4, 4/4, 2/4, and 4/4 time signatures. It features a treble, alto, and bass clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music consists of rhythmic patterns and chords.

15

Musical score for measures 15-18. The score is in 2/4 and 4/4 time signatures. It features a treble, alto, and bass clef with a key signature of three sharps. Dynamics include *mp espress*, *p*, and *mp*.

19

Musical score for measures 19-21. The score is in 2/4 and 4/4 time signatures. It features a treble, alto, and bass clef with a key signature of three sharps. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*.

22

Musical score for measures 22-25. The score is in 2/4 and 4/4 time signatures. It features a treble, alto, and bass clef with a key signature of three sharps. Dynamics include *cresc. poco a poco*.

25

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats;...

28

There never was a spring like this;  
It is an echo that repeats  
My last year's song and next year's bliss.

30

33

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats;  
There never was a spring like this...

38

*fp* *espress.*

*f p*

*fp*

41

*p*

*p*

*p*

44

*p*

47

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

*p*

50 **rit.** **Meno mosso** (♩ = c. 84)

*mp* *fp* *mp* *f* *mf* *mp dolce* *fp* *mp*

I know, in spite of all men say  
Of Beauty, you have felt her most.  
Yea, even in your grave her way  
Is laid. Poor, troubled, lyric ghost,...

54 **rit.**

*pp* (wait for text cue: "lyric ghost")

58 **a tempo**

*p* *pp* *pp*

61

Musical score for measures 61-63. Measure 61 is in 3/4 time, 62 in 3/4, and 63 in 4/4. The score includes treble, alto, and bass staves with various musical notations like notes, rests, and triplets.

Spring never was so fair and dear  
As Beauty makes her seem this year. ,...

64

**Tempo I**

*ad lib.*

*mp*

Musical score for measures 64-66. Measure 64 has a whole rest in the treble and bass staves. Measure 65 has a melodic line in the alto staff marked "ad lib." and "mp". Measure 66 is in 4/4 time with a complex rhythmic pattern in the treble staff marked "mp".

67

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

Musical score for measures 67-69. Measure 67 has a complex rhythmic pattern in the treble staff marked "mf". Measures 68 and 69 continue with similar patterns in the treble and alto staves, marked "mp" and "mf" respectively.

70

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*mp cresc. poco a poco*

74

77

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats;...

I am as helpless in the toil  
Of Spring as any lamb that bleats  
To feel the earth recoil  
Beneath his puny legs....

*f*

*ff*

*pp*

*f*

*ff*

*pp*

*pp*

80

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

84

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

87

...Spring beats  
Her tocsin call to those who love her,...

*p*

*p*

*fp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*



And lo! The dogwood petals cover  
 Her breast with drifts of snow, and sleek  
 White gulls fly screaming to her, and hover  
 About her shoulders, and kiss her cheek,  
 While white and purple lilacs muster  
 A strength that bears them to a cluster  
 of color and odor;....

93

*mp*

*p* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

*mp*

96

*mp*

99

102

105

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

...for her sake  
All things that slept are now awake.

108

**rit.** .....

**Meno mosso**

*p*

*p*

And you and I, shall we lie still,  
 John Keats, while Beauty summons us?  
 Somehow I feel your sensitive will  
 Is pulsing up some tremulous  
 Sap road of a maple tree, whose leaves  
 Grow music as they grow, since your  
 Wild voice is in them, a harp that grieves  
 For life that opens death's dark door...

112 **Andante**, ♩ = c. 76

*pizz.* *mp dolce* *pp*

118

*p* *mf* *mp*

122

*> pp* *f* *mf*

Though dust, your fingers still can push  
 The Vision Splendid to a Birth  
 Though now they work as grass in the hush  
 Of the night on the broad sweet page of the earth.

127

*p espress.*  
*pp*  
*p*

131

*mp*  
*p*  
*mp*

135

*mf*  
*mp*  
*mf*

"John Keats is dead," they say, but I  
Who hear your full insistent cry  
In bud and blossom, leaf and tree,  
Know John Keats still writes poetry.

138

*pp*  
*pp*  
*pp*  
*arco*

(pause)  
And while my head is earthward bowed  
To read new life sprung from your shroud,  
Folks seeing me must think it strange  
That merely spring should so derange  
My mind....

142

*ppp*  
*ppp*  
*ppp*  
*p*

...They do not know that you,  
John Keats, keep revel with me, too.

145

*p* *mp* *pp*  
*pp* *mp* *pp*  
*pp* *mp* *pp*  
*accel.*

151

Tempo I

mp

mf

mf

mf

156

mp

cresc. poco a poco

mp

cresc. poco a poco

p

cresc. poco a poco

161

ff

ff

ff

165

*fp*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*

*fp*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*

*fp*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*

**Presto**

170

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ffp*  $\leftarrow$

*ffp*  $\leftarrow$

*ffp*  $\leftarrow$

174

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ffp*  $\leftarrow$

*ffp*  $\leftarrow$

*ffp*  $\leftarrow$