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Three Pieces

for guitar solo and optional narrator

(2014)

Elizabeth Ogonek

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Performance Note

This piece has the option of being performed with a narrator or as a solo guitar piece. If performed with a narrator, it is up to the discretion of the performers to determine how the text fits in with the music.

There is no exact way to perform this piece. Please see the following pages for the narrated text.

Optional Text

In the in-between times, between home and school, batter and pancakes, sleep and dreams, Ada tells her daughter stories. They are not as comfortable as the stories Clara's other mother, Danielle, tells about good and bad little princesses who go to the dentist and sometimes turn into cats. They leave Clara vaguely ill at ease at night, as she stares into the darkness of her room and tries to parse Ada's words. But they are exciting. Unknown forces lurk in their depths. They hold voices within like closed doors.

She tells Clara how Vaseline is made from dinosaur guts (it will be a decade before Clara uses Vaseline again), how the planets and stars are pinprick moments in a continuum of chaos, how men and women forged an idea of God to keep themselves company when they felt lost or alone.

"I want you to think for yourself, sweet pea," says Ada.

"Don't listen to any of this man-in-the-sky baloney. What was he doing before he created the world? Twiddling his thumbs?"

She tells Clara about standing on her toes to look over the grimy railing of the steamship that carried her mother and her to America, about San Carlos and the new stepfather, who one morning announced that the family would be moving to Cuba to support the revolution. How they come up, Clara will not remember, but things like the Spanish Civil War and Franco and fascism and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade tumble about in the background of reasons, erratic as dreams. Ada tells Clara about the ships to Mexico and Havana (Clara thinks, just as Ada once thought, that all real transitions must happen on ships), where once again Ada was the new kid who once again didn't speak the language. She tells funny stories of Cuban plumbing disasters and mortifications, but here the terrain gets trickier; there is more to omit. She says a little about the friends she made, but not that they became her lovers, and not about the things they tried and that she doesn't want Clara to go near. She doesn't talk about the police or the violence. All she says is things got bad. When Clara

asks,

"Why did you leave?," Ada fudges and says,

"Oh, it was time."

Something about having to give up her American citizenship. Something about her career. She tells Clara about the ships to Canada and then New York, about getting a job holding girls' hands at an abortion clinic, about feeling lost and alone. She tells her about meeting Danielle, about the doctor on 77th street, about bringing home from the hospital, nine months later, their sweet little girl. And it astonishes Ada every day that a child can be so healthy and happy and whole.

Ada found an apartment in New York, on the Upper West Side. It wasn't at all like it is nowadays. Things were rougher, then. They had to be, if Ada could even consider renting a place. She'd spent almost all her resources getting out of Cuba. She had some books, some papers, and few clothes. When she wasn't looking for a job, Ada scoured the basement apartment. She tore out the rotting shag rug. She washed everything. Over the black walls, she painted murals of

barren planets from which solitary creatures gazed up at distant green skies flecked with faraway birds. The modern dancer in 1B took Ada under her wing. She helped her find interviews.

She introduced her to her boyfriends and pals. Ada turned out to be the next hot thing in those circles, this exotic dyke who belonged nowhere and to no one. It astonished Ada, the seemingly endless ways one could not belong.

It occurs to Clara that besides herself and Danielle, and besides the modern dancer who used to live upstairs (who never signed a lease and now lives in Brooklyn), her mother has no roots in New York, not really. For rent and groceries, she illustrates textbooks, and she can send her pictures in by mail or, later, online. Her social world exists in emails, letters, and phone calls in an exuberant Spanish that tie up the phone lines for hours. Mira, Marlana, Clara can hear from two rooms away. She catches snatches of meaning, but her Spanish is terrible; this telephone world is theirs. Every few weeks, Ada prepares careful packages of medications, sweets, things her

friends can't access or afford. She transfers money to a bank account in Mexico City. She tells her friends the news. After years of too many drinks and cigarettes, her friend Marlana can barely breathe anymore. Ada sends what she can. The world is always darker on the other side of the telephone, but sometimes a sudden awfulness will strike, like the time Ada's friend Ángel dies. Clara remembers meeting this lanky man once, at an airport. He had pale skin and freckles that had matched his hair when it was still orange. He met Clara with a rose.

A friend of the modern dancer was having a party downtown. Ada had to come, the modern dancer insisted; she needed to get out more. Ada put on her black jeans and heels and a top that left little enough to the imagination, and she followed her neighbor into the muggy air of the Downtown C. The party was crowded, which Ada usually hated, but that night she enjoyed herself. In the kitchen, she ran into a woman big red glasses and messy, cropped curls.

Ada called Danielle over, one afternoon after they'd been walking in Central Park. They both looked like they do in the picture that later hangs in the frame above their bed,

Ada more slender, Danielle with bigger hair (it's the eighties, after all).

"I want to show you something," said Ada. It was her jewelry box. She picked up a thin gold ring with two rubies on either side of a pearl.

"It was my grandmother's. I was wondering if you might like to wear it." Danielle is still wearing that ring twenty-six years later, when Ada is trying to explain to Clara the October Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs.

-Sophia Veltfort *To the Sea in a Sieve* (2014)

8
28

mp *p* *f* *p*

33

mp *mf* *p* *p*

37

mp *mf* *f* *f*

41

ff *p* *ff* *ff*

45

mp *sub* *p* *p*

49

mp *mf* *p* *sub* *f* *f*

54

p *sub* *mf* *ff* *mp* *mp*

59

mf *mp* *mf* *mp*

62

pp *mp* *p* *mp* *sub* *p* *mp* *pp*

66 *p* *mf* *p*
pp *pp* *mf*
 accel.

Musical staff 66-70: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Measures 66-70. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *pp*, *mf*. Performance markings: *pp*, *pp*, *mf*, *accel.*

70 *ppsub* *f* *p* *mfsub*
gl. *mfsub*

Musical staff 70-74: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Measures 70-74. Dynamics: *ppsub*, *f*, *p*, *mfsub*. Performance markings: *gl.*, *mfsub*, triplets.

74 *p* *f*
tr. *f*

Musical staff 74-78: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Measures 74-78. Dynamics: *p*, *f*. Performance markings: *tr.*, *f*, triplets.

78 *sfz* *psub* *ff*
accel. *a tempo*

Musical staff 78-83: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Measures 78-83. Dynamics: *sfz*, *psub*, *ff*. Performance markings: *accel.*, *a tempo*.

83 *pp* *f* *f*
pizz. *ord.*

Musical staff 83-88: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Measures 83-88. Dynamics: *pp*, *f*, *f*. Performance markings: *pizz.*, *ord.*, triplets.

88 *ff* *fff* *mfsub* *mp*
R. *R.* *2*

Musical staff 88-92: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Measures 88-92. Dynamics: *ff*, *fff*, *mfsub*, *mp*. Performance markings: *R.*, *R.*, *2*.

92 *f* *mp* *pp*
tr. *(d.)*

Musical staff 92-96: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Measures 92-96. Dynamics: *f*, *mp*, *pp*. Performance markings: *tr.*, *(d.)*.

96 *mf* *p* *ppp*
6 *l.v.*

Musical staff 96-100: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Measures 96-100. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*, *ppp*. Performance markings: *6*, *l.v.*

Two

Freely, ♩ = ca. 52

p *mp* *p* *mf sub*

pp *f* *mp*

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

f *mf* *p* *f* *accel.*

a tempo *p* *f* *tr* *tr* *ff*

rit. *a tempo* *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

mp *p* *pp* *f*

♩ = ca. 76, molto rubato, almost entirely out of time

p *mp* *pp* *ppp*

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled "Two". It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with the tempo marking "Freely, ♩ = ca. 52" and features a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mp*, *p*, and *mf sub*. The second staff has dynamics *pp*, *f*, and *mp*. The third staff includes dynamics *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mf sub*, and *p*. The fourth staff has dynamics *f*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, and an *accel.* marking. The fifth staff starts with *a tempo*, *p*, *f*, and *ff*, and includes trills (*tr*). The sixth staff has dynamics *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*, with a *rit.* marking at the beginning and *a tempo* later. The seventh staff includes dynamics *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *f*, with an *accel.* marking. The eighth staff has dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. The ninth staff has dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. The tenth staff has dynamics *ppp* and *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic hairpins.

accel. $\text{♩} = 92$

f *p* *f* *pp*

Suddenly, $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 52$

mp *pp* *f* *pp sub*

accel.

p *mp* *f* *p sub*

f *ff* *fff*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 46$

pp *p* *mf* *p*

pp *ppp*

Three

accel. ----- Suddenly, ♩ = ca. 76

The musical score is written in treble clef and consists of several systems of music. The first system (measures 1-5) is in 3/4 time, starting with a tempo of ♩ = 92. It features a melodic line with trills (tr) and triplets (3), with dynamics ranging from piano (p) to fortissimo (f). A second system (measures 6-9) includes a section marked 'sul pont.' (sul ponticello) and 'ord.' (ordine), with dynamics from mezzo-piano (mp) to mezzo-forte (mf). The third system (measures 10-13) contains a complex rhythmic passage with a 5/8 time signature, marked with dynamics like f and psub. The fourth system (measures 14-18) continues with various time signatures (3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4) and dynamics (mf, p, mp). The fifth system (measures 19-21) features a 5/4 time signature and dynamics (p, pp, f, mf). The sixth system (measures 22-26) returns to 3/4 time, marked 'accel.' and 'Suddenly, ♩ = 120', with dynamics (pp, f). The seventh system (measures 27-30) is marked 'Suddenly, ♩ = ca. 76' and features a 3/4 time signature with dynamics (ff, p). The final system (measures 31-34) includes a 5/8 time signature and dynamics (f, pp, mpsub).

♩ = 92

p *f* *pp*

6 *mp* *pp* *mp* *mf*

10 *f* *ff* *psub*

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

19 *p* *pp* *f* *mf*

22 *pp* *f* ♩ = 120

27 Suddenly, ♩ = ca. 76 *ff* *p*

31 *f* *pp* *mpsub*

35

pp *mp* *p*

rit. -----, Suddenly, ♩ = 112

39

pp *ppp* *f* *ppsub*

42

ff *p* *fsub*

45

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

49

mp *p* *pp* *p* *ppsub* *p* *ppp*