WHEN THE SOUTH WIND SINGS: A SONG CYCLE BY JULIANA HALL

by

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To Juli, for giving me this amazing project, for supporting me,

and for giving so generously of herself to countless artists.

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Introduction

The art songs of American composer Juliana Hall are just beginning to gain recognition among singers and to be programmed on recitals at the beginning of the 21st century. This document seeks to bring to light the works of this talented composer by taking a close look at one of her cycles. I will consider the composer's style, the poet, and the music itself. In this work, Hall sets the poetry of Carl Sandburg, on poetic themes of personified nature, using an improvisational compositional style. Her desire with this piece is to present something of great beauty, a contrast to the negativity of our world.

Thanks to social media and the ability to self-promote, Hall keeps her friends and fans up to date on performances of her works, interviews, and articles about her and her music. In addition, organizations like New Music USA, the Sorel Organization, the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and the International Alliance for Women in Music have helped to promote her work. Her music has been heard in at least 42 of the United States and 31 countries around the globe.[1] E. C. Schirmer published all of her vocal works in 2017.[2] With this kind of traction, her works are beginning to come to recognition and be included in the American art song canon.

That being said, among the variety of magazine and internet articles about Hall, very little scholarly work has been written about her and her output. A DMA dissertation of Lenena Holder Brezna, written in 2016 at the University of Memphis, stands as the first scholarly document about Hall. Brezna's dissertation focuses on Hall's song cycle, *Night Dances*, which was her first commission in 1987 for Dawn Upshaw. Currently there is one other DMA dissertation in progress devoted to Hall's work *Christina's World,* by Julianna Emanski at the University of North Texas. Hall is included in other scholarly work in DMA theses by Nicole Panizza, Sharon Johnson, and Hallie Coppedge Hogan, and in the Master's degree paper of Mackenzie Powell Parrott.[3] (Unlike Brezna, whose entire work is devoted to Hall, each of these authors includes Hall's work in a wider discussion, one about settings of Emily Dickinson poems, one on the setting of letters, etc.) Additionally, there are several articles in the NATS *Journal of Singing* and the *Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music* about various song cycles Hall has written. I hope this document will bring some recognition to this little-known composer and stand as a cornerstone for future researchers in their pursuit of her music.

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[1] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Sept. 26, 2019.

[2] "Juliana Hall," ECS Publishing, accessed Sept. 5, 2018, https://ecspublishing.com/composers/h/juliana-hall.html.

When the South Wind Sings is a cycle of seven songs for soprano and piano. It was commissioned by SongFest, as its 2017 Sorel Commission composition. It was premiered June 24, 2017, by the author and pianist Riley McKinch. The cycle centers on snapshots of American life. Unlike other cycles that follow a traditional narrative, Hall and her husband, David, selected these poems to create a narrative about the personification of nature and its impact on the activities of daily life.

> I feel close to a certain type of transcendent beauty…something more beautiful, and something that binds us together as humans…not necessarily in large sweeping statements, but in the everyday small ways that the very best poets illuminate.[4]

As this quote suggests, while narrative is not at the forefront of the text, Hall envisions connections between the songs. As she stated in the program notes at the premiere:

> As I composed this cycle, I imagined a loose narrative in the choice and arrangement of the poems: "Follies" and "Mask" seemed to me to depict the victory of sunlight over storm, first in nature ("Follies"), then in the human activity of dance ("Mask"), illuminating all upon which it falls, commanding acknowledgement of what it discovers in its bright directness. In "Pearl Fog," on the other hand, nature provides a sunlit, but complex, atmosphere in which a person can tell one's sins—perhaps those which the sunlight of the first two poems unearthed, but about which nature itself is indifferent. In the repetitive nature of the seasons depicted in "The South Wind Says So" we are provided a way to keep going, despite sin...a way to "get by" leading to a rejuvenating method to "fix our hearts over"...the gentle wind blowing those sins away to make room for our re-made hearts. "Under the Harvest Moon" elaborates the healing of nature's repetitive seasons, a gift in which even Death itself whispers as a friend and Love returns with memories that ask questions of beauty and mystery. "Child Moon" takes that concept still further, reminding us of the beauty and mystery children feel naturally, that make the ordinary in life magical...an absence of sin darkening even the night, allowing the child to wonder at the brightness of even the indirect light of the moon. Finally,

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[3] "Juliana Hall in Print," Juliana Hall, accessed Oct. 3, 2018, https://www.julianahall.com/juliana-hall-in-print/.

[4] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Sept. 5, 2018.

> "Between Two Hills" brings us rest as the daily cycle of nature and the forgiveness of human sin join in perfect union, sleep requested by prayer and sanctified by dream.[5]

With the exception of "The South Wind Says So," which is from Carl Sandburg's collection *Smoke and Steel*, the poems chosen for this cycle are from Sandburg's *Chicago Poems*. Hall says of these poems.

> Sandburg's early poems are especially lyrical, soft, and gentle, even when their colors are bold, vibrant, and alive.... It is my hope in writing this piece, that each song illuminates the glowing beauty of Sandburg's poetry, and the purity of his vision of a simpler existence than we, a century later, find ourselves living.[6]

The music perfectly meets the images Sandburg describes and highlights moments easily glossed over by the cursory reader. For instance, throughout the cycle flowers, night, illusion, and forgiveness play heavy roles. Hall uses quick rhythmic patterns to represent childhood, raindrops, flowers, bugs, and wind. She uses slower rhythmic and harmonic motion to represent fog, confusion, and despair.

I am interested in how the composer musically expresses the images and ideas of the poet. That is, what musical gestures and means does she employ to represent the poetic themes? Time will be spent examining the inner workings of the music in an attempt to make tactile the abstract thoughts of the poem. Additionally, some pedagogical advice and performance practice from the composer will accompany the discussion of each movement.

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[5] From the composer's program notes at the premiere of the cycle, Juliana Hall, program notes, *New Voices in American Art Song* (SongFest: Colburn School, 2017).

[6] Ibid.

Chapter 1: ON JULIANA HALL

Juliana Hall (b. 1958) is an American composer, primarily of American art song. She was born in Huntington, West Virginia, and raised just across the river in southern Ohio. She began studying piano at age six with her mother, a piano teacher. As a child, one of her early loves was the written word. Literature seemed more tangible than musical composers. Composers were figures like Bach, Beethoven, Chopin—persons of another century. Composers weren't living and working in the current age, or so she thought.

Hall studied piano for three years at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory under Jeanne Kirstein. During her time at CCM she composed a couple of pieces for a "composition for performers" class, receiving high praise from her instructors. After Hall's third year, Kirstein passed away, and Hall transferred to the University of Louisville to study with Lee Luvisi. A year later, she had earned her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance.

From there she moved to New York City where, among other things, she worked as an usher at Carnegie Hall and studied piano privately with Seymour Lipkin. Hall says of this time in her life:

> Being in New York City, after having grown up in a village of 3,000 residents, was incredibly inspiring. Working at Carnegie Hall was an incredible experience...the opportunity to hear, every week, artists of almost super human talent was not only inspiring but it helped me to further develop a sense of standards and expectations—both of myself, and once I became a composer, of singers and pianists performing my music. To witness pianists like Martha Argerich, Alfred Brendel, Maurizzio Pollini, Alicia de La Rocha, Radu Lupu, Murray Perahia, both Rudolf and Peter Serkin, Richard Goode, and Emanuel Ax, as well as world class orchestras, chamber groups, and singers, opened up the world of music like it had never before been opened.[1]

While studying for her master's in piano at Yale, Hall enrolled in composition lessons with Frederic Rzewski, who encouraged her to switch her concentration to composition. It took some convincing from fellow teachers Martin Bresnick and Leon Kirchner, but she did make the switch, earning her Master's in Music Composition in 1987. Of the shift in concentration Hall says that for the first time she found an activity that felt “completely natural.”[2] Hall credits her twenty years of studying piano for introducing her to great composers and teaching her many aspects of compositional technique. In her words:

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[1] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Sept. 14, 2018.

> Having begun my career in music as a pianist, my early influences that later proved so crucial to my composition were the study and performance of the piano literature: Bach, Barber, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Khachaturian, Mozart, Prokofiev, Ravel, Schumann…these composers and many more taught me harmony, color, and texture, and conveyed almost subconsciously a deep knowledge of pianistic writing from the inside, as it were.[3]

It is not surprising Hall has a good grasp not only of the traditional canon, but also of the 20th-century canon, as many of her primary teachers were known interpreters of important 20th-century composers. Among her primary piano teachers were Boris Berman, who has recorded the complete works of Prokofiev and Schnittke; Jeanne Kirstein, a known interpreter of John Cage; and Seymour Lipkin, a pianist-conductor who got his start touring with Jascha Heifetz in 1945 playing for the Allied troops in Europe. Her composition teachers also studied with famed composers: Frederic Rzewski studied with Thompson, Babbitt, and Dallapiccola; Martin Bresnick studied with Ligeti; and Leon Kirchner studied with Schoenberg and Bloch. Through these esteemed teachers, in addition to the canon of piano repertoire, Hall was introduced to 20th century composers and their styles and techniques. All these various influences assimilate in her music.

Following her Master’s, Hall moved to Minnesota to study with renowned vocal composer, Dominick Argento. One of Argento’s most influential lessons on Hall was that composers should set text in their native language. It is thanks to this lesson that, with a few exceptions, Hall has added so bountifully to the body of American art song. During her time with Argento, Hall received her first commission, for a song cycle for then up-and-coming soprano, Dawn Upshaw. The piece, *Night Dances*, marks the beginning of her career as a composer. Two years later, in 1989, she won a Guggenheim Fellowship.

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[2] “Juliana Hall, composer,” Meet the Artist, published May 2, 2018, https://meettheartist.site/2018/05/02/juliana-hall-composer/.

[3] “New Voice: Juliana Hall,” Musica Kaleidoskopea, published May 30, 2014 https://fdleone.com/2014/05/30/new-voice-juliana-hall/.

After her time in Minnesota, Hall moved back to the east coast to marry her husband, David Sims, a cellist, with whom she has one son. Their marriage has proved fortuitous for her career. David works in electronic publishing and assists Hall in editing and laying out her scores. He also designs her cover art. Hall says of their partnership:

> Only after completing a new composition do I approach technology…I enter new music into Sibelius software using a MIDI keyboard hooked up to my laptop. Usually I give a finished Sibelius score to my husband (who works in design and publishing and is a trained cellist as well)…he completes final layout, then I proofread the score, then corrections are made…then another proofreading is performed. For some compositions I have performed as many as six rounds of proofreading and correction in order to ensure accuracy and consistency of notation…then he makes a final PDF of the finished score and it's off to the printer to make beautiful printed scores![4]

Juliana and David have another great love in common: poetry. They own more than 200 books of poetry and often work together to find poems for her compositions. Juliana likes lyrical poems and David often assists her (occasionally anticipating her) in selecting, ordering, and narrating a series of poems. David is the one she credits for selecting the poems for *When the South Wind Sings*, and for helping draw a narrative out of the seemingly unconnected poems. Hall credits poets and their work as one of her primary inspirations:

> As a composer of art songs, I should also mention that poets have been equally important to my development as the music of other composers. Poets see truth and beauty in even the most ordinary of things, and that is what I wish to express. Poets—because their work provides the sound and color of each piece I compose—enliven my creative imagination with their stories and perceptions.[5]

She says she always has some literature on her mind, be it poetry, prose, letters, or just a good book. Her express desire as a composer is to let the words of the writer speak. She does everything in her power to use the music to portray the text, rather than drawing attention to itself. Her greatest desire is to match her music to the text at hand. "I love the lyrical in both music and in poetry, and work very hard to compose lines that soar...but all within a harmonic framework that is at once fresh, yet subtle."[6] She believes that, in art song, music is conveyance for text. In her words:

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[4] Musica Kaleidoskopea, "New Voice: Juliana Hall."

[5] Ibid.

> ...my goal in setting a literary text to music has never changed...my overarching desire, when setting a text to music, has always been to bring to life the message of that text…it is not to share my "interpretation" of that text, but rather to breathe a sense of clarity into a musically-based form so that the meaning behind the author's words becomes completely transparent to the listener, so that the poet's "story" is told clearly and authentically. By following a text's natural rhythm, down to the level of each syllable, I strive to make the text "speak" in as clear a manner as possible.[7]

Thanks to her educational path and her late switch to composition, Hall missed some early theory and composition training that traditional composition students receive. This, in some ways, freed her from traditional compositional paths and opened the gateway to composition by improvisation. Once she has a text in mind, Hall sits at the piano and composes, singing and playing until the piece begins to take shape. Due to this compositional approach, while all of Hall's songs sound like hers, they are also quite malleable to the text at hand, and to that end, each cycle has a slightly different aural world.

> ...in the sense that while all my songs have "my" sound each song or cycle possesses a strong sense of unique character built upon the author and his or her words that I'm setting in the piece...so although all my works share a common type of sound, each work has a very strong individual profile that sets it apart from my other works as well as from works by other composers.[8]

Of her compositional style, Hall says:

> [It is] my own version of extended tonality. I do not write in keys, but rather compose music that is always moving from one tonal region through another to another, then through another as the text at any given moment dictates, as if the color of the music is always changing, and the nature of the light shining on that color is shifting as well, at times highlighting this word and at times highlighting that thought.[9]

Of self-publishing and being a composer in the 21st century, Hall says:

> I have found it to be essential to produce the most beautiful, clear, accurate, and detailed scores I can, and in 2013 I became a publisher— "Juliana Hall Music" —in order to properly make my music available and appealing to performers, and to be able to distribute my works as far and wide as possible…and that part of the composer's life is entirely technology-based, as is the use of online communications tools like SoundCloud,

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[6] "Talking with composers: Juliana Hall," Schmopera, published July 3, 2017, https://www.schmopera.com/talking-with-composers-juliana-hall/.

[7] Musica Kaleidoskopea, "New Voice: Juliana Hall."

[8] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Sept. 14, 2018.

[9] Meet the Artist, "Juliana Hall, composer."

> YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, and others.…but all technology has proven, in my case at least, to be useful only if—and only when—I have first done my job as a composer, and done it properly.[10]

The commission for *When the South Wind Sings* came to Hall in January of 2017 from Rosemary Ritter, the director of SongFest, a month-long art song festival held every year in Los Angeles. The commission was underwritten by the Sorel Organization, a charitable organization with the mission to expand opportunities for women in music. SongFest has for several years premiered a newly-commissioned work at the festival, teaming up advanced singer-pianist duos and giving them the privilege of working with composers. Hall was quite happy to receive the commission, but was given a short time frame to complete the work. Only a day or two after the commission, her husband David had found and ordered the seven poems by Sandburg, and even constructed a loose narrative, and Hall got to work. The score was in the hands of the author and the pianist by early April, with a concert date set for late June. In addition to preparation before the festival, the duo coached with other faculty members experienced in performing new music. Then, four days before the premiere, Juliana Hall and her husband David flew to Los Angeles, met the author and pianist Riley McKinch and began rehearsing together.

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[10] Musica Kaleidoskopea, "New Voice: Juliana Hall."

Chapter 2: ON CARL SANDBURG

Carl Sandburg (1878–1967), American poet, is best known for his extensive biography on Abraham Lincoln. He had a long career in journalism, writing in nearly every genre and even dabbling in politics. Among his work is a collection of stories for children and a collection of American folksongs (*American Songbag*). While now he is most remembered for these accolades, during his lifetime he was also known as a performer of poetry and songs being a skilled guitarist and possessing a lovely baritone voice.[1]

He spent most of his life in the Midwest and his poetry was seen as down to earth and a representative of the common person. Sandburg was lauded by President Lyndon B. Johnson as "more than the voice of America, more than the poet of its own strength and genius. He was America."[2] That being said, his poems dealt with the everyday, the common experiences shared by humankind, the seemingly mundane. This style of poetry about ordinary events was new when Sandburg was writing. Perhaps the only other poet before him to champion this style was Walt Whitman, a poet Sandburg looked up to greatly.[3] Other influences on Sandburg include Mark Twain[4] and the imagism movement, led by Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound.[5]

Carl Sandburg was born in 1878 in Galesburg, Illinois. His Swedish immigrant parents were sincere, loving people, who raised their children to be honest, hardworking individuals. Carl's father, August, worked as a railway man, earning fourteen cents an hour, often working ten hour days. (This was before labor law reforms, a movement which Sandburg supported in his twenties.) Carl and his siblings, a brother and a sister (two younger brothers passed away from diphtheria in 1892) were able to go to school. Around age ten, Carl started working. He had jobs before or after school hours until he completed eighth grade, at which time his education was, for the foreseeable future, over. He began working full-time to help support his family, as the rail work had slowed significantly and his father was working a mere four hours a day. Among Carl's jobs were milk delivery, paper delivery, sweeping out offices, dishwashing, serving as a porter in a hotel barbershop, a bottle washer, a boathouse assistant, and many others. Always a voracious reader, he most often read history, but he also read his sister's textbooks as she continued school.[6]

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[1] Hazel B. Durnell, *The America of Carl Sandburg* (Washington: University Press of Washington, D.C., 1965), 29–31.

[2] North Callahan, *Carl Sandburg: His Life and Works* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 233.

[3] Dennye C. Swift, "Imagism in Carl Sandburg" (MA Thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1967), 36, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[4] Callahan, 9.

[5] Swift, 82.

When he was nineteen, Carl got an itch to explore and set out to travel west. He began his journey towards the Mississippi river, got a job on a boat, and traveled south. From there he would stay in a town about two weeks, often working as a dishwasher or waiter, then hop aboard a train and travel a bit further. Along this journey he met many hoboes and men seeking work to send money home to their families. Carl made it as far as Denver, Colorado, before deciding to return home. In all, this trip took about four months and was foundational in broadening Carl's horizons and experiences. It may even have been the beginning of his ability to poeticize the everyday experiences of ordinary life.[7]

In 1898 the Spanish-American war began and Carl enlisted. He trained in Washington, D.C. before being sent to Cuba, and from there to Puerto Rico. Thanks to his military service, on his return he was given one-year's free tuition to attend Lombard College, where he was shaped into the writer we know today. He worked in the fire department for additional financial support and was able to study for four years, though lacked a few credits to earn his degree. During his time at Lombard College, he became friends with his professor Philip Green Wright. Professor Wright and his wife hosted a few students weekly to read of their own writings in the "Poor Writers' Club," of which Sandburg was a member. Wright, also a Lincoln specialist, may have been one of Sandburg's inspirations when he later wrote his mammoth *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (1926). In addition, Wright and his wife had a printing press in their basement, and published Sandburg's first three collections: *In Reckless Ecstasy* (1904)*, Incidentals* (1904)*,* and *Plaint of a Rose* (1908). These works show the influence of Browning and Emerson as they have a rhyming scheme and fit into neat quatrains. Though early, they show the mark of a genius. As written by Hazel Durnell: "The little volumes published at this time [his first volumes] show him to be a lyric poet—but a poet with a passionate interest in human condition, a poet of social protest, though on humanitarian rather than political grounds."[8]

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[6] Durnell, 7–8.
[7] Ibid., 9–10.

After four years at Lombard College, Carl left to work full time. His desire to write continued to grow, and he read as much as possible. He began writing short articles for the Galesburg *Daily Mail* the New York *Daily News*, before becoming an associate editor for the Chicago-based *Lyceumite*. Six years after leaving Lombard, he was offered a position as a writer and speaker for the Social Democrats in Milwaukee. Having been raised as a Republican, but becoming more and more conscious of social issues and the need for labor law reform, Carl flung himself into his work as a Social Democrat. He took some prominence while working to reform decency in government and improve labor laws and was offered a job in politics. Though he always remained passionate about politics, he decided to make journalism and writing his career. In Durnell's words: "He preferred to voice political and social criticism through his writings and speeches, and in order to do so he returned to the field of journalism."[9]

It was during Carl's time in Milwaukee that he began exchanging letters with Lilian Steichen, a teacher from Princeton, Illinois. They met only twice over the following months, exchanging letters for the first half of 1908, and were married in June. Their daughter, Margaret Sandburg, later published their collected letters in *The Poet and the Dream Girl* (1987). In her words: "These letters reveal the thoughts of two fine, strong minds drawn to each other at first by their interest in socialism, then by their love of poetry and a similarity of ethics and ideals."[10] Their marriage proved long and fortuitous. Lilian, a prolific writer, refused to publish her works, but served as critic and editor for Carl. The Sandburgs moved to

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[8] Ibid., 17.

[9] Ibid., 19.

[10] Margaret Sandburg, ed., *The Poet and the Dream Girl, The Love Letters of Lilian Steichen & Carl Sandburg* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), ix.

Michigan for a short time before settling in the greater Chicago area. They raised three daughters, for whom Sandburg's children's stories were created. Much of his early work is also dedicated to his family, including *Chicago Poems*, which is dedicated "To my wife and pal Lilian Steichen Sandburg."[11]

Sandburg's first book of poetry, *Chicago Poems*, was published in 1916 after he came to recognition in 1914 with his poem "Chicago" in Harriet Monroe's magazine *Poetry*. The book is divided into several sections: *Chicago Poems, War Poems, The Road and the End, Shadows, Other Days,* and *Fogs and Fires*. The poems of this cycle are taken from the final section. While the poems from the *Chicago Poems* section are blunt and at times harsh, the poetry found in *Fogs and Fires* is lyrical and gentle. As explained by Durnell:

> …[Sandburg] espoused and ennobled the commonplace, giving value to aspects of universal appeal….he developed the image as a vital tool of his art; he explored meaningful and arresting rhythm patterns, exercised a gifted control of words and developed a technique of swift pen stroke vignettes that set his thought in graphic form….his love of nature in smooth lyric lines and beauty of phrase.[12]

Durnell aptly describes much of the poetry we will see in the cycle at hand. Sandburg uses vignettes and images to bring the audience face to face with nature. He highlights the commonplace of daily activities, emphasizing the unity of humankind over discordant, divisive imagery.

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[11] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1916), xiv.

[12] Durnell, 23.

Chapter 3: ON THE POETRY

One of the greatest influences on Sandburg was the Imagist movement, a movement in early 20th-century American poetry that attempted to capture images through clear, precise language. Imagism was spearheaded by poets like Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell. These poets strove to use concise, specific, and straightforward expression through heavy use of images—attempting to reveal the essence of a single image. To better understand the seven poems of Sandburg used in this cycle, let's compare it to a couple poems by other imagist poets. Here is "Autumn," by Amy Lowell:

> All day I have watched the purple vine leaves
> Fall into the water.
> And now in the moonlight they still fall,
> But each leaf is fringed with silver.[1]

Lowell presents an image of leaves falling into water. She carefully describes the colors of the leaves and marks the passage of time by their changing, purple in the day and silver in the night. The primary image is that of falling leaves. However, it is what is suggested by what is left unsaid that is interesting. The speaker watches the leaves all day. The speaker either has nothing else to do or is feeling melancholy enough to hold interest in an otherwise dull activity. It is that undercurrent, that underwritten emotion, only hinted at by the image, that propels the poem. Otherwise it wouldn't need to be a poem and would be a better work of art as a watercolor. That the image is both clear and complex, and utterly relatable, is at the heart of imagism. No longer did poetry need to be about high art or about kings and castles. At last, at the outset of the 20th-century poetry could be simple, it could encompass emotions common to nearly every person. Here is a poem by Ezra Pound, "The Garret":

> Come let us pity those who are better off than we are.
> Come, my friend, and remember
>   that the rich have butlers and no friends,
> And we have friends and no butlers.
> Come let us pity the married and the unmarried.

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[1] Amy Lowell, "Autumn," Poetry Foundation, accessed Nov. 6, 2019, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/14531/autumn-56d208413503b.

> Dawn enters with little feet
> Like a gilded Pavlova,
> And I am near my desire.
> Nor has life in it aught better
> Than this hour of clear coolness,
> The hour of waking together.[2]

Pound's poem begins like the chorus of a song, ringing with encouraging lines, and concludes with an image. Unlike Lowell's poem, this speaker addresses another subject, "my desire," admonishing the beloved to be satisfied in their own condition, by pitying those more fortunate than them. Then the image clarifies that the speaker is waking beside the beloved and enjoying the early morning together. Pound describes the coming of dawn like the feet of Pavlova, a famous Russian ballerina, therefore we can image dawn comes gracefully. Then the image turns to indoors, the speaker is near the beloved and says life holds nothing better than waking beside one's beloved in the cool of the morning.

It is poems like these, that describe images, that captured and inspired Sandburg. The poems used in this cycle all have that in common—they each depict a scene in words. Sandburg pursues relatable scenes, in this case, scenes of nature, and imagines how that impacts humanity. He does this by bringing up the motion of wind, the hint of a memory, or the light of the moon.

As Dennye Swift wrote:

> [Sandburg] operated with the rhetorical ornaments of the metaphor, the simile, personification, symbolism, and onomatopoeia. A study of these devices in his poetry reveals that, as a whole, they are fresh and clear, and intentionally evade the clichés of the old poetic jargon.[3]

Sandburg talks about his pursuit of imagery: "I cut out all words ending in ity or ness as far as I can... That is, I cut words describing 'state of being.' And I search for the picture words."[4] This concept of looking for "picture" words was an imagist concept, born out of fascination with Eastern art, particularly Japanese art. Swift goes on to say, "Much of the beauty of [Sandburg's] six volumes of poetry lies in the appropriate use of words, which excite the visual sense."[5]

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[2] Ezra Pound, "The Garret," Poetry Foundation, accessed Nov. 6, 2019, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=12666.
[3] Swift, 44.
[4] Richard Crowder, *Carl Sandburg* (New Haven, CT: New College and University Press, 1965), 86.

As Albert Olenius captures, it is easy to read Sandburg on the surface level and enjoy the snapshots of American life: "It is only after having read many of his poems that one realizes the depth of meaning the poet has intended in relatively commonplace images, symbols, and poetic situations."[6] It is only those who delve below the surface who find the deeper meaning. Olenius writes:

> [Sandburg's] avoidance, in his style, of abstract words suggesting a state of being and his search for more concrete words to convey abstract meaning is a further indication of his intent. The poems, however, often fail to inspire the cursory reader to seek such depths of meaning. Sandburg sends the reader on a search for Truth upon paths Sandburg has found ill charted. Perhaps this is rightfully so; uncertainty is a characteristic of our age.[7]

It is perhaps this interest in content and specific use of abstract descriptors that, as Olenius stated in the quote above, "fail to inspire the cursory reader to seek such depths of meaning." An explanation offered by Parry Stroud is:

> Examination of [Sandburg's] poetry will reveal that he does possess sensitivity to sound and meter and does have a sense of form, but his emphasis upon content often leads him to abandon his technical skill...[8]

Sandburg's use of color is vibrant in these seven poems. As pointed out by Swift: "The colors, besides being used in his purely descriptive poems, are often manipulated as symbols, which, at times, are associated with nature or things which have a particular color."[9]

In the first two poems of this cycle, "Follies" and "Mask," there is significant use of the color red. In "Follies" a line reads: "Roses rise with red rain-memories."[10] This is a vibrantly alliterative statement. Swift writes of the color red in Sandburg's writing: "One of the most unusual uses of red is that it paints the intensity of feeling, a strength of meaning or significance of purpose, and the rapidity of action. Here, too, is found the employment of synaesthesia [sic]...in this instance sounds have colors and so on."[11] Though often in the poems colors as descriptors are separated from their object, "Mask" uses specific instances of the color red:

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[5] Swift, 62.

[6] Albert O, Olenius, "An Analysis of the Development of Form and Content in Carl Sandburg's Poems" (MA Thesis, University of Southern California, 1954), 6, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] Parry Stroud, "Carl Sandburg: A Biographical and Critical Study of His Major Works" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, Evanston, 1956), 72, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[9] Swift, 57.

[10] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 128.

> FLING your red scarf faster and faster dancer.
> It is summer and the sun loves a million green leaves, masses of green.
> Your red scarf flashes across them calling and a-calling.[12]

In "Follies" Sandburg paints a picture of an old, abandoned garden. The lilacs are described colorfully and Swift suggests that in Sandburg's poetry "Purple and lavender are used to symbolize quietness and peace; sometimes, it is the something that is gone."[13] If lilac is being used to symbolize something that is gone, it is a logical precedent to the abandoned garden mentioned later in the poem.

An interesting consideration about these poems is the lack of use of the first person. Nowhere in these poems does the speaker refer to herself as "I." This is significant because in many ways the American dream is begun and executed from the first person. Sandburg's America, the America of only one hundred years ago, had much more community spirit. One's own best interests were not the only and final consideration of each individual, but rather, individuals thought and acted in the best interest of their neighbors and community. Olenius states that "[People are] at one with nature in a small community."[14] It is this at-one-ness with nature that Hall chooses to emphasize in her setting of these poems, where community values and child-like wonder cannot be escaped. In these seven poems, there is only a single first-person usage. In "The South Wind Says So," Sandburg uses the plural first person, "we." The other six poems are primarily in the third person. This may deter audience members from connecting with the cycle; much of the poetry is descriptive rather than active.

In conclusion, Sandburg is highly interested in content, occasionally to the simplification of his poems. He is inspired by the Imagism movement, but never fully embraces all their code. Though these poems are from his collection *Chicago Poems*, they nevertheless evoke small towns and the community associated with small towns. Perhaps this is the Chicago Sandburg knew, perhaps it was a reflection of his small hometown, or perhaps it was to inspire us to the "Chicago" (read: city of dreams) we all could know. Stroud writes:

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[11] Swift, 54.
[12] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 125.
[13] Swift, 55–56.
[14] Olenius, 69.

> All these are simple, unreflective people who find their joys in acceptance of simple, commonplace things....The inhuman upper classes who force the lower classes into poverty or degradation do not destroy the possibility of simple happiness. These contradictions can be resolved only through an act of faith in the people....On its lowest level the faith is only that of a faith in life itself, which has some semi-religious sanction...[15]

When Sandburg uses the phrase "the people," he speaks of the unity of humankind in their daily activities of rest, play, eating, and appreciation of nature. He intentionally seeks subject matter that connects reader to poem. As Stroud writes: "So it is with most of the people in *Chicago Poems*. They always retain some quality that links us with them or them to their fellows, even though they are pushed close to the edge, or go over it."[16] Durnell states:

> Sandburg regards poetry as a means of communicating distilled human experience. He has combined varying language forms and free verse rhythms with native subject matter to record collective American life. In word, style, metaphor, image and symbol he has attempted to portray an American society which is founded both upon immigrant cultures and upon three and a half centuries of life in a New World which is very different from the Old. He has made an effort to present the assimilation of European cultures; to reflect the psychology and mental mood of the machine age; to present the American spirit in two World Wars and in the Great Depression period; to present an America now inextricably involved in world politics. To do so has required a mobile and vivid language.[17]

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[15] Stroud, 78, 81.
[16] Ibid., 75–76.
[17] Durnell, 156.

Chapter 4: ON THE CYCLE

There are a number of motives and gestures that recur throughout the cycle, providing unity, which is the focus of this chapter, and a major interest of this document. However, while these gestures create unity, they are not cyclic in nature, but are merely representative of Hall's style. These motives are also used elsewhere in her works and I believe they exist out of her own improvisational style at the keyboard. Rather than exposing an overarching form, the cycle conveys unity through musical motives and themes.

Hall frequently moves throughout key areas, making harmonic analysis challenging. She also moves easily through meter changes, creating some challenges for soprano and piano as an ensemble. Finally, her use of text painting, at least in this cycle, is more general than specific. Rather than text painting individual words (which she does occasionally), in this cycle she tends to paint the entire image set by Sandburg, usually in the piano introduction of each song. Her style is best summed up by the apt description of voice teacher and mezzo-soprano Katherine Eberle:

> Hall's harmonic language in her songs is typically that of an extended tonality that sounds modern without giving the impression of belonging to a specific school of composition (e.g., atonal or romantic). A lack of key signature in her songs simplifies modulation, as tonalities move easily through a variety of keys. This allows the postmodern harmonies to heighten the emotional content of the poetry. Depending on the text, the harmonic content specifically heightens the mood Hall wishes to create, be it tonal, chromatic, or dissonant. The songs often are through-composed in form; they are always multimetric; and the accompaniment sometimes uses word painting to enhance the meaning of the words.[1]

The two primary means that Hall uses to unify this cycle are: an emphasis on parallel writing and an ascending-descending motive hereafter referred to as the wave motive. Two less important motives will also be discussed: a rocking motive and an arch motive.

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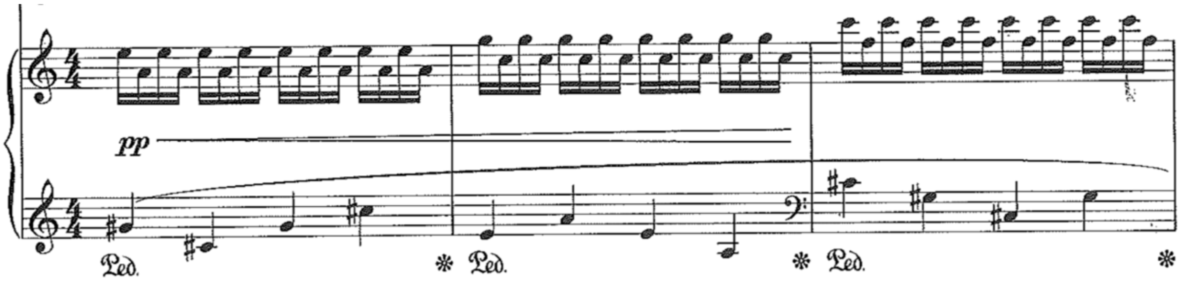
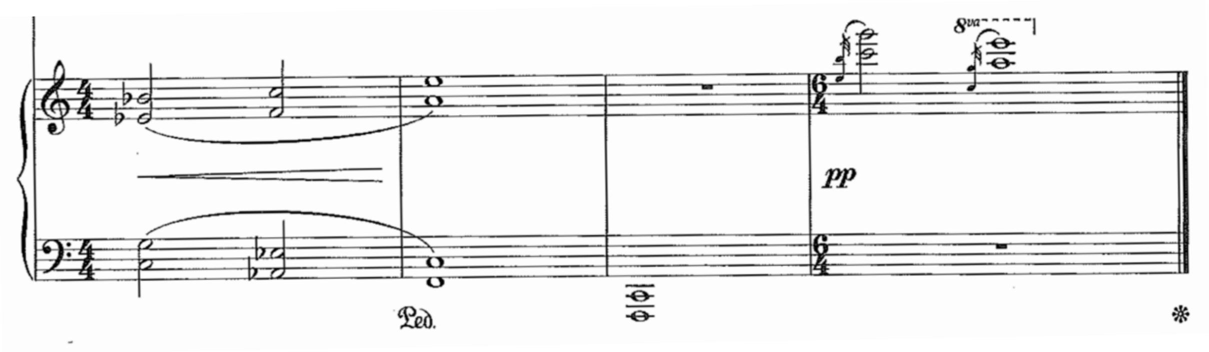
[1] Katherine Eberle, "From Words to Music: Three Song Cycles of Juliana Hall," *Journal of Singing*, Volume 71, No. 5 (May/June 2015): 573, https://www.julianahall.com/From-Words-to-Music.pdf.

First, parallelism—of seconds, thirds, fourths, or fifths—grounds and supports this cycle. The fifths are most often heard in the left hand of the piano, though there is often similar (and therefore sometimes parallel) motion in the right hand of the piano. The work begins with parallel fifths in both hands, though in different key areas (Example 4.1).



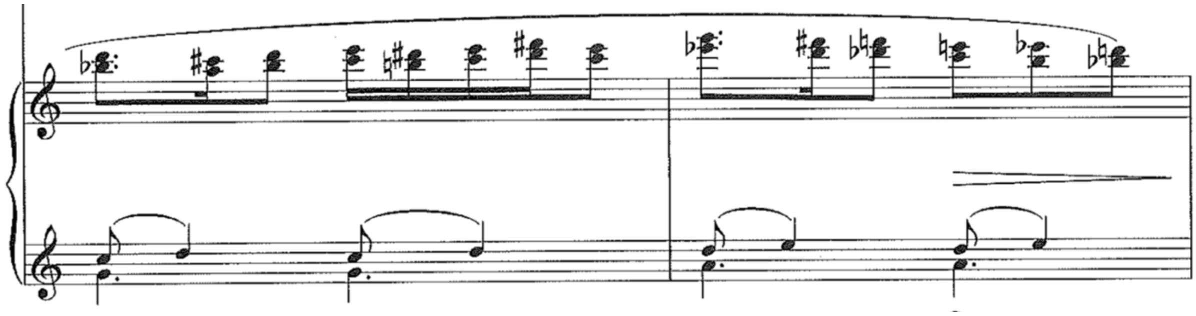
Example 4.1. "Follies," mm. 1–3, parallel fifths in both hands.

The end of the cycle also uses parallel fifths in two ways: low in the tessitura of the piano to represent the calm state of dream-like sleep and a hushed community, and high in the tessitura of the piano in a bell-like gesture (Example 4.2).



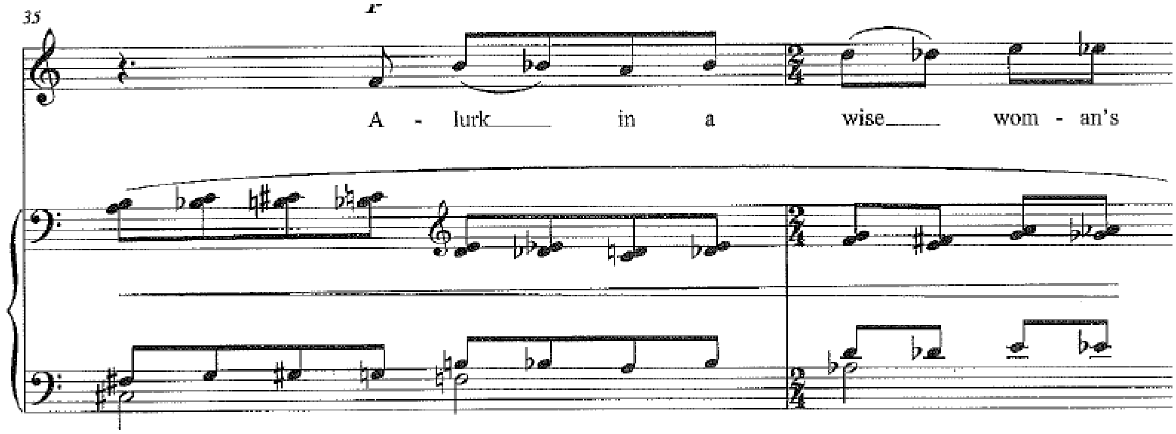
Example 4.2. "Between Two Hills," mm. 51–54, parallel fifths.

Example 4.3 demonstrates parallel thirds in the right hand and parallel fourths (expanding to fifths) in the left.



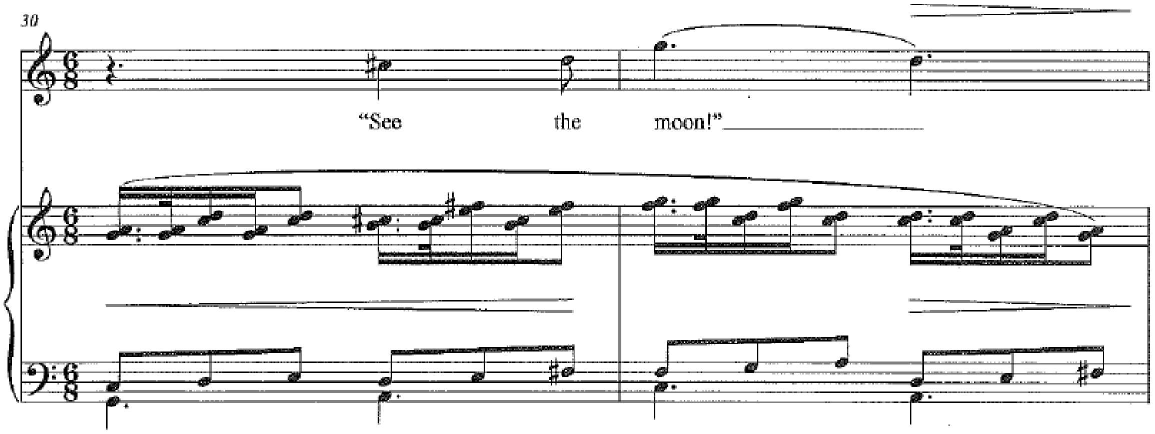
Example 4.3. "Child Moon," mm. 3–4, parallel thirds, fourths, & fifths.

Examples of parallel seconds can be found in "Pearl Fog" (Example 4.4) and "Child Moon" (Example 4.5).



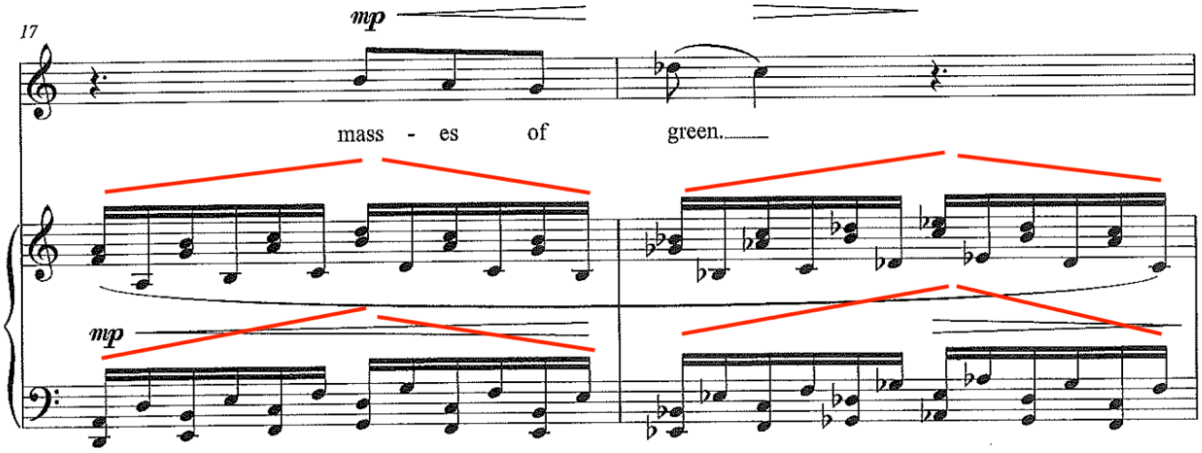
Example 4.4. "Pearl Fog," mm. 35–36, parallelism.

The iteration of parallel seconds in "Child Moon" (Example 4.5), blurs tonality, but doesn't obscure it or use it as an opportunity to explore new key areas, as other uses of parallelism in the cycle have done. (These two measures are unique in their style, being the only two measures with text spoken by a child in the cycle, and it is child-like writing that is the impetus for the use of parallel seconds in this instance.)



Example 4.5. "Child Moon," mm. 30–31, parallelism.

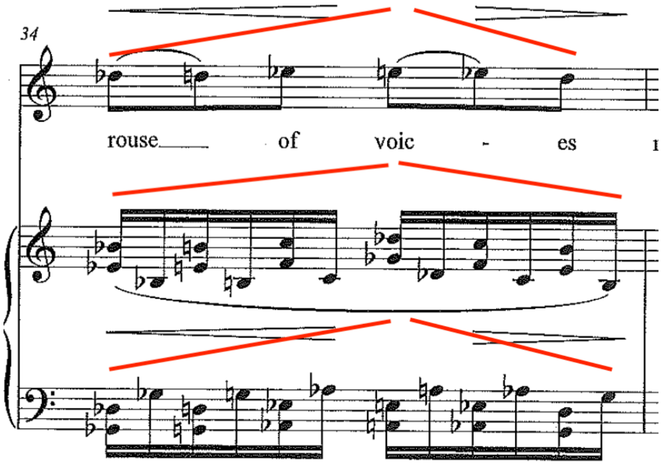
The other major unifying motive of the cycle is the wave motive. In Example 4.6, each measure consists of a three-step ascent followed by a two-step descent. The wave motive will be found in several variations, but this example is typical.



Example 4.6. "Mask," mm. 17–18, wave motive.

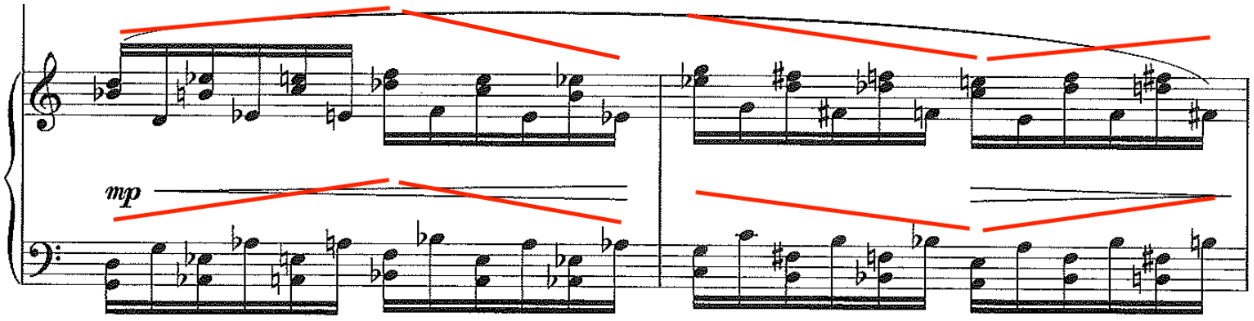
The wave motive is used several times again in "Mask" and is found throughout the remainder of the cycle. The effect of this motive is a surge of energy, naturally creating a *messa di voce* (considering the pitches, not the dynamic markings), producing more drama in the piano. This motive increases the harmonic rhythm significantly. Up to this point, though the writing is busy, the harmonic rhythm has remained constant through each beat. Now, with the introduction of this ascending and descending motion, the harmony moves much more quickly.

Measure 34 of "Mask" sees a transformation of the wave motive into a half-step chromatic variation (Example 4.7).



Example 4.7. "Mask," m. 34, chromatic wave motive.

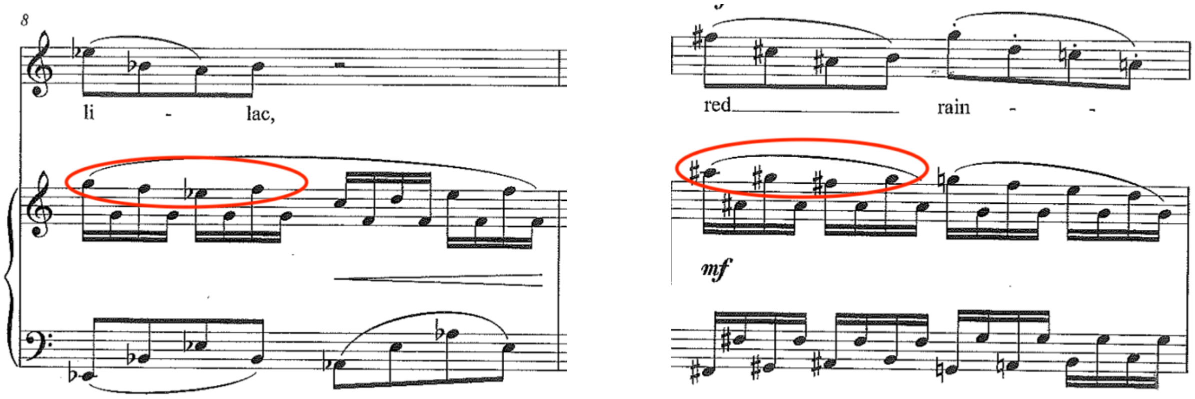
Hall creates one more variation, inverting the chromatic wave. Notice in Example 4.8 that measure 56 ascends and then descends as expected, while measure 57 is inverted, descending before ascending. The effect is the same, however, and each cell ends a half step away from where it began, obscuring a sense of tonality.



Example 4.8. "Mask," mm. 56–57, inverted descending chromatic wave motive.

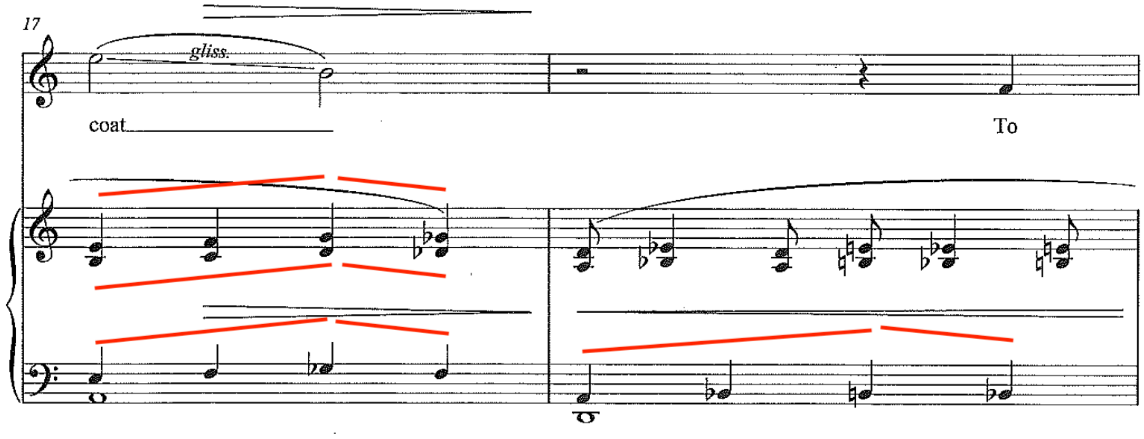
Each iteration of the wave motive is slightly different, tailored to the poem within each movement. The following are examples from other movements.

In “Follies” the (diatonic, though inverted) wave is subtly hidden among the busy texture (Example 4.9). In measure 8 the piano’s top pitches, G, F, E♭, F, are derived from the same contour (the cell is compressed in simple meter, therefore the gesture is shorter—only descending twice and ascending once). The motive appears in this same form in measure 34; A♯, G♯, F♯, G♯.



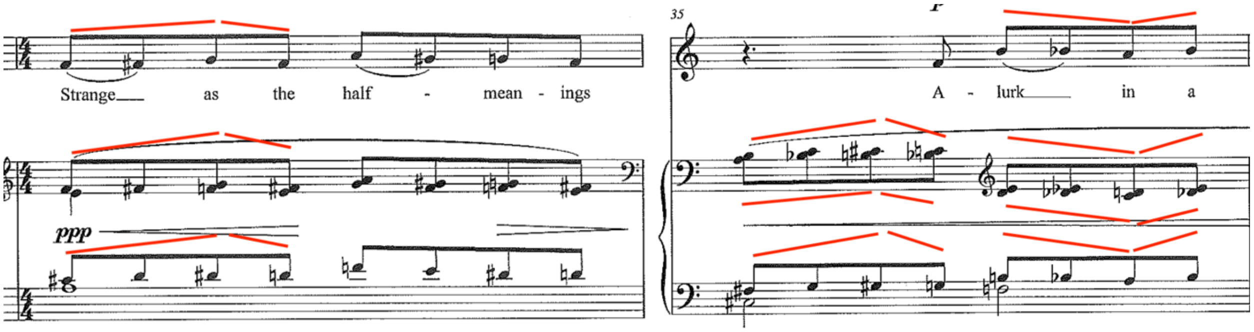
Example 4.9. “Follies,” m. 8 & 34, wave in top piano voice.

The chromatic wave is used frequently in “Pearl Fog (Example 4.10).” This time the wave motive falls in the tenor voice (a similar contour is found in the soprano and alto voices in measure 17 as well).



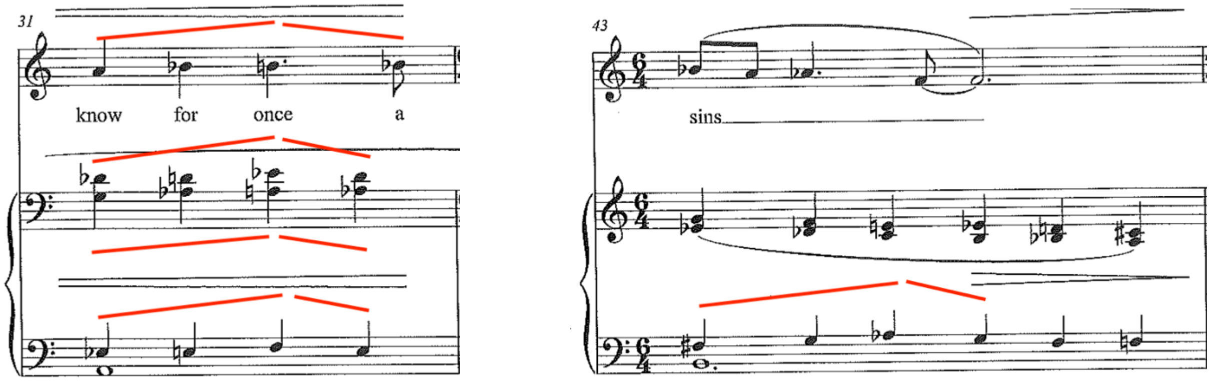
Example 4.10. “Pearl Fog,” mm. 17–18, chromatic wave motive.

In measures 34 and 35 of the same movement the chromatic wave is in three voices (Example 4.11).



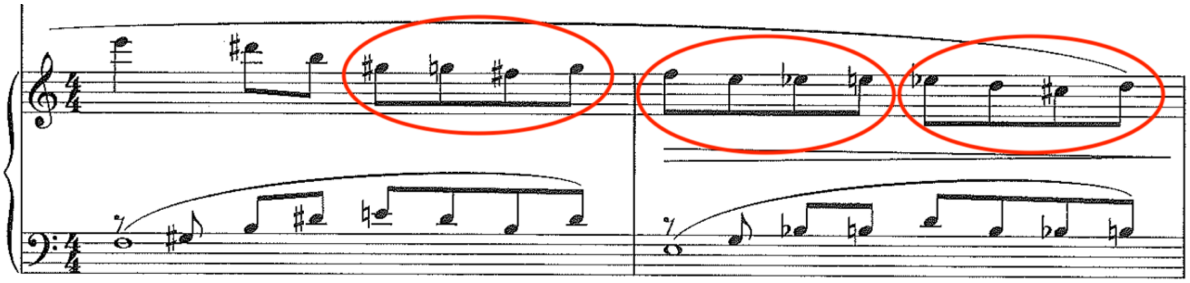
Example 4.11. "Pearl Fog," mm. 34–35, chromatic wave motive.

In measures 31 and 43 (Example 4.12), the chromatic wave is found in four of the five sounding voices.



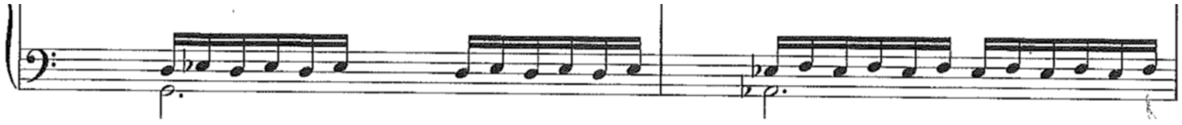
Example 4.12. "Pearl Fog," m. 31 & 43, chromatic wave motive.

The inverted chromatic wave is a motive Hall uses frequently in "The South Wind Says So" (Example 4.13). See measures 3 and 4, when, taking four eighth notes as a cell, the pitch descends twice by half step then ascends by half step, ending the cell a half step lower than where it began. This is most noticeable here as it is repeated three times in the space of six beats. In measure 3, G♯, G, F♯, G create the first cell. In measure 4, F, E, E♭, E, comprise a second cell and E♭, D, C♯, D comprise the third cell.



Example 4.13. "The South Wind Says So," mm. 3–4, inverted chromatic wave in top voice.

Other recurring motives are the rocking cell, which is comprised of two alternating neighbor tones. This is introduced in "Mask" (Example 4.14) and is altered and reused in "Under the Harvest Moon" and "Child Moon."



Example 4.14. "Mask," mm. 19–20, rocking cell.

The rocking gesture often signals something unknown, ominous, or mysterious in the text of the poem. In "Pearl Fog," the speaker urges the subject to go outside into the thick fog. The complete line of text is:

> Go roll up the collar of your coat
> To walk in a changing scarf of mist.[2]

Notice this same motion in the tenor voice in measures 15 and 16 of "Pearl Fog."

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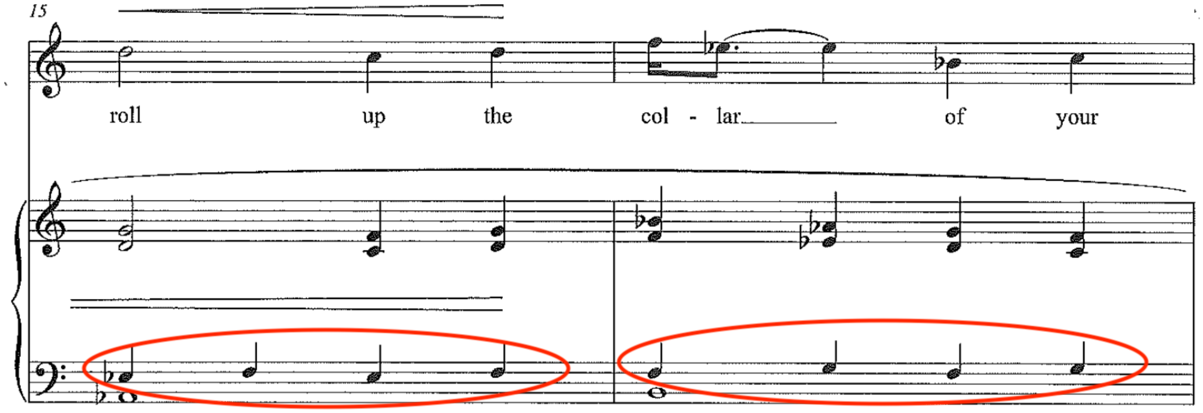
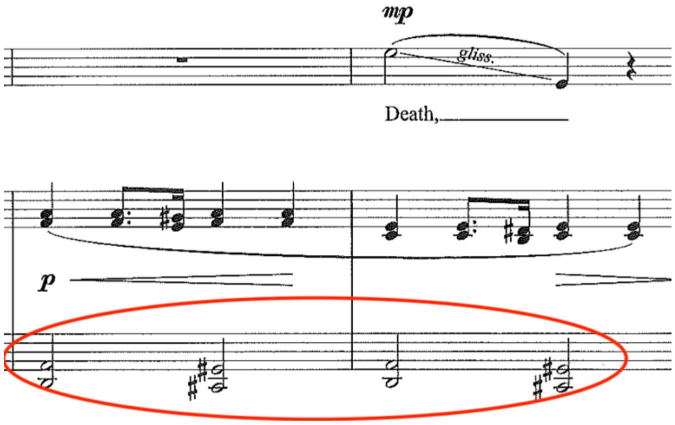
[2] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 126.



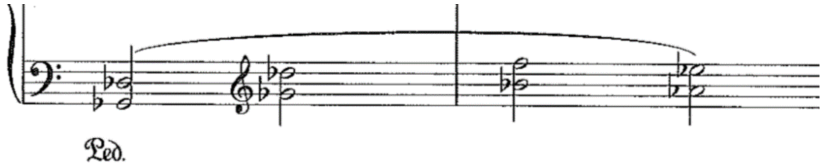
Example 4.15. "Pearl Fog," mm. 15–16, rocking in tenor.

Notice in "Under the Harvest Moon," how once again the rocking of pitches introduces a wary topic—death (Example 4.16).



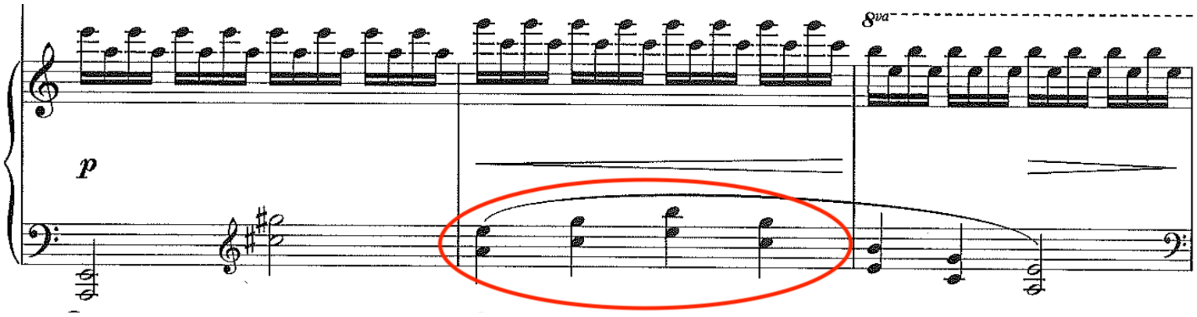
Example 4.16. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 23–24, rocking in tenor and bass.

The final unifying motive is an arch shape. Unlike the wave motive, which moves by stepwise motion, the arch motive moves by leaps. Occasionally the leaps are small, only a third, but often the leap is an octave, and in some cases the arch leaps from the lowest range of the piano and moves quite high in the range, forcing the pianist to cross hands (Example 4.17).



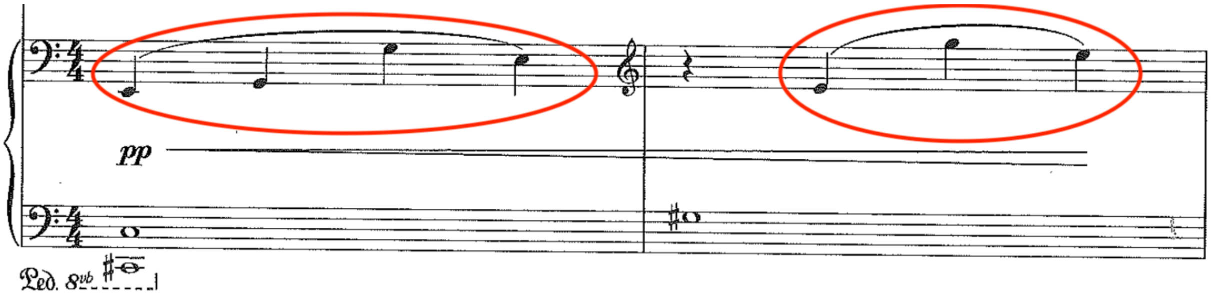
Example 4.17. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 13–14, arch cell.

The arch is found also in Follies (Example 4.18).



Example 4.18. "Follies," mm. 47–49, arch in left hand of piano.

And potentially the most compelling version of the arch is found in "Pearl Fog" (Example 4.19). This iteration of the arch is the most often used, particularly in "Pearl Fog." The near-octave ascent becomes a hallmark of the accompanimental writing in this song.



Example 4.19. "Pearl Fog," mm. 1–2, arch in right hand of piano.

The arch could be interpreted as an augmentation of the wave motive. Whereas the wave ascends and then descends by step, the arch gesture ascends and descends with wide leaps.

Chapter 5: FOLLIES

SHAKEN
The blossoms of lilac,
  And shattered,
The atoms of purple.
Green dip the leaves,
  Darker the bark,
Longer the shadows.

Sheer lines of poplar
Shimmer with masses of silver
And down in a garden old with years
And broken walls of ruin and story,
Roses rise with red rain-memories
      May!
  In the open world
The sun comes and finds your face,
  Remembering all.[1]

"Follies," the first poem of the cycle, begins brightly, with open fifths in both hands, outlining a series of loosely related chords (Example 5.1). The busy action of the right hand and treble tessitura of the left signal a cheerful, carefree setting. Though there is no strict tonal center, the opening of the work circles around A, C, D, and F as tonal landmarks. In the first five measures, Hall uses quarter note motion in the left hand and sixteenth in the right. This motion is significant because she uses these rhythmic devices and derivatives of them throughout this movement and the entire cycle. The sixteenth note motion is employed through the entirety of this movement and becomes a hallmark of the cycle. The parallel fifths represented in the left hand, played here melodically, are found many times throughout the cycle, though most often sounded harmonically.

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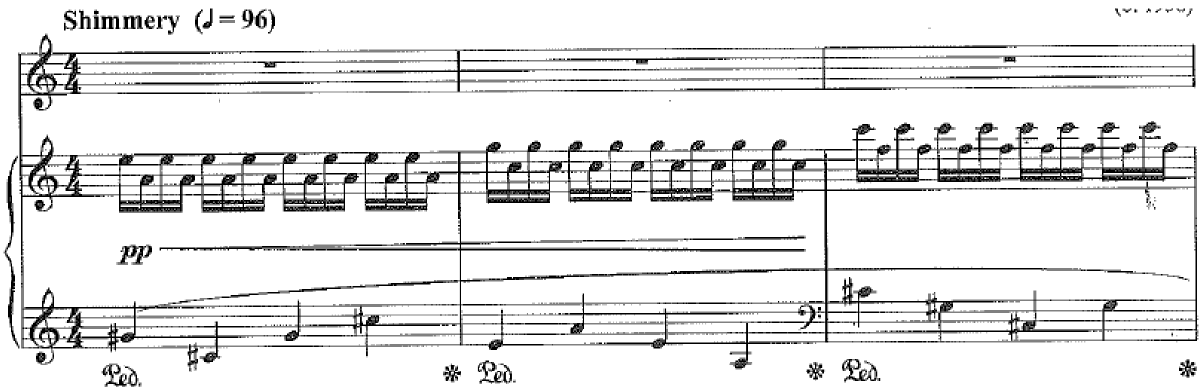
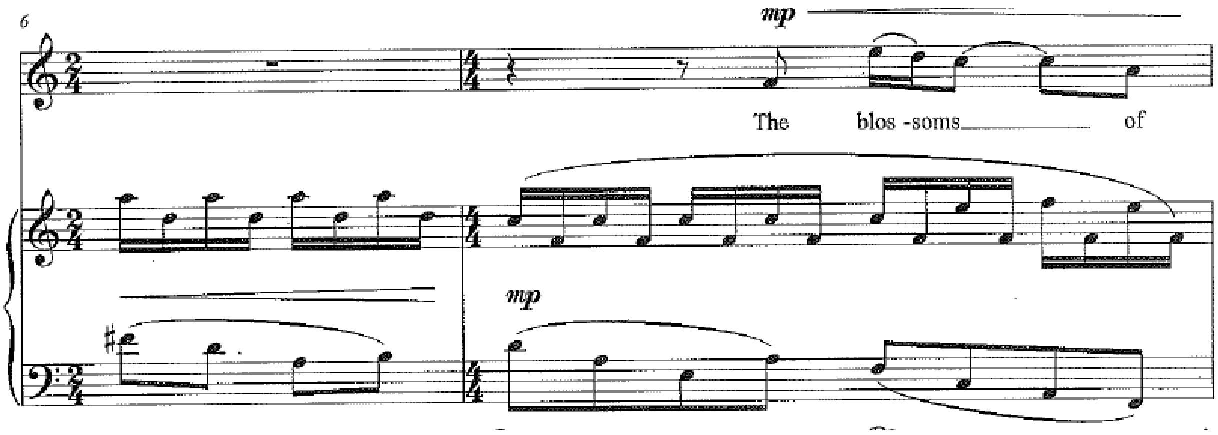
[1] Ibid., 128.



Example 5.1. "Follies," mm. 1–3, parallel fifths.

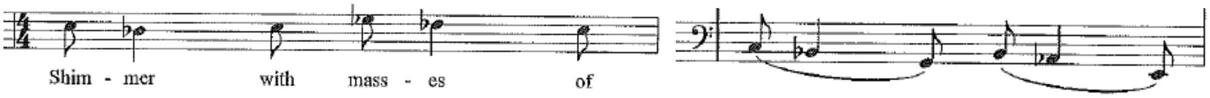
This movement can be analyzed in a loose ABA form. The first A section (mm. 1–26) begins at a moderate pace, as seen in Example 5.1, then it accelerates. The B section (mm. 27–31) is much slower, as will be seen in Example 5.4. The second A section (mm. 32–52) begins quite quickly and decelerates to the end, giving the movement a pleasing arch shape.

Hall uses various techniques to accelerate or decelerate the motion of the movement. One of these techniques, using brisk rhythms to propel the motion forward, is found in measure 6, when the motion of the left hand doubles. Replacing quarters with eighth notes heightens the emotional state and allows the harmonic rhythm to move more quickly.



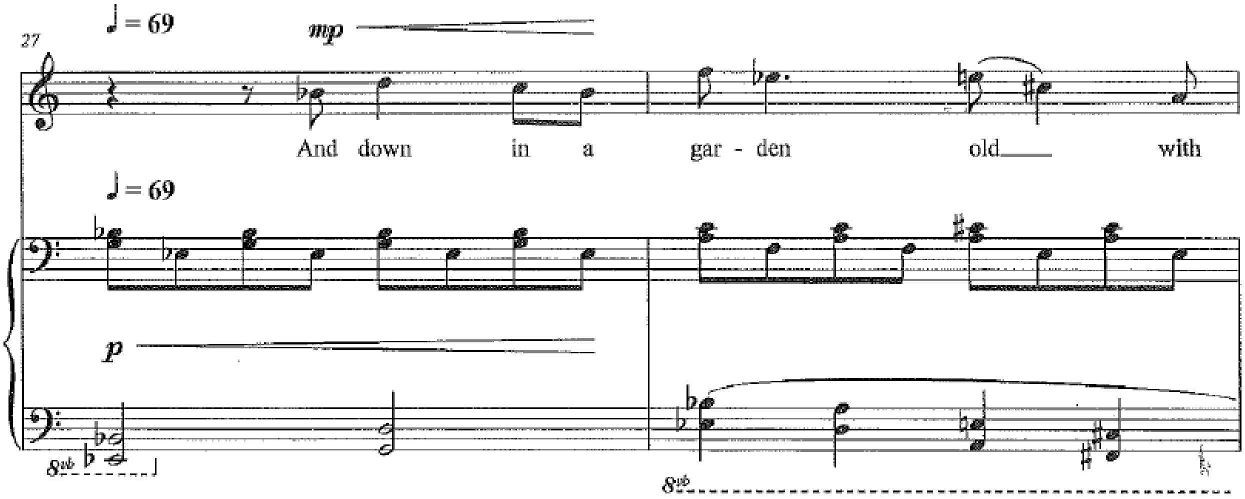
Example 5.2. "Follies," mm. 6–7, eighth notes in left hand increase motion.

Measure 26 serves as a transition to the B section, the piano imitating the voice's previous line of "shimmer with masses of silver." The imitation is not exact: the piano uses this syncopated rhythm to slow the action down and direct the key towards E♭. Below is measure 24 of the voice and measure 26 of the piano left hand.



Example 5.3. "Follies," mm. 24 & 26, similar rhythm.

The B section of this movement is at a slower tempo. As seen in Example 5.4, the sixteenth notes of the opening have become eighth notes and the quarter notes of the left hand have become half notes—a complete augmentation of the opening rhythm. Parallel fifths still ground the harmonic writing, however.



Example 5.4. "Follies," mm. 27–28, B section, augmentation of A section.

Measure 27 begins the B section significantly slower than the A section (69 bpm in the B section as opposed to 96 bpm in the A section). The B section presents the text:

> And down in a garden old with years
> And broken walls of ruin and story.[2]

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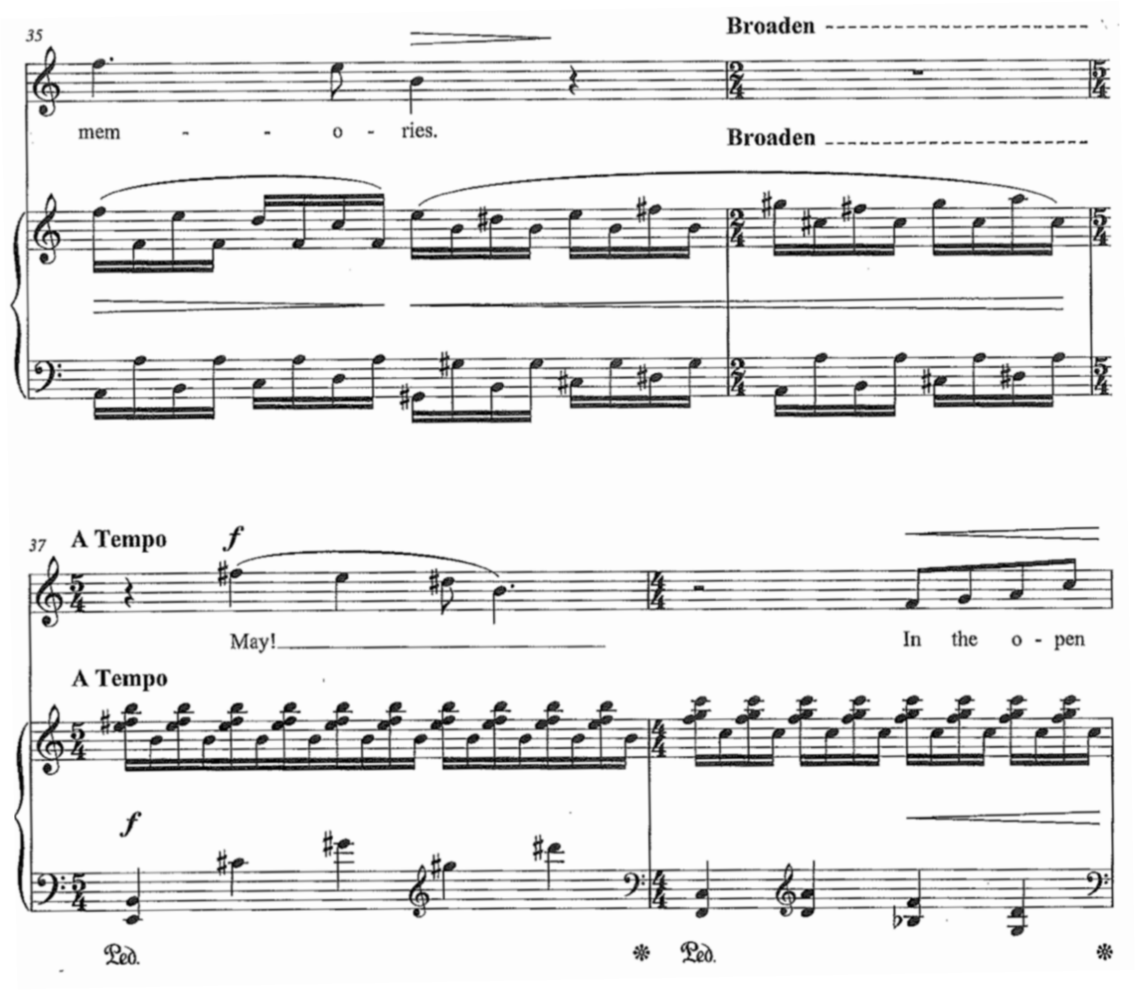
[2] Ibid., 128.

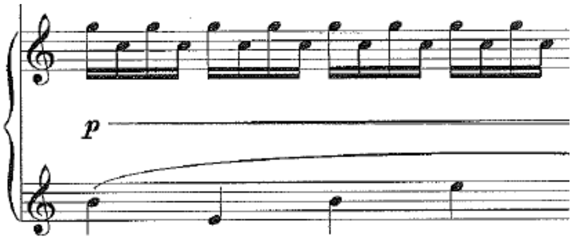
Musically presented as something of an aside, the tempo and tessitura of these short five measures are unlike the rest of the movement—slower in tempo and lower in the piano tessitura. Aside from that, however, the writing could be interpreted as an augmentation of the opening material. The rhythmic values are augmented and the parallel fifths, here sounded harmonically, are an augmentation of the opening melodic fifths. The parallel fifths in various treatments (see measures 27 and 28) are one of the motives Hall employs to unify the cycle and exemplify what is to come in later movements.

After the slowed B section, the busy, briskness of the opening returns and constant sixteenth notes continue until near the end of the movement (see measures 35–38 in Example 5.5), when Hall slowly reintroduces larger rhythmic values to slow the movement down. Notice the reintroduction of the quarter note in the left hand in m. 37 (now sounding fifths both melodically and harmonically), the first step in slowing down the movement.


35
Broaden
mem - - o - ries.
Broaden
37
A Tempo
f
May!
In the o - pen
A Tempo
f
Ped.
Ped.

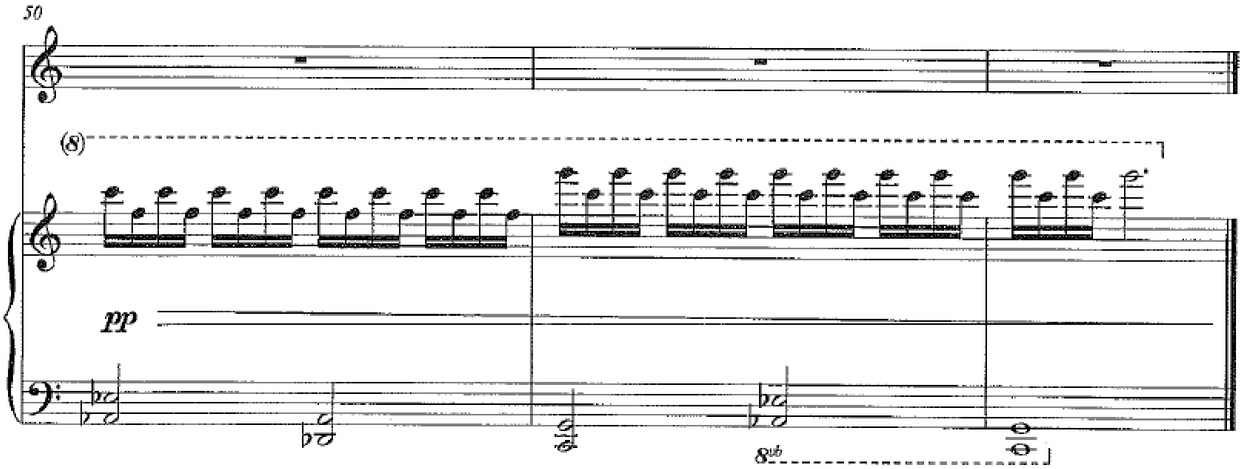
Example 5.5. "Follies," mm. 35–38, deceleration in piano left hand.

The motion is slowed even more a few measures later when the busy sixteenths in the right hand are reduced to undulating single pitches, rather than undulating chords; however, the open fifths remain.



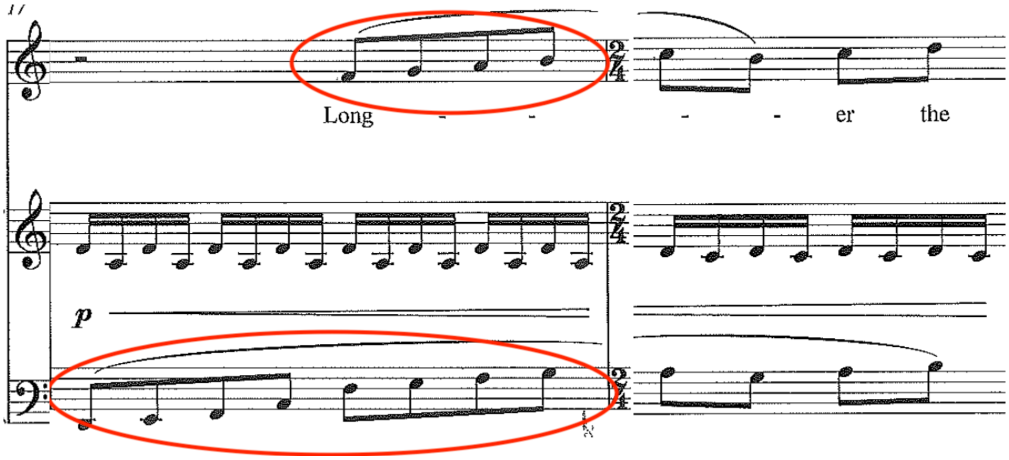
Example 5.6. "Follies," m. 41, reduced texture.

The final decelerating device comes at the end of the movement when half notes replace the quarter notes in the left hand. Parallel fifths, sounded here harmonically, ground the harmonic motion, giving finality and depth to the end of the movement. This postlude sees the piano expanding as far as the instrument allows, reaching to the very ends of the range, with undulating sixteenths for the right hand, ever ascending, and solid, stately parallel fifths, bringing the left hand nearly as low as possible.



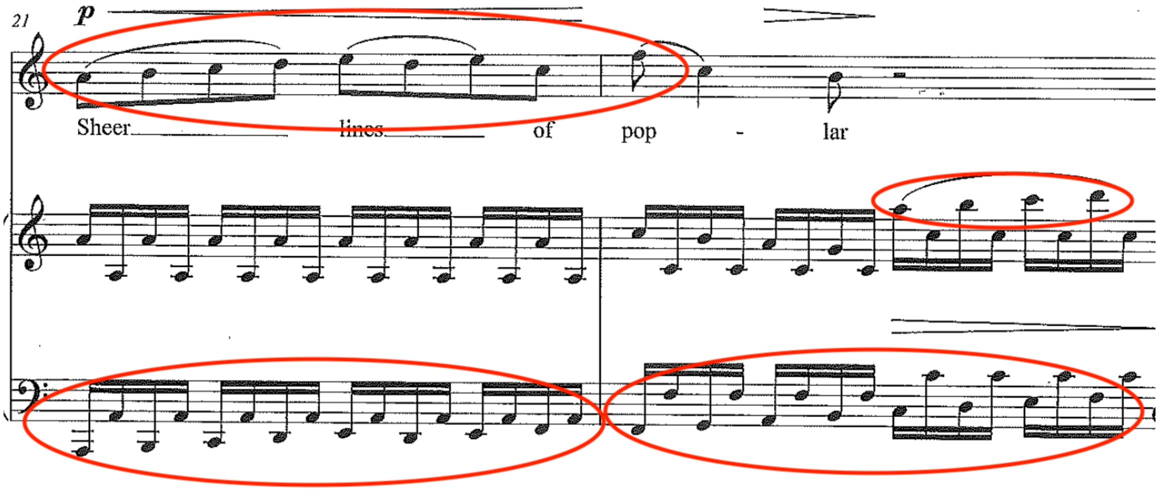
Example 5.7. "Follies," mm. 50–52, deceleration of the end of the movement.

A motive used several times in the movement is an ascending scalar line, often doubled or harmonized by the piano. See Example 5.8.



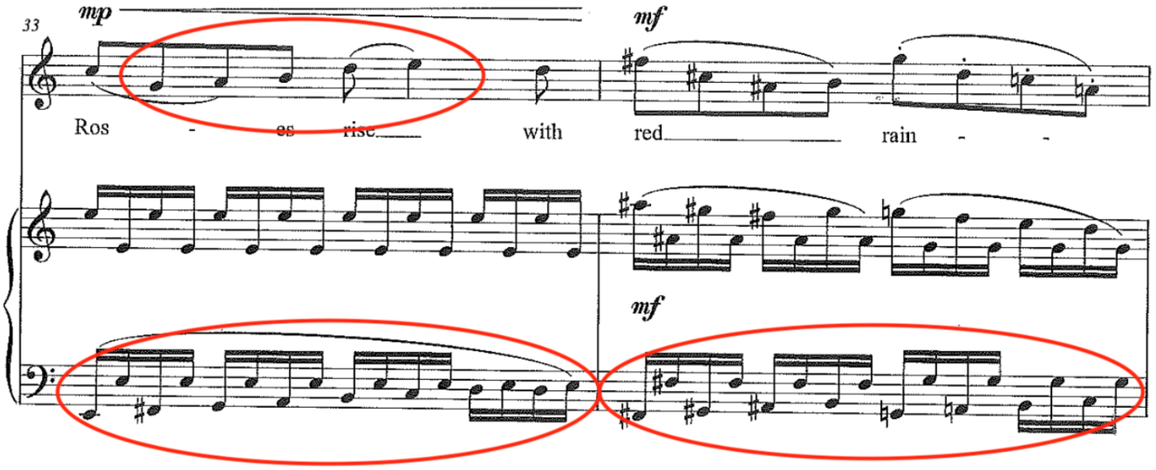
Example 5.8. "Follies," mm. 16–17, ascending scalar line in soprano and bass.

In Example 5.9 the ascending line motive is repeated in the soprano with the text “sheer lines of poplar,” in octaves with the lowest pitches of the piano, but this time the rising of the piano continues after the soprano finishes her line.



Example 5.9. “Follies,” mm. 21–22, ascending scalar line in soprano and bass.

A slight variation of the ascending line is found in measure 33 (Example 5.10). This time the piano left hand is sometimes at the octave of the voice and sometimes only a step away from the voice. In this example the voice and piano soar to the top of the staff with the text “Roses rise with red rain-memories.” With this text, Hall demonstrates creative text-painting, setting the word “rain” on four staccato eighth notes slurred together. The result of slurred staccato gives the impression of water droplets. In the example below, notice the ascending line of “roses,” aided by an ascending bass line, and the setting of the word “rain.”



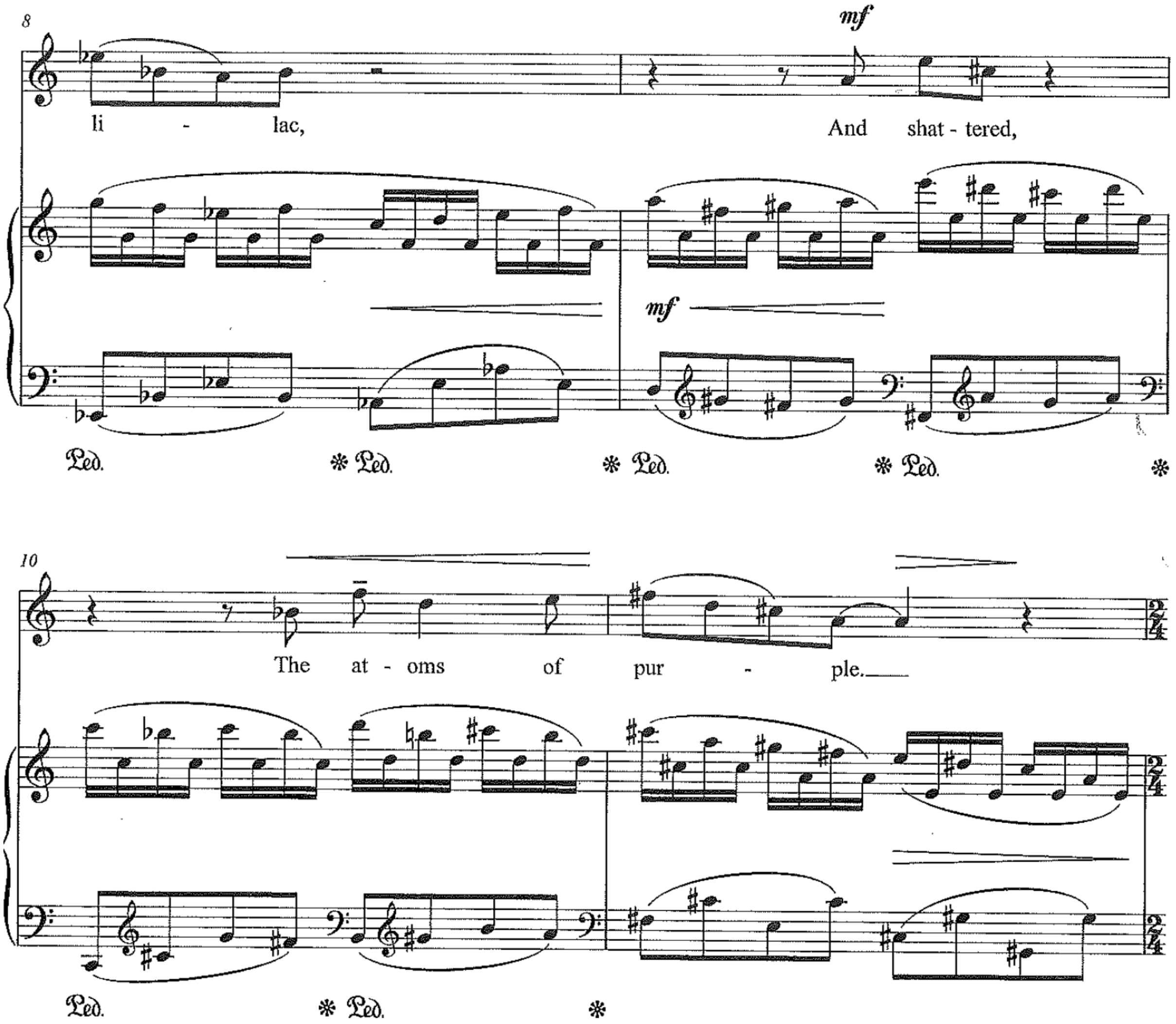
Example 5.10. "Follies," mm. 33–34, ascending scalar line in soprano and bass.

The motives introduced in this movement set the stage for the rest of the cycle. Two of the most important textures of the work have been heard: the undulating sixteenth notes and the parallel fifths.

The overall effect of this movement is quite cheerful, and it is a lovely way to begin the cycle. This movement serves as an introduction for the following six movements. It introduces themes and ideas but does not take part in the action of the story. It doesn't introduce us to major human players in the mini-drama, but it does set up a few expectations. Namely, that nature itself is a player in this cycle. Nature's moods and variances greatly impact the actions and emotions of the speaker and the shape and direction of the music.

Taking into account the contemporary nature of the cycle, "Follies" is one of the easier of the songs to learn from a singer's standpoint. The chromatic shifts tend to be more supported in this movement than in others. This movement still requires a good musician, as the vocal melody often has the seventh of the chord, or is a chromatic half step away from the pitches in the piano. There are some rhythmic relationships between the soprano and the piano that make putting together the ensemble challenging.

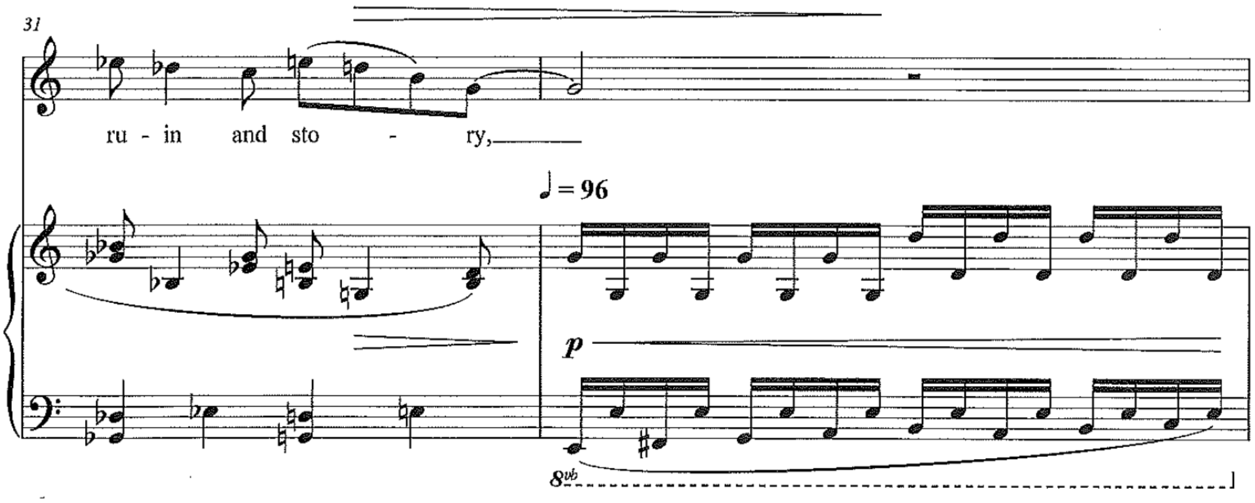
Pedagogically, this movement must employ a text-first approach. The first lines of text, "Shaken, the blossoms of lilac/And shattered, the atoms of purple," use words not frequently set to music, and because of Hall's free use of syncopation and motion to the line, this text can be unclear (Example 5.11). The singer must prioritize diction above all else.



Example 5.11. "Follies," mm. 8–11, text setting.

Along with crisp, clear consonants, the singer must maintain pure vowels on the melismatic passages. For example, Hall sets the word "longer" on six-note ascending scale through the middle voice (Example 5.8). The singer must maintain open space and vibrancy through the ascent to ensure the vowel and the word are clear.

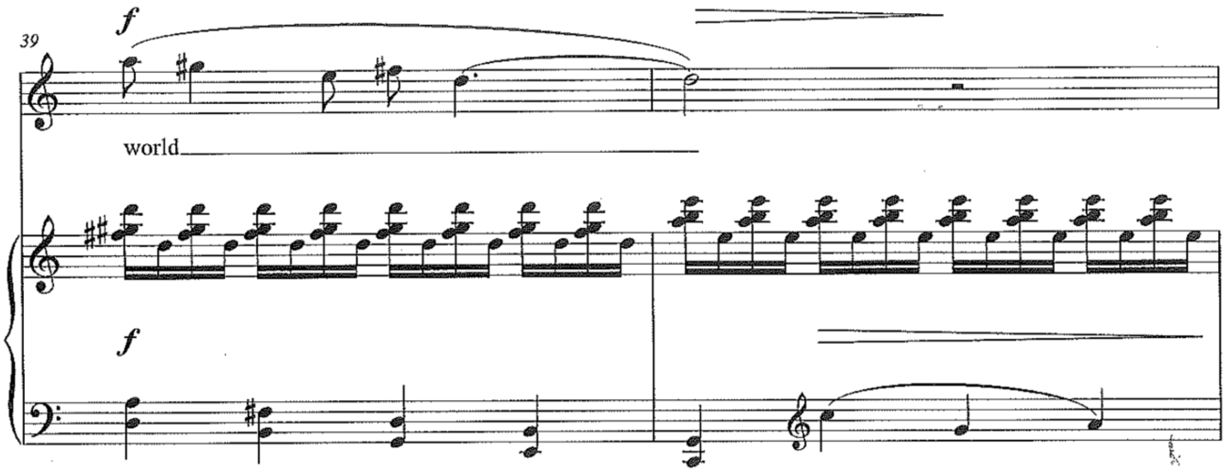
Another unique challenge to this movement is that occasionally Hall sets the final syllable of a word with longer rhythmic values than the other syllables. And, often in English, the final syllable is the least important. See Example 5.12, where Hall sets the word "story" with three eighth notes for "sto-" and a half note tied to an eighth note for "-ry."



Example 5.12. "Follies," mm. 31–32, text setting.

The singer must work against the agogic accent to emphasize the correct stress of the text—in this case that means giving a slight accent or tenuto to the first note of "sto-" and making less dynamically of the "-ry." This occurs many times throughout the movement.

The final text-related challenge is that Hall makes frequent use of syncopation at the beginning of words. For example, "atoms," "darker," "shadows," "poplar," "shimmer," "silver," "garden," "ruin," "rise," "face," "all," and "world" (Example 5.13), are set with a rhythmic syncopation (and change of pitch) at the outset of the note. This is challenging, as any good musician will try to make the syncopation clear. The inexperienced singer may be tempted to prioritize rhythm over text, and as this is a text-based work, that is an incorrect solution. Rather, the singer must find a way to honor the rhythm without detracting from a pure vowel.



Example 5.13. "Follies," mm. 39–40, syncopated text setting.

It is important to remember that Hall is a composer very much interested in gesture. She writes according to instinct. If she hears motion to the word "rise," she gives it musical action. In this case, that means a step-wise ascent on a syncopated eighth-quarter. It is the singer's job to maintain the first vowel of the word, [a] to the end of the gesture before completing the diphthong [aIz] (Example 5.10). It is attention to details like this that honor the intention of the composer, which in turn honors the intention of the poet.

In the following, I recall my time coaching the cycle (along with pianist Riley McKinch) with Hall and her husband, David Sims. It is my hope that the advice below may be useful to future singers of this cycle. I will include similar points of discussion at the end of each chapter.

In measure 9 of "Follies," with the text "and shattered," Hall asked me for a slightly *marcato* sound. I suggest that this is best accomplished with crisp consonants. The crescendo in measures 16 and 17 should be significant, so that the *mezzopiano* in measure 18 is a *subito* color change. The B section, measures 27–31, should be sung as if a nostalgic melody, far back in the singer's memory. The effect on "rain-memories" (in measure 34) should be like that of a raindrop—plump and full but ending abruptly. I envision a staccato with a tenuto—a sort of lengthened staccato articulation. Hall asked for the notated Broadening in measure 36 to continue into measure 37, so that the text "May" has time to settle and expand. She also asked for the next line of text “The sun comes and finds your face” to be more personal than the extraverted statement that precedes it. And she truly wants very soft dynamics when marked *mezzopiano* or below (from both performers).[3]

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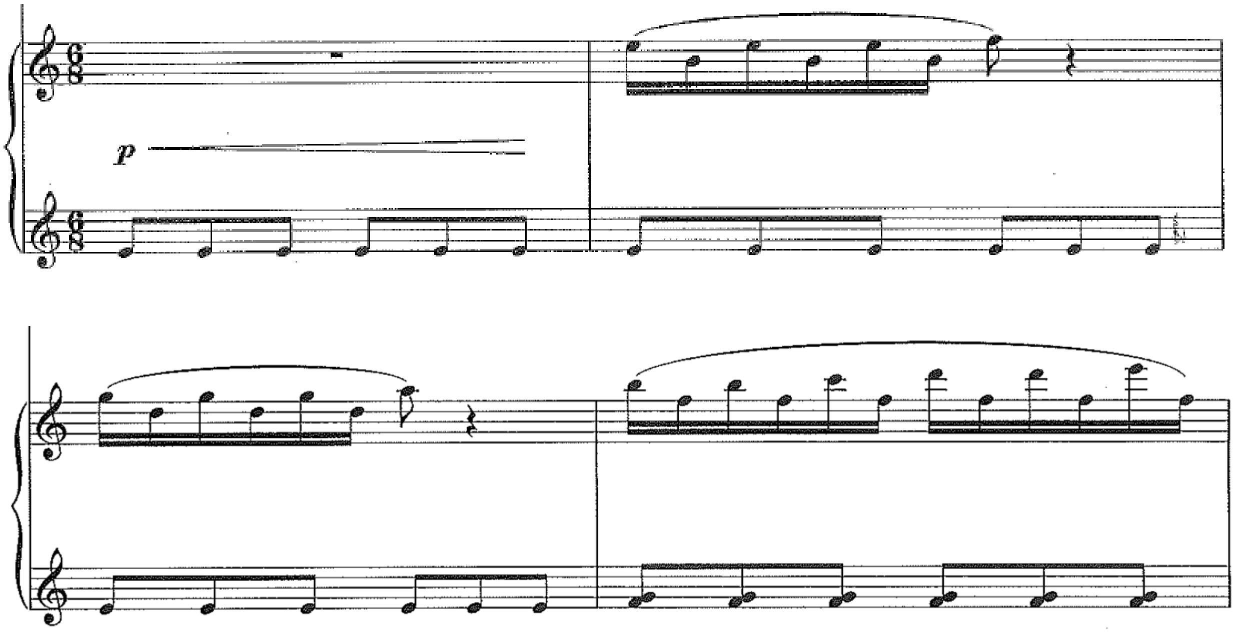
[3] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.

Chapter 6: MASK

FLING your red scarf faster and faster dancer.
It is summer and the sun loves a million green leaves, masses of green.
Your red scarf flashes across them calling and a-calling.
The silk and flare of it is a great soprano leading a chorus
Carried along in a rouse of voices reaching for the heart of the world.
Your toes are singing to meet the song of your arms:

Let the red scarf go swifter.
Summer and the sun command you.[1]

This movement begins animatedly, in 6/8 at a brisk tempo (Example 6.1). The left hand begins with a pedal E4 while the right hand, beginning at the octave (E5), quickly widens the range, with an undulating sixteenth note pattern, somewhat reminiscent of the opening of "Follies."



Example 6.1. "Mask," mm. 1–4, opening.

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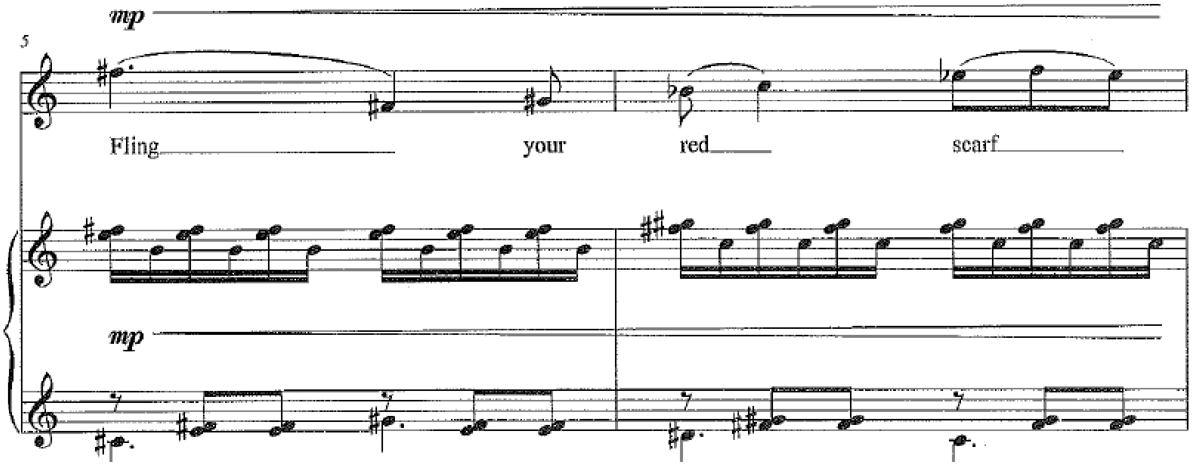
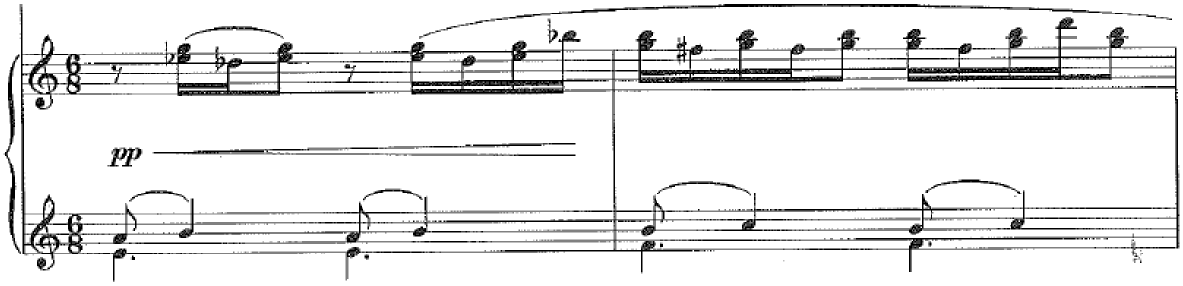
[1] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 125.

Following the four measures of introductory material, the first line of text is accompanied in the piano by a waltz-like bass, creating an effect like a carnival merry-go-round (Example 6.2). (One might feel quite "flung" on a fast-paced merry-go-round, as the text suggests.)



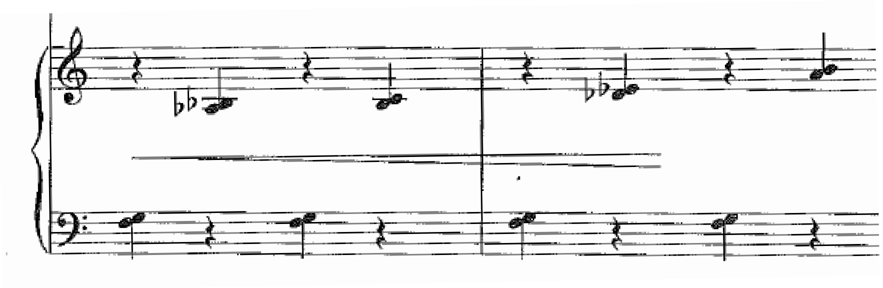
Example 6.2. "Mask," mm. 5–6, waltz-like bass.

This waltz-like bass doesn't find a reappearance in this movement, but might be compared to the lullaby of "Child Moon" (Example 6.3), or even the bass-afterbeat of "Between Two Hills." See below the first two measures from "Child Moon," and notice the similarity in the left hand of the piano writing.



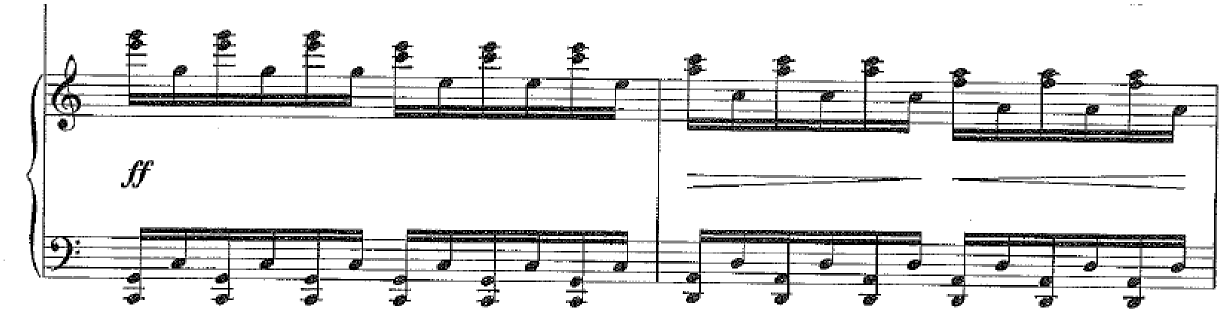
Example 6.3. "Child Moon," mm. 1–2, waltz-like bass.

In "Between Two Hills" the comparable passage expands from a three-beat cell to a four-beat cell, but maintains the strong-weak pattern (Example 6.4).



Example 6.4. "Between Two Hills," mm. 16–17, strong-weak is reminiscent of waltz-like.

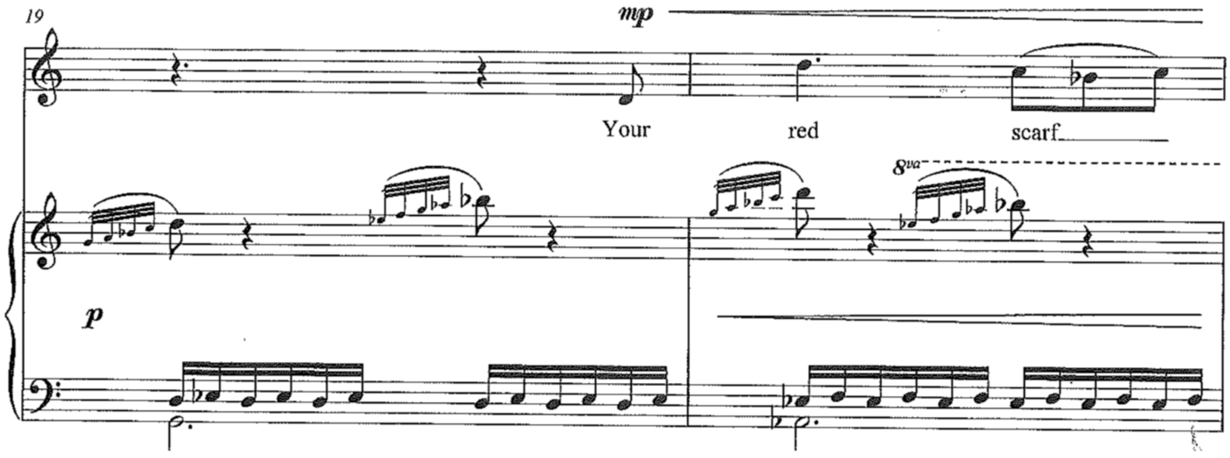
The general mood of "Mask" is bright, sunlit, and energetic. Hall accompanies the text with a busy piano part, constant sixteenth notes in both hands, generally outlining octaves (Example 6.5).



Example 6.5. "Mask" mm. 11–12, undulating sixteenths.

The undulating sixteenths in Example 6.5 make up the majority of the pianistic writing in this movement and bear an undeniable resemblance to the sixteenths in "Follies." This accompanimental texture allows for slow harmonic rhythm, leaving the voice to communicate the text. The voice line often looks as it does in Example 6.2 beginning with "Fling": simple rhythms and, though diatonic within each measure, often chromatic between measures.

The B section of "Mask" (measures 19–26) begins abruptly with an ominous rocking half step in the bass and wind-like gestures in the right hand (Example 6.6). The "wind" is created by a five-tone scale, generally quite high in the register.



Example 6.6. "Mask," mm. 19–20, B section.

The B section continues with the writing exemplified above, unstable bass and ever-ascending treble in the piano. In Hall's words, this movement contains both sunshine and shadow. This section is clearly representative of the shadow of the poem.

> "Mask" has much brightness, but also plenty of shadow. Throughout the song, the music moves between obvious "major" music (sunlight) and obvious "minor" music (shade). The song ends in what I think of as a "soft" minor...not really a fully developed instance of a minor key, but more of a bright and sunny ending tempered by the tiniest "dab" of "shade" in the scene, for there is never a scene in nature that is either all bright or all dark...and the B♭ at the end only serves to provide that little bit of "shade" providing contrast to the sunny disposition of the song as a whole.[2]

As hinted in Hall's statement, the end of the movement is a fantasia-like postlude on the material from Example 6.6. Example 6.7 demonstrates the "shade" part of the postlude.

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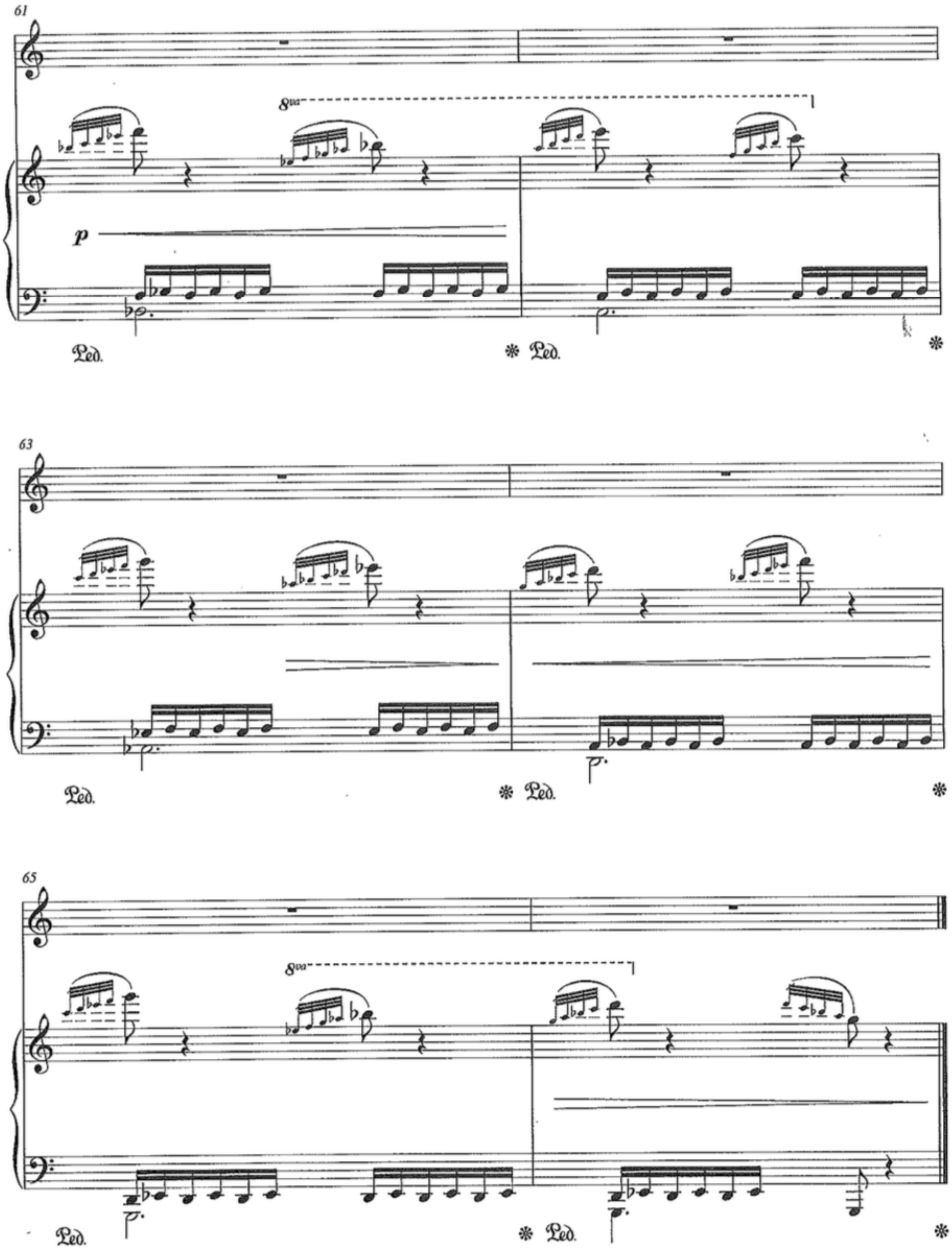
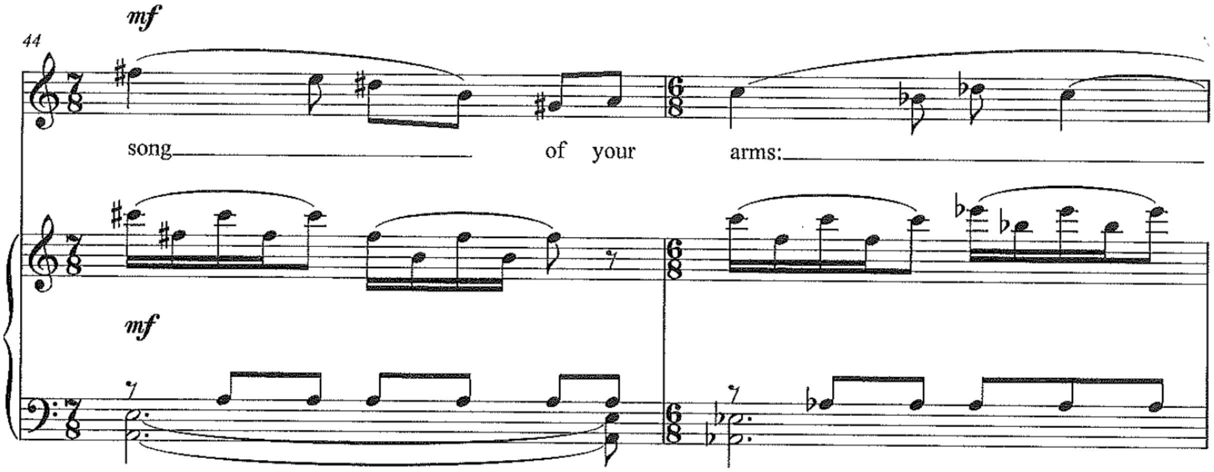
[2] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Oct. 13, 2018.


61
8va
p
Ped.
63
65

Example 6.7. "Mask," mm. 61–66, postlude.

"Mask" continues gestures and pianistic writing from the first movement, but also introduces themes from upcoming movements. Its bright and cheery mood is tempered with elements of minor, leading smoothly into the next song, which is decidedly more serious.

Vocally, this movement is challenging. As mentioned previously, while within each measure the vocal writing tends to be diatonic, between measures the writing is highly chromatic (Example 6.8). At times, the writing appears to be whole tone or even octatonic. This is due to the improvisational nature of Hall's compositional style. Whole tone or octatonic (or nearly whole tone or nearly octatonic) passages are prevalent in her writing, as they help blur any tonal center and lend to quickly changing tonal areas. On the page, the chromaticism may look manageable, but once heard with the accompaniment, it is apparent how challenging this movement is. The chromatic shifts are often doubled in the lower voices of the piano writing. Though this is the case, it is difficult for the soprano to hear the doubling, due to the distance in register and the busy texture. This movement also employs the most frequent time signature changes in the cycle.



Example 6.8. "Mask," mm. 44–45, chromaticism and meter changes.

This movement is the most rhythmically challenging of the cycle. ("Child Moon" is a close second.) The singer must keep the rhythm precise throughout this movement. Even though the text of "Mask" suggests a free-spirited affect, attention to rhythmic detail is in fact the greatest challenge to a convincing performance. Because the text is primarily syllabic, vowel continuity, legato, and sustained singing are comparatively easy to achieve. Without the rhythmic clarity of syncopation, dotted rhythms, and meter changes, the song lacks the energy and excitement needed to achieve a dance-like affect.

As Hall expressed in our coaching on “Mask,” the tempo should be brisk—to evoke the motion of a scarf in the wind. That being said, there are a couple spots that deserve rhythmic flexibility; for example, mm. 9–11, m. 29, and mm. 37–38 (though this broadening can almost begin in m. 35). When the piano has the wave motive at mm.17–18, the top voice should be brought out. In the piano in the final measure of the piece the last set of grace notes should be performed not as grace notes, but as part of the line.[3]

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[3] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.

Chapter 7: PEARL FOG

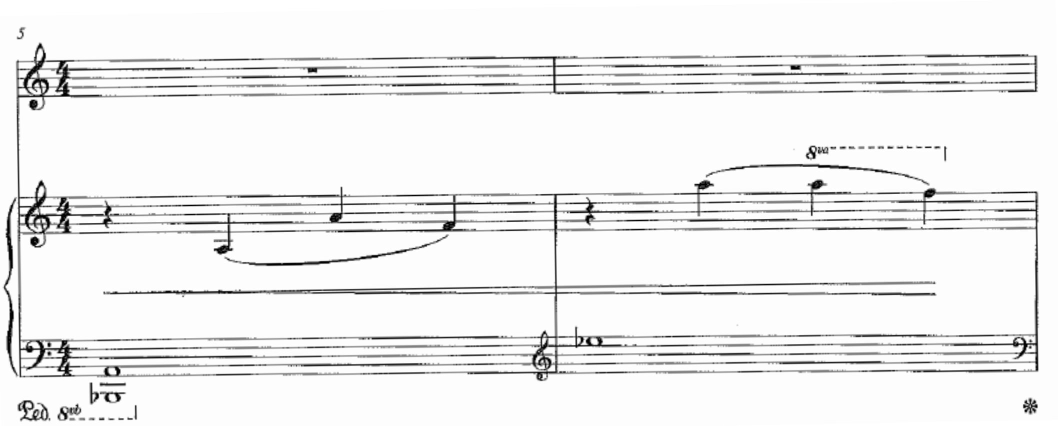
OPEN the door now.
Go roll up the collar of your coat
To walk in the changing scarf of mist.

Tell your sins here to the pearl fog
And know for once a deepening night
Strange as the half-meanings
Alurk in a wise woman's mousey eyes.

Yes, tell your sins
And know how careless a pearl fog is
Of the laws you have broken.[1]

Hall's setting of this poem falls into three sections or motives. The A motive is comprised of a murky, low bass, accompanied by a high-ranged octave ascent. The B motive employs more motion in the piano with some syncopation. The C motive compresses the syncopation of the B motive into a smaller cell, heightening the intensity of the movement.

The first section has two components: a dark, murky sound in the lowest range of the piano and an arch motive in the right hand, generally an octave ascent, followed by a descending third (Example 7.1). (The arch motive is discussed in Chapter 4. For comparison, see Examples 4.17 and 4.18.)



Example 7.1. "Pearl Fog," mm. 5–6, arch motive.

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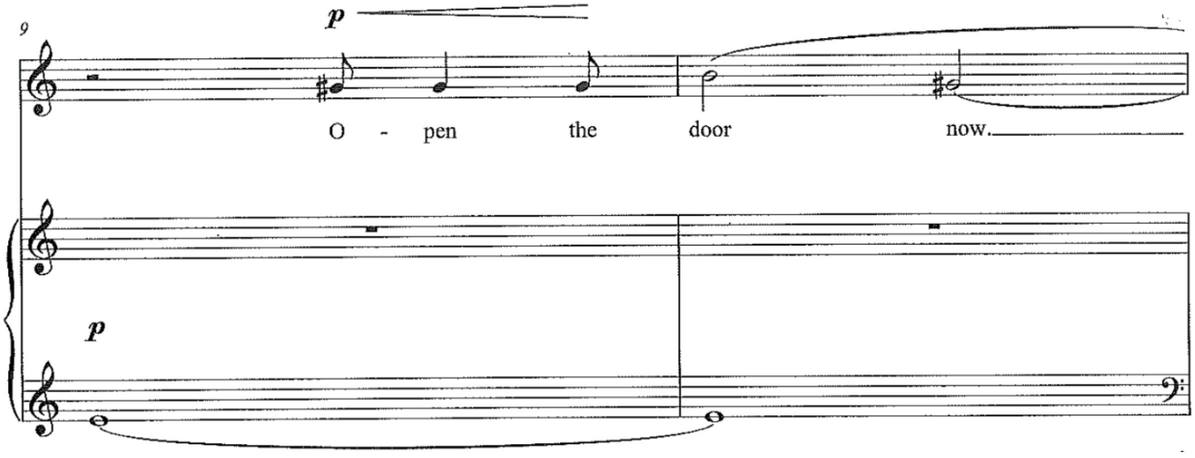
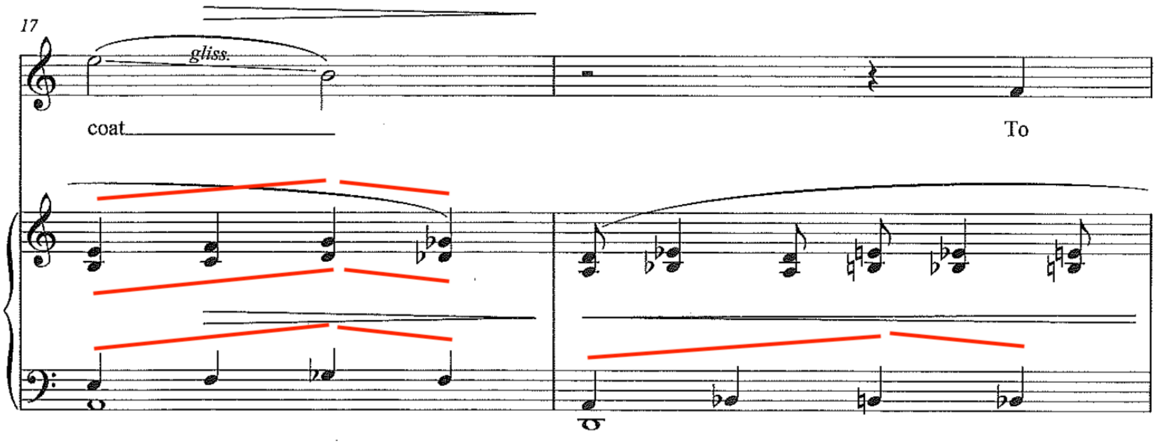
[1] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 126.

This motive represents the fog referenced in the poem's title. Just as fog is mysterious and ever changing, this introduction is quite unsettling, using the entire range of the piano. The measures are never the same, never quite fitting into four-bar phrases, easily conveying the constant change of fog: occasionally revealing, but then immediately concealing. This introduction comes to a halt with the entrance of the voice, when the piano has a solitary note to support the voice (E4, also the first note sounded in the piano in both the previous movements) (Example 7.2). However, Hall's choice to set the vocal entrance on G♯ hints immediately to the end of the poem. Not only does it create a major interval between the voice and piano, giving the speaker the impression of hope, but that G♯ is transformed to an A♭ at the very end of the movement, as the resolution to the final cadence.



Example 7.2. "Pearl Fog," mm. 9-10, vocal entrance.

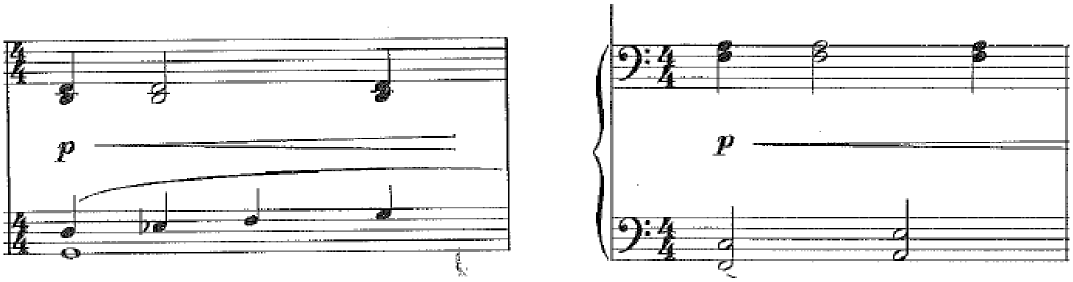
After the voice's initial statement, the B motive arrives at only the second line of text. The B motive begins with homorhythmic chords in the piano and gently introduces eighth note motion into both the piano and the voice (Example 7.2). The unsettling aspect of this motive is the parallel fourths in the right hand of the piano—ever insistent, relentless. At the same time, the tenor line ascends by half step twice and descends once (this is the wave motive, as discussed in Chapter 4—see Examples 4.6–4.9). Example 7.2 shows the homorhythmic B theme rhythm in measure 17, and the syncopated version in measure 18.



Example 7.3. "Pearl Fog," mm. 17–18, homorhythmic B motive, return of wave motive.

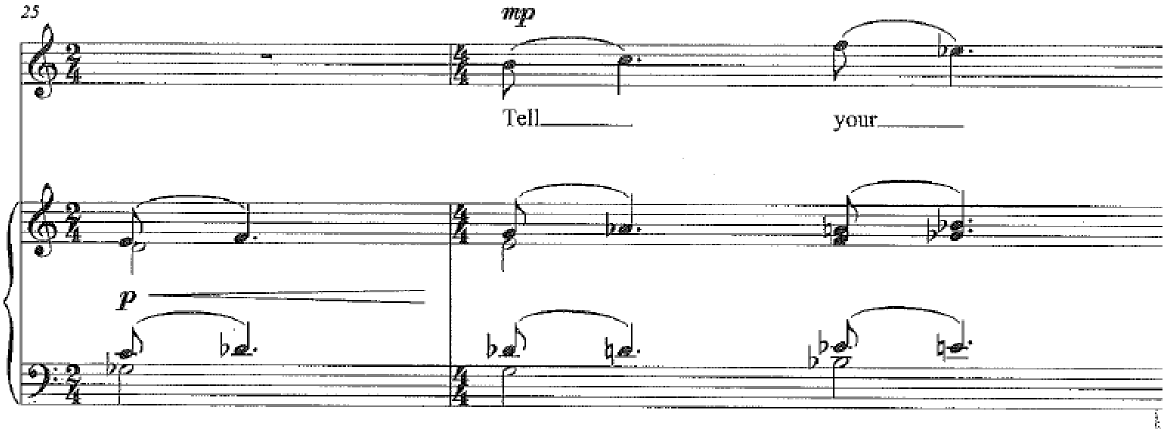
In much of Hall's writing the piano is written in such a way to frame and support motives, leaving the voice free to carry the text. Therefore, the voice is often unrelated to the motivic material in the piano, but is separate, declaiming the text. This is due both to Hall's extensive training as a pianist, but also her desire to clearly convey text. Since the voice is unrestricted, the structure and motives often fall solely in the piano writing.

The C motive of "Pearl Fog" transforms a quarter note followed by a half note (from the B motive, see Example 7.3), into an eighth note followed by a dotted quarter note (Example 7.4). This compresses the three-beat rhythmic cell into two beats, heightening the emotional fervor, as the speaker pleads with the subject to confess his sins. This short-long rhythm is replicated in the postlude and in "Under the Harvest Moon." In Example 7.4, see measure 44 of "Pearl Fog" on the left, contrasted with the first measure of "Under the Harvest Moon," on the right.



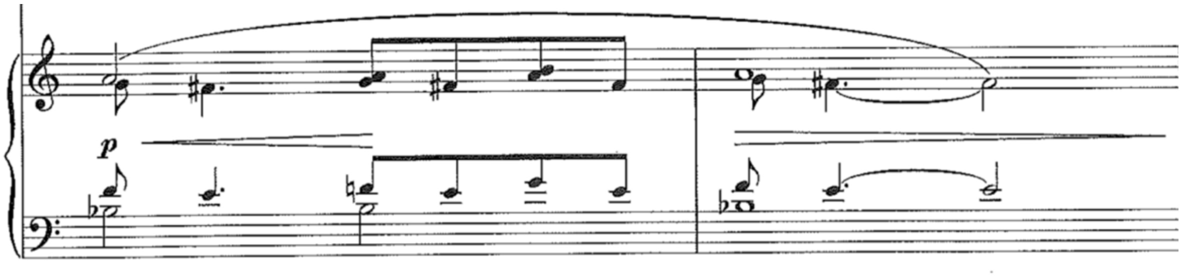
Example 7.4. "Pearl Fog," m. 44, & "Under the Harvest Moon," m. 1, rhythmic similarity.

The same short-long rhythmic gesture is compressed into two beats in Example 7.4. The short-long rhythm is maintained, creating familiarity, but the compression of the rhythm heightens intensity. This immediately gives the illusion of a quicker pulse, though the tempo remains unchanged.



Example 7.5. "Pearl Fog," mm. 25–26, C motive, short-long rhythm.

In addition to the rhythmic cell, the C motive is also characterized by heavy use of parallel seconds (Example 7.5). The close parallelism blurs tonality, representing the murkiness of the fog and the emotional toll on the subject, who is reluctant to confess his sins.



Example 7.6. "Pearl Fog," mm. 23–24, parallel seconds common in the C motive.

Hall creates a compelling synthesis of motives beginning in measure 44, when she weaves the three motives together. The piano returns to the B motive and the voice to the C motive, setting the text:

> And know how careless a pearl fog is
> Of the laws you have broken.[2]

In measures 44–46 (Example 7.7), the short-long rhythm of the C motive in the voice on "careless" and "is" and the homophonic quarters of the B rhythm in the piano.

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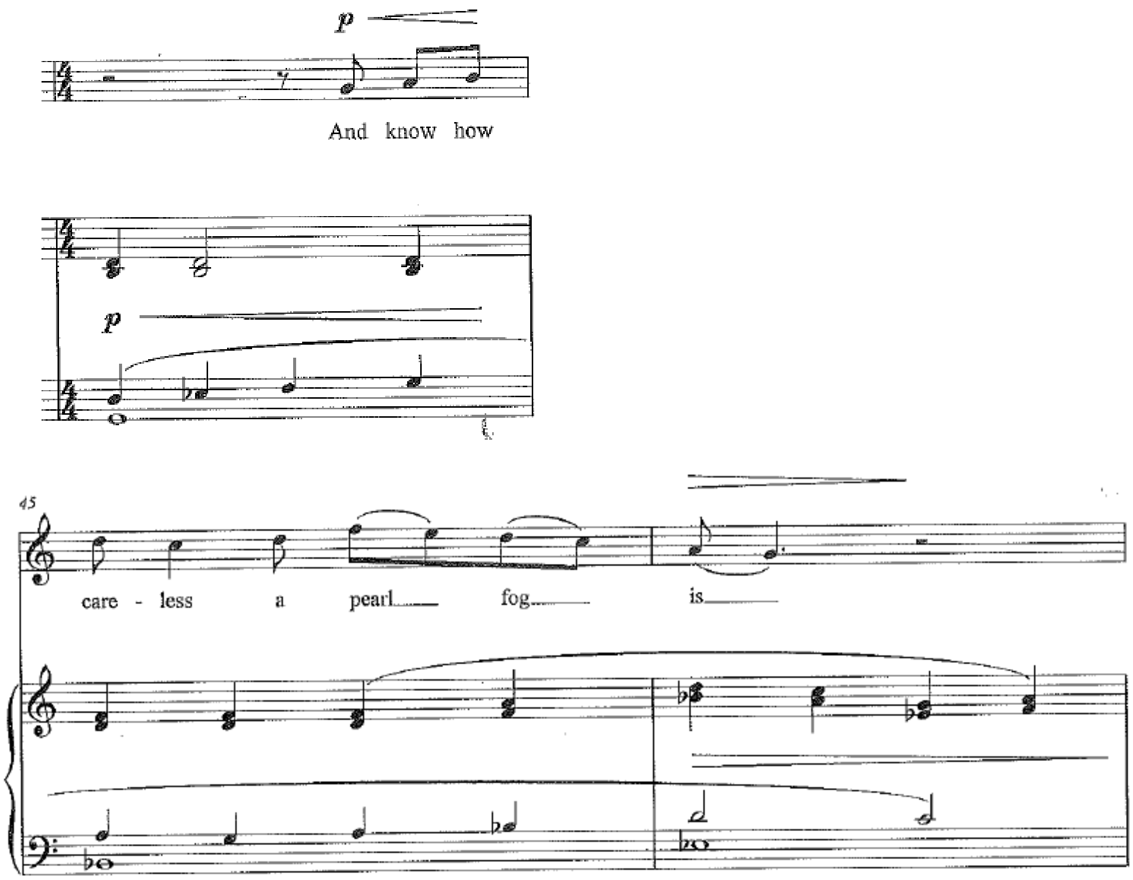
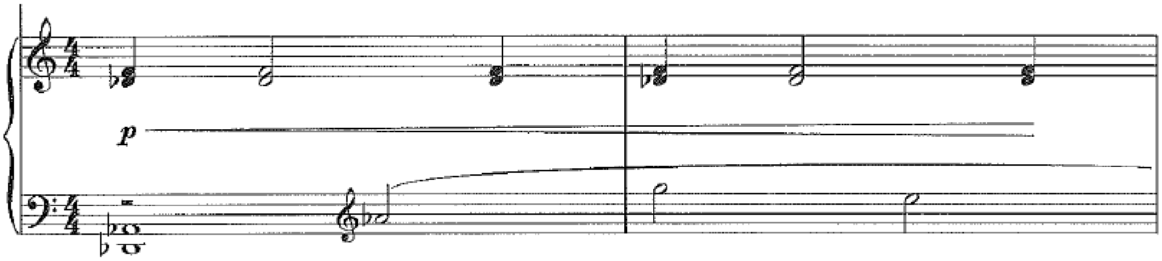
[2] Ibid., 126.



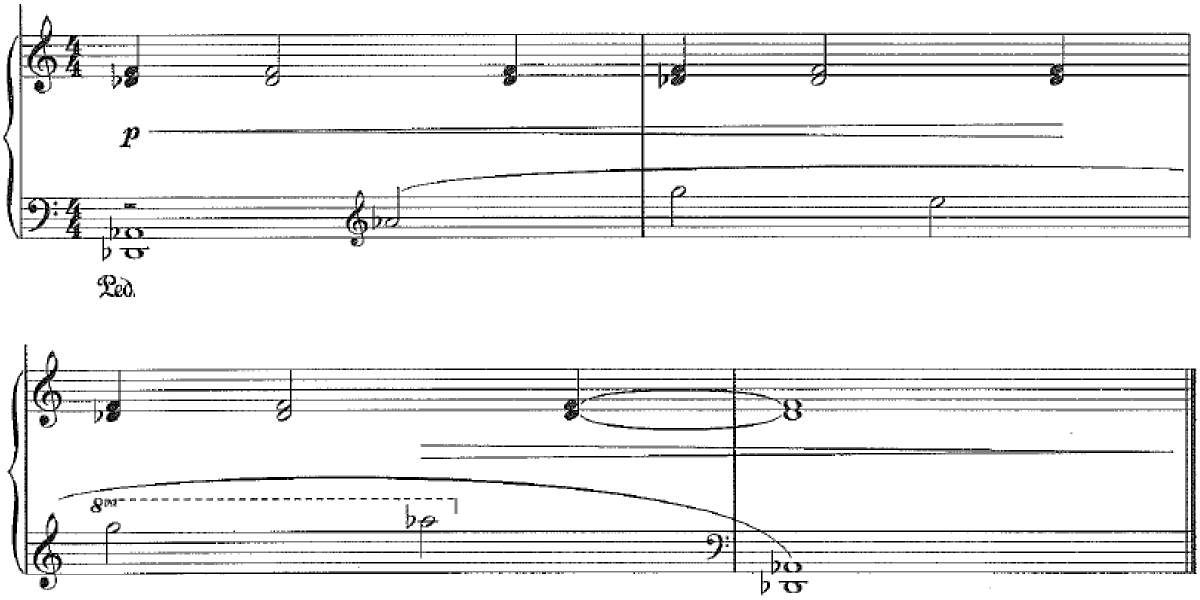
Example 7.7. "Pearl Fog," mm. 44–46, B and C motives presented together.

In the postlude beginning in measure 50 the B motive is overlaid with the arch motive from the introduction (Example 7.7). This layering of musical ideas reminds the listener how far they have travelled—from being lost in a mysterious fog, to confessing sins openly, to finding in that action freedom and relief. In Example 7.7 the short-long rhythm is in the right hand and the opening material arch melody is in the left hand. Notice also the lowest pitches in the piano, reminiscent of the murky opening, are now transformed into a lighter, more tonal foundation for the other two themes.



Example 7.8. "Pearl Fog," mm. 57–58, A & B motives presented together.

That searching, reaching motive representing the hopeful side of fog is now tempered in the gentle accompaniment of the right hand. In the last phrase of the movement, the reaching doesn't ascend and fall back down, but reaches further and further up, creating a consonance with the underlying D♭ harmony, and settling, at last into a major sonority (Example 7.8). The G♯ from the voice's first entrance of the movement is now transformed into an A♭ in the piano's last chord. This is significantly the only time the arch motive resolves upwards.



Example 7.9. "Pearl Fog," mm. 57–60, resolution of A motive.

The first motive represents the atmosphere of the movement; that is, if the poem were a painting, the first motive captures the visual aspect of the scenery. The second motive enters with the voice and presents a more pragmatic approach to the text. The third motive arises out of a shift in the text which must be conveyed by a different color in the music. The most interesting part of the work, though, is when halfway through the movement Hall begins to intertwine its motives. Suddenly one realizes how necessary to the situation the physical surrounding is to the speaker, how being in a pearl fog induces one to speak one's sins.

Vocally, the aspect of most importance in this movement is that the voice continues spinning out long phrases. Nearly every phrase in this movement is extended and most span more than one register of the voice. That is, phrases often include moments in the lower middle and the passaggio, rarely does the line remain in one area of the voice for a complete phrase. As the soprano moves through the ranges of the voice she must maintain her space, support, and vibrancy, accommodating each tone and creating legato throughout the registers. This movement also showcases some opportunities to make non-traditional vocal sounds: there are glissandi markings and there is a section marked *sotto voce*, which should be performed quasi-*sprechstimme*. The aim here is not vocal prowess, but expressive declamation of the text. The text marked *sotto voce* deals with a mysterious woman and should prioritize vocal color and atmosphere over traditional *bel canto* sounds.

From my coaching with Hall on "Pearl Fog:" the tempo should be no slower than 60 bpm. It needs to not be too static, but have slow motion, as if the subject is walking in the fog. The opening entrance from the singer should be somewhat soft and mysterious, unsure, as if peering from behind the door. But remember the speaker is encouraging the subject, and while at times imploring, is always supportive of his vulnerability. In measures 17 and 38 Hall marks glissandi. The glissando should begin as early as possible after establishing the first note and take as long as possible to get to the second note. If there is time left, it should be spent on the lower pitch. I find these glissandi are most effective when sung straight tone. Measure 34, marked *sotto voce* should be performed with as little voice as possible, with a breathy tone, almost inaudible. The effect is of something totally otherworldly—as one might behave in the midst of a dark night—with heightened senses: slightly whispered, almost unpitched.[3]

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[3] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.

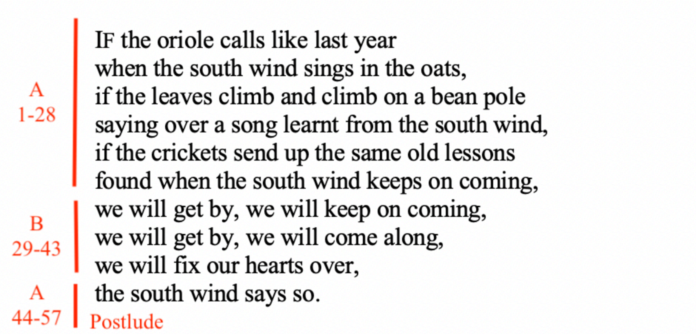
Chapter 8: THE SOUTH WIND SAYS SO

IF the oriole calls like last year
when the south wind sings in the oats,
if the leaves climb and climb on a bean pole
saying over a song learnt from the south wind,
if the crickets send up the same old lessons
found when the south wind keeps on coming,
we will get by, we will keep on coming,
we will get by, we will come along,
we will fix our hearts over,
the south wind says so.[1]

"The South Wind Says So" is taken from Sandburg's collection *Smoke and Steel*, published four years after *Chicago Poems*. Hall creates a pleasing arch by placing the one outlying poem in the exact center of the cycle, balancing it on either side by three poems from *Chicago Poems.* Hall uses motives of earlier movements in this song but also uses it as a springboard to the upcoming movements, setting up the rest of the cycle.

In addition to being from a different collection, this poem also bears the distinction of having the longest textual lines of the seven in the cycle. Hall keeps the poem's structure intact, setting each line of poetry as a line of music, allowing the listener to experience some of the longest phrases in the cycle. This is perhaps the most well-paced song in the cycle, as she allows the poetic line to flow continuously. (In other movements she often breaks up poetic thought with musical rests, disrupting the textual structure.)

Musically, Hall sets the poem with the following ABA construction:


A
1-28
B
29-43
A
44-57

IF the oriole calls like last year
when the south wind sings in the oats,
if the leaves climb and climb on a bean pole
saying over a song learnt from the south wind,
if the crickets send up the same old lessons
found when the south wind keeps on coming,
we will get by, we will keep on coming,
we will get by, we will come along,
we will fix our hearts over,
the south wind says so.
Postlude

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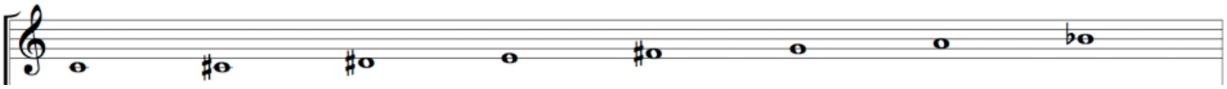
[1] Carl Sandburg, *Smoke and Steel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920), 165.

This musical ABA construction makes sense, as it follows the construction of the poem. The lines of the poem that make up the A section are long in structure and hypothetical in subject matter ("If the oriole calls" and "if the leaves climb"). The B section, however, is more active, the speaker (for the first time in the cycle using the plural) makes several short encouraging statements ("We will get by, we will keep on coming"). Then, the return of the A section is made up of the final line of text "the south wind says so" and the postlude. How apropos that the south wind would return at the end of the song—as it was the south wind that spawned the entire poem.

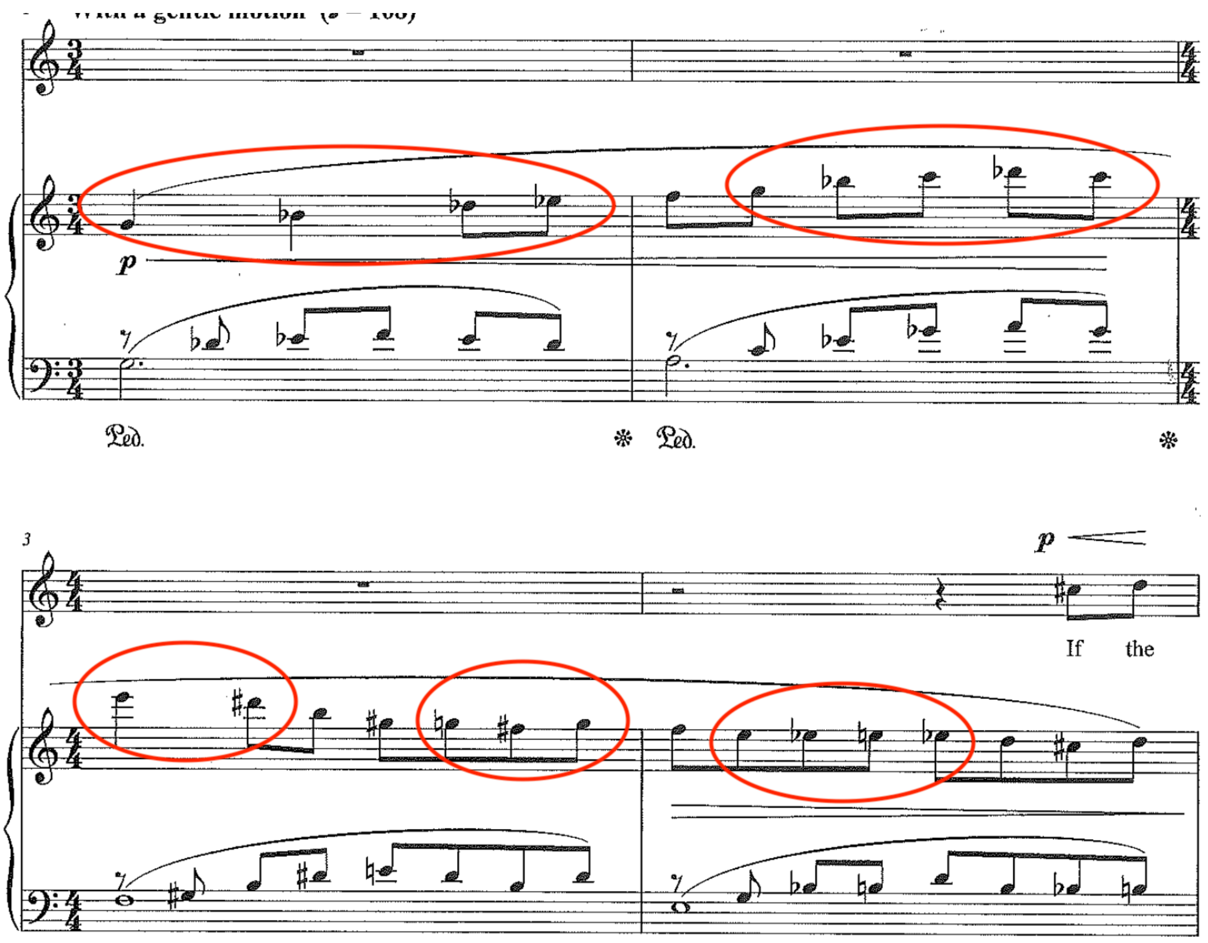
The A section (mm. 1–28) tends to be highly chromatic with very long lines while the B section (mm. 29–43) is significantly more diatonic and sets shorter lines of text. Within those bounds, the A section is made up of two musical textures: the first, a lyrical, nearly octatonic, arched line (demonstrated in Example 8.2), and the second, ethereal trills and tremolos in the right hand with a continuing eighth-note rising bass (Example 8.3).

The first thing I would like to discuss is the use of near-octatonicism in the piano introduction of this song. For reference, Example 8.1 demonstrates an octatonic scale.



Example 8.1. An octatonic scale.

As you can see in Example 8.2, nearly all of the pitches in the right hand of the piano can be accounted for with the octatonic scale. As the usage here is not strictly octatonic, we will refer to it as nearly octatonic. The nearly octatonic melody continues in the piano for the first four bars (Example 8.2).



Example 8.2. "The South Wind Says So," mm.1–4, octatonicism.

Though the text is quite simple, and the overall impression of this movement is charming and easy, the bolts and gears of the composition are quite advanced. Much of the movement appears to be near-octatonic in some way. Once detected, this makes the whole movement seem highly constructed. However, while Hall acknowledges the presence of octatonicism in her work, she says it wasn't a predetermined choice:

> The way I compose, I may very well use an octatonic environment, and use it intentionally from an artistic viewpoint...but though I may have sought a specific artistic result—meaningful sound related to the words I'm setting—I most probably never arrived at that result by application of theoretical or compositional "knowledge" but rather by my intuition and strong sense of the inner qualities inherent in certain structures. In this sense, then, I might employ octatonic or octatonic-like music without consciously being aware of it. Instead of the word "octatonic" entering my mind, I simply thought the

> harmonic world I had arrived at through improvisation informed by intuition sounded like wind...the "right" artistic result, sound, to "paint" the text as it moved me.[2]

In other words, Hall is always concerned with the text first. Her desire is to represent the text musically. Rather than compose with any pre-designed ideas, she improvises at the piano, allowing the text to guide her. Sometimes this leads to interesting harmonic areas, which can be analyzed under certain labels. Other times, her music evades traditional analytical labels. In this case, the use of the octatonic and near-octatonic passages, are Hall's attempt to text-paint "wind."[3]

The other motive of the A section, the trills and tremolos, easily represent the outdoors: birds singing, wind whistling through the leaves, and bugs moving. The tessitura of the trills and tremolos is always quite high in the piano, always marked 8^{va} and occasionally 15^{ma}. The extremity of range immediately lends itself to symbolize small creatures, gently moved by wind, and is somehow quite believable in that representation.

Example 8.3 is representative of the trills and tremolos in the right hand of the piano.

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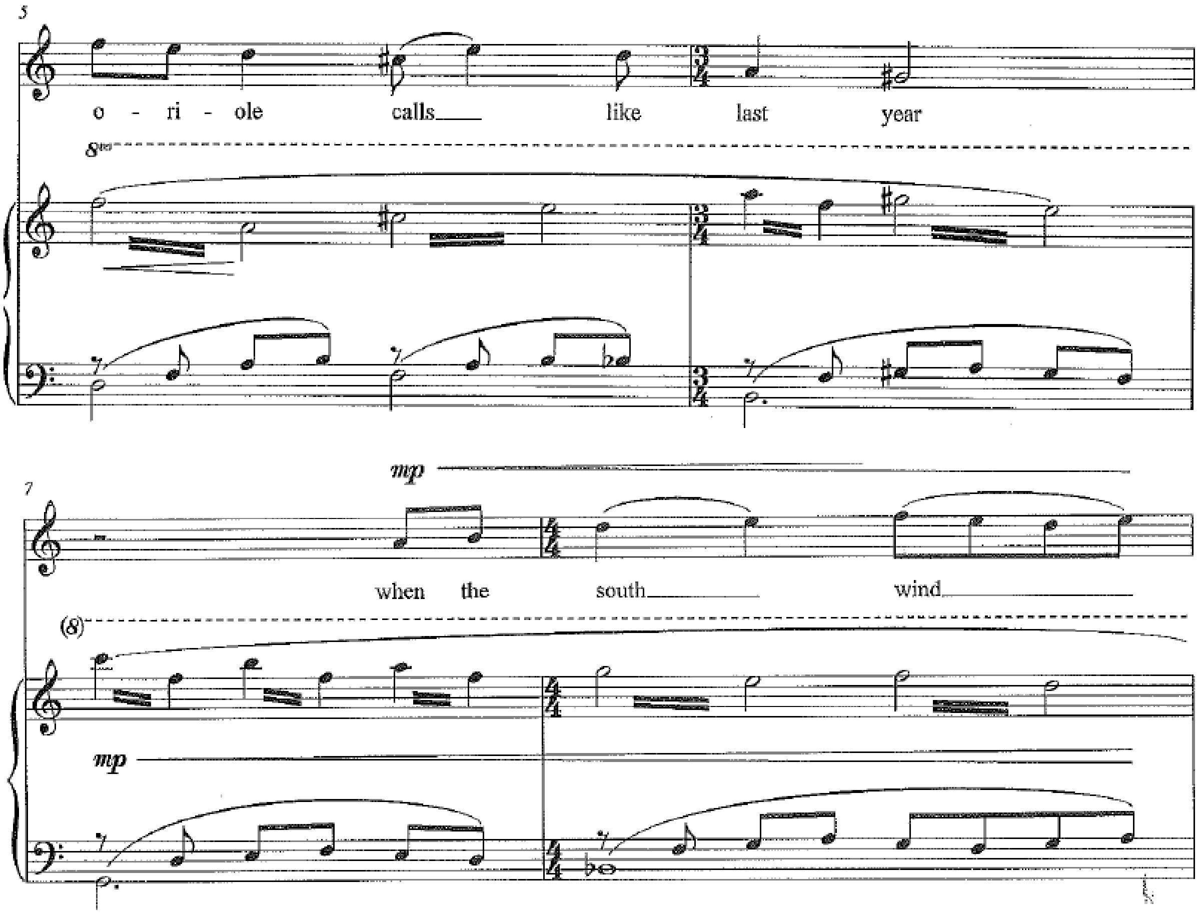
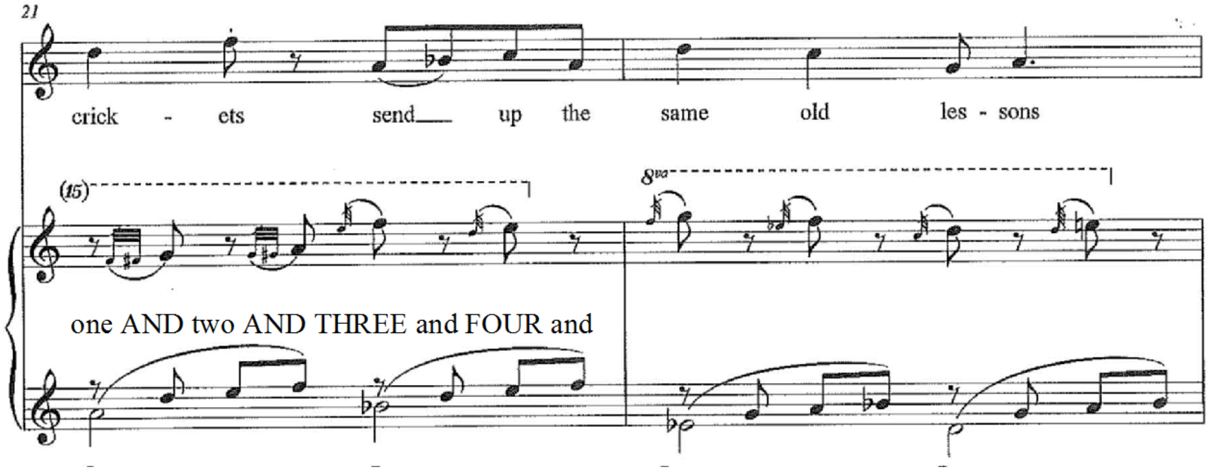
[2] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Oct. 13, 2018.

[3] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.


5
o - ri - ole calls like last year
8va
7
mp
when the south wind
(8)
mp

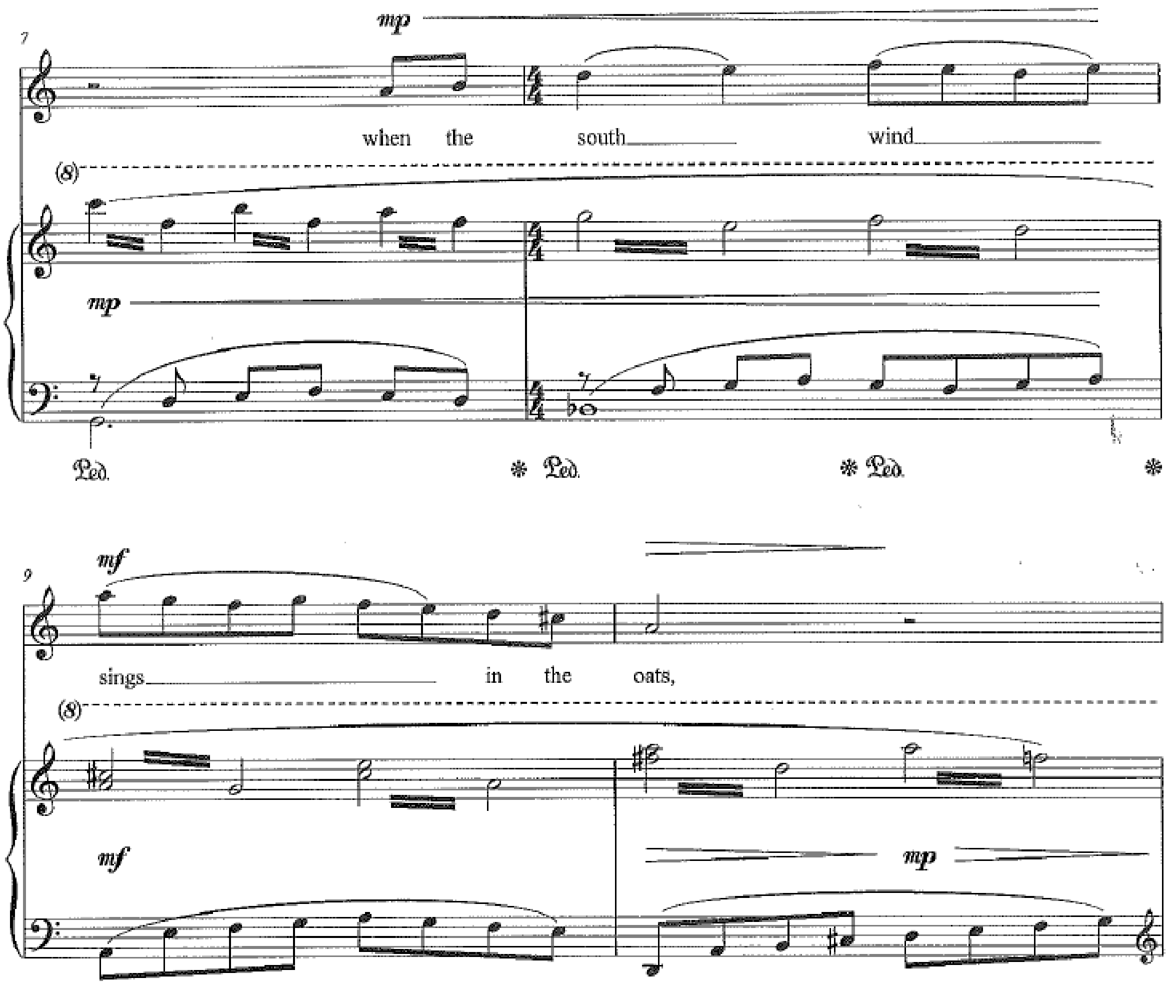
Example 8.3. "The South Wind Says So," mm. 5–8, trills and tremolos in piano.

This texture is easily pliable and at the mention of crickets Hall alters the tremolo in the right hand of the piano and it becomes a short, staccato flourish, two beats in quick succession, suggesting the hopping of a cricket (Example 8.4).


21
crick - ets send up the same old les - sons
(15)
8va
one AND two AND THREE and FOUR and

Example 8.4. "The South Wind Says So," mm. 21–22, "cricket" rhythm in right hand.

Employed in both the A and B motives is a lyrical line created by an arch; it always ascends about an octave and then descends. This melodic shape is found in the piano at the opening (Example 8.2) and closing of the movement, and in nearly every phrase of the voice. In Example 8.5 the voice encompasses a complete octave, from A4 to A5 and back again, creating an arch shape in the melody, typical of the A motive.


mp
7
when the south wind
(8)
mp
Ped. ❋ Ped. ❋ Ped. ❋
mf
9
sings in the oats,
(8)
mf
mp

Example 8.5. "The South Wind Sings," mm. 7–10, arch in vocal melody.

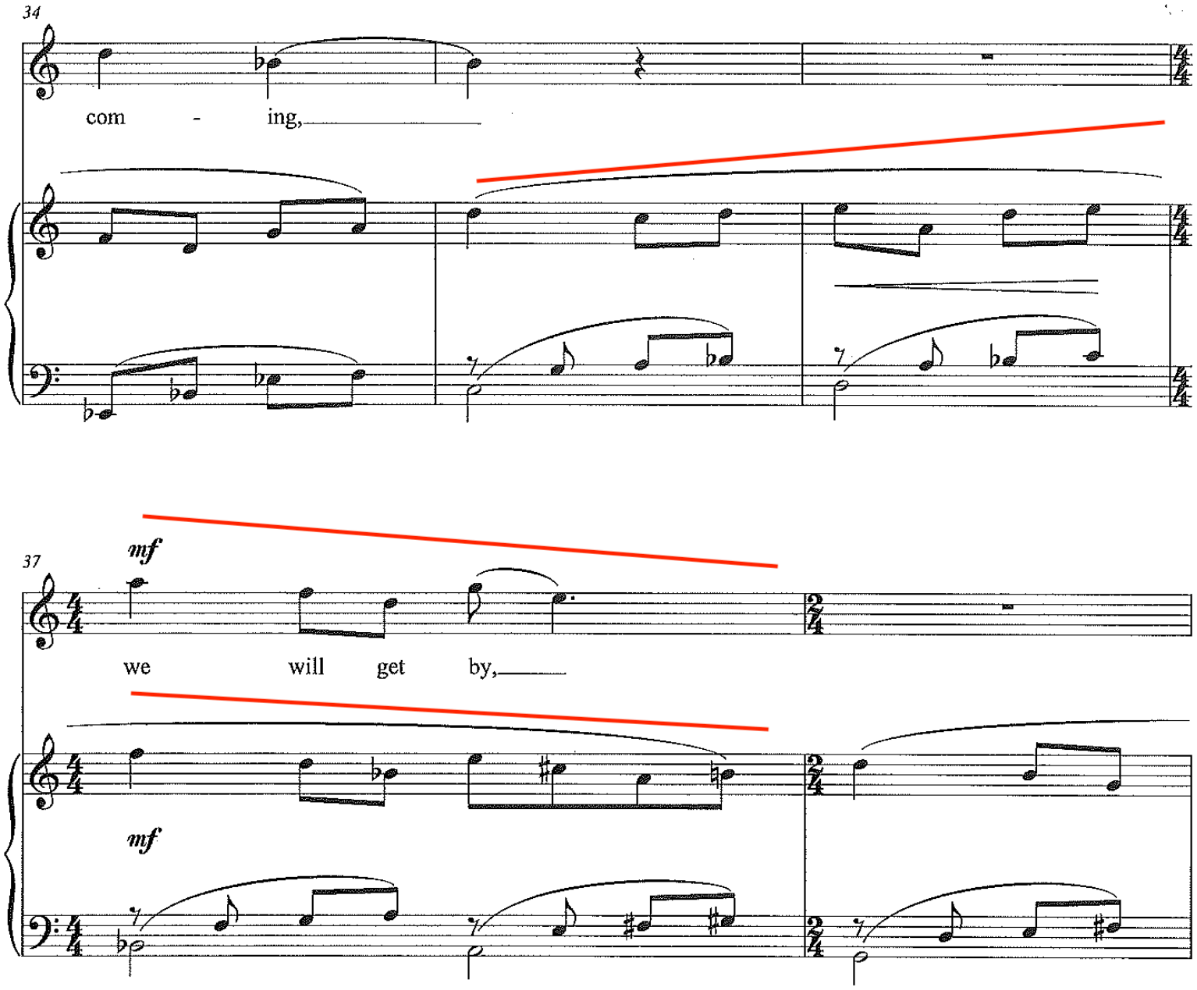
The only exception to the arch shape in the voice is the B section of the movement, when for four miniature phrases the voice sings only descending phrases. The B section is comprised of the "we will get by" statements of the poem, four statements, set ABAB (the fifth "we will" statement returns to the arch shape):

> we will get by, we will keep on coming,
> we will get by, we will come along,[4]

---

[4] Carl Sandburg, *Smoke and Steel*, 165.

Any hint of octatonicism is gone and though this section does not have one tonal center, it is more diatonic than the A section. Rhythmically, it also tends to fit a bit more squarely in 2/4 time (Example 8.6). This symmetry is unlike the rest of the movement.



Example 8.6. "The South Wind Says So," mm. 34–38, arch created by both voice & piano.

In Example 8.6, the arch begins in the piano in m. 35, is joined with the voice in 37, and both descend through the end of m. 37. This exact chain of events occurs several more times in the movement—using both voices to create a complete arch (though admittedly a complete arch is also created by the piano right hand alone).

Though “The South Wind Sings” is interesting to study in terms of theoretical analysis, it was not composed with pre-planned scalar, tonal, or harmonic construction. Hence, the use of octatonicism in this movement is a result of Hall’s effort to capture in music the sound of wind.[5] The other gestures (chromaticism, arch, and wave motives) found in other movements unify this song with the rest of the cycle.

Vocally, because the lines in this song imitate each other so closely (four settings of “the south wind” are similar in shape and four settings of “we will” are alike), the movement appears easy to learn. This similarity keeps the material both familiar and new. The similarity in contour between the lines certainly helps unite the movement, but executing the specific chromaticism for each iteration requires a good memory plan from the performer.

The challenge with this movement is to keep it lyrical. One must remember that above all, this movement is about *wind*. Hall’s greatest desire in this movement is to capture the motion, restlessness, and feeling of wind. The soprano can aide that pursuit by leaning into the gestures Hall writes, especially the melismatic writing on words such as “sings,” “wind,” and “coming.” Furthermore, the soprano can aide the pursuit of wind-like singing by leaning into downbeats, especially of melismatic passages, rather than singing each note of a melisma with the same weight and color.

Another challenge in this movement is the vowel and tessitura of the word “wind.” Often this word is set with four pitches, moving throughout the voice. See the final setting in Example 8.7.

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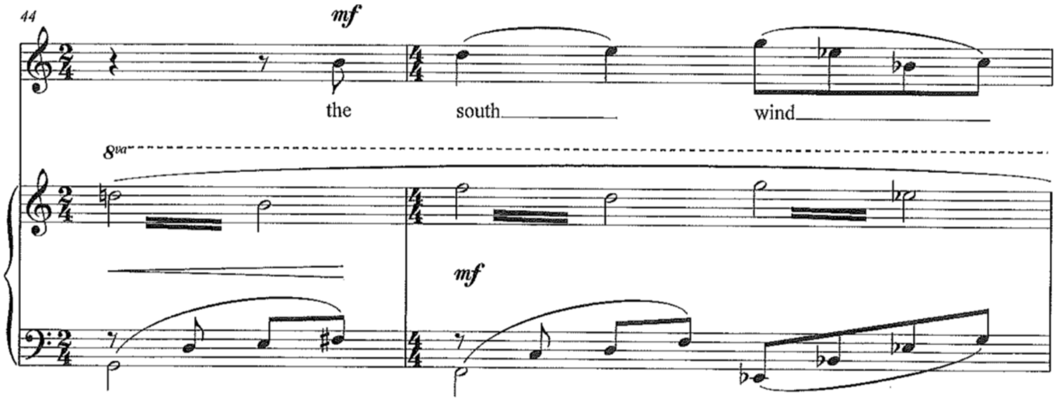
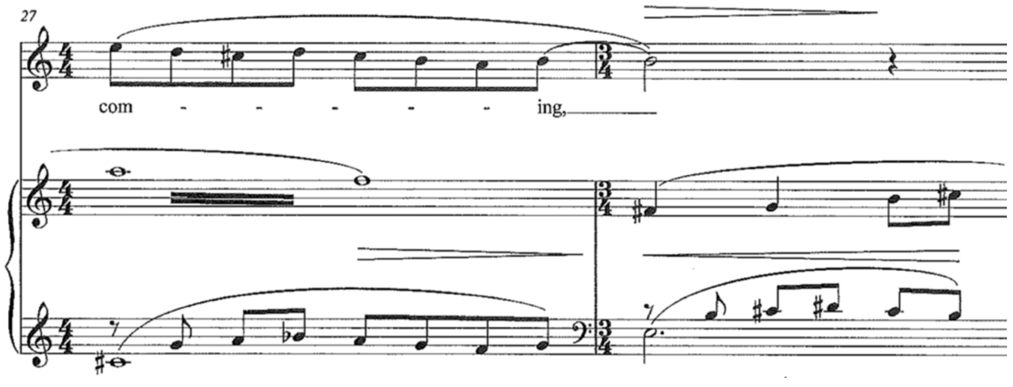
[5] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.



Example 8.7. "The South Wind Says So," mm. 44–45, final setting of the text "wind."

This setting, spanning G5 to B♭4, moves from the soprano's high register, through the passaggio (the E♭5) to the middle voice. Due to the transition through the passaggio, vowel modification will be necessary. Traversing this range is challenging enough, but the given vowel ([I]) makes it more difficult to navigate. One approach is to narrow the vowel through the descent. In other words, the [I] vowel employed on G5 has much more space than the vowel [I] vowel employed on B♭4. The mouth shape will likely be in the [a] posture for G5 and the [i] posture for B♭4. (One could also simply argue for using a more closed vowel on the descent, potentially even employing an [i] on the lower pitches.)
Similarly challenging is the setting of the text "coming" (Example 8.8).



Example 8.8. "The South Wind Says So," mm. 27–28, setting of the text "coming."

Example 8.8 demonstrates a melismatic descending passage employing a vowel which must be clear and consistent throughout the descent. The vowel of choice here must be [a]. However, it may be a challenge to maintain the same pure, clear, supported [a] unchanged while moving through the passaggio to the middle voice. The soprano must keep the placement high and continually reestablish (or reinvent) the vowel for clarity and continuity throughout the melisma. She must constantly match the resonance throughout the line to maintain consistent tone and vowel modification is an aid she may choose to use.

From my coaching with Hall and her husband: “The South Wind Says So” should be sung as if outdoors in a sun-soaked, gentle windy breeze, fascinated with small bugs and critters. Gentle and delicate are the words of the movement. In terms of the piano writing, the long, chromatic lines are representative of the wind—flowing airily where it will, in and out of trees, grass, flowers, and other nature—and should be musically performed as a long, seamless line, without beginning or end. The trills and tremolos are also painting the text and imagery of small, outdoor creatures and should also be performed with gentleness and delicacy.

Juliana Hall and her husband, David Sims (who selected and ordered the poems), offered the following insight on the intention of “The South Wind Says So”:

> This is very spiritual stuff…the reason the gentleness is there is the previous, the Pearl Fog, to me, it’s like God providing this bizarre mechanism of unburdening ourselves from sin. And this wind is like the gentleness of God saying “It’s okay, I love you anyway.” Whether or not you’re a believer…It’s like in the previous one God say[s], “Tell me,” but at the end of it He says “but this pearl fog doesn’t even care, I don’t care about your sins, I still love you,” and then this is like you’re washed clean. It’s gentle. It’s not a rainstorm, it’s a rain shower.[6] (David)
>
> It really tells you every bit, God is over, watching, saying that we’re okay. And the wind and all of nature is helping, showing us.[7] (Juliana)
>
> That sense of gentleness…I think that’s sort of applicable to the whole cycle. And it doesn’t mean that it’s colorless or doesn’t have internal vitality or strength, but just it has a certain roundness, a lyricism…[8] (David)

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

Chapter 9: UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

UNDER the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker,
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful, unanswerable questions.[1]

Sandburg presents two contrasting verses in this poem. Alike, but different, the two seasons, harvest and summer, each have unique reminiscences. Harvest is colored with silver, summer with crimson. In harvest Death visits; in summer Love visits. Harvest brings a pleasant memory; summer brings both memories and questions. Therefore, Hall sets the poem in order to contrast the two verses. She uses the 8-bar introduction to set the stage of the poem, depicting a visual scene in music, in this case an outdoor scene with nearby fields visible by moonlight. Hall acknowledges that she uses first motives as framing or atmospheric, heavily related to the visual stimulation of the text.[2] The first verse begins in F major (Example 9.1).

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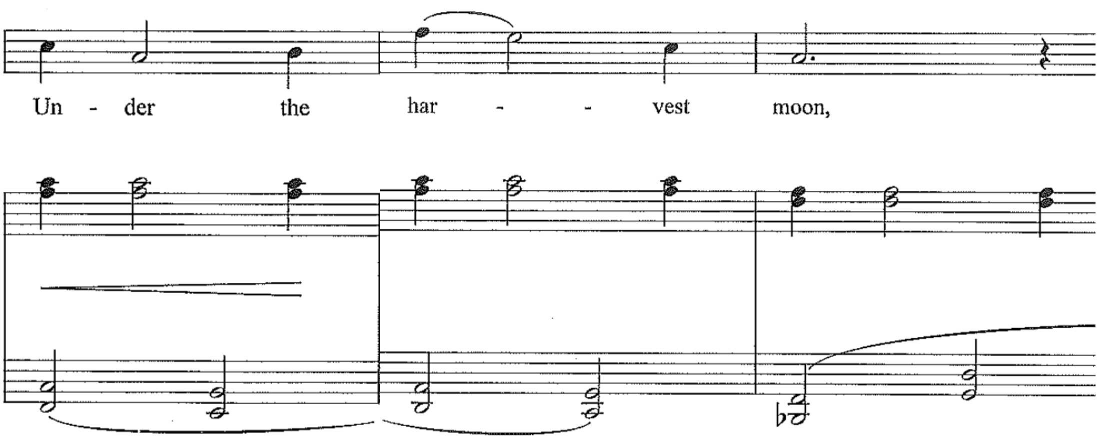
[1] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 116.

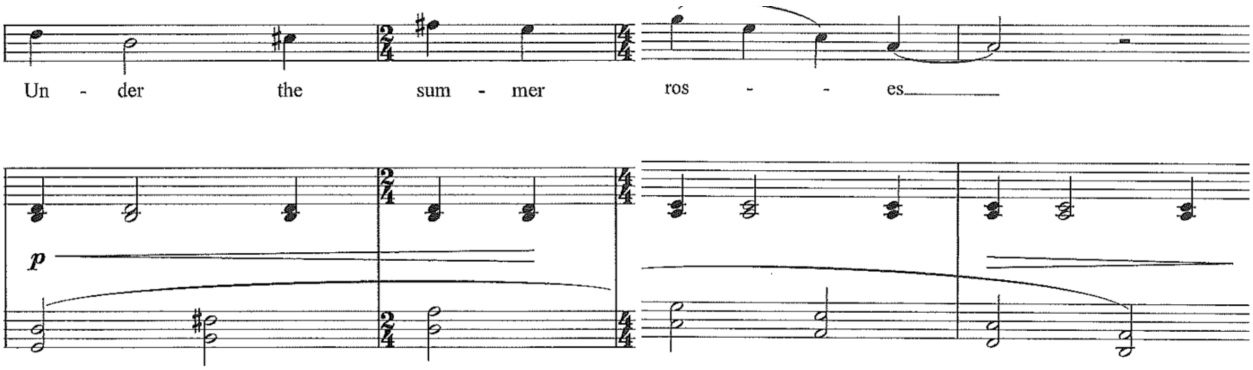
[2] Juliana Hall, email message to author, Oct. 13, 2018.



Example 9.1. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 9–11, opening of the first verse.

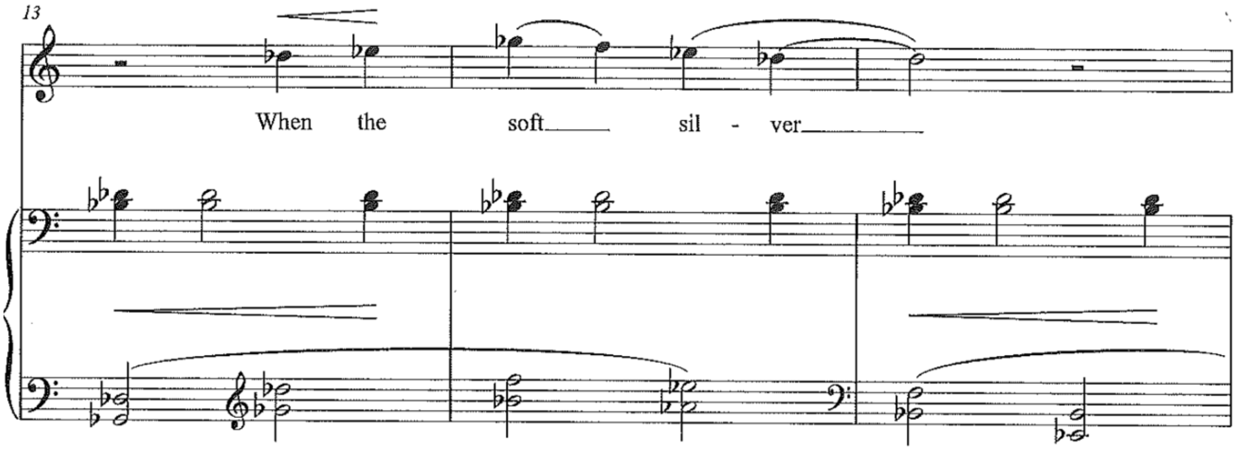
Rhythmically, Hall keeps quarter notes pulsing evenly, which create constant motion, giving the music rhythmic familiarity amid ever-evolving harmonies. The regularity of the rhythm represents the stability of the moon, an entity constant to human experience.

In measure 40, the singer begins the second verse of text, in G major, a whole step higher than the first verse. This verse is much brighter in color than the first verse but begins with familiar rhythmic and harmonic motion (Example 9.2).



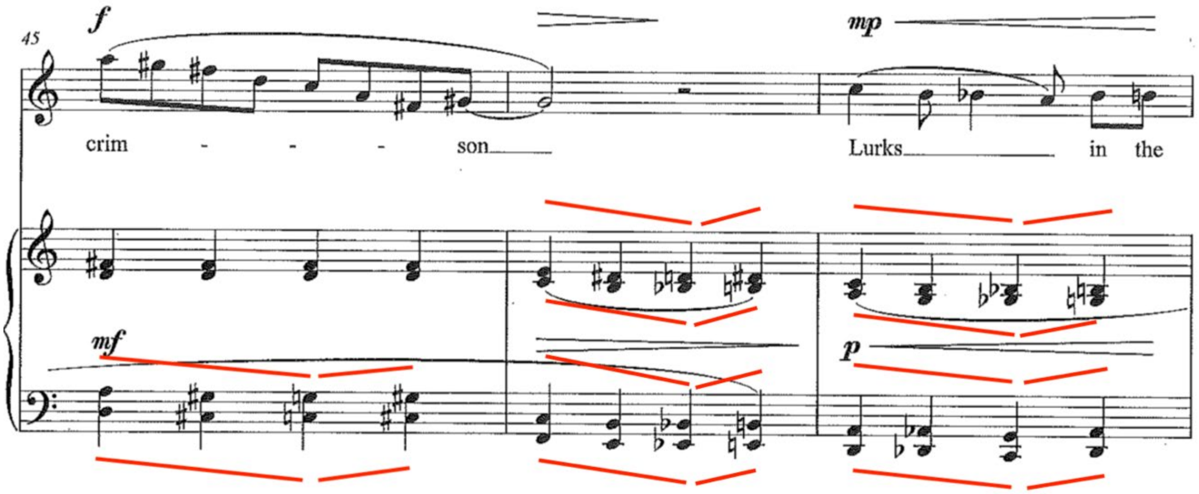
Example 9.2. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 40–43, opening of the second verse.

In each verse, after the initial "under" statement, a statement specifying the colors is made. In the first verse the moon is tinted silver (Example 9.3).



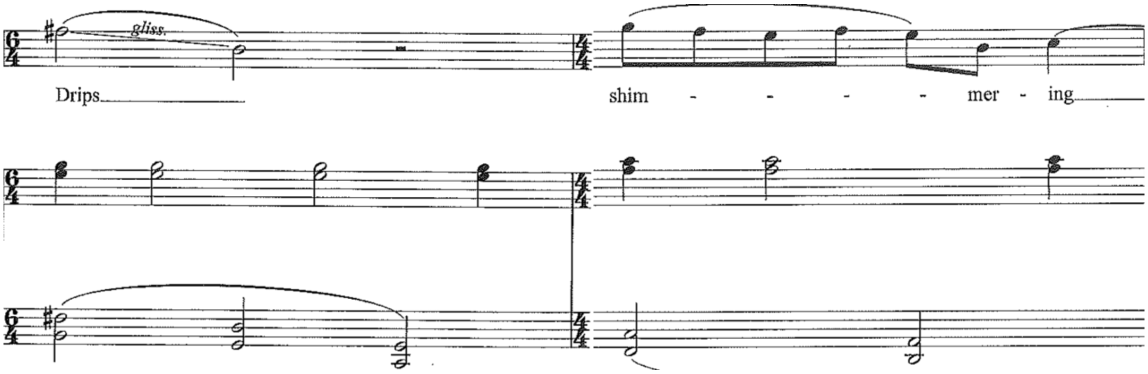
Example 9.3. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 13–15.

The summer roses of the second verse are crimson (Example 9.4). In general, the second verse is more active than the first verse. Words like "flagrant," "crimson," "lurks," "wild," and "touches" spur on the excitement of the text. Hall in turn, creates music to match the heightened energy of the poem. Both the rhythm of the entire texture and the range of the voice are affected. While the voice spans over an octave, the piano now moves by small intervals, primarily parallel half steps. (The chromatic motion in the piano is an inversion of the wave motive, discussed in Chapter 4.)



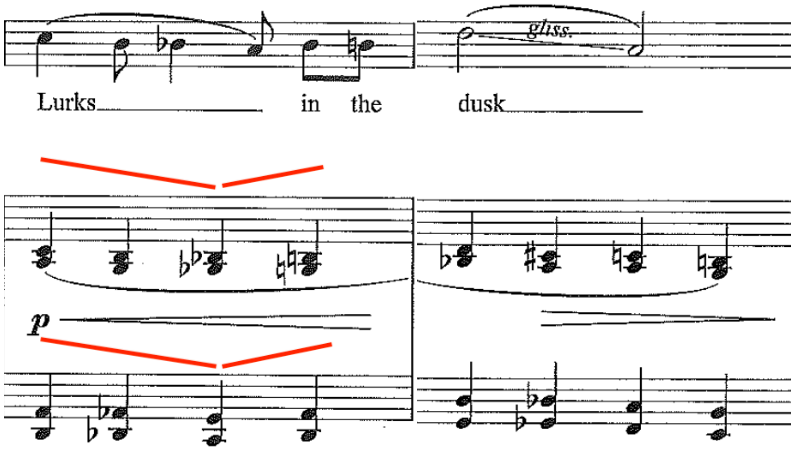
Example 9.4. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 45–46, more active second verse, inverted wave motive in piano.

Hall likes to use out-of-the box text painting like Sprechstimme or glissandi, and in this case, she uses glissandi in both of the verses of this poem. In the first verse the soft silver of the moonlight drips shimmering (Example 9.5). Aside from the glissandi, notice that the non-glissando measure in both Example 9.5 and Example 9.6 have descending lines for the soprano and largely descending for the piano. The first verse is set with a slower harmonic rhythm, the left hand of the piano playing half notes and the right hand of the piano creating what might be termed a bass afterbeat.



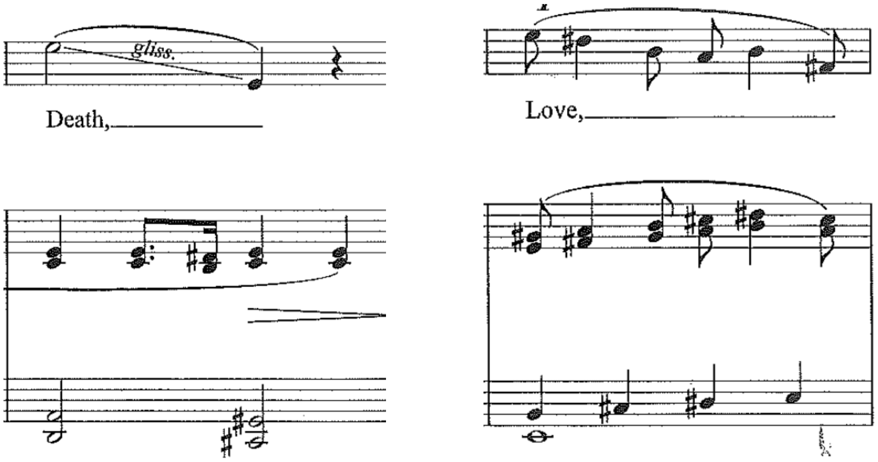
Example 9.5. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 17–18, vocal glissando, piano descent.

In the second verse, the flagrant crimson of the summer roses lurks in the dusk (Example 9.6). The inverted wave motive is again employed in the piano.



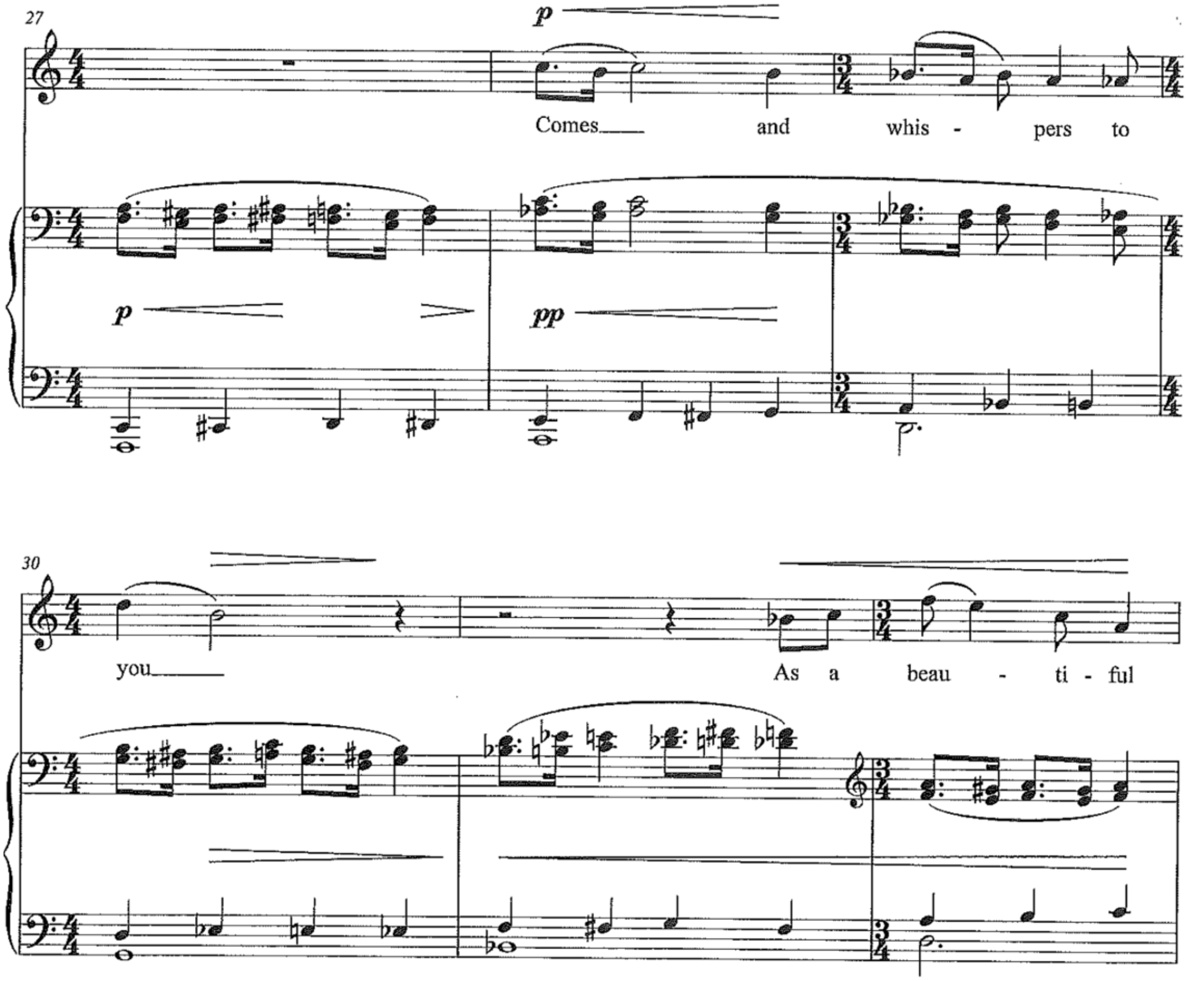
Example 9.6. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 47–48, vocal glissando, piano descent.

Following the introductory poetic material in each verse, we are presented with the main actors. In verse one, we are visited by Death, in verse two, by Love (Example 9.7). The two entrances are alike in that they both span nearly an octave in the voice, both entrances beginning on E5 for the soprano. Death again employs a glissando as text-painting. Love, on the other hand, is set with a tonal, syncopated descending line for the soprano, neatly accompanied with contrary motion in the piano.



Example 9.7. "Under the Harvest Moon," m. 24 & m. 53.

In measure 23, a dotted eighth-sixteenth rhythmic cell is introduced with the mention of Death (m. 24 in Example 9.7 above demonstrates the same rhythm). This device becomes central to the second rhythmic motive of the movement as it slowly converts all the beats from simple quarters into more active rhythms. The more active motion, of course, impacts other parts of the texture, eventually resulting in much more motion in all voices (Example 9.8).



Example 9.8. “Under the Harvest Moon,” mm. 27–32, low tessitura in the piano.

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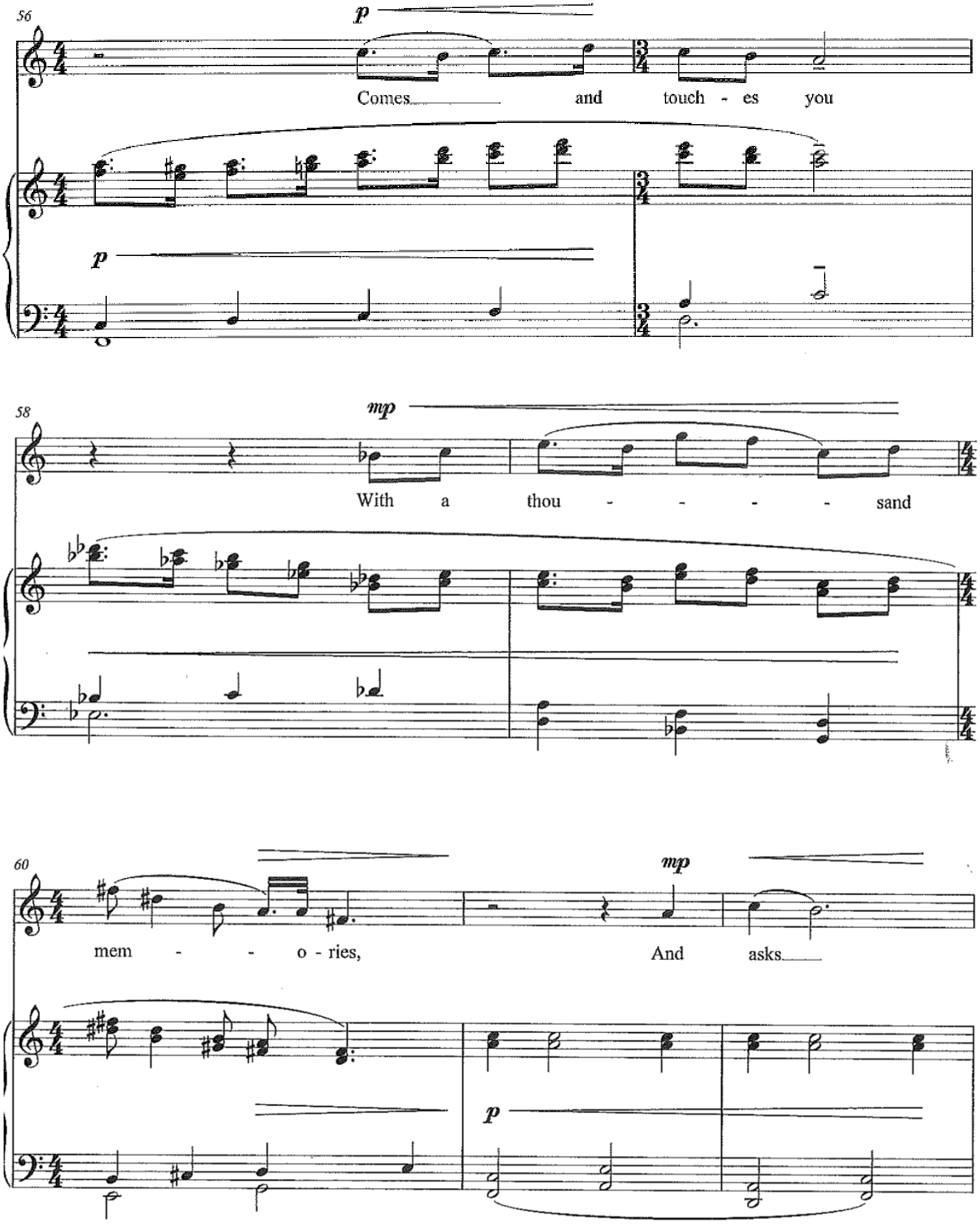
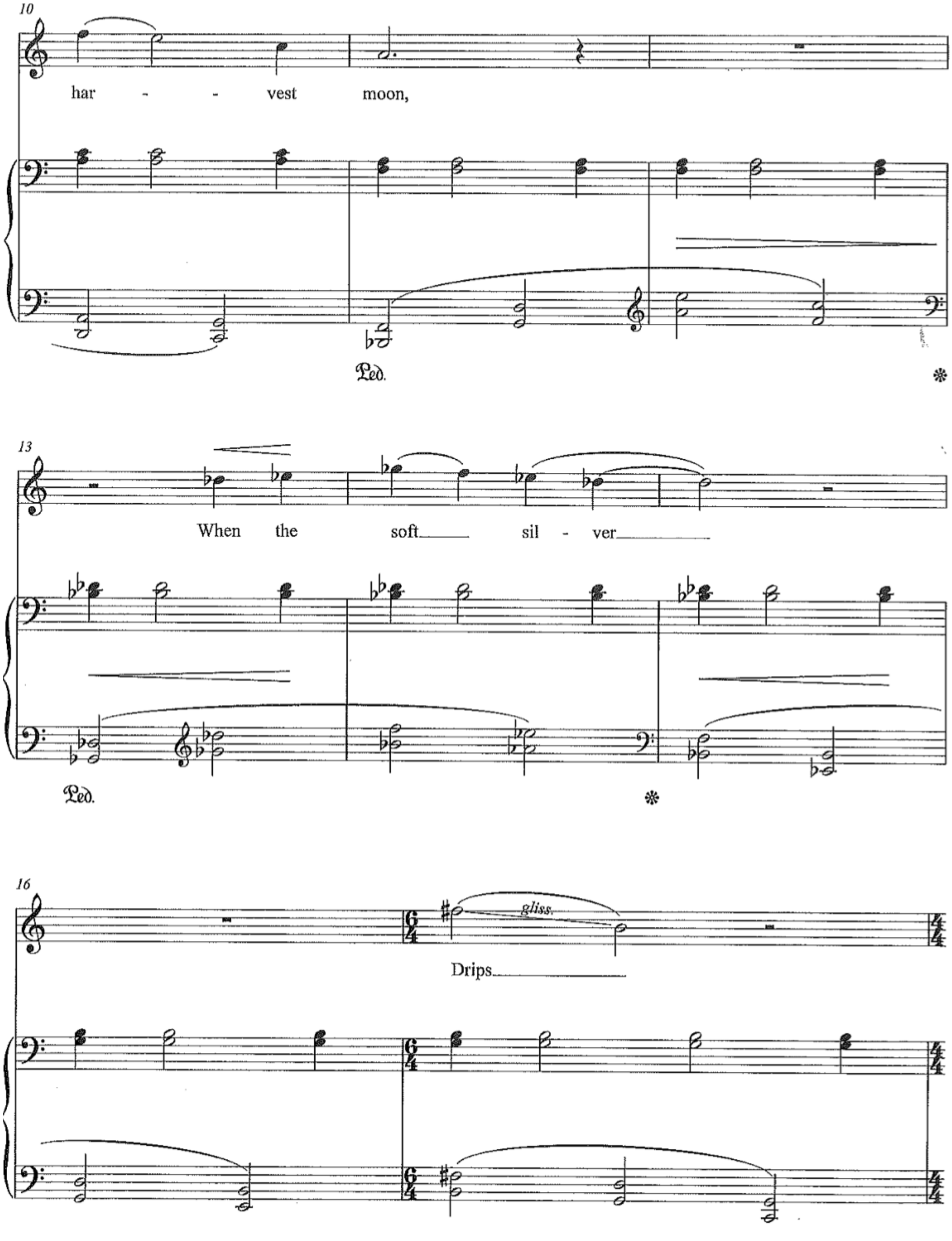
Of course these two visitors come with different intentions. In the first verse, “comes and whispers to you” primarily employs C5 in the voice, supported by chords very low in the piano’s range (Example 9.8). In the second verse, “comes and touches you” is sung at the same pitch level, but this time the piano is in a much higher tessitura (Example 9.9). Hall uses contrasting ranges of the piano to create the contrasting emotions of fear and joy.


56
p
Comes and touch - es you
p
58
mp
With a thou - - - - sand
60
mp
mem - - o - ries,
And asks
p

Example 9.9. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 56–62, high tessitura in the piano.

Vocal challenges in this movement would be the more static parts of the movement, especially the beginnings of both verses. The temptation after hearing the piano's placid introduction, would be to under-support the voice; however, as with any slow movement, breath speed is vital. And because the first word in both verses is "under," beginning with the ill-favored schwa, set just below the passaggio for the soprano, there is even more likelihood that the singer will begin with a lowered soft palate, a back vowel, and poor breath support. The singer must not be drawn into the stasis of the line, but rather, must always begin with an [a] vowel, remember the forward motion of the line, and the drama of the text.

The challenge of this movement dramatically is to link together the lines of text. Due to the slow tempo, long rhythms, and rests between lines of the poem, it is hard to comprehend the poem as a whole—rather, the text reaches the audience one line at a time. The singer must strive to thread the lines of text into a whole, connecting them wherever possible. See Example 9.10 where there are lengthy rests between lines of text. Imagine the difficulty both of the singer to maintain dramatic intent, and for the audience to keep their ears attentive to the broken-up text.


10
har - - vest moon,
Ped.
13
When the soft sil - ver
Ped.
16
Drips
gliss.

Example 9.10. "Under the Harvest Moon," mm. 10–17, rests between lines of text.

In my coaching with Hall on “Under the Harvest Moon,” she asked for a whispered quality in measure 29 with the text about death whispering. In measure 26 she requests a weighted, detached, almost marcato sound on the tenutos on the word “mocker.” This can be begun by the piano in measure 25, so long as the dynamic remains soft. She gives permission for a little bit of time in measure 57 to make the text “touches you” very clear. The piano at mm. 77–78 should be somewhat playful, matching the articulation from measure 57 with the gesture on “touches you.”[3]

In measure 45, the vowel on the word “crimson” presents a challenge to the soprano (Example 9.4). The ill-favored [I] in the highest part of the tessitura, must travel through the passaggio to the middle voice. And to top that, it’s begun with a [kr] plosive. I recommend that the soprano maintain the [a] space throughout the duration of the note, but rather than singing a pure [I] vowel, I recommend she modify towards a slight [i] vowel. Clearly she should not modify all the way to the closed [i]; however, if she imagines the slightly more closed vowel, the space and resonance are more likely to match throughout the descent.

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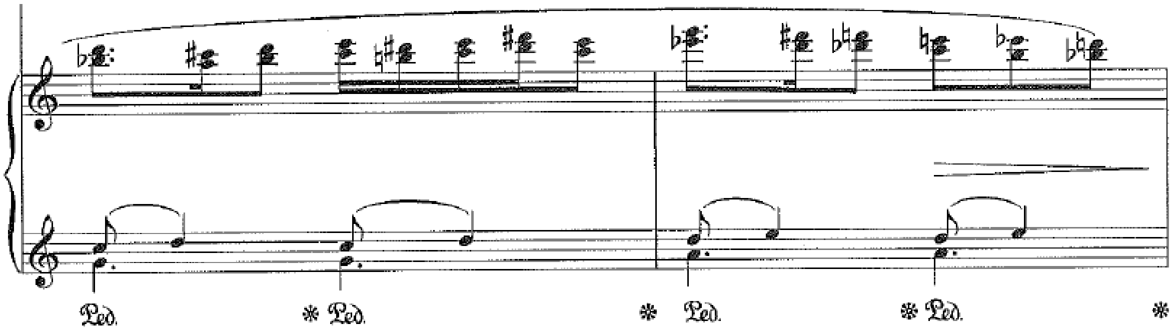
[3] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.

Chapter 10: CHILD MOON

THE child's wonder
At the old moon
Comes back nightly.
She points her finger
To the far silent yellow thing
Shining through the branches
Filtering on the leaves a golden sand,
Crying with her little tongue, "See the moon!"
And in her bed fading to sleep
With babblings of the moon on her little mouth.[1]

In this movement, Hall hints at moonlight filtered through trees, leaves, and windowpanes to a small child's watchful gaze. Her setting of "Child Moon" employs a lullaby theme in 6/8 and a rocking theme in 3/4. These two time signatures and their accompanying music return in an almost rondo form, ABABA, with some expansion of the first A and B sections.

Hall said in my coaching with her than in this movement, the piano writing in the 3/4 sections of "Child Moon" is meant to evoke moonlight filtering through leaves.[2] The left hand of the piano in the 6/8 meter has a waltz-like gesture; the bass sustains a pitch while the tenor moves from a fourth above the bass to a fifth above the bass (Example 10.1). This simple stepwise motion in the tenor grounds the movement in its lullaby nature and remains a hallmark of the movement.



Example 10.1. "Child Moon," mm. 3–4, "waltz" in left hand and parallel thirds in right hand.

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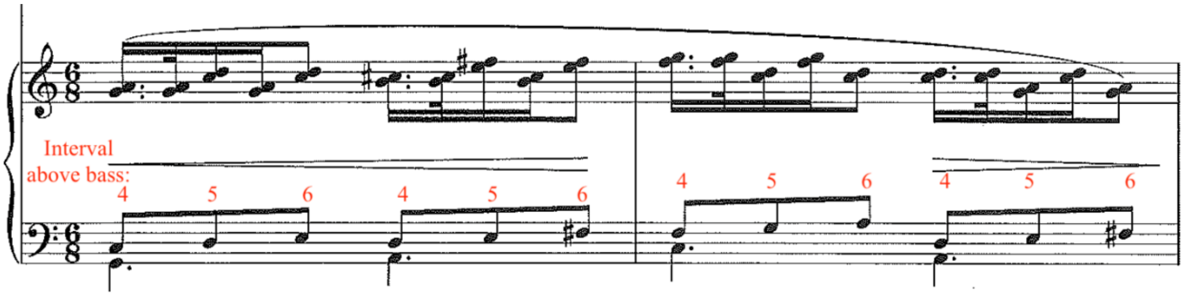
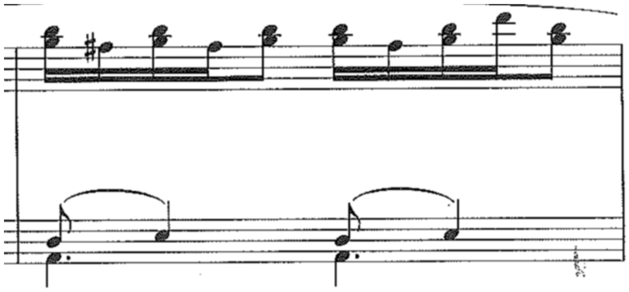
[1] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 142.
[2] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.

Parallelism has been frequently used in the cycle, but this movement uses it with a new level of intensity, employing not only parallel fifths, but parallel fourths, thirds, and even seconds (see Example 10.2). Despite the meter changes, the left hand always begins with a perfect fourth between the tenor and bass voices, rising most often to a perfect fifth, especially in the compound meters, but occasionally to a sixth or even seventh above the bass (Example 10.2).



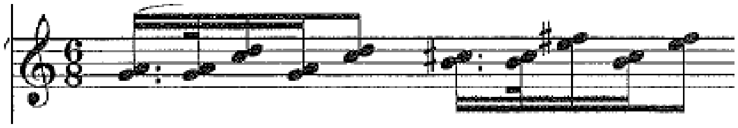
Example 10.2. "Child Moon," mm. 30–31, rising tenor line.

The other great interest of this movement is the rhythmic motives. Hall builds rhythmic motives and then creates variations on them. These variations are sometimes demanded by the change in time signature, but most often, something in the text initiates the change. She then molds these motives in the different time signatures and sections of the movement. For example, one rhythmic cell heard in the right hand of the piano is four sixteenth notes and one eighth note beamed together (Example 10.3).



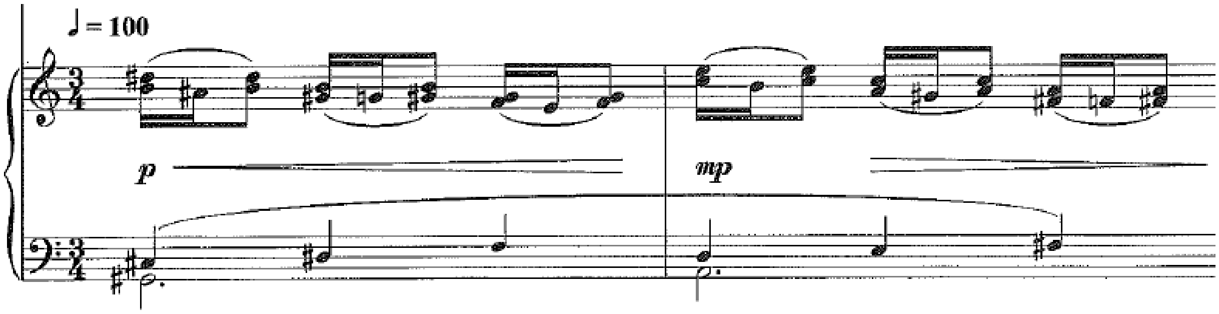
Example 10.3. "Child Moon," m. 2, undulating rhythmic motive.

In a later 6/8 section of "Child Moon," a variant of this rhythm is created, becoming a dotted sixteenth, a thirty-second, two sixteenths, and an eighth (Example 10.4).



Example 10.4. "Child Moon," m. 30, 6/8 dotted undulating rhythmic motive.

This rhythmic cell is shortened to two sixteenths followed by an eighth note in the 3/4 sections (Example 10.5). The cell maintains the undulation, the parallel thirds, and the rising bass motion from the original iteration. It has merely been altered to fit into simple meter.



Example 10.5. "Child Moon," mm. 42–43, variation of undulating motion in 3/4 meter.

The first five poems take place primarily in the first person, but the final two poems are firmly third person narrative. This change of narrative has the advantage of framing the cycle, as if the speaker, having been on the inside, now stands outside, looking back on a familiar and comfortable scene.

From a vocal perspective, this movement is one of the most rhythmically challenging. Due to the complexity of the rhythms (those of the voice alone and when added to the rhythms of the piano), this movement could be daunting for many sopranos. Both musicians must get very comfortable with the time signature changes. With such a demand on rhythm, especially moving in and out of simple and compound meters, it would be easy for the singer to become solely focused on the rhythm. However, Hall is not interested in rhythm for rhythm's sake, she uses it as a tool to express the text. In this movement, the music is meant to depict moonlight shining through a window and a child babbling, likely fighting sleep. With these two images in mind, the singer must create a beautiful legato out of the fast-moving rhythms.

The singer must also kindle a child-like wonderment, that is sing with a hushed, awed sound, as if brimming with inspiration and energy.

Chapter 11: BETWEEN TWO HILLS

BETWEEN two hills
The old town stands.
The houses loom
And the roofs and trees
And the dusk and the dark,
The damp and the dew
   Are there.

The prayers are said
And the people rest
For sleep is there
And the touch of dreams
   Is over all.[1]

"Between Two Hills" serves to bring this song cycle to a close. This free-verse poem is very suited to an end-of-day theme, neatly reminding us that this cycle began with a morning rain shower, followed by midday fog, afternoon wind, and evening moon. This poem fulfills the role of imagism, clearly and succinctly describing a town at rest at the end of a workday. Following the descriptive first verse, the second verse becomes more personal—not only the town and scenery, but also the people—are beginning their slumber. The last two lines "And the touch of dreams is over all" hints that the future is bright and safe for this town of folk, their sleep is not tormented with nightmares, but is calm and restful. Hall includes a "bell" motive at the beginning and ending of this movement. This "bell" sound could either represent a town clock chiming the hour or the gentle hum of a second hand on a personal bedside clock.

The organization of pitches in "Between Two Hills" can be divided into two categories: closed (primarily seconds or whole tone clusters) and open (primarily fourths and fifths). The movement begins with familiar open fifths moving in parallel motion (Example 11.1). The third bar introduces a "bell" motive, used here and at the end of the movement. Measures 1 and 2 illustrate the open writing common in this movement, and measure 3 illustrates the "bell" motive.

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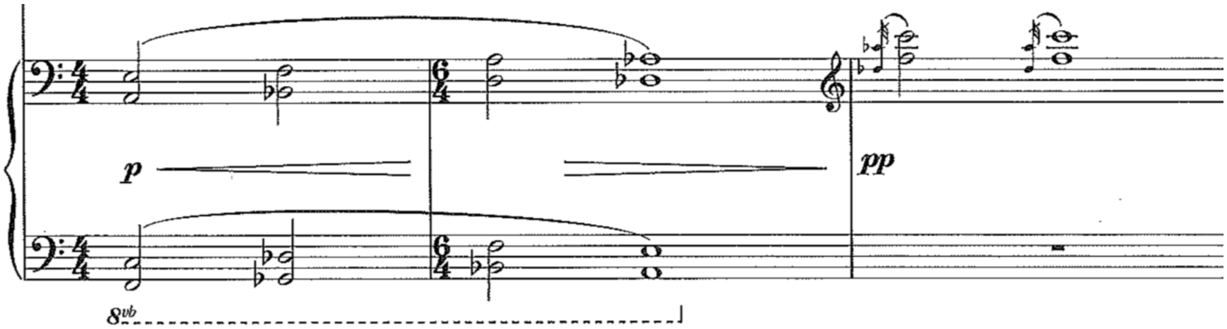
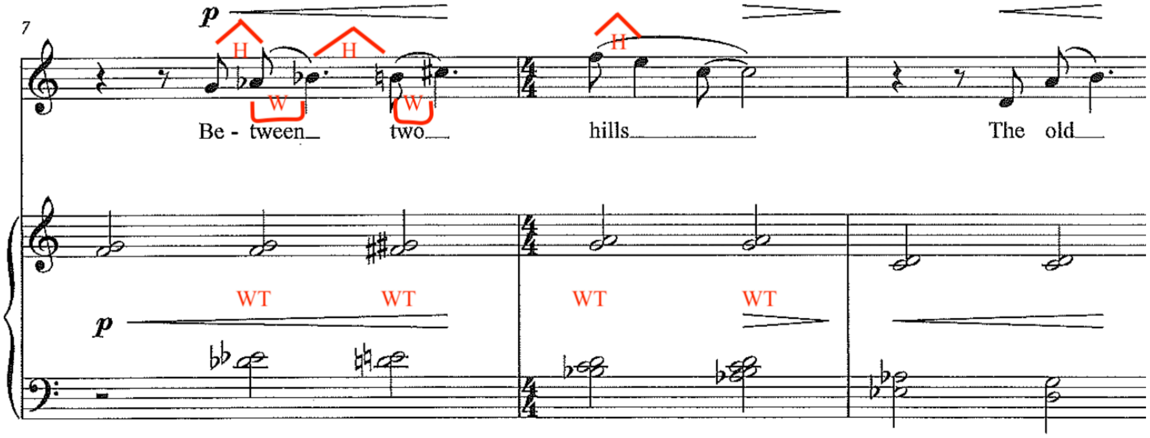
[1] Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, 133.



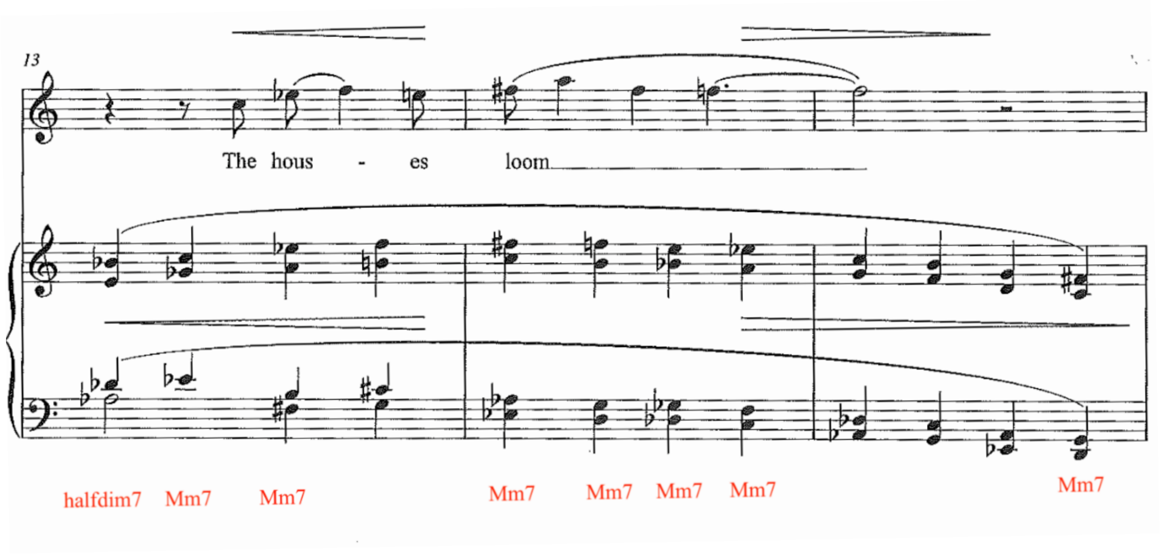
Example 11.1. "Between Two Hills," mm. 1–3, open writing.

The other common texture used in this movement are cluster chords. This begins when the voice enters, accompanied with a major second (F4 and G4) expanding to very closely built cluster chords, slowly blossoming out from there (Example 11.2). The first four chords in the piano are drawn from one of the whole-tone collections, while the voice is drawn from a quasi-octatonic scale (as used earlier in "The South Wind Says So").



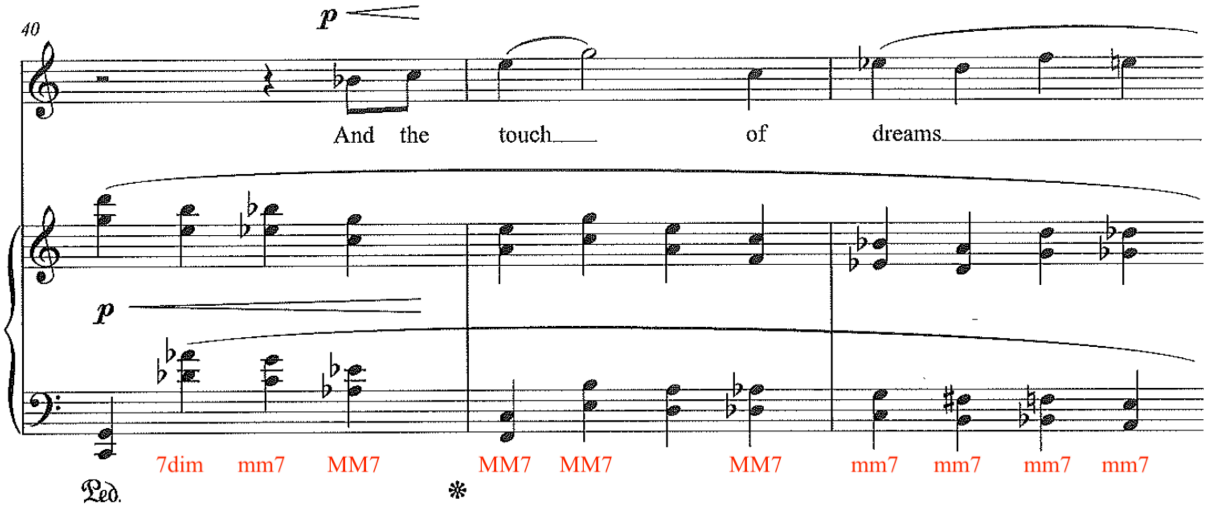
Example 11.2. "Between Two Hills," mm. 7–9, closed (or cluster, whole tone) writing.

The entire movement hinges around these two musical ideas; open parallel motion and close parallel motion. One consideration is that whole tone, cluster chords, and sevenths (often the composite of the parallel fifths) lend well to tonal ambiguity. Tonal ambiguity is a characteristic of Hall's, and in this movement, lends itself well to the dream-like nature of the poem. Regardless of sustained tonal ambiguity, parallel fifths are naturally grounding, and the ear is trained to interpret those pitches as root and fifth. Though these parallel fifths quickly move to new harmonic areas, while the fifth is sustained, the vocal line has freedom within that harmonic framework. See Examples 11.3 and 11.4.



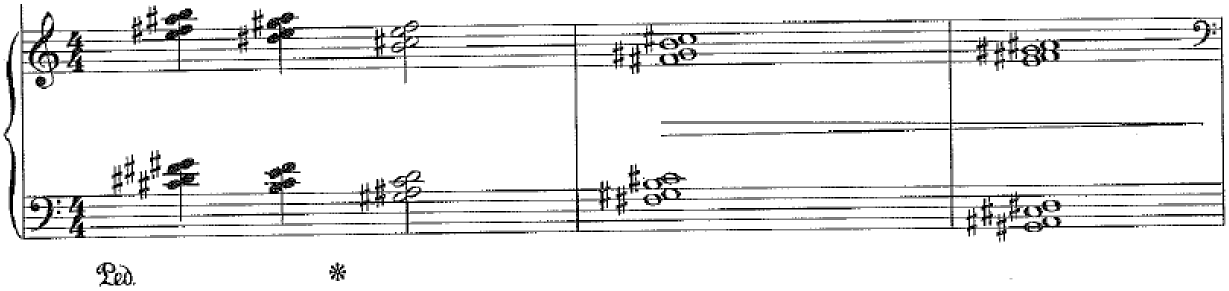
Example 11.3. "Between Two Hills," mm. 13–15, parallel intervals in piano, motion in voice.

The parallel intervals in Examples 11.3 and 11.4 create composite chords, most often MM7 and Mm7 chords with occasional mm7 and dim7 chords.


40
p
And the touch of dreams
p
7dim
mm7
MM7
MM7
MM7
MM7
mm7
mm7
mm7
mm7
Ped.
*

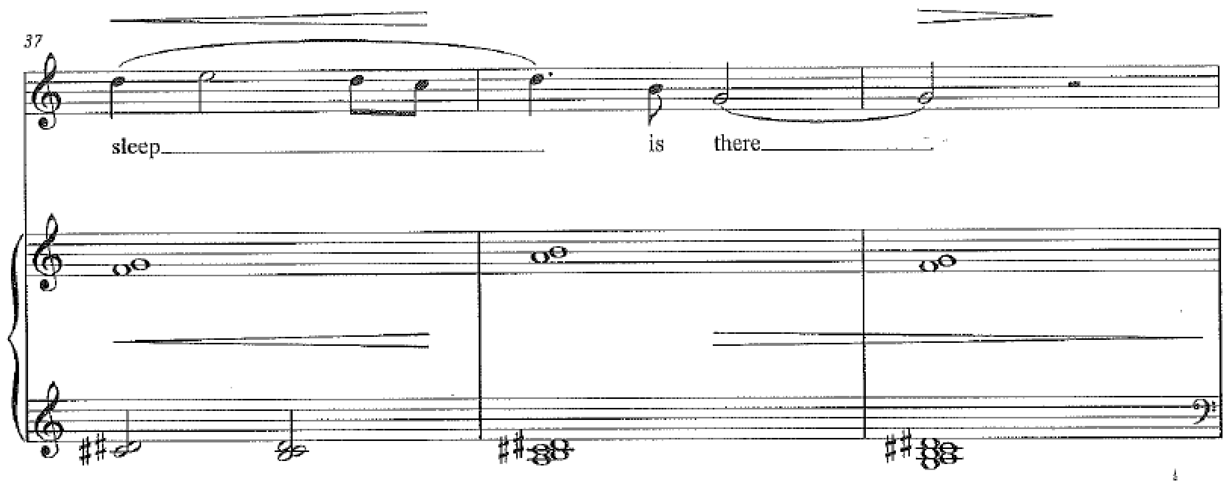
Example 11.4. "Between Two Hills," mm. 40–42, parallel fifths in piano, motion in voice.

This movement shifts between the open parallel writing demonstrated in Examples 11.3 and 11.4, and the closed (or cluster) writing as in Example 11.5.



Example 11.5. "Between Two Hills," mm. 25–27, closed writing.

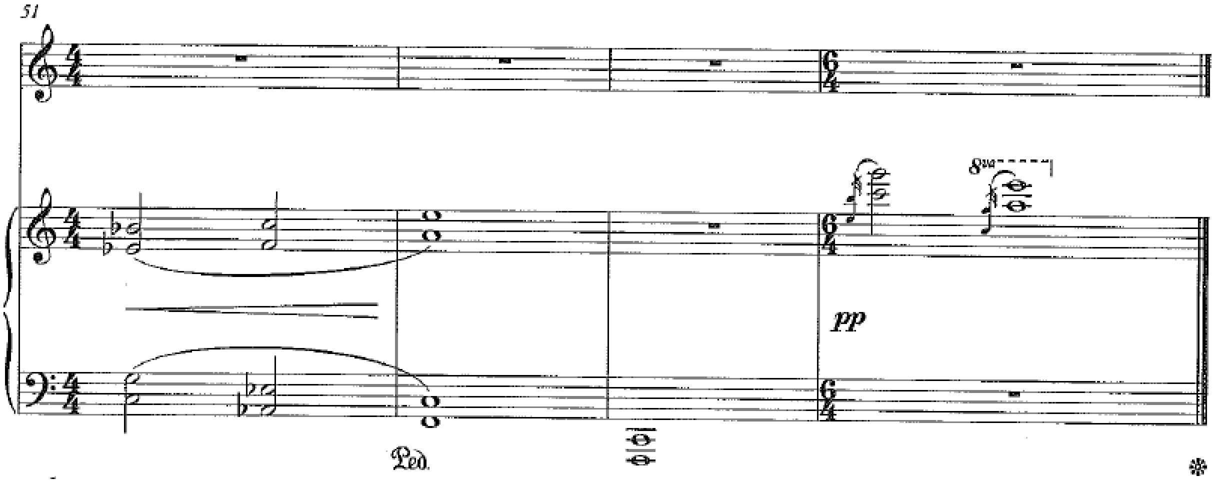
Hall accompanies the text "for sleep is there," with the closed style of writing—whole tone cluster chords (Example 11.6). Though the simplicity of the vocal line implies a tonal center, the obscured tonality in the piano aptly captures the lack of tangible things during sleep.



Example 11.6. "Between Two Hills," mm. 37–39, closed writing in the piano.

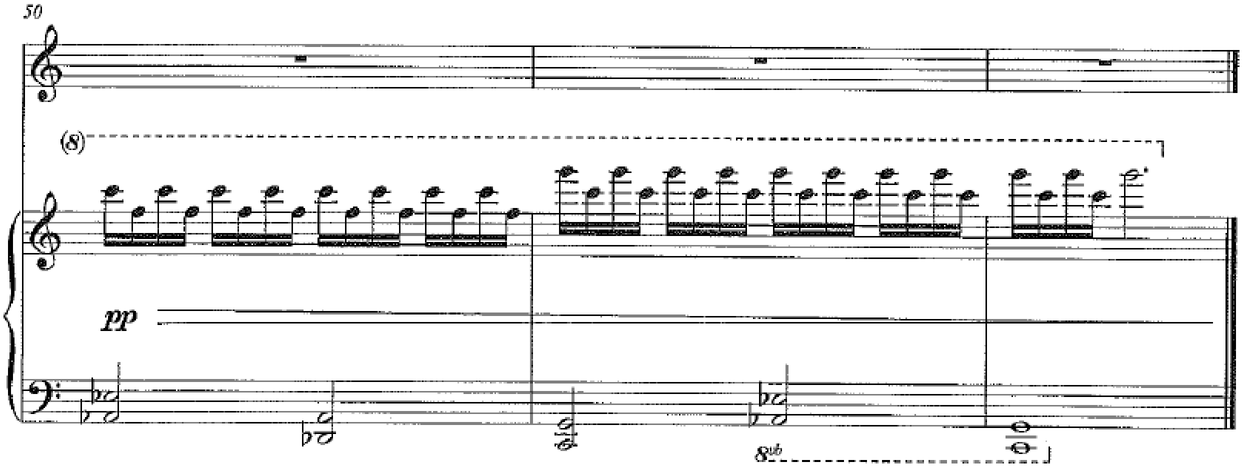
While parallel motion has been used throughout the cycle, its purpose in "Between Two Hills" is to create a sense of both stasis and motion, of familiarity and adventure, of openness outdoors and closeness indoors. This final movement serves well to bring the cycle to a close. It leaves the listener with calm, refreshing sounds, bidding a sweet farewell to the Sandburg-ian world we've inhabited for twenty-five minutes.

The final bars of the cycle see the piano extending to the extremity of its range and reprise the "bell" motive from the opening of the movement (Example 11.7).



Example 11.7. "Between Two Hills," mm. 51–54, open writing at the end of the cycle.

This motion of the hands moving in opposite directions in parallel fifths is highly reminiscent of the final bars of "Follies" (Example 11.8).



Example 11.8. "Follies," mm. 50–52, open writing in the first movement of the cycle.

The return of the bell motive at the end of the movement is a nice cyclic nod within the final movement. The similarity to the end of the first movement, both in parallelism between the two hands, and the motion of both hands away from each other, creates some continuity across the cycle as a whole.

Vocally, as in other movements, “Between Two Hills” may indulge the temptation to sing lazily. The slow tempo, hazy nature of the underlying harmonies, and subject matter might lull a soprano into singing with a low soft palate or slow breath energy. This must not be. The soprano must support and spin these lines with all her skill: one, because they are more exposed than in the rest of the cycle, and two, because it is the end of the cycle and she must leave her audience with her best sounds.

Specifically, there is a lot of stasis in the accompaniment of this movement. It is challenging for the singer to create long lines, singing through whole notes when there is little to no motion in the piano. The first entrance is particularly difficult to navigate (see Example 11.2); “Between two” ascends through the middle voice, but the word “hills” is set in the passaggio. [I] is a difficult vowel in the passaggio and is further complicated by the preceding [h]. There is no encouragement in the piano for the syncopation, so the soprano is solely responsible for the success both of the rhythm and the clarity of text. The syncopated, chromatic writing continues for nearly half the movement. The second half of the movement is less chromatic in the voice and the text setting seems somehow so natural, so unaffected, so representative of the image Sandburg has painted in words. Though the rhythms become simpler, and short portions of text continue to be set, each phrase is still quite long. Good breath support and a keen ability to shape phrases is the best assistance to the remainder of the movement.

According to my coaching with hall, in “Between Two Hills” the “bell” gesture in the piano (particularly the grace note) should be executed very quickly, to imitate the sound of a bell. The movement should have a still, reserved feeling. I discovered that in measure 34 I was arriving too early to the F♯, which should not be reached until the downbeat of measure 35. What Hall and I decided together was for me to stay on the B until the second beat of that measure before beginning the glissando.[2]

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[2] Coaching with Juliana Hall and David Sims, recorded by the author, June 22, 2017.

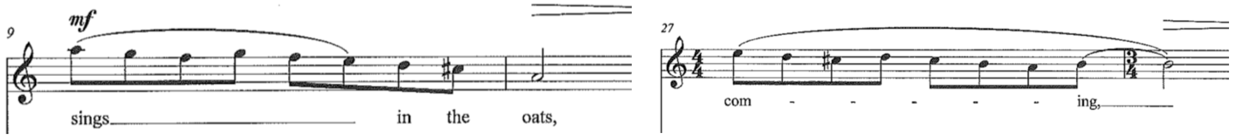
Chapter 12: PEDAGOGY OF THE CYCLE

As with all songs, precedence should be given to the text. The pitches and rhythms of *When the South Wind Sings* are well within the bounds of 21st century vocal composition. That said, the voice is often not supported harmonically by the piano and requires a talented singer.

Due to the chromaticism, ensemble challenges, structure of the text setting, and dramatic poise required, this cycle is for graduate and professionally minded singers. The cycle has many challenges which make it an unsuitable pedagogical choice for undergraduate or young singers. Besides the heavy chromaticism and lack of tonal support from the piano, the tessitura lies throughout the entire voice, spending significant portions of time just below the passaggio in the C5-D5 range. This, in tandem with the often open or dark vowels of the English language, would likely cause trouble for a young singer, still learning to navigate that part of her voice. A more advanced singer will know to approach this register with a narrowed posture (narrowed of course at the buccal point and with the vowel, open at the back).

Assuming the singer is capable of learning the music, there are a few pedagogical matters to keep in mind. First, of course, is breath control. There are many phrases that are quite long, or that span wide ranges of the voice and require steady use of the breath to navigate the register shifts. Additionally the various colors and text painting asked by Hall require consistent and confident fluidity of the breath cycle.

Secondly, much of the cycle sits around and just under the passaggio, often beginning with a dark, back vowel. This has the possibility to lead the soprano into using an unfocused, under-energized tone. The result would lack the shimmer necessary to make this music come alive. Considering the nature-themed poetry, high placement and consistent breath energy will serve to animate the music. This is an opportunity to cultivate high placement in the midrange for young singers. Exercises bridging high to middle range (as high placement is often more easily attained in the top of the voice) would be excellent aids, and there are a few melismas from the cycle that could be used as vocalizes for this purpose (Example 12.1).



Example 12.1. “The South Wind Says So,” mm. 9–10 & 27–28, vocalises to bring high placement from the upper range to the midrange.

Lyricism should above all be the aim of the singer. There is a certain gentleness, or perhaps even introverted-ness to this cycle. This inside-focused quality makes the work quite challenging to perform as a whole. Generally, song cycles are made up of contrasting songs, songs with varying tempos, songs with various emotional intentions. This cycle, however, traces the action of a day from a narrator’s perspective, somewhat passively. Because the speaker acts primarily as narrator, there is a lack of dramatic action. And because the texts are all highly reflective in nature, the work itself takes on a quiet, introspective feel. This soft, introverted style is hard to sustain and makes it even harder to maintain an audience’s focus for twenty-five minutes during performance. This is perhaps the greatest challenge of the work. Once the woodshedding has been done, the piece is learned, and the ensemble set, the performers must find a way to captivate the audience with this work of quiet rest.

Chapter 13: CONCLUSION

In this song cycle, Juliana Hall sets the poetry of Carl Sandburg. Through an improvisatory style, she often returns to similar textures, most often employing parallelism in the piano and very often using a wave or arch shape in both the piano and the voice. Arches are pleasing gestures to sing, as they don't require the singer to sustain any one tessitura but allow the voice to move throughout the range.

Hall's greatest desire when composing for the voice is to express the text. She establishes a different sound world for each poet she sets, and her ambition is to create music that is specific to each poem. With this in mind, she employs sounds, textures, and articulations less common to art song. For example, in this cycle, there is a lot of descriptive text about the outdoors—various types of flowers, gardens, sun, moon, wind, weather, crickets, etc. Hall wants to represent each of these musically and finds inventive ways to do so. Her setting of the word "cricket" employs short, staccato notes, leaping from note to note, as perhaps, a cricket might leap (Example 8.4). Her setting of the word "rain" is slurred staccato notes, ideally meant to aurally sound like water droplets (Example 4.9). These are obvious examples of text painting. The less obvious examples are perhaps the more challenging to perform. For example, she creates lines and phrases in "The South Wind Says So" that are meant to imitate the sound of wind. Rather than representing the wind with a breathless tone, she wants the direction and shape of the line to follow a wind-like pattern, weaving in and out of the accompaniment the way wind weaves in and out of trees, leaves, and grass.

Juliana desired to compose something very beautiful with this cycle, an antithesis to negativity in our world. She believes that by returning to the ordinary, simple parts of life, we can rediscover our joy in life. She chose these Sandburg poems to remind us of the simple things—the moon, the wind, nature, the outdoors—and to hint that maybe through those entities we can find healing. In her own words:

> "In the whole cycle, as a general piece, it's kind of a quiet cycle, except the first two, but then everything is kind of gentle, even within the first two." [1]

My best advice to the singer: be bold to make expressive choices. In my coachings with Juliana Hall she encouraged me to explore sounds outside of the "pearl-shaped" *bel canto*—providing in the cycle non-traditional vocal sounds, such as glissandi and slurred staccatos. She most of all desires to capture the sound of the wind or rain. Be daring enough to attempt such sounds.

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[1] Ibid.

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