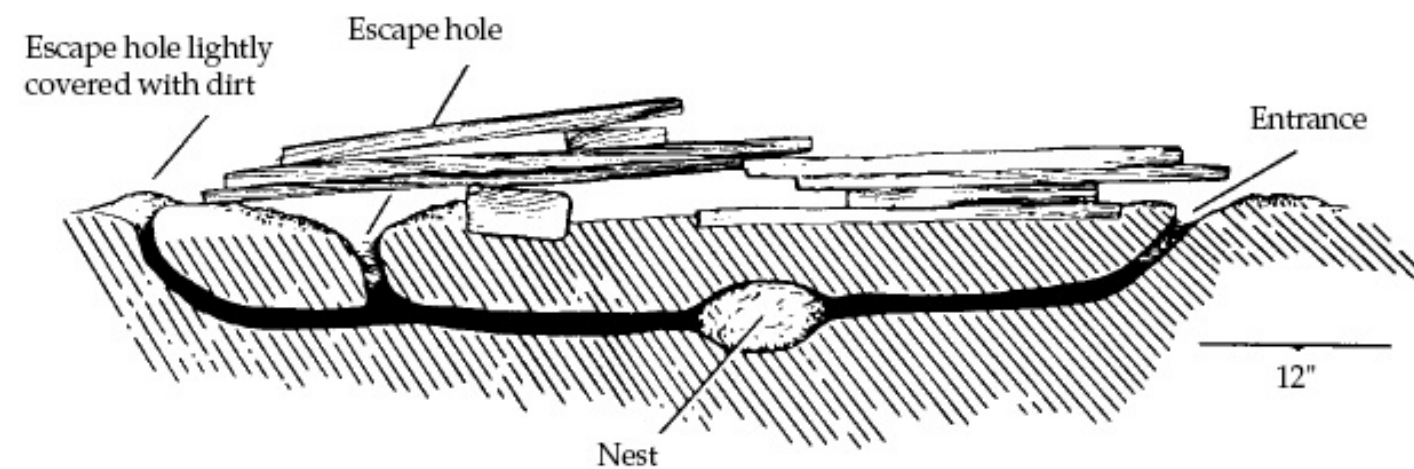


Curtis Rumrill

The Long Hibernation



text by Webberly Ebberly Finnich

for Ensemble Dal Niente

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Deep underground,
A velvet bed
Of cotton thread
And night so dark.

Sounds from above;
Sounds softened
By snowfall.

And along comes Crow,
His a scissor of bone
To slice at gristle.

Deep underground,
A velvet bed
Of cotton thread
Fit like a finger in a glove.

And along comes Thistle
Roots kissing up against my lips;
A tender suckling slid

Deep underground
The beat of my heart
The sound of my breath

And along comes Fungus
A soft white yarn
To fill my lungs

*Musking on a moonlit day
Were Gillthiyat ay Grythithem
A winter baby came to them:
Ag Almogor neag Woodiben*

*It's time to put him in again
Said Gillthiyat pi Grythithem
There's rain tonight and also wind
Said Gillthiyat pi Grythithem*

*Said Gillthiyat pi Grythithem
Lets fix his winter nest for him
He'll nestle deep in sedgy fen
Ag Almogor neag Woodiben*

Notes on the Collaborative Process

The Long Hibernation is a continuation of my collaborative efforts with the writer Webberly Ebberly Finnich (Zachary Webber). Zach studied creative writing at Oberlin, and is an active member of the Philadelphia outsider art scene as a writer, sculptor, musician, comedian and thespian. His wordless *Bird Opera*, produced and performed in 2010 entirely by amateurs with costumes, props and sets made nearly exclusively out of materials scavenged from trash piles, was a total an immersive experience of focused creativity like no other.

In some ways I don't think of myself as a composer, but as a part of a short-story writing duo made up of Zach and myself. When we work on a piece together Zach sends me pages upon pages of text, and often improvised recordings as well, all of which I collate and whittle down into a cohesive narrative that can function as a sung text. The music I set to the text is governed by the tone and momentum of the text, though of course I also have the freedom to edit and rework the text for musical considerations. In the end there is a piece that is neither wholly mine nor Zach's.

As a collaborative team our musical output has largely stayed true to the thematic world of tales involving fantastic or personified animals, with a sense of allegory, or folk

tradition. At the risk of sounding pretentious, I find common ground in the Italian writer Italo Calvino's *Cosmicomics*. Though I hadn't read Calvino when we began our collaboration, he has opened my eyes to the potency of creating new works in the form of mythology.

The text for *The Long Hibernation* was once five pages of text involving multiple possible endings and literal choruses to be sung by the instrumentalists in response to or simultaneously with the soprano's main line. I am deeply grateful not only for Zach's creativity, but also his generous flexibility in allowing me to edit and eliminate text -often material that he has considerable time creating. Another of our collaborations began with us spending a year developing nearly 30 pages of text together, of which only 5 pages survived the composition process. The obvious value of this approach is that neither the text/story nor the music fully takes precedent in the creation of the piece. Never is the musical material subjugated to the needs of the text in the way that working in a less collaborative manner might demand, nor does the text become simply musical material for a singer to sing. The goal is a unified whole whose purpose is a compelling musical story.

Notes on the Text and Performance Notes

The Long Hibernation is the story of an animal of indeterminate species that dies in her sleep. She is then lamented through a folk-song in an imaginary dialect of English (presumably the fictional folk-dialect of her species).

Structurally the piece mimics the text. The majority of the text, and musical accompaniment is essentially written in the first person, and is an anxiety ridden, yet dreamy inner monologue. The following text gives the setting:

*Deep underground,
A velvet bed
Of cotton thread
And night so dark.*

*Sounds from above;
Sounds softened
By snowfall.*

*Deep underground,
A velvet bed
Of cotton thread
Fit like a finger in a glove.*

*Deep underground
The beat of my heart
The sound of my breath*

The protagonist is drifting in and out of sleep, and slowly becoming aware of her surroundings (*the beat of my heart, the sound of my breath*). A full soprano sound is appropriate for this material from a poetic, or text-setting perspective, with a judicious use of vibrato. This text is set largely to the backdrop of the glissando on the violin and

the timbral and multiphonic trills in the saxophones (as middle-ground material, the bass drum and piano as background, and punctuation). The feel for these sections, and largely for the piece, should be otherworldly and to varying degrees anxious.

Interspersed among the atmospheric “setting” text is verse describing the incursion of threat from the outside world:

*And along comes Crow,
His a scissor of bone
To slice at gristle.*

*And along comes Thistle
Roots kissing up against my lips;
A tender suckling slid*

*And along comes Fungus
A soft white yarn
To fill my lungs*

Here a predator of some sort enters the scene, accompanied by intersecting quartertone material in the voice and saxophone. It should feel tense, anxious, and surreal –something the protagonist is vaguely aware of is trying to kill her in her sleep, and that something may be an animal (in the part about the crow), or it may be the roots of a plant, or a fungus. Or she may only be dreaming the danger. The change here in color palate should be striking. The material goes from being highly heterogeneous (everyone contributing to a composite texture in distinctive ways, seemingly in different pitch, timbre and rhythmic worlds) to rhythmic unity and similarity of pitch language. If this were a staged work the color of all of the lights would change here. Aside from the entrance to these sections the articulation should be light. At the entrances the saxophone and bass drum should use a heavier accent to delineate the material from

what has preceded it. This is best achieved by the instrumentalists, rather than by the soprano as each of these sections begins on a vowel, and an overly articulated vocal part here –both in diction and in attack- will sound forced and awkward. On the downbeat of M, Q, and T the instrumentalists should accent slightly their first note (everyone is together here). The soprano and the saxophone should aim toward blending, both using just a hint of vibrato.

The piece ends with a shift from the first person to the third person, with the following text:

*Musking on a moonlit day
Were Gillthiyat ay Grythithem
A winter baby came to them:
Ag Almogor neag Woodiben*

*It's time to put him in again
Said Gillthiyat pi Grythithem
There's rain tonight and also wind
Said Gillthiyat pi Grythithem*

*Said Gillthiyat pi Grythithem
Lets fix his winter nest for him
He'll nestle deep in sedgy fen
Ag Almogor neag Woodiben*

It is a lament in an imaginary dialect of English that is presumably native to the group of animals of which the protagonist is a part. Though an explanation isn't offered, the protagonist of the piece has died, and she is being memorialized in a folk song.

Notes on Some Sections

Opening to Rehearsal A

Percussion solo: The sound here should be focused, and not too diffuse.

Rehearsal A

The piano is the soloist here, despite the activity in the percussion.

Rehearsal B-C

For the first bar and a half of B the percussion and piano are together and should momentarily get into a groove. The groove is then quickly disrupted and undermined by the material in the LH of the piano. From B to C the percussionist is the soloist. The piano has the pedal down, is playing written out ritard, and is playing in or moving to the registral extremes of the instrument. The triple forte should be observed as a way of creating a wash of sound and resonance. The percussionist should feel free to play loudly and aggressively, without regard for drowning out the piano. This is a foreshadowing of the chaos that begins at W. It should feel big, and possibly a little over the top.

Rehearsal H

Overall and throughout the piece the soprano's diction should be relatively light and unobtrusive.

Rehearsal W-Y

This part should feel as though it is on the edge of spinning out of control. The difficulty of the material adds to the drama and tension of the performance. That said, if need-be, the tempo can be reset to something slightly slower at V in order to facilitate accuracy, and then brought up again at Y. However, if a slower tempo is used, a balance should be struck between playing the section and at a tempo that allows for the drama and cacophony of the material –it should feel too fast, and a little bit out of control.

-Curtis Rumrill

The Long Hibernation

For soprano and chamber ensemble

approx. duration ~15'00"

Tenor Saxophone

(dbl. Soprano Saxophone)

Percussion

Snare, Floor Tom, Concert Bass Drum

Soprano

Piano

Violin

Score in C

23

B

Snr F. Tom

p *mp*

Pno.

f *mf* *f* *fff*

15^{ma} *(loco)*

8^{vb}



27

Snr F. Tom

f *ff*

Pno.

(8^{vb}) *(loco)* *8^{vb}* *15^{ma}*

31

To B. D.

C Calm with Sudden Violence

Snr
F. Tom

Musical notation for Snare Drum and F. Tom. The staff shows a series of rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic marking of *fff*.

Pno.

Musical notation for Piano. The score is in G-flat major and 3/4 time. It features a melodic line in the right hand with slurs and a bass line with triplets and slurs. A dynamic marking of *f* is present. Measure numbers (15) and (8) are indicated.



soft vibraphone mallets

edge

Bass Drum II

ppp

p

Pno.

Musical notation for Piano and Bass Drum II. The piano part continues with triplets and slurs. The Bass Drum II part has two measures of notes with a dynamic marking of *ppp*. The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure numbers (15) and (8) are indicated.

D

Ten. Sax. *ff*

B. D. *f* center mute with palm l.v.

Pno. *mp*

Vln. *fff*

Center of drum with fingers dead stroke

p

E

Ten. Sax. *ff* *fff*

B. D. *mp* *pp* *mp* *ff*

Pno. *p*

Vln. *fff* *fff*

soft vibraphone mallets mute w/palm l.v.

mute w/palm l.v.

H Strange, Dark, Earthy

Timbral trill using alternate fingerings. Choose fingerings which will allow for the greatest contrast in timber, while not compromising the speed of the trill.

83

bisbigliando

Sop. Sax.

B. D.

Sop.

Pno.

Violin

91

bisbigliando (timbral trill)

Sop. Sax.

B. D.

For all of this material, except where notated, change bow direction as needed, but use as long a stroke as possible before changing, and mask changes.

Vln.

L

Ten. Sax.

Musical notation for Tenor Saxophone, featuring notes with dynamic markings *mp* and *mf*.

mp

B. D.

Bass Drum staff with a triplet of eighth notes.

Sop.

Soprano vocal staff with lyrics: "sounds from above sounds softened by snow fall". Includes dynamic markings *mp*, *mf*, and *mp*.

Piano

Piano staff with markings for *8va* and *8vb*.

Sul G

molto pont.

ord.

Vln.

Violin staff with performance instructions: "Sul G", "molto pont.", "ord.", and "Upward Glissando Sul G from B to C". Includes numerical markings +12.5, +25, and +37.5.

mp

116

Ten. Sax. To Sop. Sax.

B. D.

Pno.

Vln.

ppp *mp* *ppp* *mp*

ord. *molto pont.* ord.

Sul G

Upward Glissando Sul G from C to D

+0 +12.5 +25 +37.5 +0 +12.5 +25 +37.5 +0 +12.5 +25 +37.5 +0 +12.5 +25 +37.5 +0

ppp *mp* *ppp* *mf*

M *legato* **N**

Sop. Sax. *mp* *mf* *mp*

B. D. center, soft B.D. beater *mf* *f* *mf* l.v.

Sop. *mf* *f* *mf*

And a - long comes crow his a sci - ssor of bone to slice at gris - tie

Pno. *mp*

Vln. *mf*

Upward Glissando Sul G from E to F-sharp +25 cent

+12.5 +25 +37.5 +0 +12.5
3

133

Sop. Sax.

B. D. *pp*

Sop. Sax. *mf*

0 bisbigliando (timbral trill)

mp

Piano *f*

Vln. *f*

136

Sop. Sax. *ppp* *mp*

B. D. *mp* *mf* *pp*

Sop. *Deep* un - der - ground a vel - - vet bed

Pno.

139

Sop. Sax. *p* *p*

B. D. *p* *mp* *mf*

Sop. *mf* *gliss.* *p* *mp*
of cott - on thread fit like a fin - ger in a glove

Pno. *mf* *pp*

p

B. D. *f*

Pno.

Vln. *mf*

Downward Glissando Sul G from F# to E

Q

Sop. Sax. *ppp* *mf*

B. D. *mf* *mp* *p*

Sop. *f* *mf* *mp*

Pno. *f*

And a - long comes thi - stle roots kiss - ing up a gainst my lips a ten - der suck - ling slide

R
To Ten. Sax.

Sop. Sax. *pp*

B. D. normal, l.v. *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Sop. *pp*

Pno. *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. *p* *pp* *mf* *pp*

S

Tenor Saxophone

Sop. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*
gliss. Deep Deep Deep un - der ground

ord. +0 Sul G Sul D +0 Sul G +25 Sul D +0 Sul G +12.5 Sul D +0
molto pont.

165

To Sop. Sax.

Ten. Sax. *mf* *ppp* *mf*

B. D. *mp* *f* *p*

Sop. *f* *p* *mf* *f* *p*
the beat of my heart the sound of my breath

Pno. *pp* *ppp*

(15) (8)

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for rehearsal mark 165. It features four staves: Tenor Saxophone (Ten. Sax.), Bass Drum (B. D.), Soprano Saxophone (Sop.), and Piano (Pno.). The Tenor Saxophone part begins with a series of sixteenth-note runs, marked *mf*, followed by a *ppp* section with a vertical line of notes, and then continues with *mf*. The Bass Drum part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *mp*, followed by a single eighth note marked *f*, and then rests marked *p*. The Soprano Saxophone part has a melodic line with lyrics: "the beat of my heart" and "the sound of my breath". Dynamics range from *f* to *p*. The Piano part features a complex accompaniment with triplets and slurs, marked *pp* and *ppp*. A rehearsal mark (15) is indicated at the start of the piano part, and a section ending at (8) is marked at the bottom.

T

Sop. Sax. *mp* *mf* *f* To Ten. Sax.

B. D. center *mp* *mf* *f* l.v.

Sop. *mf* *f* *ff*

And a - long comes fun - gus a soft white yarn to fill my lungs

U

B. D. normal *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Pno. *f* *pp* *mf*

Vln. *ppp* *pp*

Downward Glissando Sul G from B-flat to G

+0, +37.5, +25, +12.5, +0, +37.5, +25, +12.5, +0, +37.5, +25, +12.5, +0, +37.5, +25, +12.5

185

B. D. *f* *mf* *mp*

Pno. *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Vln. *p* *mp* *mf* *f*

begin alternating bow attacks

+0 +37.5 +25 +12.5 +0 +37.5 +25 +12.5 +0 +37.5 +25 +12.5 +0 +37.5 +25 +12.5 +0 +37.5 +25 +12.5

193

V Catastrophic Lullaby

To Snr, F. Tom

B. D. *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *mf* *p*

Pno. *mf* *ppp* *pp*

Vln. *ff* *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

ord. *molto pont.* *tasto*

Pno.

Vln.

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*



Ten. Sax.

mf pitch bend

Snr, F. Tom

mf

Pno.

mf

Vln.

p *mf* ord.

222

The musical score is divided into four systems, each corresponding to a different instrument. The Tenor Saxophone part features a melodic line with dynamic markings of *(mf)*, *ff subito*, *f*, *(f)*, and *ff subito*, along with a "pitch bend" instruction. The Snare Drum part consists of rhythmic patterns with triplet markings and dynamic markings of *mf* and *f*. The Piano part includes a treble clef staff with a *8va* marking and a bass clef staff with a *Ped.* marking, featuring chords and triplets with dynamic markings of *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. The Violin part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 8/8, playing a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings of *ff*, *f*, and *ff*.

227

Ten. Sax.

Musical notation for Tenor Saxophone. It features a series of triplet eighth notes with accents. A *pitch bend* is indicated over a note in the second measure. A circled 'X' is placed above the staff in the third measure. Dynamics include *(ff)*, *fff subito*, and *fff*.

Snr, F-Tom

Musical notation for Snare Drum and Floor Tom. It consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth notes, primarily in triplet groupings. Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*.

Pno.

Musical notation for Piano. The right hand features chords and triplets, with a *15^{ma}* (15th measure) marking. The left hand plays a steady triplet eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. Pedal markings (*Ped.*) are present in the left hand.

Vln.

Musical notation for Violin. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, mostly in triplet groupings. Dynamics include *ff* and *fff*.

231

Ten. Sax.

Snr, F-Tom

Pno. *fff*

Vln.

(15)

(8)

Ped.

264

Snr, F-Tom

Sop.
-thi - yat ay Gry - thi - them. A win - ter ba - by came to them:

Vln.

275

Snr, F-Tom

Sop.
Ag Al - - mo - gor neag Wood - i - ben It's time to put him in a -

Vln.

286

Snr, F-Tom

Sop.

gain, said Gill - thi - yat pi Gry - thi - them

Vln.

mf only if necessary to balance with increased activity and dynamics in percussion. *f*



292

Snr, F-Tom

Sop.

There's rain to - night and al - so wind, said Gill - thi - yat pi Gry - thi - them

Vln.

BB

CC

Snr, F-Tom

Sop.

Vln.

309

DD

Snr, F-Tom

Sop.

Vln.