

Vita Brevis (version for soprano and piano trio) (2009)

[1] No. 1 A Lullaby

Text: James Agee (1909-55)

(We regret that we are unable to reproduce the text for this track.)

[2] No. 2 My Heart Leaps Up

Text: William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

My heart leaps up
When I behold a rainbow in the sky
So was it when my life began
So is it now
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die.
The child is father of the man
And I could wish my days to be bound each to each by
natural piety.

[3] No. 3 Mezzo Cammin

*Text: Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) / Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow (1807-82)*

*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
ché la diritta via era smarrita.*

Half my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth....

Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura.....

Tant' e amara che poco e piu morte;

[4] No. 4 The Coming of Wisdom with Time

Text: William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

Though leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into truth.

[5] No. 5 In Remembrance

Text attributed to Mary Elizabeth Frye (1904-2004)

(We regret that we are unable to reproduce the text for this track.)

[13] Useful Knowledge: A Franklin Fantasy (2006)

Text: Benjamin Franklin (1706-90)

I.

We are spirits.
That bodies should be lent us...
is a kind and benevolent act of God.

II.

Time enough, always proves little enough.

The Bell strikes **One**: We take no Note of Time,
But from its Loss. To give it then a Tongue
Is wise in Man. If heard aright
It is the Knell of our departed Hours;...
It is the Signal that demands Dispatch;
How much is to be done?

III.

One today is worth two tomorrows.

You may delay, but time will not.

There will be sleeping enough in the grave.

Early to bed and early to rise.
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

Lost time is never found again.
That bodies should be lent us is a kind and benevolent act of
God.

IV.

To pour forth benefits for the common good is divine.
Surely the Thunder of Heaven
is no more supernatural than the Rain,
Hail or Sunshine of Heaven,
[against the inconvenience of which
we guard by Roofs and Shades without Scruple].

It has pleased God in His goodness to mankind
at length to discover to them
the means of securing their habitations and other buildings
from mischief by thunder and lightning.

The method is this: provide a small iron rod....
To the [end of the] upper end of the rod
fasten about a foot of brass wire
the size of a common knitting needle,
sharpened to a fine point;
the rod may be secured to the house by a few small staples.
A house thus furnished
will not be damaged by lightning,
it being attracted by the points
and passing through the metal
without hurting anybody.

V.

Those who love deeply never grow old;

Joy is not in things.
It is in us!

O Powerful Goodness!
Bountiful Father!
Merciful Guide!
Increase in me that Wisdom
which discovers my truest Interests;
Strengthen my Resolutions
to perform what that Wisdom dictates.
Accept my kind Offices to thy other Children,
as the only Return in my Power for
Thy continual Favors to me.

Those who love deeply never grow old;
They may die of old age, but they die young.

VI.

It is impossible
to imagine the Height
to which may be carried,
in a thousand years,
the Power of Man over Matter...

O that moral Science
were in as fair a way of Improvement,
that Men would cease
to be Wolves to one another,
and that human Beings would at length
learn what they now improperly call
Humanity.

VII.

To pour forth benefits for the common good is divine.

We are spirits.
That bodies should be lent us,
while they can afford us pleasure,
assist us in acquiring knowledge,
or doing good to our fellow creatures
is a kind and benevolent act of God.