

On the Porch

for chorus, piano, and strings
(vocal score)

Commissioned by the Arlington Choral Society
in celebration of their 25th Anniversary Concert

by Jon Christopher Nelson

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text by Martha Elizabeth

On the Porch—Denton, Texas
by Martha Elizabeth

Let us live the slow way,
watching the light
while the rail-posts shadow us
with lengthening stripes.
The hours have their own momentum, a pace
logical as cloth.

Fossils from a local creek,
and stones from travels, unpolished.
Cowskull, cholla skeleton.
An oak stump, partly hollow,
where a glass leaves rings.

No more movement than to lift a wet glass.
Skin glossed with sweat.
Cool shininess
like a mirror glancing back at the sun.

Let us turn the rule of time
to pleasure, the hours
measured by design,
tailored for fulness.

Taillights blaze and dim
on the west horizon avenue.
A wasp returns to the stump and enters it,
filling the hole where the heart was,
making itself at home.

—1994

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Performance Notes

noteheads marked with × = forced whisper

noteheads marked with ▽ or ▼ = lowest possible pitch

noteheads marked with △ or ▲ = highest possible pitch

parenthetical syllables provide a pronunciation reference and are not sung

On the Porch

by Jon Christopher Nelson
poem by Martha Elizabeth

dur. c. 13:00

Largo ♩ = 50

Violin I
Viola
Violoncello

tranquillo
p

dolce
p

5
vln. 1
vln. 2
vla.
vcl.

mf
f
mp

mp
mp
f
risoluto

9
vln. 1
vln. 2
vla.
vcl.

mf
f
mf
mp

mf

12 3

vln. 1 *mf* *p*

vln. 2 *p*

vla. *p*

vcl. *mp* *p*

16 *tranne* *mp* *mf* *poco accel.* *p*

S

A *tranne* *mp* *mf* *p*

T *tranne* *mp* *mf* *p*

B *tranne* *mp* *mf* *p*

live the slow way,

Let us live the slow way,

Let us live the slow way,

Let us live the slow way,

Let us live the slow way,

16 *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

vln. 1 *ppp*

vln. 2 *ppp*

vla. *ppp*

vcl. *ppp* *ppp*

Adagietto ♩ = 72

21

S

21

A

21

T

21

B

21

capriccioso

mp

Red.

21

vln. 1

p

21

vln. 2

p

mp

21

vln.

p

21

vcl.

p

mp

21

D.B.

Andante ♩ = 90

The score is for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a chamber orchestra. The vocal parts are in 4/4 time, marked *cantabile* and *mp*. The lyrics are: "Let us live the slow way, watching the". The instrumental parts include piano (pf.), violin 1 (vln. 1), violin 2 (vln. 2), viola (vln.), violin (vcl.), and double bass (D.B.). The piano part features a *Red.* (Reduction) section. The violin parts are marked *animato* and *pizz.* (pizzicato), with *arco cantabile* for the first violin in the final measure. The double bass part is marked *pizz. animato* and *mf*.

28 *mf*

S light Let us live the slow way,

A light Let us live the slow way,

T light Let us live the slow way,

B light *cantabile mp* 3 *mf* watching the light Let us live the slow way,

pf.

vln. 1 *mf* *ppp*

vln. 2 *arco cantabile mp* *mf* *ppp*

vla. *arco cantabile mp* *mf* *ppp*

vcl. *arco cantabile mp* *mf* *ppp*

D.B. *arco mp* *mf* *ppp*

33 *semplce* *p* *mp*

S watching the light while the rail - posts shad - ow us

A 33 *p* *semplce* *mp*

A watch - ing while the rail - posts shad - ow us

T 33 *p* *semplce* *mp*

T watch - - - - - ing shad - ow us

B 33 *p* *semplce* *mp*

B watch - - - - - ing watching the light

vcl. 33 *mp*

36 *robusto* *mf* *espressivo*

A watch - ing the light while the rail - posts shad - ow us

T 36 *mf* *robusto* *espressivo*

T watch - - - - - ing the light while the rail - posts shad - ow us

B 36 *robusto* *mf* *espressivo*

B rail - posts shad - ow us

vln. 2 36 *espressivo* *mf*

vla. 36 *espressivo* *mf*

vcl. 36 *mf* *espressivo* *mf*

D.B. 36 *espressivo* *mf*

espressivo

39 *f*

S watch - ing the light while the rail - posts

A *f* *espressivo* watch - - - ing the light while the rail - posts

T *espressivo* watch - - - ing the light

B *f* *espressivo* watch - - - ing the light

pf. *mf*

Red. Red.

vln. 1 *espressivo* *mf* *f*

vln. 2 *con ardore* *f*

vla. *con ardore* *f*

vcl. *f* *con ardore*

D.B. *f* *con ardore*

Largo $\text{♩} = 50$
maestoso

S
shad - ow us with length - en-ing stripes. length -
mp sereno

A
shad - ow us with length - en-ing stripes. length -
mp sereno

T
shad - ow us with length - en-ing stripes. length -
mp sereno

B
shad - ow us with length - en-ing stripes. length -
mp sereno

(S^{va})
pf. *mf* *maestoso*
f *Red.* *Red.* *mf* *Red.*

vln. 1 *maestoso*

vln. 2 *maestoso*

vla. *maestoso*

vcl. *risoluto* *ff* *maestoso* *f*

D.B. *maestoso*

46 *p*
S en - ing stripes. with *p*

46 *p*
A en - ing stripes. with *p*

46 *p*
T en - ing stripes. with *p*

46 *espressivo* *mf* *p*
B en - ing stripes. with *p*

The hours have their own mo - men - tum,

46 *tranquillo* *p* *Red.* *Red.*
pf. *8va*

46 *p*
vln. 1

46 *p*
vln. 2

46 *p*
vla.

46 *espressivo* *p* *mp* *p*
vcl.

46 *p*
D.B.

49

S
length - en-ing stripes.

A
length - en-ing stripes.

T
length - en-ing stripes.

B
length - en-ing stripes.

a pace log-i-cal as

pf.

vcl.

53

B
pp

cloth.

pf.

vcl.
pp

57 *S^{va}*

pf.

57

ff

mf

Red.

vln. 1

57

mp

vln. 2

57

mp

vla.

57

mp

vcl.

57

mp

D.B.

57

mp

60

pf.

60

f

mf

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

vln. 1

60

f

mf

vln. 2

60

f

mf

vla.

60

f

mf

vcl.

60

f

mf

D.B.

60

f

mf

Allegretto ♩ = 108

70

pf.

70

mf

strepitoso

8va

vln. 1

70

pp

mf

pizz.

strepitoso

vln. 2

70

mf

pizz.

strepitoso

vla.

70

pp

ppp

vcl.

70

pp

ppp

D.B.

70

mf

pizz.

strepitoso

73

mf

mp

3

8va

vln. 1

73

f

arco

vln. 2

73

vla.

73

strepitoso

pizz.

sfz

pizz.

3

vcl.

73

sfz

arco

f

D.B.

73

mf

77

S

A

T

B

Fos - sils

Fos - sils

Fos - sils

Fos - sils

from a

from a

secco *f*

f secco

f

secco *mp*

secco *mp*

mf

ff

mp

mf

f

mf

mf

pizz. *f* *sfz* *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

mf

pizz. *f* *sfz* *mf*

f *sfz* *mf*

f *sfz* *mf*

Red. *

8

8

81 *mf* *sfz* *mp*

S
Fos - (sil) - s Fos - sils

81 *mf* *sfz* *mp*

A
Fos - (sil) - s Fos-sils Fos - sils

81 *mf* *mp*

T
(Fos) - sils Fos-sils

81 *mf* *mp*

B
(Fos) - sils Fos - - - sils

81 *mp* *mp*

pf.

81 *mf* *sfz* *mp*

vln. 1
vln. 2
vla. *arco* *ff* *pizz.* *mp*
vcl. *ff* *mp*
D.B. *sfz* *mp*

85 *mf* Fos - sils Fos-sils from a lo - cal creek, *f*

85 Fossils *mf* Fos - sils from a lo - cal creek, *f*

85 Fos - sils Fossils Fos - sils from a lo - cal creek, *f*

85 Fos-sils Fossils Fos-sils from a lo - cal creek, *f*

85 *pf.*

85 *animato con brio* *mf* *mf* *mf*

85 *animato con brio* *mf* *mf*

85 *animato con brio* *mf* *mf*

85 *animato con brio* *mf* *mf*

85 *animato con brio* *mf* *mf*

85 D.B.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 85 to 88. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and an orchestra. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'Fossils from a local creek'. The vocal dynamics are marked *mf* for the first two measures and *f* for the last two. The Soprano part includes triplet markings in the third measure. The piano part has a *pf.* dynamic. The string sections (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello) are marked *animato con brio* and *mf*. The Double Bass part is marked *mf*. The score is written in a common time signature.

misterioso
mf

89

S

Fos - - - - - sils

mf

89

A

Fos - - - - - sils

mf misterioso

89

T

Fos-sils

f

89

B

Fos - sils

mf

from **mf**

from **mf**

from **mf**

from

Fos - sils

89

pf.

89

89

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

89

D.B.

93 *mf* $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

S (Fos) - - sils Fos - - sils from a

A (Fos) - - sils Fos - - sils from a

T Fos-(sils) from a lo-cal creek, Fos-sils

B Fos-(sils) from a local creek, Fos - sils

pf. $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

vln. 1 $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

vln. 2 $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

vla. $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

vcl. $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

D.B. $\frac{3+7}{4+8}$

97 *f* *p* *mf* *f*

S lo - cal creek, from from a lo-cal creek,

A lo - cal creek, from from a lo-cal

T *mf* Fossils from a local creek, from

B *mf* Fossils from a local creek, from

pf.

vln. 1 arco sul pont. *f*

vln. 2

vla. 97

vcl. 97

D.B. 97

100 *mf* *f*

S

100 *mf* *f*

A

lo - cal creek, and stones

100 *f*

T

lo-cal creek, and stones

100 *f*

B

localcreek, from a lo-cal creek, and stones

100

pf.

100

vln. 1

100

vln. 2

100

vla.

100

vcl.

100

D.B.

103 *mp*

S from trav - els,

A from trav - els,

T from trav - els,

B from trav - els,

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl. arco *f*

D.B.

107

S

trav-els, *mf* *f* *ff* 3

A

trav-els, and *mf* *f* *ff* 3

T

trav-els, and *mf* *f* *ff* 3

B

trav-els, and *mf* *f* *ff* 3

stones un - polished.

stones un - polished.

stones un - polished.

stones un - polished.

trav-els, stones un - polished.

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

110 *mf*

S

stones from a local creek,

A

stones from a local stones

T

travels, travels,

B

travels, creek,

110 *mf*

110

pf.

110

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

114 *mf* *f*

S stones from a lo-cal creek,

A travels, un -

T and *f* *deciso mf* and stones

B *f* *deciso mf* stones and stones

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

118 *mf* *f* *mp*

S un - - - - pol - ished. Cow -

A pol - ished. Cow -

T *mp preciso*

B *mp preciso* chol-la skel - e-ton. chol-la skel - e -
chol-la skel - e-ton. chol-la skel - e -

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2 *f* arco sul pont.

vla. *f* arco sul pont.

vcl.

D.B.

122

S
- - skull, _____ Cow - skull, _____

A
- - skull, _____ Cow - skull, _____

T
ton. chol-la skel - e-ton. chol-la skel - e-ton. chol-la skel - e-ton.

B
ton. chol-la skel - e-ton. chol-la skel - e-ton. chol-la skel - e-ton.

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

126 *mf*

S oak stump, oak

A *mf*
oak stump, oak

T chol-la skel - e - ton. part - - ly hol-low, part -

B *mf*
chol-la skel - e - ton. part - ly hollow, part - ly hol-low,

pf.

vln. 1 *simile*

vln. 2 *simile*

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

130 *f*

S stump, where a glass leaves rings.

A stump, where a glass leaves rings.

T - - ly hollow, part - - - ly hollow part - - - ly hol-low

B part - ly hollow, part - ly hollow, part - ly hol-low

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

134 *impasto ff* *ardore*

S No more — move - ment — than to

A *impasto ff* *ardore* No more — move - ment — than to

T *impasto ff* *ardore* No more — move - ment — than to

B *impasto ff* *ardore* No more — move - ment — than to

No more — move - ment — than to

pf.

vln. 1 134

vln. 2 134 *simile*

vla. 134

vcl. 134

D.B. 134

138 *mf*

S lift a wet glass.

A lift a wet glass. *mf*

T lift a wet glass. *mf*

B lift a wet glass. *mf*

pf.

vln. 1

vln. 2 *simile*

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

142 *mf*

S

142

A

Cool
mf

142 *cantabile*
mf

T

3

Cool

142 *cantabile*
mf

B

3

3

Skin glossed with sweat.

3

Skin glossed with sweat

142

pf.

142

strepitoso

mf

f

142

vln. 1

simile

142

vln. 2

142

vla.

142

vcl.

f

142

D.B.

mf

146

S
shin-iness Cool shini- ness like Cool shini- ness like Cool shini-

A
shin-iness Cool shini- ness Cool shininess Cool shin-iness

T
Cool *mf* shin - - - i - ness *f* like

B
Cool *mf* shin - - - i - ness *f* like

pf.
146 *mp* *mp* *sfz* *f*

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

149

S
ness like a shin-ness like a shini-ness like a mir - ror shini-ness like a mir-ror shini-

A
Cool shini-ness like Cool shini-ness like Cool shini-ness like a

T
a mir - - - - - ror

B
a mir - - - - - ror

pf.
149 *mf*
149 *sfz*

vln. 1
ord. *ff* *strepitoso* *f* *8va*

vln. 2
149 *preciso*

vla.
149 *preciso*

vcl.
149

D.B.
149

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 149 to 151. It features vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), along with piano (pf.), violin 1 (vln. 1), violin 2 (vln. 2), viola (vla.), violin (vcl.), and double bass (D.B.). The vocal lines include lyrics such as 'ness like a shin-ness like a shini-ness like a mir - ror shini-ness like a mir-ror shini-'. The piano part has dynamic markings *mf* and *sfz*. The violin 1 part includes markings for *ord.*, *ff*, *strepitoso*, *f*, and *8va*. The violin 2 and viola parts are marked *preciso*. The double bass part has a marking of *8* at the beginning of the line.

152

S
ness like a mir - ror shininess like a mir - ror glanc-ing glanc-ing glanc-ing glanc-ing back

A
shininess like a shininess like a mir-ror shininess like a mir-ror shininess like a mir-

T
mf *f*
glanc - - - - ing

B
mf *f*
glanc - - - - ing back

pf.
152 *f* *mf* *sfz*

vln. 1
152 *ff* *mp* \rightarrow *ff*

vln. 2
152

vla.
152

vcl.
152 *strepitoso* *sfz* *f*

D.B.
152

155

S glanc - ing back glanc - ing back glanc - ing back glanc - ing back

A

T ror glanc - ing glanc - ing *mf* glanc - ing glanc - ing back

B back at the sun. *mf*

at the sun.

155 *Sva* *mp*

155 *f*

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

157

S
glanc-ing back at glanc-ing back at glancing back at the sun. glanc-ing back

A
glanc-ing back glanc-ing back glanc-ing back glanc-ing back glanc-ing back

T
back *p*

B
p

pf.
157 *sfz* *f* *mf* *mp*

vln. 1
157 *mp* *sfz*

vln. 2

vla.
157 *strepitoso* *pizz.*

vcl.
157 *pizz. sfz* *sfz*

D.B.
157

159 *f*

S at the sun. glancing back at the sun. glancing back at the sun. glancing back at the sun.

A glancing back back at the sun. back at the sun. back at the sun. back at the sun. back at the sun. back at the sun. back

T glanc - ing back at the sun. glanc - ing

B glancing back at the sun. glancing back at the sun.

pf. *mf* *sfz* *ff*

vln. 1 *sfz* *ff* *sfz*

vln. 2

vla.

vcl. arco *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

D.B. 159

161 *ff* *espressivo f*

S sun. glancing back at the sun. Let us turn

A at the sun. glancing back at the sun. Let us turn

T back at the sun. *espressivo f* Let us

B *ff* *espressivo*

glancing back at the sun.

161 *ff* *ff* *Red.*

161 *f* *fff*

161 *f* *fff*

161 *f* *fff* *espressivo mf*

161 *f* *fff*

161 *ff* *fff*

161 *ff* *fff*

164

S the rule of time to pleas - ure,

A the rule of time to pleas - ure,

T turn the rule of time to pleas - - - -

B turn the rule of time to pleas - ure,

pf.

vln. 1 *espressivo*

vln. 2 *espressivo* *mf* *f*

vla. *espressivo* *f*

vcl. *mf* *f*

D.B. *espressivo* *f*

168

S
A
T
B

Let us turn turn

Let us turn turn

ure, Let us turn

Let us turn

8va
pf. *mf*

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

vln. 1
vln. 2
vla.
vcl.
D.B.

f

Calando *mp dolce* Andante *mf mp*

S
A
T
B

turn to pleas - ure, to pleas - - - ure,
turn to pleas - ure, to pleas - - - ure,
rule of time to pleas - ure, to pleas - - - ure,
rule of time to pleas - ure, to pleas - - - ure,

pf.

vln. 1
vln. 2
vla.
vcl.
D.B.

Adagietto $\text{♩} = 72$

181

S

A *mp* *espressivo* *mf*
the

T *p teneramente*
ah

B *p teneramente*
ah

ah

ah

181 *trattivo*

181 *mp*
Red.

181 *p*

181

vln. 1

vln. 2

vla.

vcl. *espressivo* *mf*

D.B. 181

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 181 to 184. It features vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), along with piano (pf), violin 1 (vln. 1), violin 2 (vln. 2), viola (vla.), violoncello (vcl.), and double bass (D.B.). The tempo is Adagietto with a quarter note equal to 72 beats. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The vocal parts have lyrics: Soprano and Alto sing 'the' in measure 184; Tenor and Bass sing 'ah' in measures 182 and 184. The piano part has a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics *mp* and *p*. The string parts (vln. 1, vln. 2, vla., vcl., D.B.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some dynamics like *espressivo* and *mf*.

189 *f* *mp*

S
- - - lored for full - - - ness.

A
189 *mf* *mp*
ah ah ah

T
189 *mf* *mp*
ah ah ah

B
189 *mf* *mp*
ah ah ah

ah ah ah

pf.
189 *mp* *mf* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

vln. 1
189 *f* *mp* *legato*

vln. 2
189 *p* *mp* *legato*

vla.
189 *mp*

vcl.
189 *mp* *legato*

D.B.
189 *p* *mp* *legato*

197

S

A

T
mp cantabile
 Tail - - - lights blaze _____ and _____ dim _____

B
mp cantabile
 Tail - lights blaze _____ and _____ dim _____

pf.

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

vln. 1
mp
legato

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.

D.B.

205 *pesante* *f*

S av - - - e - nue. av - e - nue.

A 205 *pesante* *f*

T 205 *mf* *pesante* *f*

B 205 *mf* *pesante* *f*

av - - - e - nue. av - e - nue.

205 *mf* *f* *espressivo*

pf. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

vln. 1 205 *mf* *pesante* *mf*

vln. 2 205 *mf* *pesante* *f*

vla. 205 *mf* *pesante*

vcl. 205 *mf* *pesante* *f*

D.B. 205 *mf* *f*

212 *cantabile mp*

S

A

cantabile mp

A wasp re - turns to the

A wasp re - turns to the

pf.

212

212

Red. *Red.*

vln. 2

vla.

216

S

A

stump and en - - - ters it,

stump and en - - - ters it,

pf.

216

216

Red. *Red.*

vln. 2

vla.

220 *poco rit.* *mp* *poco rit.*

S
A
T
B

fill - ing the hole where the
fill - ing the hole where the
fill - ing the hole where the
fill - ing the hole where the

pf.

Red. *mf*
Red. Red.

vln. 1
vln. 2
vla.
vcl.
D.B.

mp
mp
mf

a tempo *f* *mp* *tranne*

S heart was, mak - ing it - self at home.

A heart was, mak - ing it - self at at

T heart was, mak - ing it - self at at

B heart was, mak - ing it - self at at

pf.

vln. 1 *f* *mf* *mp* *dolce*

vln. 2 *f* *mp*

vla. *f* *mp*

vcl. *f* *mp*

D.B. *f*

229

S
at home. home. *p*

A
home. at home. *p*

T
home. at home. at home. *p*

B
home. at home. home. *p*

pf.

vln. 1
229 *p*

vln. 2

vla.

vcl.
229 *p*

D.B.
229 *p*

236 *pp* poco rit. $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ Largo $\text{♩} = 50$

S
home.

A
236 *pp*
home.

T
236 *pp*
home.

B
236 *pp*
home.

pf.

vln. 1
236
dolce \sharp
pp

vln. 2
236

vla.
236 *teneramente*

vcl.
236 *p teneramente*
p

D.B.
236
pp

242

vln. 1 *mf* *mp* *mf*

vln. 2 *mp* *teneramente* *mf*

vla. *mp* *mf*

vcl. *mf* *mf*

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

246

pf.

vln. 1 *p* *pp*

vln. 2 *mp* *p* *pp*

vla. *mp* *p* *pp*

vcl. *mp dolce* *p* *pp*

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

8^{va}
p
Red.

