

to correspond with sparrows

for flute and bassoon

Thomas J. Dempster

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In “Haiku: This Other World:”

i.	gleeful sparrows and telegraph lines	[haiku 14]
ii.	seeing into tomorrow	[301]
iii.	a bell in soft twilight	[13]
iv.	blacksmithing the crescent moon	[197]
v.	trilling sparrows	[216]
vi.	noisy sparrows fall silent	[67]
vii.	autumn pine	[281]
viii.	twisting tendrils in sunshine (sparrows return)	[113]

Program Notes

to correspond with sparrows originates from a reading of Richard Wright’s *Haiku* – a collection of over 800 haiku composed during the last two years of Wright’s life. Ranging from the sublime and pastoral to bawdy and visceral, the haiku span as many elements of the American South as any author could or might in entire novels. Rich with imagery, double entendre, and overtones of race and place, Wright evokes all senses and surrounds us with the colors, sounds, and atmosphere of his mind.

Among the haiku are some consistent threads – the aurality and quickness of sparrows; isolation, silence, and the evocation of joy from simple human communication; days slipping into nights. I sought out the most “audible” haiku, or those with such a strong visual content that audition was sparked, and, in the tradition of haiku, sought economy as best I could, keeping every movement as short as I could while evoking the same colors, textures, and scents as the haiku. I take some liberties with the songs of sparrows – and some literalism with telegraph messages – and attempted to illustrate each haiku. Due to copyright permissions, I cannot reprint them here; however, they are found in Wright’s *Haiku: This Other World*, and I give the precise haiku number above in brackets.

Above all, I found in these short, vibrant poems an unending thread of love, and an unending sense of optimism. I hope, in some way, these are communicated through my interpretation of these poems as well.

This work, originally for flute and alto saxophone, was commissioned in 2013 by Paula Van Goes and Jessica Dunnivant. This adaptation for flute and bassoon was made in January, 2020 at the request of Michael Burns and Carla Copeland-Burns, two people who have been friends and champions of my music for decades.

Performance Notes

Most performance notes appear in-score. Often, the marking “pizz” is seen in the flute part. A tongue pizzicato is intended here. (There are indeed specific places in the piece that call for a lip pizz.) Jet whistles for the flute should follow the arrow (above staff) or dynamic markings for lip shape and head joint angle. The bassoon is asked to play ghost tones throughout the piece; if not possible, play at *pppp* dynamic. The ending of the first movement is a (secret) Morse code message that should, as much as practical, be performed as Morse-code-ily as possible. The second movement should not be played with *any* vibrato. The third movement features a multiphonic; the fingering is given. The fifth and sixth movements are notated using clock time; these durations should be strictly observed. Estimated durations of movements are given at ends of movements. The total estimated duration is between 8’30” and 9’00” depending on tempos.

to correspond with sparrows

i: gleeful sparrows and telegraph lines

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Robust, Bright ♩ = 108

The score consists of three systems of music for Flute and Bassoon. The first system (measures 1-2) features a melodic line for both instruments, starting with a *p* dynamic and marked *freely*. The Flute part includes a *mp* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The second system (measures 3-4) shows the Flute playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a *mf* dynamic, while the Bassoon plays a more melodic line. The third system (measures 5-6) continues the rhythmic pattern in the Flute and the melodic line in the Bassoon. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, dynamics, and articulation marks.

Flute

Bassoon

Fl.

Bsn.

Fl.

Bsn.

8

Fl. *mf*

Bsn. *mp* *poco staccato*

10

Fl.

Bsn.

12

Fl. *mp*

Bsn. *f* *mp*

14

Fl. *f* *full, clear*

Bsn.

to correspond with sparrows

16

Fl.

Bsn.

f₊

mp

mf

mp

f

mf

cantabile

3

pizz.

jet whistle

19

Fl.

Bsn.

mf

mp

mf

mp

mf

j.w.

21

Fl.

Bsn.

buoyant

f floating

23

Fl.

Bsn.

p

p

25 *poco stringendo...*

Fl.

Bsn.

27

Fl.

Bsn.

Ecstatic! ♩ = 92

29 *ff* *sending a telegraph...*

Fl.

Bsn.

31

Fl.

Bsn.

Musical score for Flute (Fl.) and Bassoon (Bsn.) instruments, measures 33-35. The score is in 4/4 time and features dynamic markings such as *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. Measure 33 includes a sixteenth-note sextuplet and a triplet. Measure 35 includes a triplet and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The score concludes with the instruction "ca. 1'25''".

33

Fl.

Bsn.

mf

mp

mf

35

Fl.

Bsn.

p

mp

pp

p

mp

p

pp

ca. 1'25''

ii: seeing into tomorrow

♩ = 80 Clear - crystalline

The score is divided into three systems, each with a Flute (Fl.) and Bassoon (Bsn.) part. The music is in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 80 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

System 1 (Measures 1-3):
Flute: Starts with a whole rest, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*.
Bassoon: Starts with a whole rest, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*. A triplet of eighth notes appears in measure 3.

System 2 (Measures 4-6):
Flute: Measure 4 starts with a 4-measure rest, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *pp*. A triplet of eighth notes is present. Measure 6 includes a "jet whistle" effect indicated by a dashed line.
Bassoon: Continues the melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *p*.

System 3 (Measures 7-12):
Flute: Measure 7 starts with a 4-measure rest, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *sfz pp*, *mf*, *pizz.*, *p*, and *mf*. A triplet of eighth notes is present. Measure 12 includes a 4-measure rest.
Bassoon: Continues the melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *p*. A triplet of eighth notes is present.

** No vibrato throughout movement.
Pure, straight tones only.

12

Fl. *tongue pizz.*

Bsn.

f p *pp* *p*

pp *mp*

16

Fl. *lip pizz.*

Bsn.

f *f* *mf* *p*

mf p *mf p*

20

Fl. *jet whistle* *tongue pizz.*

Bsn.

p *p* *pp*

mf

ca. 1'05"

iii: a bell in soft twilight

Freely; on a warm breeze ♩ = c. 63-66

Flute

Bassoon

Fl.

Bsn.

Fl.

Bsn.

Fl.

Bsn.

A

Fl.

Bsn.

mf dolce; comodo

notes at bottom; use fingering below. ***

mf

mf

mp

mp

p

mf

p

mf

p

p

mf

* The bassoonist must turn away from the audience.

** Placement of multiphonic attacks is relative; there must be eight attacks in the movement spaced relatively equally, though there can be sax silence for as long as needed once all attacks are completed.

*** Finger a G#2/A#2, hold down pancake / RH thumb, and lift RH index / RH 2. A stable, muffled multiphonic pitched similar to the given "chord" should result.

Fl. *p* *mp*

Bsn. *mf* *mf*

B

Fl. breath tones *mp* *p*

Bsn. *mf*

Fl. *pp*

Bsn.

iv: blacksmithing the crescent moon

Precise ♩ = 108

Flute

mp pinging, ringing

Bassoon

f

Hammerblows ♩ = 96

Fl.

mf lip pizz.

Bsn.

p

Come prima ♩ = 108

Fl.

(in time - no fermata)

mp

Bsn.

f

Hammerblows ♩ = 96

Fl.

mf

Bsn.

mf

iv: blacksmithing the crescent moon

Aggressive ♩ = 112+

12

Fl. *ff* *mf*

Bsn. *ff* *mf*

Heavy ♩ = 92

15

Fl. *mp*

Bsn. *mp*

poco accel.

Inhaling ♩ = 88

19

Fl. *ff* (in time - no fermata) *p*

Bsn. *ff* *mp*

22

Fl. *p* *mf* lyrical... 3

Bsn. *p* *mfp*

iv: blacksmithing the crescent moon

Violent! ♩ = 176

Fine-tuning... ♩ = 88

lip pizz. -----

Fl. *fff*

Bsn. *fff*

mp

key clicks **

(normale)

Fl.

Bsn.

33 *tossing the moon into the air...*

Fl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

ca. 1'15"

** Produce key click sounds and put just a small amount of air through horn. Reed should not vibrate and horn should not speak!

v: trilling sparrows
and
vi: noisy sparrows fall silent

v: trilling sparrows

A **B** *T=15"*
5" *10"*

Flute

Bassoon

mf *3* *mp* *3* *f* *p*

mf *5* *p*

* Play each cell (between | and ||) no more than three times per measure-block (A, B, etc), in any order. Time in **bold** is length of each block; time in *italics* is total time.

C *T=23"*
8"

Fl.

Bsn.

mf *3* *mp* *f* *3*

p *3* *mp* *f*

D *growing more cacophonous...* *T=33"*
10"

Fl.

Bsn.

mp *5* *mf* *p* *3* *mf*

f *3* *mp* *p*

repeat cells as quickly as possible

T=45"
12"

Fl. *mf* 3 6 5

Bsn. *mf* 6 5 3 *ATTACCA*

vi: noisy sparrows fall silent

total chaos - repeat cells rapidly!

T=55"
10"

Fl. *ff* 3 7

Bsn. *ff* 5 3 5

G

T=1'03"
8"

Fl. *f* 4"

Bsn. *sffz f* Slap! (normale) *sffz mf* Slap! (normale)

H

T=1'11"
8"

Fl. *mf* < *ff* > < *p* > *sffz* *mp* > *mp* > *mp* > *mf*

Bsn. *sffz* *mf* < *ff* > < *sffz* *mp* < > < >

v: trilling sparrows and vi: noisy sparrows fall silent

3

I T=1'20"
9"

Fl. *8va*
ff *f* *mf* *mf* *mp* *p*

Bsn. *f* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

J T=1'35"
15"

Fl. *pizz.* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*
whistle tone *3* *10"* *breath tone* *3* *15"*

Bsn. *p* *ppp*

ca. 1'35"

vii: autumn pine

Murky, Cold ♩ = 60

Nocturnal ♩ = 69+

Flute

Bassoon

mp single drops... *pp* lark, velvety

mp single drops... *pp* lark, velvety

A tempo... ♩ = 60

Fl.

Bsn.

mf *mf*

A ♩ = 69+

Fl.

Bsn.

mp *mp* *mp*

♩ = 60 ♩ = 69+

Fl.

Bsn.

p *mf* *mf* *mf*

vii: autumn pine

senza misura

B

Fl. *pizz.* *mp* *p* *mf* *mp* *p* *f* *mf* *mp* *mf* *pizz.* 5" 10"

Bsn. *key clicks* *mp* *p* *mf* *f* *key clicks + breath tone (no reed!)*

Fl. $\text{♩} = 60$ $\text{♩} = 69+$ 14 7 *pp* *mp* *p* *pp* *ghost tone possible*

Bsn. 3 5 *pp* *mp* *pp*

ca. 1'00"

* + designates key click with almost no air through flute.

viii: twisting tendrils in sunshine (sparrows return)

Exuberant; sunny ♩ = 208+

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a Flute (Fl.) and Bassoon (Bsn.) part. The first system (measures 1-3) is in 7/8 time and marked *f*. The second system (measures 4-6) is in 4/4 time. The third system (measures 7-9) includes a section labeled 'A' in 3/4 time. The fourth system (measures 10-12) is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings *p* and *mf*. The score features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A tempo marking of ♩ = 208+ is provided at the beginning.

14

Fl.

Bsn.

mf

f

p

B

Fl.

Bsn.

p

mp

mp

C

23

Fl.

Bsn.

mf

f

f

27

Fl.

Bsn.

mp

mp

mp

viii: twisting tendrils in sunshine (sparrows return)

31 D

Fl. *f*

Bsn. *f*

35

Fl. *p*

Bsn. *f* *p* *mp*

40 E

Fl. *f* *ff* *ecstatic!*

Bsn. *mf* *f*

46

Fl. *f* *fff*

Bsn. *f* *fff*