

Les Quatre Temps Cardinaux is a work for large chamber orchestra, written for solo soprano (Laura Aikin), and solo bass (Ethan Herschenfeld), with electronics, featuring poems or oblique reference to a poem by four poets; Creeley (*Spring Light*, and, *Buffalo Evening*), Gioia (*Insomnia*), Neruda, as inspirational guide in movement 5, (*Full Powers*), and the central poem by Rene Daumal from which the work takes its title. Each of the poems warmly affirms time positioning and varying qualities of light as central to our sensory and internal experiencing. The Daumal serves as the central poem, a cross, indicative of a transpersonal 'Great Time' around which the other poems turn, as specific markers of events on a more intimate, personal scale.

The large ensemble consists of 2 flutes, doubling piccolo, alto and bass flutes, clarinet doubling bass, contrabass clarinet, oboe doubling English horn, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, and contrabass trombone, 3 percussion, harp, keyboards (one player), and smaller string section, with electronic cues in 12 channels. Recordings of the poets, reading their poems are sources for electronic transformation (excepting Daumal – no recording of his reading exists, but a substitute reciter has been enlisted). The form of the work is in 12 songs grouped in 4 movements of 3 pieces each, with several electronic interpolations between certain poems as bridges or passageways to new musical spaces corresponding to 'time of day', and/or season. Most notable are interpolations after movements 3, 8, 9, and 11. Within the movements, the Daumal stanzas are generally given two treatments, sometimes consecutively and other times in isolation.

The entirety of the work is about 51 minutes.

The texts:

Les Quatre Temps Cardinaux

Rene Daumal/Rosenblatt trans.

La poule noire de la nuit

vient encore de pondre une aurore.

Salut le blanc, salut le jaune,

salut, germe qu'on ne voit pas.

Seigneur Midi, roi d'un instant

au haut du jour frappe le gong.

Salut a l'oeil, salut aux dents,

salut au masque devorant toujours!

Sur les coussins de l'horizon,
le fruit rouge du souvenir.
Salut, soleil qui sais mourir,
salut, bruleur de nos souillures.

Mais en silence je salue la grand Minuit,
Celle qi veille quand les trois s'agitent.
Fermant les yeux je la vois sans rien voir
par dela les tenebres.
Fermant l'oreille j'entends son pas qui ne s'eloigne pas.

The black hen of the night
Has hatched a dawn yet again.
Hail the white, hail the yellow,
The seed that we cannot see.

Lord of the Noon, king of the moment
Bang the gong at the height of the day.
Hail the eye, hail the teeth,
Hail the ever devouring mask!

On the cushions of the horizon,
The red fruit of memory.

Hail, sun who knows how to die.

Hail, incinerator of our filth.

But in silence I salute the great Midnight.

The one who keeps vigil while the other three are active.

Closing my eyes I see her

Without seeing anything across the shadows.

Closing my ears I hear her footstep which never abandons me.

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THE FOUR CARDINAL TIMES

The black hen of the night
begins again to powder a dawn,
Salut, the white, salut the yellow
Salut, seed that one does not see..

Lord of Noon, King of an instant
strikes the gong at the height of day,
Salut , the eyes, salut, the teeth,
Salut , the devouring mask, forever..

On cushions of the horizon.
the red fruit of memory,
Salut, sun who kows how to die,
Salut burner of impuritiesl.

But in silence I salute the great midnight,
She who keeps watch while the three are in motion,
Closing the eyes I see her without seeing anything
 Beyond the darknesses
Closing the ear I hear her step that does not recede.

(first published in Montana Gothic, 1977)

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Robert Creeley

Spring Light

Could persons be as this
fluffed light golden spaces
intent airy distances so up
and out again they are here
the evening lowers against the sun
the night waits far off at the
edge and back of dark is summer's
light that slanting clarity all
wonders come again the bodies open
stone stillness stunned in the silence
hovering waiting touch of air's edge
piece of what had not been lost.

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Buffalo Evening

Robert Creeley

Steady the evening fades
up the street into sunset
over the lake. Winter sits

quiet here, snow piled
by the road, the walks stamped
down or shoveled. The kids

in the time before dinner are
playing, sliding on the old ice.
The dogs are out, walking,

and it's soon inside again,
with the light gone. Time
to eat, to think of it all.

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Insomnia

Dana Gioia

Now you hear what the house has to say
Pipes clanking, water running in the dark,
The mortgaged walls shifting in discomfort
And voices mounting in an endless drone
Of small complaints like the sound of a family
That year by year you've learned to ignore.

But now you just listen to the things you own,
All that you've worked for these past years,
The murmur of property, of things in disrepair,
The moving parts about to come undone,
And twisting in the sheets remember all
The faces you could not bring yourself to love.

How many voices have escaped you until now,
The venting furnace, the floorboards underfoot
The steady accusations of the clock
Numbering the minutes no one will mark.
The terrible clarity this moment brings,
The useless insight, the unbroken dark.

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