

David Heuser

A r r o w s

*three songs on poems by Tony Hoagland*



*for baritone, clarinet, cello, and piano*

2006

Duration approximately 23 minutes

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2006

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# A r r o w s

– texts for songs –

## Appetite

There are three of us in the restaurant  
where I have dinner with my friend  
— me, him, and one of those diseases  
known by its initials.

There's a recently amputated rose  
in a jar at table center  
and in the kitchen, just this minute,  
a lobster with my name on it  
is being carried toward a kettle,  
which doesn't bother me.

What bothers me  
is how I imagine I can see  
the virus looking out  
from his dullish-bright dark eyes,  
and the peculiar gusto  
with which he eats and drinks,

taking two of everything,  
touching all his food before he swallows it—  
the bread, the crumpled dark green  
money of the lettuce  
entering his mouth, which keeps  
on talking while he chews,

telling me how good life is now that he is  
living on the edge,  
now that he is tasting every bite—

until a weird contagious glow  
creeps into our corner of the room,  
and in that X-ray light

I can see the blackness hidden  
in the tissues of the rose,  
the sooty funeral procession just setting out  
from the frail, veined  
edges of each petal,

and the pimples on the busboy's chin  
ripen toward their bursting  
moment of perfection.

How horrible it is to be alive,  
to wake one day to feel the earth  
begin to seethe and writhe beneath your feet—

the wilderness outside you pressing to get in,  
the wilderness inside you trying to get out,  
the tangled, penetrating vines,  
the compost stink.

And in the jungle of my brain  
I can hear the thoughts now  
chewing on the underside  
of other thoughts,

and under them, the humming, shifting feelings  
which feed on anything,  
and under them  
the ink of anti-thought, liquidly unlinking  
the little chains—  
and then a clinking sound *tink tink*  
from far away

as my friend  
strikes his fork against his water glass  
to bring me back *tink tink*  
from wherever I am gone.

His plate is clean, his teeth are white,  
his glass is raised. I understand  
he wants to make a toast:  
to Dream  
and Appetite  
and Night.

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## Brave World

But what about the courage  
of the cancer cell  
that breaks out from the crowd  
it has belonged to all its life

like a housewife erupting  
from her line at the grocery store  
because she just can't stand  
the sameness anymore?

What about the virus that arrives  
in town like a traveler  
from somewhere faraway  
with suitcases in hand,

who only wants a place  
to stay, a chance to get ahead  
in the land of opportunity,  
but who smells bad,

talks funny, and reproduces fast?  
What about the microbe that  
hurls its tiny boat straight  
into the rushing metabolic tide,

no less cunning and intrepid  
than Odysseus; that gambles all  
to found a city  
on an unknown shore?

What about their bill of rights,  
their access to a full-scale,  
first-class destiny?  
their chance to realize

maximum potential? – which, sure,  
will come at the expense  
of someone else, someone  
who, from a certain point of view,

is a secondary character,  
whose weeping is almost  
too far off to hear,

a noise among the noises  
coming from the shadows  
of any brave new world.

## Arrows

When a beautiful woman wakes up,  
she checks to see if her beauty is still there.  
When a sick person wakes up,  
he checks to see if he continues to be sick.

He takes the first pills in a thirty-pill day,  
looks out the window at a sky  
where a time-release sun is crawling  
through the milky X ray of a cloud.

◆◆◆◆

I sing the body like a burnt-out fuse box,  
the wires crossed, the panel lit  
by red malfunction lights, the pistons firing  
out of sequence,  
the warning sirens blating in the empty halls,

and the hero is trapped in a traffic jam,  
the message doesn't reach its destination,  
the angel falls down into the body of a dog  
and is speechless,

tearing at itself with fast white teeth;  
and the consciousness twists evasively,  
like a sheet of paper,  
traveled by blue tongues of flame.

◆◆◆◆

In the famous painting, the saint  
looks steadfastly heavenward,  
away from the physical indignity below,  
the fascinating spectacle  
of his own body  
bristling with arrows;

he looks up  
as if he were already adamantly elsewhere,  
exerting that power of denial  
the soul is famous for,  
that ability to say, "None of this is real:

Nothing that happened here on earth  
and who I thought I was,  
and nothing that I did or that was done to me,  
was ever real."

"Brave World" and "Arrows" from *Donkey Gospel*, copyright 1998 by Tony Hoagland.  
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(Range for entire set)

Dedicated to Timothy Jones



Score is in C

# Arrows

## I. Appetite

Words by Tony Hoagland

Music by David Heuser  
2006

*Freely*

(♩ = ca. 60)

Baritone

Clarinet

Cello

Piano

The musical score is written for four instruments: Baritone, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or E-flat minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Freely' with a tempo of approximately 60 beats per minute. The score includes dynamics such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *poco* (poco ritardando). The piano part includes a pedal instruction: 'Ped. ———> (hold down until m. 15)'. There are asterisks (\*) above certain notes in the Cello and Piano parts, indicating specific performance instructions.

Ped. ———>  
(hold down until m. 15)

\* always play this figure  
as if it began on the downbeat.

Music © 2006 David Heuser (ASCAP)

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I. Appetite

6

Bar. *pp*

There are three of us in the res - tau-rant

Cl. *pp* ( $>$ )\* *poco* *pp*

Vc. *p* 3 3

Pno. 6

\* always play this figure as if it began on the downbeat.

10

Bar. where I have din-ner with my friend - me, him, and

Cl. *p* *p*

Vc. *pp* *poco* *p*

Pno. 10

I. Appetite

14 *f* *p* *rit.* ----- *pp* *In tempo, flowing*  
(♩ = ca. 48/♩ = ca. 72)

Bar. *f* *p* *pp* *pp*

Cl. *f* *p* *pp* *pp*

Vc. *f* *p* *gtiss.* *pp*

one of those dis-eas - es known by its in - it - ials.

14 *f* *mp* *rit.* ----- *In tempo, flowing*  
(♩ = ca. 48/♩ = ca. 72)

19 *pp* *p* *(♩ = ♩) sempre*

Bar. *pp* *p* *(♩ = ♩) sempre*

Cl. *p*

Vc. *p* *(♩ = ♩) sempre*

There's a recently ampu-tated rose in a jar at tab - le

19 *(♩ = ♩) sempre*

I. Appetite

25 *rit.* ----- *a tempo*

Bar. *pp* *p*

cen - ter and in the kitch-en, just this

Cl. *pp* *p*

Vc. *pp* *p*

25 *rit.* ----- *a tempo*

*pp* *p*

with ped. as desired

31 *mp*

Bar. *mp*

min - ute, a lob-ster with my name on it is be-ing car-ried toward a ket-tle which

Cl. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

31 *mp*

I. Appetite

35 *f* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *p*

Bar. does - n't both - er me, it does - n't both - er me.

Cl. *f* *pp*

Vc. *f* *pp*

35 *f* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *pp*

40 *p* *mp* *mp*

Bar. What both-ers me \_\_\_\_\_ is how I im - ag-ine I can see the vir - us \_\_\_\_\_ look-ing out

Cl. *mp*

Vc. *mp* *mp*

40 *p* *mp*