

Christopher Cerrone  
Three e.e. cummings Poems  
*for chorus (SSAATTB) a cappella*  
(2004)

Notes on performance:

If ossia are to be used, they must be performed by all members of a part.

The score occasionally makes use of the international phonetic alphabet to indicate vowels that are not attached to words. They are notated with a bracket surrounding them (e.g. [e]). Below are English examples of all of the vowels used:

[ə] = **touch**

[o] = **to**

[ɛ] = **wed**

[i] = **we**

[aɪ] = **night**

Duration: 5-7 minutes

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Texts

I.

since feeling is first  
who pays [any] attention  
to the syntax of things  
will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool  
while Spring is in the world

my blood approves,  
and kisses are a far better fate  
than wisdom  
lady i swear by all flowers. Don't cry  
--the best gesture of my brain is less than  
your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then  
laugh, leaning back in my arms  
for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis

II.

un  
der fog  
's  
touch

slo

ings  
fin  
gering  
s

wli

whichs  
turn  
in  
to whos

est

people  
be  
come  
un

III

Tumbling-hair  
picker of buttercups  
violets

dandelions  
And the big bullying daisies  
through the field wonderful

with eyes a little sorry  
Another comes  
also picking flowers



# 1. since feeling is first

e.e. cummings

**Flowing.** (♩ = ca. 100)

*mp*

Soprano  
since feel-ling is first who \_\_\_\_\_ pays at-ten-tion to \_\_\_\_\_ the syn tax \_\_\_\_\_ of things

Alto  
since feel-ling is first who \_\_\_\_\_ pays at-ten-tion to \_\_\_\_\_ the syn tax \_\_\_\_\_ of things

Tenor  
*mf appassionato*  
will

Bass  
*mf appassionato*  
the syn - tax of things will

Piano  
(for rehearsal only)  
*mp*  
*mf appassionato*

**Flowing.** (♩ = ca. 75) **rit.** **Tempo primo.**

4 = ♩ (♩ = ca. 75)

*mp*

whol - ly be a fool \_\_\_\_\_ while Spring is in the world

*pp* *mp*

whol - ly be a fool \_\_\_\_\_ while Spring is in the world

*f*

ne-ver whol-ly kiss \_\_\_\_\_ you;

*f*

ne - ver kiss you **rit.** **Tempo primo.**

*f* *mp*

9  $\leftarrow \overset{-3}{\bullet} = \bullet \rightarrow$  (♩ = ca. 75)

**ff** *f* *appassionato*

ap - proves and kis - ses are a bet - ter fate than wis - dom\_

**ff** *appassionato*

ap - proves kis - ses are a *unis.* bet - ter\_ fate than wis - dom

**mf** (*stagger-breathe*) *unis.*

my blood ap - proves,

**mf** (*stagger-breathe*) *unis.*

ap - proves,

$\leftarrow \overset{-3}{\bullet} = \bullet \rightarrow$  (♩ = ca. 75)

14 **p** *quasi echo* **rit.** **Tempo primo.** **mp** *tender* **mp**

than wis - dom Don't cry\_ of my brain

**mp** *tender*

the best ges - ture of my brain

**mp** *solemn* **mp**

la - dy la - dy i swear by all flowers\_

**mp** *solemn*

la - dy la - dy i swear flowers\_

**p** *quasi echo* **rit.** **Tempo primo.** **mp** *solemn* **mp** *tender*

18

rit. . . . . A little slower, but still flowing. (♩ = ca. 90)

less than your eye-lids' flutter which says we \_\_\_\_\_ are foreach oth-er: \_\_\_\_\_

is less than \_\_\_\_\_ eye - lids'flutter which says we \_\_\_\_\_ are foreach

is less than \_\_\_\_\_

rit. . . . . A little slower, but still flowing. (♩ = ca. 90)

22

\_\_\_\_\_ then laugh, lea-ning back in my arms \_\_\_\_\_ And

oth - er then laugh \_\_\_\_\_ lea-ning back in my arms

*f* *appassionato*

a par - a - graph

*mf* *appassionato*

for \_\_\_\_\_ life's\_(s)not \_\_\_\_\_ a par - a - graph

*f*

*f*



## 2. un/der fog

e. e. cummings

**Motionless, still.** (♩ = 45-50, or less)  
*(all voices stagger-breathe and mark the melody throughout)*

**Soprano**

*ppp* (slowly open mouth) → *p*

m ger - ing

**Alto**

*p*

un: der fin

**Tenor**

*p*

fog ings

**Bass**

*p*

's [ə]

touch

*ppp* *poco a poco cresc.* (*p*)

s - - low - - - - li -

\*) Notes with an x are non-pitched "s" sounds that gradually open into the tone at which they are notated.

\*\*) "Mmm" sound of a closed mouth opening to the "ger" sound.

**Motionless, still.** (♩ = 45-50, or less)

**Piano**  
*(for rehearsal only)*  
*(see parts for dynamics)*

*accel.* ..... (cut off suddenly)

*f* *molto* *mp* *molto cantab.*

to [u] be

*pp* *f* *mp* *molto cantab.* (cut off suddenly)

which whos peo - ple

*mf* *f* *molto* *mp* *molto cantab.* (cut off suddenly)

s turn [u] come

*mf* *pp* *f* *molto* *mp* *molto cantab.* (cut off suddenly)

s turn whos come

*mf* *f* *molto* *mp* *molto cantab.* (cut off suddenly)

unis. in [u] un

*(mp)* *f* *mp* (cut off suddenly)

est

*accel.* ..... (cut off suddenly)

### 3. Tumbling Hair

e.e. cummings

**Wild and fast.** (♩ = ca. 108)

Soprano  
Tum - bling hair [ə] [ɛ]

Alto  
pic - ker of but - ter cups [ɛ]

Tenor  
vi - o - lets

Bass

Piano  
(for rehearsal only)

**Wild and fast.** (♩ = ca. 108)

*ppp* *mf* *p*

(without metrical emphasis) (♩ = ♩) (♩ = 162) \*

(mark the melody)

*f*

\*) Each singer repeats until out of breath, then cuts off. The conductor should cut off all the voices if the singers are going on for what he perceives as too long, and then cue the bass.

**Slower.** (♩ = 54; ♩ = 162)

7 = ♩ →

[aI] through

*mf* stubborn

[aI] big - bul - ly - ing dai - sies

*p* *mf* stubborn

[aI] And the big bul - ly - ing dai - sies

*pp* quasi echo big bul - ly - ing

*p* tender *mf* stubborn *pp* quasi echo div. big bul - ly - ing

dan - de - li - ons big - bul - ly - ing dai - sies

**Slower.** (♩ = 54; ♩ = 162)

*p* tender *mf* stubborn

Even more slowly. (♩ = 54)

11 *mf* tender; free

*p* solemn

the field won-der - ful with eyes

through the field won-der ful with eyes a

unis. *ppp* quasi whisper *p* solemn  
big-bul ly - ing eyes a lit

unis. *ppp* quasi whisper *p* solemn  
big bul-ly ing with eyes a lit - tle sor -

*mf* tender; free

*ppp* *p* solemn

Even more slowly. (♩ = 54)

Tempo primo

19 [i] a - no - ther comes a - no - ther comes a -

[i] a - no - ther comes a - no - ther comes

ry al - so pic - king al - so pic - king

- ry al - so pic king al - so

Tempo primo

*f* *p* *f* *f* *p*

25

no - ther comes a no - ther comes a -  
 a - no - ther comes a -  
 al - so pic - king al - so pic - king al - so pic - king [i]  
 pic - king al - so pic - king al - so pic - king al - so [i]

*p*  
*p sub.*

29

no - ther comes al - so pic king flo - wers  
 no - ther comes al - so pic king flo - wers  
 al - so pic king flo - wers  
 al - so pic king flo - wers

*p* *f*  
*p* *f*  
*f* *p* *f*  
*f* *p* *f*

\* Repeat the word "flowers" (as one syllable) on this note more and more frequently for about 4-7 seconds. Do not synchronize parts.