

# Deconstruct a Chrysalis

Text: Leanne Veitch  
Music: Michael Winikoff

For SAT semi-chorus and SATB choir

deconstruct a chrysalis  
unravel the twisted thread  
pull apart the gossamer

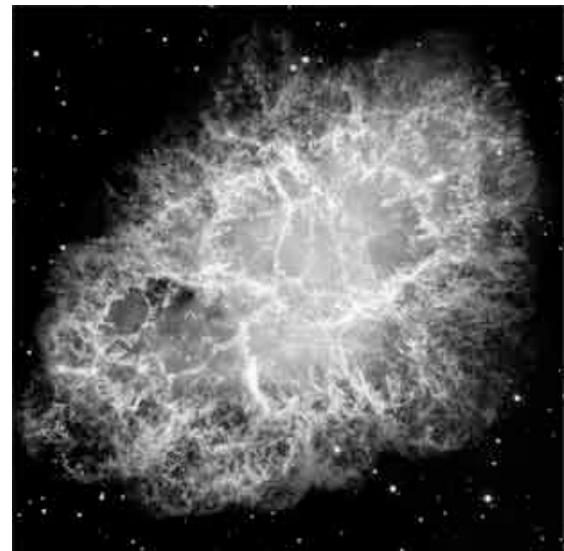
take a look  
nothing inside  
but a shrivelled corpse

no pulse, no beating heart  
no wings, perhaps the tiniest hint  
of a shroud that once might have flown

now the gift is gone

deconstruct the universe  
unravel the twisted mind  
pull apart the skin, the eyes

take a look  
nothing inside  
but a shrivelled heart  
now pulled apart



## Program Notes

*This piece is dedicated to Leanne,  
without whom it wouldn't exist.*

American poet John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) wrote in his poem Maud Muller: “*For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been!'*”, and these sentiments are echoed here.

The first thing that struck me when reading Leanne's poem, apart from its vivid imagery, was the almost unspeakable sadness evoked by the poem, and especially the regret, the “what-if” of a butterfly that “*might have flown*”.

The poem is about the futility of using reductionism in an attempt to understand life, and the universe. It also highlights the violent nature of taking things apart to see how they work: pulling apart the gossamer, pulling apart the skin, the eyes.

In setting the poem I have tried to capture the violence (“*pull apart*”), the horror (“*take a look*”), and the unspeakable sadness (“*of a shroud that [once<sup>1</sup>] might have flown*”). The climax of the work is the second repetition of “*nothing inside*” (third last line, bars 83-88).

## Performance Notes

The semi-chorus should have a choral, rather than an operatic, sound, and should sound smaller than the main choir. Its size will depend on the size of the main choir. For a chamber choir as the main choir the “semi-chorus” may have 1-2 people per part. For a large choir (e.g. 200+) as the main choir, the semi-chorus may be a chamber choir.

The piano reduction is designed to be a playable part that will provide support in rehearsals, rather than being a complete reduction.

Consonants in brackets should not be pronounced – they are there to indicate what the word is. For example, at the end of the chant, the tenor semi-chorus should not pronounce the “d” of “thread”. The chant in the first bar could be a solo (conductor’s discretion). Also, all tempo markings are suggestions and should be modified by the conductor to suit the choir and venue.

In long sustained notes the choir should stagger breathing as needed.

The semi-chorus does not sing in bars 34-41.

In bars 33-47 the tenors and basses should sound like drumming, and for the sopranos (in bars 35-41) each 4 beat phrase should be phrased (think of a soaring bird!). The altos in bars 38-42 should come through.

The climax of the work is bars 84-87, and the diminuendo should not start too early.

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<sup>1</sup> The word “once” has been omitted from the setting with the poet’s permission.

## Deconstruct a Chrysalis

Leanne Dahirja Veitch

Duration: approx. 6:30

Michael Winikoff

*chant-like, freely*

Soprano Semi-chorus

Alto Semi-chorus

Tenor Semi-chorus

*mp (solo)*

de - con - struct      a chry-sa - lis,      un - ra - vel      the twi \_\_\_\_\_ sted threa(d) \_\_\_\_\_

**A**

*Andante (♩ = 50)*

Sopranos

Altos

Tenors

Basses

*p*

Daw \_\_\_\_\_

*chant-like, freely*

Piano (rehearsal only)

*Andante (♩ = 50)*

2

Soprano (S) vocal line:

A (Alto) vocal line:

Tenor (T) vocal line:

Soprano (S) vocal line:

Alto (A) vocal line:

Tenor (T) vocal line:

Bass (B) vocal line:

chry-sa-lis — un - ra - vel the twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread — pull a - part the  
*f*

chry-sa-lis, chry-sa-lis — un - ra - vel the twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread the twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread pull a - part the  
*f*

chry-sa-lis — un - ra - vel un - ra - vel the twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread — pull a - part the  
*f*

the twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread pull a - part the

7

**[B]**

*mf*

S de - con - struct a chry-sa - lis un -  
*mf*

A de - con - struct a chry-sa - lis

T

*mf*

S gos - sa - mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer mm

A gos - sa - mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer mm

T gos - sa - mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer mm

B gos - sa - mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer mm

12

**C**

*poco a poco cresc.*

S ra - vel the twi - sted thread pull a-part  
*f* pull a-part - pull a-part - pull a-part

A un - ra - vel the twi - sted thread pull a-part (tutti)  
*f* pull a-part - pull a-part - pull a-part

T - - - - - pull a-part - - - - - *f* pull a-part - - - - - *poco a poco cresc.*

S - - - - - pull a - part the gos - sa - mer pull a - part the

A - - - - - pull a - part the gos - sa - mer pull a - part the

T - - - - - pull a - part the gos - sa - mer pull a - part the

B - - - - - pull a - part the gos - sa - mer pull a - part the

18

S – pull a-part – pull a-part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

A – pull a-part – pull a-part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

T – 8 pull a-part – pull a-part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

S gos-sa-mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

A gos-sa-mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

T 8 gos-sa-mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

B gos-sa-mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer take a look, take a look

23 **D**

Soprano (S): *no - thing in - side but a shri-velled corpse*

Alto (A): *p*  
*no - thing in - si(de) —*

Tenor (T): *no - thing in - si(de) —*

Soprano (S): *in - side bu(t) —*

Alto (A): *—*

Tenor (T): *—*

Bass (B): *—*



40

Soprano (S): wings

Alto (A): no wings

Tenor (T): no beating heart

Bass (B): pulse

42

Soprano (S): per - haps the ti - niest hi(nt)

Alto (A): per - haps the ti - niest hi(nt)

Tenor (T): per - haps the ti - niest hi(nt)

Bass (B): per - haps the ti - niest hint

Soprano (S): no bea-ting heart

Alto (A): no bea-ting heart

Tenor (T): no bea-ting heart

Bass (B): pulse

45

S (ee) rit.

A (ee)

T (ee) rit.

S per - haps the ti - niest hint

A per - haps the ti - niest hint per -

T no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart per -

B pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no wings rit.

49

S (ee) G ppp a tempo

A (ee) ppp

T (ee) ppp a tempo

S of a shroud that might have flown of a shroud that

A haps the ti - niest hint, per - haps a hint of - a shroud that might have flown of a shroud that

T haps the ti - niest hint of a shroud that might have

B per - haps the ti - niest hint of a tempo a shroud that might have

54

S de - con - struct a chry-sa - lis un - ra - vel the  
A - de - con - struct a chry-sa - lis un - ra - vel  
T - - - - pull a -  
S might have flown now the gift, the gift is gone, now the gift, the  
A might have flown now the gift, the gift is gone, now the gift, the  
T flown, have flown, now the gift is  
B flown, have flown, now the gift is

58

**H**

(ppp)

S twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread gone \_\_\_\_  
A the twi \_\_\_\_ sted thread  
T part pull a-part now \_\_\_\_ the gift \_\_\_\_ is gone  
S gift is gone \_\_\_\_ gone \_\_\_\_ gone \_\_\_\_ gone \_\_\_\_  
A gift is gone, is gone \_\_\_\_  
T gone \_\_\_\_ is gone  
B gone

64

S — gone —

A —

T (pp) de - con - struc - the u - ni - verse de - con - struc - the u - ni - verse

S — gone —

A —

T —

B —

S —

70 I

S —

A —

T u - ni - verse

S — de - pp con - struc - the u - ni - verse, un - ra - vel the twi \_\_\_\_ sted mind

A — de - pp con - struc - the u - ni - verse, u - ni - verse, un - ra - vel the twi \_\_\_\_ sted mind the

T — De - con - struc - pp the u - ni - verse, un - ra - vel un - ra - vel the twi \_\_\_\_ sted mind

B — Daw — the

75

Soprano (S): pull a-part  
Alto (A): pull a-part  
Tenor (T): pull a-part  
Soprano (S): pull a-part  
Alto (A): pull a-part  
Tenor (T): pull a-part  
Soprano (S): f (subito, violent) pull a - part the skin, the eyes  
Alto (A): f (subito, violent) pull a - part the skin, the eyes  
Tenor (T): f (subito, violent) pull a - part the skin, the eyes  
Bass (B): twi \_\_\_\_ sted mind pull a - part the skin, the eyes  
Bass (B): twi \_\_\_\_ sted mind pull a - part the skin, the eyes

rit.

(♩ = 45)

80

Soprano (S): – pull a-part the skin, the eyes take a look take a nah  
Alto (A): – pull a-part the skin, the eyes take a look take a nah  
Tenor (T): – pull a-part the skin, the eyes take a look take a look, take a look no - thing in -  
Soprano (S): pull a - part the skin, the eyes take a look take a nah  
Alto (A): pull a - part the skin, the eyes take a look take a nah, look, take a look no - thing in -  
Tenor (T): pull a - part the skin, the eyes take a look take a no \_\_\_\_\_ thing in -  
Bass (B): pull a - part the skin, the eyes take a look rit. take a nah  
Bass (B): pull a - part the skin, the eyes take a look rit. take a nah

rit.

(♩ = 45)

J

85

Soprano (S) *p.*  
Alto (A) *p.*  
Tenor (T) *b<sub>9</sub>p.*  
Bass (B) *b<sub>9</sub>p.*

no - thing in - si(de) *mp*  
no - thing in - side but a  
side no - thing in - side no - thing  
no - thing in - side no - thing in - si(de)  
— no - thing in - si(de)  
side no - thing in - si(de) heart now pulled  
but a shri - velled heart nah

*rit.*

91 *slightly slower (♩ = 43)* *pp*

Soprano (S) *pp*  
Alto (A) *pp*  
Tenor (T) *pp*

but a shri-velled heart now pulled a - part  
shri-velled heart but a shri-velled heart now pulled a - part, now pulled a - part, pulled a -  
*slightly slower (♩ = 43)*

Soprano (S) *pp*  
Alto (A) *pp*  
Tenor (T) *pp*  
Bass (B) *pp*

now pulled a - part, pulled a -  
shri-velled heart now pulled a - part  
but a shri - velled heart now pulled a - part now

*slightly slower (♩ = 43)*

96

S part, pulled a - part, now pulled a - part de - con -

A

T

S shri - velled heart now pulled a - part shri - velled heart now pulled

A

T

B

S shri-velled heart now pulled a - part shri-velled heart now pulled a - part, now pulled a - part

A

T

B

101

S struct the u - ni - verse un - ra - vel the twi - sted mind

A

T

S now pulled now pulled a - part

A

T

B