

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

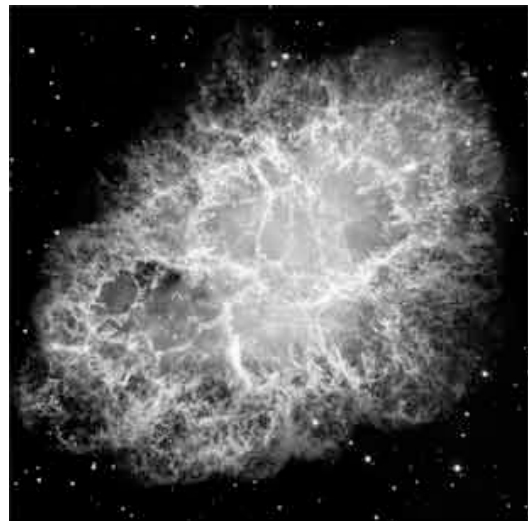
take a look
nothing inside
but a shrivelled corpse

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 [once¹] 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”. Where the tenor semi-chorus does not sing certain optional notes (e.g. the high A in bar 71) they should nonetheless contribute the consonants, and mime singing the vowel.

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.

¹ The word “once” has been omitted from the setting with the poet's permission.

Deconstruct a Chrysalis

Leanne Daharja Veitch

Duration: approx. 6:30

Michael Winikoff

[A] *Andante* ($\text{♩} = 50$)

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) ____

Andante ($\text{♩} = 50$) *mp*

Sopranos *chant-like, freely*

Altos *mp*

Tenors *mp*

Basses *p*

Daw ____ Daw ____

Piano (rehearsal only) *chant-like, freely*

Andante ($\text{♩} = 50$)

2

S

A

T

S *f*

chry - sa - lis ____ un - ra - vel the twi ____ sted thread ____ pull a - part the

A *f*

chry - sa - lis, chry - sa - lis ____ un - ra - vel the twi ____ sted thread the twi ____ sted thread pull a - part the

T *f*

chry - sa - lis ____ un - ra - vel un - ra - vel the twi ____ sted thread ____ pull a - part the

B *f*

the twi ____ sted thread pull a - part the

7

B *mf*

S de-con-struct a chry-sa-lis un-ra-vel the

A de-con-struct a chry-sa-lis un-ra-vel

T

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

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

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

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

Piano

13

C *poco a poco cresc.*

S twi-sted thread pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part

A the twi-sted thread pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part

T pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part

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

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

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

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

Piano

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 — 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 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** *p*

S — — — — — no - - - thing in si(de) —

A *p* no - thing in - side but a shri-velled corpse no - thing in - si(de) —

T — — — — — *p* in - side bu(t) —

S — — — — —

A — — — — —

T — — — — —

B — — — — —

Pages 4-8 omitted

78

S — pull a - part — pull a - part — pull a - part the skin, the eyes

A — pull a - part — pull a - part — pull a - part the skin, the eyes

T — pull a - part — pull a - part — pull a - part the skin, the eyes

S — pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the skin, the eyes

A — pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the skin, the eyes

T — pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the skin, the eyes

B — pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the skin, the eyes

rit. (♩ = 45)

82

S take a look take a nah — no - thing in - side — no - thing in -

A take a look take a nah — no - thing in - side — no - thing in -

T take a look take a look, take a look no - thing in - side — no - thing in -

S take a look take a nah — no - thing in - side — no - thing in -

A take a look take a nah look, take a look no - thing in - side — no - thing in -

T take a look take a no — thing in - side — no - thing in -

B take a look take a nah — but a shri - velled

rit. (♩ = 45)

87 J

rit. slightly slower (♩ = 43)

S: no - thing in - si(de) *mp*

A: no - thing in - side but a *pp* shri-velled heart

T: side no - thing

S: no - thing in - si(de)

A: si(de)

T: si(de) heart now pulled

B: heart nah *pp* but a

rit. slightly slower (♩ = 43)

92 *pp*

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

A: but a shri-velled heart now pulled a - part

T: but a shri-velled heart now pulled a - part

S: *pp* now pulled a - part, pulled a -

A: *pp* shri-velled heart now pulled a - part

B: shri - - velled heart now pulled a - part now

96

S

A

T

pp

S

shri - velled heart now pulled a - part

A

part, pulled a - part, now pulled a - part

T

shri-velled heart now pulled a - part

B

pulled a - part now pulled a - part

de - con -

de - con -

101

S

A

T

pp

S

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

A

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

T

shri-velled heart now pulled a - part

S

now pulled now pulled a - part

A

part a - part a - part a - part

T

pulled a - part pulled a - part pulled a - part

B

part a - part a - part a - part