

# 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

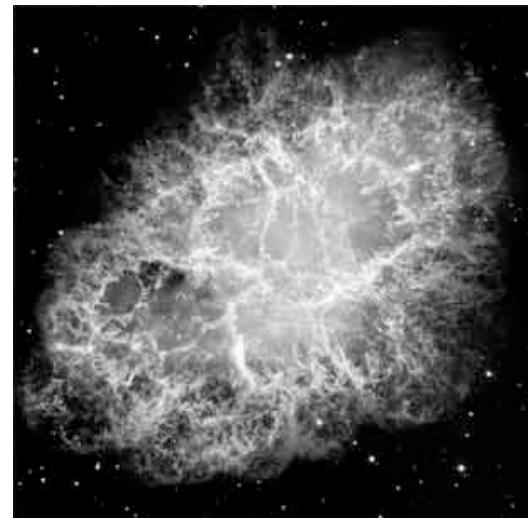
take a look  
nothing inside  
but a shrivelled corpse

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”. 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.

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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) \_\_\_\_\_*

*Andante (♩ = 50)*

*3* *4* *3* *4* *3* *4*

*chant-like, freely*

Sopranos

Altos

Tenors

*p*

Basses

*Daw*

*Andante (♩ = 50)*

*3* *4* *3* *4* *3* *4*

*De - con - struct      a*

*De - con - struct      a*

*De - con - struct      a*

*Daw*

*Andante (♩ = 50)*

*3* *4* *3* *4*

Piano (rehearsal only)

2

S

A

T

S

*chry - sa - lis      un - ra - vel      the      twi \_\_\_\_\_ sted thread*

*f*

*pull a - part the*

A

*chry - sa - lis, chry - sa - lis      un - ra - vel      the      twi \_\_\_\_\_ sted thread      twi \_\_\_\_\_ sted thread*

*f*

*pull a - part the*

T

*chry - sa - lis      un - ra - vel      un - ra - vel the      twi \_\_\_\_\_ sted thread*

*f*

*pull a - part the*

B

*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

*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

13

**C**

*poco a poco cresc.*

S twi - sted thread pull a - part pull a - part pull a - part  
A the twi - sted thread pull a - part (tutti) pull a - part pull a - part  
T pull a - part f pull a - part poco a poco cresc. pull a - part  
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      — 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**

Soprano (S):  $\text{G} \frac{3}{4}$ , Alto (A):  $\text{F} \frac{3}{4}$ , Tenor (T):  $\text{C} \frac{3}{4}$ , Bass (B):  $\text{C} \frac{3}{4}$

*p*

no - thing in - side but a shri-velled corpse no - thing in - si(de) in - side bu(t)

**Pages 4-8 omitted**

69

Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B)

**I**

pp de - con - struct the u - ni - verse  
 pp de - con - struct the u - ni - verse  
 pp de - con - struct the u - ni - verse

u - ni - verse u - ni - verse de - con - struct the u - ni - verse

De - con - struct the u - ni - verse, un -  
 De - con - struct the u - ni - verse, u - ni - verse,  
 De - con - struct the u - ni - verse, un -

Aw

73

Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B)

f the twi - sted mind pull a - part poco a poco cresc.  
 f the twi - sted mind pull a - part pull a - part poco a poco cresc.  
 f the twi - sted mind pull a - part pull a - part poco a poco cresc.

the twi - sted mind pull a - part f (subito, violent) pull a - part pull a - part poco a poco cresc.

ra - vel the twi - sted mind pull a - part the skin, the eyes poco a poco cresc.  
 un - ra - vel the twi - sted mind the twi - sted mind pull a - part the skin, the eyes poco a poco cresc.  
 ra - vel un - ra - vel the twi - sted mind pull a - part the skin, the eyes poco a poco cresc.

the twi - sted mind pull a - part the skin, the eyes

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.*      ( $\text{♩} = 45$ )

82

S take a look take a nah      nah  
A take a look take a nah      nah  
T take a look take a look, take a look no - thing in - side      no - thing in -  

*rit.*      ( $\text{♩} = 45$ )

S take a look take a nah      no - thing in - side  
A take a look take a nah      look, take a look no - thing in -      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.*      ( $\text{♩} = 45$ )

J

87

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

no - thing in - si(de)      rit.      slightly slower ( $\text{♩} = 43$ )

no - thing in - side but a      pp      shri-velled heart

side      no - thing

no - thing in - si(de)      rit.      slightly slower ( $\text{♩} = 43$ )

si(de)      si(de) -

si(de) heart now pulled      pp      but a

heart nah      rit.      slightly slower ( $\text{♩} = 43$ )

92

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

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

but a shri-velled heart now pulled a - part

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

shri - - velled heart now pulled a - part now

96

S A T S A T B

*pp*

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

101

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

S      now      pulled      now      pulled a - part

A      *z:*      *z:*      *z:*      *z:*      *z:*

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

B      part      a - part      a - part      a - part