

TWO ART SONGS

on text by e. e. cummings and William Wordsworth

JOHN WILLIAM BRINK

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TEXT

1. *[love is more thicker than forget]*
by e. e. cummings

love is more thicker than forget
more thinner than recall
more seldom than a wave is wet
more frequent than to fail

it is most mad and moonly
and less it shall unbecome
than all the sea which only
is deeper than the sea

love is less always than to win
less never than alive
less bigger than the least begin
less littler than forgive

it is most sane and sunly
and more it cannot die
than all the sky which only
is higher than the sky

2. *A Complaint*
by William Wordsworth

There is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

Premiered on
20 February, 2025 by
Nazmee Kamal, mezzo-soprano;
John Makara, piano.

Kresge Theatre, College of Fine Arts
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA

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PREFACE

Two Art Songs brings a British romantic-era poem and an early 20th-century work together in a short collection of vocal pieces. E. E. Cummings (1894 – 1962), a quintessential American poet, describes love in abstract terms along with familiar images, adding layers of complexity and beauty to his brief work, [*love is more thicker than forget*]. The ambiguity is complemented by the varying definitions of love, with Cummings describing it as "more thinner than recall", "most mad and moonly", and many more. The second piece, set on the early 19th-century poem, *A Complaint*, by William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850), similarly dwells on themes of love. The poem is often regarded as a reaction to the author's falling out with fellow British poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834). In this way, the poem captures the despair of losing love not just for these two literary figures, but for all who encounter love's fragility.

TWO ART SONGS

for Nazmee Kamal

Text by
e. e. cummings
(1894 – 1962)

1. [love is more thicker than forget]

John William Brink (2024)

Moderato espressivo (♩ = ca. 80) *pp*

Voice

Piano *pp*
(con pedale)

4

— is more thi - cker — than for - get — more thin - ner

7

than re - call — more sel - dom than a wave is wet —

10 *rall.* — — — — — *a tempo*

more fre - quent than to fail —

[love is more thicker than forget]

poco rall. ----- a tempo

13

[pp]

16

it is most mad and moon - ly

19

cresc. ----- mf

and less it shall un - be than all the sea which on - ly

mf

22

is dee - per than the sea

scorrendo p poco dim. pp

8va.]

27

Musical score for measures 27-30. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics: "Love is less al - ways than to win. less ne - ver than a - live". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. Dynamic markings include *p* and *pp*. Triplet markings are present in the piano part.

rall. ----- a tempo

31

Musical score for measures 31-33. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "less big - ger than the least be - gin it is most sane and". The piano accompaniment continues with triplet markings and a *p* dynamic marking.

34

Musical score for measures 34-36. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "sun - ly and more it can - not die than all the sky". The piano accompaniment features a *cresc.* marking and a *mf* dynamic marking.

37

Musical score for measures 37-40. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "which on - ly is high - er than the sky". The piano accompaniment features a *pp* dynamic marking.

Text by
William Wordsworth
(1770 – 1850)

2. A Complaint

Maestoso (♩ = ca. 70)

pp

Voice

There is a change and I am poor; Your love hath been, nor long a - go, —

Piano

pp

sim.

(con pedale)

5

A foun - tain at my fond heart's door, Whose on - ly bus - iness was to flow; And flow it did;

p

8va

9

not ta - king heed Of its

p

8va

14 *mf*

own boun - ty, or my need.

20 *f*

What hap - py mom - ents did I count!___ Blest was I then all bliss a - bove! Now, for that

24 *mf* *p*

con - sec - ra - ted fount Of mur - mur - ing___ spark - ling

27

liv - ing love, What have I? Shall I dare to tell?_____

p

This system contains measures 27 through 30. The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 27, followed by the lyrics "liv - ing love, What have I? Shall I dare to tell?". A triplet of eighth notes is marked above the vocal line in measure 29. The piano accompaniment starts in measure 27 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a complex harmonic texture with many accidentals.

31

[*p*] *delicato*

A com-fort-less and hid-den well._____

pp *p* *delicato*

This system contains measures 31 through 35. The vocal line has a rest in measure 31, followed by the lyrics "A com-fort-less and hid-den well.". The piano part includes a *pp* dynamic marking in measure 31 and a *p* *delicato* marking in measure 32. The piano accompaniment is characterized by a series of chords with many accidentals, creating a delicate and complex sound.

36

A well of love_____ it may be deep I trust it is,_____

(G#)
(C#)

This system contains measures 36 through 40. The vocal line has rests in measures 36 and 37, followed by the lyrics "A well of love_____ it may be deep I trust it is,_____". The piano accompaniment consists of sustained chords with many accidentals. At the bottom right of the system, the notes (G#) and (C#) are indicated.

39

and ne - ver dry: _____ What mat - ter?_ If the wa - ters sleep

(G#)
(C#) (A)
(D)

Detailed description: This system contains measures 39, 40, and 41. The vocal line starts with a melodic phrase in measure 39, followed by a rest in measure 40, and then continues in measure 41. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. A large watermark 'PREFACE' is visible across the page.

42

In si - lence and ob - scu - ri - ty. _____ Such change, and at the

8va. _____

Detailed description: This system contains measures 42 through 46. The vocal line has a melodic line in measure 42, a rest in measure 43, and then continues in measures 44, 45, and 46. The piano accompaniment includes a bass line with an 8va. marking and chords in the right hand. A large watermark 'PREFACE' is visible across the page.

47

ve - ry door Of my fond heart, hath made me poor. _____

8va. _____ (G#)
(C#)

Detailed description: This system contains measures 47 through 51. The vocal line has a melodic line in measure 47, a rest in measure 48, and then continues in measures 49, 50, and 51. The piano accompaniment features a bass line with an 8va. marking and chords in the right hand. A large watermark 'PREFACE' is visible across the page.