

LINES FOR Music

Adrian Ford

These lines were written for recitation to the opening chorus of the ST. MATTHEW PASSION by J. S. Bach. In this chorus, COME, YE DAUGHTERS, the symbolical figure of "The Daughter of Zion" calls on the mourners to share her sorrow at the Savior's bearing His cross for them. But the lines are united with the music only as it infuses them with its abstract sensitivity and grandeur. Through this manner of oral interpretation the listener is more emotionally involved in their mood and meaning. The lines are not a statement of faith or philosophy but indications of an individual psychological orientation.

I depart
 into that spotted darkness which we feel
 when aching lids close over conscious eyes.
 It summons me as my own mood draws
 reply from silence which my in-quest awes
 and I am drawn, a ball of flowing shadowy moral laws,
 into an existential pilgrimage.
 My mind
 is captivated in loud light, not free
 from each impatient colloquy to flee
 into an eloquent repose. Thus plea
 against this trip I make not: for in me
 it is an exodus to liberty.
 An exodus,
 for every man when lying in repose
 who rubs his eyes as to reverse the world
 flows through the galaxies beneath his lids
 into suspended glowing happenings
 that float in his nocturnal past.

He is a lone priest moving through the black
and afterimage of his latest world
the fading history of its nearest lights
toward burning silences of inner space
that pulsate with a primary desire
an ultimatum wishing to be his—
to be the slow gradations of delight
to be the morning gray and lilac night
of one more hardened, airless asteroid.
For when it is arrived at, it receives.
All space, receding, opens into halves:
one is generative light and one the peace
of night external. To be there is Being
no longer in the paradox of search
that journeys to the farthest not to leave
the wells of darkness centered in its eyes.
Perhaps in going out into the night
in flowing through the demi-dreams beneath
thin lids of insight, wondering through the suns
that beckon from the heaven of my brain—
perhaps my fading path is meant to shine
in further indication to a few
although I cannot recommend the way
(it is a secret finding itself out)
as being that almost two thousand years
have followed, claiming it to be the best.
Nor can I declare
amid wide constellations of our doubt
just one among a multitude of suns
that may be sons of nebulous illusion—
nor can I tell
if there *is* further that Creation spreads
to be the whole of and at last fulfill.
How can I, but a ball upon the lake,
a mind adrift on murmuring shallows, say
how best to navigate *your* spatial flood?
In *you* is the direction of your course:
one half decision and the other, want
of graphic certainty to map the whole
and having come (or like me, being near)

be-ware at once that hung amid the lights
is your trail—smoldering near you, but a line
of haze that fainter wanders backward, back
into the waiting limit of recall
that lives anticipating your return.
But as a sudden meteor
perhaps I may foretell some miracle
and be an omen if not the reply
of what is coming, of where each must go
when lying in repose that is our prayer.

So shall we find God . . . humbly if we can.
But if not, wandering in a similar daze
through separate night, considering the maze
of intellectual insight that conveys
somehow my flowing flaming shadow-globe
to what is more than paradox resolved—
unto the vital half of answer.

God, I do not come alone though I traverse
the infinence beneath my lids. For I hear
still closer and advancing with the sound
of multitudes beside and far behind
emerging from the darkness of their eyes
the memories from childhood in men
that with me are progressing through the prayer
of this experience. Being there,
my self revealed among them, shall I care
for their past or my own that in the glare
that in the acts of open eyes . . . exists
as either nervous glance or desperate stare?

