

THE MOUNTAIN

Four Songs for Voice and Piano

Poems by

DENISE LEVERTOV

Music by

BRUCE TRINKLEY

THE MOUNTAIN

Four Songs for Voice and Piano

1. Settling	3
2. Elusive	7
3. Effacement	10
4. Open Secret	13

COMPOSER'S NOTE

Denise Levertov was born in England in 1923 and served as a nurse in London during the bombings of World War II. She spent most of her career in the United States and was active as a feminist and a political activist during the Vietnam War. In the 1980s she moved to the Pacific Northwest and taught at the University of Washington and Stanford. She died in 1997.

The composer first encountered the poetry of Denise Levertov during time spent in the Pacific Northwest. The mountain of which she writes made a very memorable impression each morning as he looked across Puget Sound at Mount Baker and Mount Rainier, very much as described in the poems.

THE MOUNTAIN was composed during a residency at The Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences in Rabun Gap, Georgia, in October 2007.

The poems are drawn from the sequence "LAKE MOUNTAIN MOON" in *Evening Train*, copyright ©1992 by Denise Levertov. Used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

POEMS

Settling

I was welcomed here – clear gold
of late summer, of opening autumn,
the dawn eagle sunning himself on the highest tree,
the mountain revealing herself unclouded, her snow
tinted apricot as she looked west,
tolerant, in her steadfastness, of the restless sun
forever rising and setting.

Now I am given
a taste of the grey foretold by all and sundry,
a grey both heavy and chill. I've boasted I would not care,
I'm London-born. And I won't. I'll dig in,
into my days, having come here to live, not to visit.
Grey is the price
of neighboring with eagles, of knowing
a mountain's vast presence, seen or unseen.

Elusive

The mountain comes and goes
on the horizon,

a rhythm elusive as that of a sea-wave
higher than all the rest, riding to shore
flying its silver banners –

you count to seven, but no,
its measure
slips by you with each recurrence.

Effacement

Today the mountain
is cloud,
pale cone of shadow
veiled by a paler scrim –

majestic presence become
one cloud among others,
humble vapor,
barely discernible,

like the archangel walking
with Tobias on dusty roads.

Open Secret

Perhaps one day I shall let myself
approach the mountain –
hear the streams which must flow down it,
lie in a flowering meadow, even
touch my hand to the snow.
Perhaps not. I have no longing to do so.
I have visited other mountain heights.
This one is not, I think, to be known
by close scrutiny, by touch of foot or hand
or entire outstretched body; not by any
familiarity of behavior, any acquaintance
with its geology or the scarring roads
humans have carved in its flanks.
This mountain's power
lies in the open secret of its remote
apparition, silvery low-relief
coming and going moonlike at the horizon,
always loftier, lonelier, than I ever remember.

1. Settling

Denise Levertov

Bruce Trinkley

Andante con moto ♩ = 84 *mp*

Voice

Piano

ff *mp* *con pedale*

I was

wel - comed here, _____ clear gold _____ of late sum - mer, _____ of

6

o - pen - ing au - tumn, _____ the dawn ea - gle sun - ning _____ him - self on the high - est

11

sub. p

tree, — the moun - tain — re - veal - ing — her - self un - cloud - ed, —

16

sub. pp

mp

her snow tint - ed a - pri - cot as she looked west, —

21

mp

mf

tol - e - rant, in her stead - fast - ness, — of the rest - less sun —

26

cresc. poco a poco

f dim.

mf

for - ev - er ris - ing and set - ting.

31

mf

dim.

molto rit.

Moderato ♩ = 120 *mp*

Now I am giv - en a

35

molto rit.

p

taste of the grey fore - told by all and sun - dry, a grey both heav - y and

39

poco rit. *a tempo*

chill. I've boast - ed I would not care, I'm Lon - don-born.

43

poco rit. *a tempo*

47 — And I won't. I'll dig in, — in - to my days, — hav - ing

mf

mp

51 come here to live, not to vis - it. —

molto rit.

fast arpeg.

Freely

54 Grey is the price of neigh-bor-ing with ea - gles, of know - ing a moun - tain's vast

f

sub. p

mf *slow arpeg.*

p

58 pres - ence, seen or un - seen. —

espressivo

pochiss. rit.

2. Elusive

Denise Levertov

Bruce Trinkley

Adagio $\text{♩} = 72$

Piano

ff

p cresc.

con pedale sempre sonore

mf

The moun - tain comes _____ and

f dim.

mf

cresc.

4

f

goes _____ on the ho - ri - zon, _____

9

cresc.

f

mp

13

cresc. poco a poco

mf

rhy - thm e - lu - sive as that of a sea - wave

16

p cresc. poco a poco

sub. p *mf*

high - er than all the rest, rid - ing to shore

20

sub. p *mf*

with abandon

fly - ing its sil - ver ban - ners,

24

mp *cresc. poco a poco*

you count to sev - en, but no,

28

p *cresc. poco a poco*

f

its meas - ure slips by you with

32

mf

each re - cur - rence.

35

dim. al fine

allargando

39

allargando

pp

p

3. Effacement

Denise Levertov

Bruce Trinkley

Andante ♩ = 80 *molto sostenuto*

Voice *p*

To -

Piano *pp*

con pedale

day the moun - tain is cloud, _____ pale cone of

3 *simile*

mp

shad - ow veiled by a pal - er

6 *p*

mf

scrim, ma - jes - tic

9

mp 6 6 6 6

pres - ence be - come one

11

poco rit.

cloud a - mong oth - ers,

13

poco rit.

Larghetto espressivo ♩ = 63

p

hum - ble va - por, bare - ly dis - cern - i - ble,

[15]

pp delicato

warmly poco rit. a tempo cresc. mp dim.

like the arch - an - gel walk - ing with To - bi - as on dust -

[19]

poco rit. a tempo cresc. mp dim.

y roads. _____

[24]

p mf

4. Open Secret

Denise Levertov

Bruce Trinkley

Andante con moto ♩ = 112 *mp* *poco cresc.*

Voice

Per - haps one day I shall let my-self ap -

Piano

p *poco cresc.*

mf *p* *cresc.* *mp*

proach the moun - tain, hear the streams which must flow down it, —

5

mp *mf* *p* *cresc.* *mp*

lie in a flow-er-ing mead - ow, e - ven touch my hand to the

9

p

Piu mosso ♩ = 120

mf matter-of-factly

13 snow. Per-haps not. I have no long - ing to

mf *poco marcato* sub. *p*

17 do so. I have vis - it - ed oth - er moun - tain heights. This one is

jaunty *mp*

21 not, I think, to be known by close scru - ti - ny, by touch of

poco cresc.

24 foot or hand or en - tire out - stretched bod - y; not by an - y fa - mil - i - ar - i - ty

mf *dim.* *mp*

of be - ha - vior, — an - y ac - quain - tance — with its ge - ol - o - gy

28 *tr*

espressivo

31 or the scar - ring roads hu - mans have carved in its flanks.

sonore e colla voce

Andante luminoso $\text{♩} = 84$ *mp cantabile but well-articulated*

35 This moun - tain's pow - er lies in the o - pen

p

con pedale

se - cret of its re - mote ap - pa - ri - tion, sil - ver - y low - re -

40

dim. poco a poco al fine

45

lief ——— com-ing and go - ing moon - like at the ho - ri - zon,

dim. poco a poco al fine

50

al - ways lof - ti - er, lone - li - er, than

poco rit. a tempo

55

I ev - er re - mem - ber. ———

poco rit. a tempo

60