

TEXTS

The Astronomers (An Epitaph)

Susan Campbell 1863-1910 Brian Campbell 1862-1909
We have loved the stars too deeply
To be afraid of the night.
(Based upon an inscription found in Allegheny, Pennsylvania)

Come Ready and See Me

(from *Mr. Evening, and Nine Poems* by James Purdy)
Come ready and see me
No matter how late
Come before the years run out.
I'm waiting with a candle
No wind will blow out,
But you must haste on foot or by sky
For no one can wait forever
Under the bluest sky
I can't wait forever
For the years are running out.

Sweet Suffolk Owl (Anonymous Verses, 1619)

Sweet Suffolk Owl, so trimly dight
With feathers like a lady bright,
Thou singest alone, sitting by night,
Te whit, te whoo! Te whit, te whoo!

Thy note, that forth so freely rolls,
With shrill command the mouse controls;
And sings a dirge for dying souls,
Te whit, te whoo! Te whit, te whoo!

I Do (from *The Running Sun* by James Purdy)

I'll mail lilacs & lilies
& roses to you,
& great big hats
with ribbons of blue

will express brass & tympani
and the honey sax
if you vow to espouse
the king of the cats

you'll sit on a throne
of diamonds and moss
& your crown'll be gold,
sprinkled with dross.

this offers comes once
in a lifetime or two
pin on your wings
& say I do.

Mirage (Poem by Christina Rossetti)

The hope I dreamed of
was a dream,
Was but a dream; and now I wake
Exceeding comfortless, and worn, and old,
For a dream's sake.

I hang my harp upon a tree,
A weeping willow in a lake
I hang my silenced harp there, wrung and
snapt
For a dream's sake.

Lie still, lie still, my breaking heart;
My silent heart, lie still and break:
Life, and the world, and mine own self,
are changed
For a dream's sake.

The Land of Nod (Alice Wirth Gray)

Dreams of pure spirit are other people's dreams.
Animal animas appear as guides.
Lobsters befriend them in rocky times,
or their dreams are in French,
or painted in archaic style on vases: objet d'art.

You couldn't hire a guide the hot spots my dreams go.
I don't go my nightly journey with friendly totems.
There are no areas of abstract color, pure form.
Along my way to dreamland are gas stations
You need keys to use the restroom.
You wouldn't want to get out of the car,
not even run down the window,
in my dreams.

Deer in Mist and Almonds

It's rained for months and the deer step delicately
trying to shake dry their hooves,
It's so muddy down by the creek,
They've come up close to the house.
They stand in the mustard,
It's flowered early this year.

When a sudden Fog, thigh-high, eradicates all below,
and all colors not grave go.

Only metal stays:
pewter, silver, steel stainless sight,
lodestones, black holes in the light,
great tin gods, pinch-beck on a damask cloth of white
eating the hips off the roses near the road.
They brown into the invisible mustard.

Stags in the winter orchard bear their bare branches
past the almond's antlers,
float above the white; great inflexible crafts of zinc.
Before sunset the sky is icy pink.

Earth Walking, Soul Longing (words by Susan Stoderl)

1. The Call
The Earth Goddess boldly strides
rain spatters, pocked gray streets.
Her autumn tattered raiment
twirls, swirls 'round her feet.
She bids me to follow.
I ignore her call and drift away.

2. Defiance
Leaves crimson and gold,
mud-tattered yellow,
Defiantly cling to the known.
Entwining and embracing,
they hug the asphalt wetness,
Avoiding Her wide-swathed broom.

Trudging through dampened streets,
Weighted with belongings and cares.
my path is littered with disposable thoughts.

Brain mutterings muddle,
puddle,
become mired in muck.
A precious few lift and float,
bound toward star and moon.

3. Odd One Out

Life pools of autumn colored water lilies.
A claue of beauties haughtily cup and curl.
The odd one out, yellow, brown and large
Outside, alone, I know not my own beauty.

4. The Cycle Broken

The Great Mother draws her curtain against the
light.
A lullaby blankets all in winter's white water.
In continual flow, She teaches love, honor.
Steadfastly changing, forgiving misuse, neglect.
Rain falters, wind stutters, her rhythm is lost.
The begotten remain deaf, senseless, self-absorbed.
Desolate, despairing, Great Mother turns away.
Bitter anger forges a cold, eternal mirror,
A reflection of my own arrogance and disregard.
But beyond,
a waterfall of tears creates anew.

5. Soul Longing

Earthly drums beat an intricate pattern
Heaven's harps call forth the angel song.
My feet trod neither heaven nor earth.
I remain deaf to the call of the mist.

My heart tightens, fighting to find the rhythm.
Anguish, disquiet, fill my thoughts.
Soul longing ignored, remains unanswered.
Nowhere left to run, my gaze turns inward.

Spirit calls me, and this once, I listen.
My very breathing drums and strums.
I put forth a tentative foot to dance.
it is with the beat.
With another few steps, I dance and sway.
Light illumines my step, still darkness hovers.
Be loud my soul.
Quiet the world.

Waltzing to Her beat, I live in wonder and joy,
Stillness, peace invade my soul
The me, the I, intertwine with you,
The I Am at last becomes, We Are.

6. Acceptance

A single red maple heralds the changing of my
colors,
One by one, all my parts answer Her call.
Smokey tendrils rise from Earth's center,
Beavers and silver schools of fish beckon
Mist thickens like steam from a witches brew,
Then just as suddenly gives way to dawn.
A golden laser points to the water's edge.
Stepping stones invite me to enter.

What about air? Will I be able to breathe?
Will fish nibble and tangle my hair?
Can fear and longing be washed away?

Resting in the water's embrace,
I laugh at my futile omnipotence.
And luxuriate in nothingness.

Special Guest Artist for this Concert



Helena native **Chas Elliott** is no stranger to Montana audiences. Onstage he has appeared at the Myrna Loy Center, Grandstreet Theatre, the Missoula Children's Theatre and Ft. Peck Summer Theatre. Most recently he sang with Montana Lyric Opera (Monterone in *Rigoletto*) and Musikanten Montana (Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*). He has sung with Intermountain Opera, and the Helena, Missoula, and Great Falls symphonies.

As a musical director and pianist, Mr. Elliott has worked for the University of Montana Opera Theatre, the Illustrious Virginia City Players, the Ft. Peck Summer Theatre, Grandstreet Theatre, and the Montana Rep. He has played for ballet classes for Sallyann Mulcahy and Gelsey Kirkland.

Chas made his Carnegie Hall debut in October 2009 and has appeared as a soloist at Lincoln Center's Avery Fischer Hall, Symphony Space, and the Players Club. Upcoming performances include *Tosca* (Scarpia), *Das Rheingold* (Wotan), and *Salome* (Jochanaan). He is relocating to Berlin in the fall of 2010 to begin a career as a *heldenbariton*.