

N-400
Erasure
Songs

for TTBB chorus

Melissa Dunphy

Poetry by Laurel Chen,
Niina Pollari, and Melissa Dunphy

13 min

2021

Commissioned by Cantus



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Erasure poetry is created by blacking out portions of a pre-existing text to create a new work. Each of the poems in this cycle uses and reshapes text from the N-400, the application form that foreign-born "aliens" submit to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to be naturalized and become citizens of the United States.

1. Form N-400 Erasures

Niina Pollari

Do you
Have
awful
association s

Have you been in
total
terror

Yes/No

If you
EVER claim in writing or any other way
to
have no
country
are you
confined

2. N-400 (an erasure)

Laurel Chen

i.
notice: any immigration
notice: hearing
notice: see
notice: you

ii.
to the immigrant :
homeland is
a process
delayed.

iii.
fingerprints disposable
a number unpermitted
immigrants: are
all of the above

iv.
about the United States:
do not
support
the criminal history

v.
you are what
you have
abandoned

vi.
identify: alien
copy: self

vii. separate your open wounds in the process

viii. verify:
all has been destroyed

ix. naturalization can not capture your free
can not level your personal for political

x. this application simplified is persecution of
your own safety to ensure social security

xi. reschedule
reschedule
reschedule
reschedule
a time
time
time
again time
time
date and

time

xii. resubmit
resubmit
resubmit

xiii. please

xiv. you will never belong

3. change [y]our Country
Melissa Dunphy

you Are Home
this IS where you live now
Home
your space
Your **Time**
Your History

How many have been
persecuted
occupied
arrested
detained charged
Have Been
Failed
lied to
removed, excluded
deported

but you did not
f al t e r
you
are willing
you
are true
release
re form
prepare
S t a n d Firm
you
are the best of u s
you will b re a the
free

N-400 Erasure Songs: 1

Form N-400 Erasures
Poetry by Niina Pollari

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Adagio ♩ = 66

TENOR 1
Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No.

TENOR 2
Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No.

BASS 1
Oo. Do you have?

BASS 2
Oo. Do you have?

7
T.
No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No.

T.
No. Yes. No. Do you have? Do you have?

B.
Do you have aw-ful as-so-ci-a-tions-ss? Do you have aw-ful as-

B.
Do you have? Do you have? Do you have? Do you

13

T. *p*
 Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Do you

T.
 Do you have aw-ful as-so-ci-a-tions? Do you

B.
 so-ci-a-tion-s? Do you have aw-ful as-so-ci-

B.
 have? Do you have? Do you have?

18

T. *mp*
 have? Do you have? Have you been in to-tal ter-ror?

T.
 have aw-ful as-so-ci-a-tions? Do you have aw-ful as-so-ci-

B.
 a-tion-s? Do you have aw-ful as-so-ci-a-tion-s? Do you

B.
 Do you have? Have you been in to-tal, Have you

24

T. *mf* *f*
 Have you been in to-tal ter-ror? If you

T. *mp* *mf* *mf* *f* *f*
 a-tions? Have you been in to-tal ter-ror? Yes. No. Yes. If you

B. *f*
 have? Do you have aw-ful as-so-ci-a-tions? Yes.

B.
 been? Have you been? Have you been?

30

T. *f* ev - er, ev - er claim in writ-ing or an - y

T. ev - er, ev - er claim in writ-ing or an - y

B. *f* If you ev - er claim in writ - ing or an - y

B. *f* If, if you ev - er claim in writ-ing or an - y oth-er

35

T. *mf* oth - er way to have no coun - try, to have no

T. *mf* oth - er, an - y oth - er way to have no coun - try, no

B. *mf* oth - er way to have no coun - try, to have no

B. *mf* way, an-y oth - er way to have no *p*

41

T. *p* coun - try, are you con - fined?

T. *p* coun - try. Yes.. No.. Yes.. No.. Yes.. No..

B. *p* coun - try, are you con - fined? Are you con - fined? If *mp*

B. *p* coun - try, are you con - fined? Are you con - fined? If *mp*

46 *mp*

T. If you ev - er claim in writ-ing or an - y oth - er

T. If you ev - er, ev-er claim in writ-ing or an - y oth - er

B. you ev - er, ev-er claim in writ - ing or an - y oth - er

B. you ev - er claim in writ - ing or in an-y oth - er

52 *p*

T. way_____ to have no coun - try, to have no_____

T. way, an - y_____ oth - er way to have no coun - try, no

B. way_____ to have no coun - try to have no

B. way, an - y oth - er way to have no coun - try, no

57 *p*

T. coun - try, are you_____ con - fined? <

T. coun - try. Yes... No... Yes... No... Yes...

B. coun - try, are you con - fined? Are you con -

B. coun - try, are you con - fined? Are you con -

61

T. *p* Con - fined? Con - fined?

T. Do you have? Do you

T. *p* No... *p* Yes... *p* No... *p* Yes... *p* No... *p* Yes...

B. fined? Are you con - fined? Are you con -

B. fined? Are you con - fined? Are you con -

65

T. *rit.* *pp* Con - fined? Con - fined?

T. *pp* have? Do you have? Oo.

T. *p* No... *p* Yes... *p* No... *p* Yes... *pp* Oo.

B. *pp* fined? are you con - fined? Oo.

B. *pp* fined? Are you con - fined? Oo.

N-400 Erasure Songs: 2

N-400: An Erasure
Poetry by Laurel Chen

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Driving ♩ = 120+

TENOR 1
f
 No-tice: an-y im-mi-gra-tion. No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: see. No-tice: an-y im-mi-gra-tion.

TENOR 2
f
 No-tice: an-y im-mi-gra-tion. No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: see. No-tice: an-y im-mi-gra-tion.

BASS 1
f
 No-tice: an-y im-mi-gra-tion. No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: see. No-tice: an-y im-mi-gra-tion.

BASS 2
f
 No-tice: an-y. No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: an-y.

4

T.
fp
 No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: see. You, you, you, you you. No-tice:

T.
fp
 No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: see. No-tice: you. No-tice: you, you, you, you,

B.
fp
 No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: see. No-tice: you, _____ you. _____ No-tice:

B.
fp
 No-tice: hear-ing. No-tice: you, _____ you. _____ No-tice:

7

7

T. *p*
 you, you, you. Not-ice:you, you, you. Not-ice:Fin-ger-prints dis-pos-a-ble, a num-ber un - per-mit-ted,

T. *fp* *p*
 you._____ No-tice:you, you, you. No-tice:Fin-ger-prints dis-pos-a-ble, a num-ber un - per-mit-ted,

B. *fp* *fp* *p*
 you,_____ you._____ Fin-ger-prints dis-pos-a-ble, a num-ber un - per-mit-ted,

B. *fp* *fp* *p*
 you,_____ you._____ Fin - ger - prints dis - pos - a - ble.

11

T. *p*
 im-mi - grants are all of the a - bove,_____ im-mi - grants are all of the a -

T. *p*
 im-mi - grants are all, im-mi - grants are all of the a - bove,_____

B. *p*
 im-mi - grants are all of the a - bove,_____ all of the a -

B. *p*
 Im - mi - grants are all of the a - bove._____

14

T. *mf*
 bove._____ Home - land is a pro - cess de-layed, home-land is a

T. *mf*
 im-mi - grants are all of the a - bove._____ Home-land is a pro - cess de-

B. *mf*
 bove. To the im-mi - grant:_____ home-land is a pro - cess de-

B. *mf*
 To the im-mi - grant:_____ home-land is a

17

T. *8* pro - cess de-layed, _____ home - land is a pro-cess delayed, home-land is a

T. _____ a pro - cess de-layed. _____ Home-land is, a home-land is a

B. _____ a pro - cess, to the im-mi-grant: _____ home-land is, a home-land is a

B. *8* pro - cess de-layed _____ To the im-mi-grant: _____ home-land is a

21

T. *sub. p* *8* pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess de - layed, de - layed,

T. *sub. p* *8* pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess de - layed, de - layed,

B. *sub. p* *8* pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess de - layed, de -

B. *sub. p* *8* pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess de -

24

T. *f* *8* de - layed, de - layed. _____ de - layed, de - layed, de - layed. A -

T. _____ de - layed, _____ de - layed, de - layed, de - layed, de - layed,

B. *f* *8* layed, de - layed, de - layed, de - layed, _____ de - layed. _____ A -

B. *f* _____ home - land _____ is a pro - cess de - layed. A -

9

27

T. *bout the U-ni-ted States, do not sup - port_ the crim-in - al his-tor-y.*

T. *de-layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-layed. His-tor-y.*

B. *bout the U-ni-ted States, do not sup - port_ the crim-in - al his-tor-y.*

B. *bout, a - bout the U - ni - ted States, do not sup - port the_*

30

T. *A - bout the U - ni-ted States, do not sup-port_ the crim-in-al.*

T. *A - bout the U-nit-ed States, do not sup-port_ the crim-in-al.*

B. *De-layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-layed.*

B. *his - to - ry, a - bout, a - bout the U - ni - ted States.*

33

T. *You are what you have a - ban - doned. I - den - ti - fy,*

T. *I - den - ti - fy,*

B. *You are what you have a - ban - doned. I - den - ti - fy,*

B. *I - den - ti - fy,*

f solo *p tutti*

37

mf *f*

T. *mf* *f*
i-den - ti-fy, i-den - ti-fy: a-li-en.. Cop-y, cop-y, cop-y self. Sep-a - rate your o-penwounds,

T. *mf* *f*
i-den - ti-fy, i-den - ti-fy: a-li-en.. Cop-y, cop-y, cop-y self. Sep-a - rate your o-penwounds,

B. *mf* *f*
i-den - ti-fy, i-den - ti-fy: a-li-en.. Cop-y, cop-y, cop-y self. Sep-a - rate your o-penwounds,

B. *mf* *f*
i-den - ti-fy, i-den - ti-fy, a-li-en.. Cop-y, cop-y, cop-y self. Se-pa - rate your, o-penwounds,

41

T. *mf* *f*
sep-a - rate your o-pen wounds, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess.

T. *mf* *f*
sep-a - rate your o-pen wounds in the pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess.

B. *mf* *f*
sep-a - rate your o-pen wounds in the pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess, pro - cess.

B. *mf* *f*
sep-a - rate your o-pen wounds in the pro - cess, in the pro - cess. And

44

ff

T. *ff*
Ver - i - fy:— all has been des-troyed, des - troyed, des - troyed, des - troyed, des -

T. *ff*
Ver - i - fy:— all has been des-troyed, des - troyed, des - troyed, des - troyed, des -

B. *ff*
Ver-i - fy, ————— ver - i - fy:— all has been des- troyed, ————— des -

B. *ff*
ver i - fy: ————— all has been des-troyed, des - troyed, des -

11

47

T. *fp*
 troyed, des - troyed. Ver - i - fy: all has been des - troyed, all has been des - troyed, _____

T. *f*
 troyed, des - troyed. Ver - i - fy: all has been des - troyed. _____ Nat-ur-al-i - za-tion

B. *fp* *p*
 troyed, des - troyed. Ver-i-fy, _____ ver-i-fy: all has been des - troyed, _____ des-

B. *fp* *p*
 troyed, des - troyed. Ver-i-fy: _____ all has been des - troyed, _____ des-

51

T. *p* *f*
 des - troyed, _____ des - troyed. _____ Can - not lev-el your

T. *p*
 can - not cap-ture your free. Des - troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des-

B. *f* *p*
 troyed. _____ Nat-ur-al-i - za-tion can - not cap-ture your free. _____ Des-

B. *f* *p*
 troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des-

55

T. *p*
 per-son-al for pol - it-ic-al, _____ pol - it-ic-al. _____ Des- troyed, _____ des-

T. *f* *p*
 troyed. For pol - it-ic-al, _____ pol - it-ic-al. _____ Des- troyed, _____ des-

B. *f*
 troyed. _____ Can - not lev-el your per - son - al. This ap-pli-ca-tion sim-pli-fied is

B. *p*
 troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des - troyed, _____ des-

59

p legato

T. troyed, — oo. — Time, time, date and time, time, date and

T. troyed, — oo. —

B. per - se-cu-tion of your own safe-ty to en-sure so-cial se - cu-ri-ty. —

B. troyed, — oo. —

64

T. time, time, date and time, time, date and time, time, date and

T. *p* Re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

B. *p* Re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

B. *p* Re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

67

T. time, time, date and time, time, date and time, time, date and

T. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule. Re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit. Re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

B. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule. Re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit. Re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

B. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule. Re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit, re-sub-mit. Re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

71 *f*

T. time, time, date and time, time, date and time, time, date and

T. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule. Re - sched-ule, re-sched - ule, re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule,

B. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule. De-layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-

B. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule. Time a - gain, a time a - gain, a

74

T. time, time, date and time, time, date and time, time, date and

T. re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule, re - sched-ule, re-sched - ule. Re - sub-mit, re-sub - mit,

B. layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-

B. time a - gain, a time a - gain, a time a - gain, a

77

T. time, time, date and time, time, date and time, time, date and

T. re - sub-mit, re - sub-mit. Re - sched-ule, re-sched - ule, re-sched-ule, re-sched-ule.

B. layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-layed, de-layed.

B. time a - gain, a time a - gain, a time a - gain.

80

fp *ff* **Faster** ♩=130

T. Please, _____ please, _____ please, _____ please. _____ You will nev - er be-long.

T. Time, time, date and time, time, date and please, _____ please. _____ You will nev - er be-long.

B. Please, _____ please, _____ please, _____ please. _____ You will nev - er be-long.

B. Please, _____ please, _____ please, _____ please. _____ You will nev - er be-long.

85

T. You will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be - long.

T. you will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be-long. you will nev - er be - long.

B. You will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be - long.

B. You will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be-long. You will nev - er be - long.

N-400 Erasure Songs: 3

change [y]our Country
Poetry by Melissa Dunphy

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Largo ♩=72

p molto espressivo

T. You are home. This is where you live now. You are home, you are

T. You are home. This is where you live now. You are home.

B. You are home. You are home. This is where you live.

B. You are home. This is where you live now.

7

T. home. You are home. This is where you live now. You are

T. You are home. This is where you live now. You are

B. You are home. Home. This is where you live now.

B. You are home. Home. This is where you live now.

13 16

T. *mp*
home. Your space, your time, your his-tor - y. How man - y have been

T. *mp*
home. Your space, time, his-tor - y. How man - y have been

B. *mp*
Home, space, time. You are home. How man - y have been

B. *mp*
Home, space, time. You are home. How

18

T. *mp*
per - se-cu - ted, oc-cu - pied? How man - y ar - res - ted, de -

T. *mp*
per - se-cu - ted, oc-cu - pied? How man - y ar - res - ted, de -

B. *mp*
per - se-cu - ted, oc-cu - pied? How man - y ar - res - ted,

B. *mp*
man - y have been per - se-cu - ted, oc-cu - pied? How man - y ar - res - ted,

23

T. *mf*
tained, charged. Have been failed, lied to, re - moved, re - moved, ex -

T. *mf*
tained, charged. Have been failed, lied to, re -

B. *mf*
de-tained, charged, failed, lied to, re - moved, re - moved, ex -

B. *mf*
de - tained, charged, failed? Have been lied to, re - moved, re -

29 *rit.* *a tempo*
p
 T. clu - ded, de - por - ted? But you, you did not fal - ter.
 T. moved, ex - clu - ded, de - por - ted? But you did not fal - ter.
 B. clu - ded, de - port - ed, de - por - ted? But you, you did not
 B. moved, ex - clu - ded, de - por - ted? But you, you did not

36 *mp* *mf*
 T. You are will - ing, you are true. This is
 T. You are will - ing, you are true. You are home.
 B. fal - ter. You, you are true. Home.
 B. fal - ter. You are will - ing, you are true. This is

42 *f* *p*
 T. where you live. You are will - ing, true. Re -
 T. This is where you live now. You are will - ing, you are true.
 B. This is where you live now. You are will - ing, you are true.
 B. where you live now. You are will - ing, you are true. Re -

49

T. lease, re - form, re - lease, re - form, pre - pare, pre - pare, stand

p

T. Re - lease, re - form, re - lease, re - form, pre - pare, pre - pare,

p

B. Re - lease, re - form, re - form, pre - pare, pre - pare,

p

B. lease, re - form, re - lease, re - form, pre - pare, pre pare, stand

55

T. firm, stand firm. You are the best of us. You will breathe.

ff *mf warmly*

T. stand firm. You are the best of us. You will, you will

ff *mf warmly*

B. stand firm. You are the best of us. You will breathe.

ff *mf warmly*

B. firm, stand firm. You are the best of us. You will breathe.

62

T. You are the best of us. You will breathe. You are the

T. breathe. You are the best of us. You will breathe

B. You are the best of us. You, you will breathe

B. You are the best of us, you will breathe

67

T. best of us. You will breathe. You are the best of us.

T. free. You are the best of us. You are the best of us.

B. free. You are the best of us, the best of us. You

B. free. You are the best, the best of us.

72

T. *f* You will breathe *p* free, *rit.* breathe free.

T. *f* You will breathe *p* free, breathe free.

B. *f* will breathe *p* free, breathe free.

B. *f* You will breathe *p* free, breathe free.