



Chants

for soprano and clarinet

Music by Melissa Dunphy
Poetry by Rosaleen Norton

Commissioned by Whistling Hens
with the support of Wesley Green

14.5 minutes
2023

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*This piece is sponsored by Wesley Green and commissioned by Whistling Hens.
Thank you, Wes, for your belief in Whistling Hens' mission,
your dedication to new music, and your support of women composers.
Thank you for championing this commission.*

Rosaleen "Roie" Norton (1917-1979) was an artist, poet, and Witch who lived in Sydney, Australia. Known as "the Witch of Kings Cross," in the 1950s, she was persecuted by the tabloid press, the police, and the courts for her beliefs and sexual practices; an affair with composer and conductor Eugene Goossens led to a major scandal and the effective end of his career in 1956. Many of Norton's works appear in the book *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952) and *Thorn in the Flesh: A Grim-memoir* (2009). For more information about Norton, including interviews of those who knew her, see Sonia Bible's documentary *The Witch of Kings Cross* (2021).

Cover image: "Astral Dreams" by Rosaleen Norton.

Rosaleen Norton's poetry is used with permission of her surviving relative Philip Burgess, from the estate of Rosaleen Norton's loved niece, Cecily Burgess. By his request, a portion of the commission fee was donated to UN Women USA, a non-profit organization that supports UN women's programs.



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A Chant

In the spiral horns of the Ram;
In the deep scent of Midnight;
In the secret Colour above and below the spectrum;
Is Life.

In the wild laughter of Chaos;
In the curving wings of infinite space;
In the coiled springs of violence;
In the lust of the goat;
In the ringing invisible aether;
In moonlit houses and nightlit streets;
In the majesty of great animals;
In the Powers of the Air;
In earth and sky and fire and water;
In the bright fangs of lightning;
In the seed of secrets, the still core of Silence;
Is Life.

Life spins in the dream of a planet;
Life leaps in the lithe precision of Felinity;
Life flames in the thousandth Name;
Life dances this thing that is I.
Therefore
I live in the green blood of the Forest;
I live in the white fire of Power;
I live in the scarlet blossom of Magic;
I live in Infinity.

Swoon-Number, Sung by Don Qui Bray

You're the vamp in my Vampire,
You're the Belle in Belfreee.
Your hellseye gleams haunt my hemlock dreams
You're just the gargoil for me, for me,
Come Vampire-pie an' vamp me,
O Ghoulbelle,
Yes, Ghoulie, come an' eat meeeee.

Crystalline sparkles

Crystalline sparkles of rain drifting, drifting,
Icy notes of kimonoed music floating, floating –
The room, empty, but for meaningless objects,
Becomes transfused with light.

Grey shadows beckon me to follow
through the silvery pane
Shrouded with shimmering rain.

Through the window I wander
Into the wet shrubbery
Where grow the sparkling roses,
White, crimson, and gold,
Shimmering, tinkling, beckoning,
Whispering of spheres undreamt of
But by those who know
The tenderness of rose petals falling,
Falling, falling, to lie,
Decay, and die,
All through rapturous autumn
and winter gales.

Downstream she floats

Downstream she floats,
her hair enmeshed in seaweed and ferns—
The sound of the black steed growing steadily softer
as, into the darkness, departs the one, forever.

Seaweed, green and brown, flowers white and pink,
Court to mind the rapture of kiss-enchanted caresses,
Golden, honeyed words drift to her through
the moon-silvered blackness,
The room, lit by passing lights, the enraptured garden,
whispering of bells and willows,
The room, a cocoon enmeshed
by the city's garish splendours.
Ecstasy of hours—time woven with eternity's tapestry—
That conjure moon-enmeshed, rain-enmeshed music
Darkness enmeshed, notes, drifting, whirling, swirling.

Now she floats, droplets of the icy,
tinkling stream murmuring,
Kissing her eyelids, falling through her hair.

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A Chant

Poetry by Rosaleen Norton

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Mysterious $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 40$
senza vib.—match tone of clarinet as much as possible

Soprano

Clarinet in B \flat

5

9

12

n *f* *n* *f* *n* *n* *mf* *rubato* *p* *espress.* *vib.*

O aspirate at end of fall o

In the

spi ral horns of the Ram; in the

deep scent of Mid-night; in the se - - cret

p *mp* *mp* *mf* *mf*

15

col-our ab-ove and be-low the spec - trum;

Musical notation for measures 15-17, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with triplets and a *p* dynamic marking.

(♩=♩) *accel.* *Piu mosso*, dance-like ♩. = c. 60

18

is Life, is

Musical notation for measures 18-20, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with *p* and *f* dynamics.

21

Life. In the wild laugh-ter of

Musical notation for measures 21-23, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with a *f* dynamic marking.

24

Cha-os; in the cur - - ving wings of in - fin-ite space; in the

Musical notation for measures 24-26, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with a *mp* dynamic marking.

27

coiled springs of vio - lence; in the lust of the goat; in the

Musical notation for measures 27-29, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with *f* and *harsh* markings.

30 *f*

ring-ing in-vis - ib-le ae-ther is Life. _____ In moon - lit hous-es and

mp *f*

34

night-lit streets; in the maj - es - ty of great an - im-als; in the

37 *p* *f* *ff*

Pow - ers of the Air; in earth and sky and fire and wa - ter; in the

sub. p *f*

40 *f* *rit.* *p*

bright fangs of light-ning; in the seeds of se-crets, the

ff *fp* *fp*

43 *f* *a tempo*

still core of si - lence is Life.

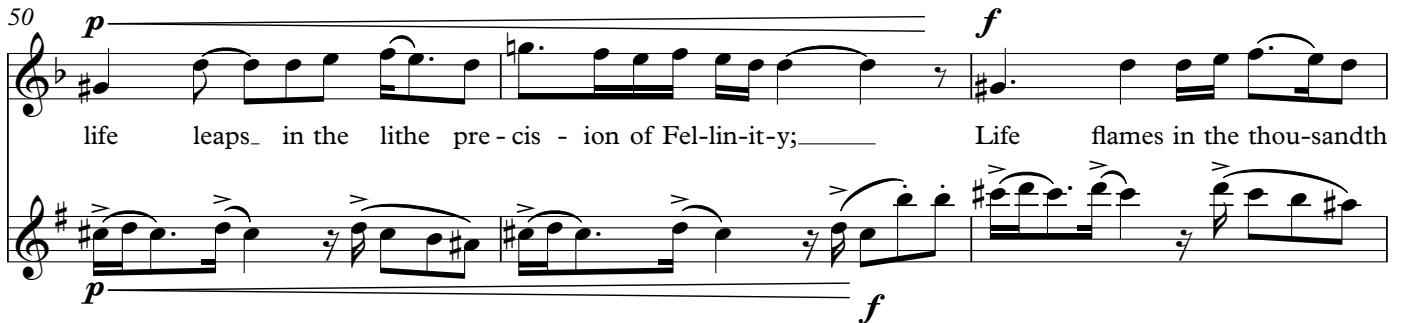
n *f*

47 *mp* *f*



Life spins in the dream of a planet;

50 *p* *f*



life leaps in the lithe precision of Fellini-ty; Life flames in the thousandth

53 *ff*



Name; Life dances this thing, dances this thing, dan - -

56 *rubato* *mf* *f*



- ces this thing that is I, I.

60 *mp* *p* *rit.*



There - fore, there - fore, there - fore.

64 *Meno mosso, ♩. = c. 50*

p *mp*

I live in the green blood of the forest; I

p

67 *mf*

live in the white fire of power; I live in the scar - let

mp *mf*

70 *f* *mf*

blos - som of Mag - ic; I live, I live, I

73 *p*

live in In - fin - it-y, in In - fin - it-y, in In -

p

76 *f*

fin - it-y, in In - fin - it-y.

f

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Swoon-Number

Poetry by Rosaleen Norton

Sung by Don Qui Bray

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Rubato moderato ♩ = c. 76

f flirty

5 *mf* schmaltzy

You're the vamp in my vam - pire, you're the belle in bel - free. Your

mf schmaltzy

10 *Peppy swing* ♩ = c. 126
(optional: snap fingers on 2 and 4)

hells-eye_ gleamshaunt my hem - lock_ dreams. You're just the garr - goil for

(swing 8th notes)

14

me, for_ me, you're_ just the garr - goil for

18

me. O_ Ghoul-belle, you're the garr - goil for me. *f* You're the

22

vamp in my vam - pire, you're the bell in bel - free. Your

26

hells-eye_ gleams haunt my hem-lock dreams. You're just the garr - goil for

30

me. Come Vam - pire - pie an' vamp

34

me, O Ghoul - belle,

38

Yes, Ghou-lie come an' eat me. You're the vamp in my vam - pire, you're the

42 *f* *rit.*

belle in bel - free. Your hells-eye gleams haunt my hem - lock

46 *mp* *a tempo*

dreams. You're just the garr - goil for me.

50 *mf* *p*

Come vam - pire-pie an' vamp me, you're the garr - goil for

53 *f*

me. Yes, Ghou - lie, come an' eat me,

Rubato, straight

56 *mp*

you're just the garr - goil for me.

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Crystalline Sparkles

Poetry by Rosaleen Norton

Music by Melissa Dunphy

With Movement ♩ = c. 52

Soprano

Clarinet in B \flat

mp

Crys - tal-line

4

spar-kles of rain drift - ing, drift - ing, I - cy notes

8

of ki - mo - noed mu - sic float - ing, float -

11

- ing The room, emp-ty, but for mean - ing-less

p

n p p

rit. . . .

15

ob - jects, be - comes trans - fused with

p

19 **Rubato** *f* **Meno mosso** ♩ = c. 69

light.

f *p*

23 *p* *mf* *p*

Grey shad - ows beck - on me to fol - low, fol - low

mf *p*

26

through the silv' - ry pane shroud - ed with shim - mer - ing

3

29 *mf*

rain. Through the win - dow I wan - der, I

3

32 *p*

wan - der in-to the wet shrub-ber-y where grow the

p

36 *f* **poco rit.**

spark - ling ro - ses,

f

40 **a tempo** *mp*

white, crim-son and gold shim-mer-ing, tink-ling, beck-on-ing,

mp

44 *p*

whis - per-ing of spheres un-dreamt of but by those who

p

48 *p*

know the ten-der-ness of rose pet - als

pp *p*

52 *rit.* *mf* *Rubato*

fal-ling, fal-ling, fal-ling, to lie, de-cay and die,

57 *rit.* *Tempo primo* ♩ = c. 52 *mp*

all through the

61

rap-tur-ous au-tumn and win-ter

64 *p*

gales, win-ter gales,

67 *rit.* *pp*

win-ter gales.

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Downstream She Floats

Poetry by Rosaleen Norton

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Grave ♩ = c. 60

Soprano

Clarinet in B \flat

p

Down-stream she floats, her hair en-meshed in sea-weed and ferns—

7

f

the sound of the black steed grow-ing stead - i-ly

13

p

soft-er as in - to the dark-ness, de-parts the one, for - ev - er.

p *p*

20

mf

Sea-weed, green and brown, flow-ers white and pink, court to

mf

26

mind the rap-ture of kiss-en-chant-ed ca-ress - es. Gold - en, hon-eyed

32

words drift to her through the moon-sil - vered black - ness, — the room, lit by

37

pass-ing lights, the en-rap-tured gar-den, whisp'-ring of bells and wil-lows,

42

the room, a co-coon en-meshed by the cit-y's gar-ish splen-dours.

49

Piu mosso

ec-sta-sy of hours — time wo-ven with e-

54

ter-ni-ty's tap-es-try — that con - jure moon-en-meshed, rain-en-meshed

58

mu - sic. _____ *p* Dark-ness en-meshed, notes, drift-ing, whirl - ing,

64

notes drift - ing, whirl - ing, swirl - - - ing.

f accel.

accel.

f

Tempo primo ♩ = c. 60

70

p

Now she floats, drop-lets of the icy tink-ling stream mur-mur-ing,

p

77

mf

kiss - ing her eye - lids, fall-ing through her hair,

mf

85

p *rit.*

fall - ing through her hair.

p *rit.*

3