

Three Poems of Two-fold Consciousness
for medium voice and piano

- I. The Heart of Herakles – Kenneth Rexroth
- II. The Depths – Denise Levertov
- III. “A Land not mine” -- Anna Akhmatova

8 minutes

Brooke Joyce (1992)

Premiered at Lawrence University, 1992
Winner, Devora Nadworney Award from NFMC, 1992

Program Note:

I. The Heart of Herakles, Kenneth Rexroth

Lying under the stars,
In the summer night,
Late, while the autumn
Constellations climb the sky,
As the Cluster of Hercules
Falls down the west
I put the telescope by
and watch Deneb
Move towards the zenith.
My body is asleep. Only
My eyes and brain are awake.
The stars stand around me
Like gold eyes, I can no longer
Tell where I begin and leave off.
The faint breeze in the dark pines,
And the invisible grass,
The tipping earth, the swarming stars
Have an eye that sees itself.

II. The Depths, Denise Levertov

When the white fog burns off,
the abyss of everlasting light

is revealed. The last cobwebs
of fog in the
black firtrees are flakes
of white ash in the world's hearth.

Cold of the sea is counterpart
to this great fire. Plunging
out of the burning cold of ocean
we enter an ocean of intense
noon. Sacred salt
sparkles on our bodies.

After mist has wrapped us again
in fine wool, may the taste of salt
recall to us the great depths about us.

III. "A land not mine," Anna Akhmatova

A land not mine, still
forever memorable,
the waters of its ocean
chill and fresh.

Sand on the bottom whiter than chalk,
and the air drunk, like wine,
late sun lays bare
the rosy limbs of the pine trees.

Sunset in the ethereal waves:
I cannot tell if the day
is ending, or the world, or if
the secret of secrets is inside me again.