

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.