

Nathaniel Eschler

A COMMUNITY OF THE SPIRIT: EIGHT SONGS SET TO THE POETRY OF RUMI

Translations and permissions by Coleman Barks

Written for Miaomiao Wang

for Soprano and Piano

Eight Poems of Rumi*

1. Quietness

Inside this new love, die.
Your way begins on the other side.
Become the sky.
Take an axe to the prison wall.
Escape.
Walk out like someone suddenly born into color.
Do it now.
You're covered with thick cloud.
Slide out the side. Die,
and be quiet. Quietness is the surest sign
that you've died.
Your old life was a frantic running
from silence.

The speechless full moon
Comes out now.

2. A Community of the Spirit

There is a community of the spirit.
Join it, and feel the delight
Of *walking* in the noisy street,
And *being* the noise.

Drink *all* your passion,
And be a disgrace.

Close both eyes
To see with the other eye.

Open your hands,
If you want to be held.

Sit down in this circle.

Quit acting like a wolf, and feel
The shepherd's love filling you.

At night, you beloved wanders.
Don't accept consolations.

Close your mouth against food.
Taste the lover's mouth in yours.

You moan, "She left me." "He left me."
Twenty more will come.

Be empty of worrying.
Think of who created thought!

Why do you stay in prison
when the door is so wide open?

Move outside the tangle of fear-thinking.
Live in silence.

Flow down and down in always
widening rings of being.

~

There's a strange frenzy in my head,
of birds flying,
each particle circulating on its own.
Is the one I love *everywhere*?

~

Drunks fear the police,
But the police are drunk too.

People in this town love them both
like different chess pieces.

~

3. Sweet-Talked into Connection

Stay with your family.
Do not wander away.

If you are an arc of the moon,
Live the full circle.

Why should a part be coy with the
whole?
Do you want compliment?
Do you want to be lied to?

As a genus branches and becomes a
species,
So the unseen reaches here.

It's a constant natural process,
But you want to be sweet-talked
Into connection.

It would be better
If a spirit-king slapped you awake.

Don't avoid discipline.
You have learned ways to make a
living
For your body. Now learn to support
Your soul. You wear find clothing.
How do you dress your spirit?

This world is a playground
Where children pretend to have
shops.

Sometimes when they wrestle,
It may look like sex,
but none of it's real.

They exchange imaginary money.
Night comes, and they go home tired
with nothing in their hands.

4. Say I am You

I am dust particles in sunlight.
I am the round sun.

To the bits of dust I say, Stay.
To the sun, *Keep moving*.

I am morning mist,
and the breathing of evening.

I am wind in the top of a grove,
and surf on the cliff.

Mast, rudder, helmsman, and keel,
I am also the coral reef they founder on.

I am a tree with a trained parrot in its branches.
Silence, thought, and voice.

The musical air coming through a flute,
a spark of a stone, a flickering

in metal. Both candle,
and the moth crazy around it.

Rose, and the nightingale
lost in the fragrance.

I am all orders of being, the circling galaxy,
the evolutionary intelligence, the lift,

and the falling away. What is,
and what isn't. You who know

Jelaluddin, You the one
in all, say who

I am. Say I
am You.

6. Spring

Again, the violet bows to the lily.
Again, the rose is tearing off her gown!

The green ones have come from the other world,
Topsy like the breeze up to some new foolishness.

Again, near the top of the mountain
The anemone's sweet features appear.

The hyacinth speaks formally to the jasmine,
"Peace be with you." "And peace to you, lad!
Come walk with me in this meadow."

Again, there are Sufis everywhere!

The bud is shy, but the wind removes
her veil suddenly, "My friend!"

The Friend is here like water in the stream,
like a lotus on the water.

The narcissus winks at the wisteria,
"Whenever you say."

And the clove to the willow, "You are the one
I hope for." The willow replies, "Consider
These chambers of mine yours. Welcome!"

The apple, "Orange, why the frown?"
"So that those who mean harm
will not see my beauty."

The ringdove comes asking, "Where,
where is the Friend?"

With one note the nightingale
indicates the rose.

Again, the *season* of Spring has come
And a spring-source rises under everything,
a moon sliding from the shadows.

Many things must be left unsaid, because it's late,
But whatever conversation we haven't had
tonight, we'll have tomorrow

5. Dark Sweetness

The ground turns green. A drum begins.
Commentaries on the heart arrive in seven volumes.

The pen puts its head down
to give a dark sweetness to the page.

Planets go wherever they want.
Venus sways near the North Star.
The moon holds on to Leo.

The host who has no self is here.
We look in each other's eyes.

A child is still a child
even after it's learned the alphabet.

Solomon lifts his morning cup to the mountains.
Sit down in this pavilion, a
and don't listen to religious bickering.
Be silent as we absorb the spring.

7. Love and I Talking

Love says, You cannot deny me. Try.

I say, Yes, you appear out of nowhere
like the bubbles in wine, here, then not.

Love says, Prisoned in the body-jar,
singing at the banquet.

I say, This ecstasy is dangerous.

Love says, I sip the delicious day,
until night takes the cup away.
Then I insist night give it back.
The light I see by never changes.

Arabs describe wine with the word mudam,
which means continual. On and on and on,
because wine drinkers never get enough.

The water of realization is the wine we mean
Where love is the liquid, your body the flagon.

Grace floods in. The wine's power
breaks the jar. It's happening now.

The water of waking becomes the one who pours,
the wine itself, and every presence at the banquet.

No metaphor can hold this truth
that knows how to keep secret
and when to show itself.

8. Dissolver of Sugar

Dissolver of sugar, dissolve me,
if this is the time.
Do it gently with a touch of a hand, or a look.
Every morning I wait at dawn. That's when
It's happened before. Or do it suddenly
Like an execution. How else
can I get ready for death?

You breathe without a body like a spark.
You grieve, and I begin to feel lighter.
You keep me away with your arm,
But the keeping away is pulling me in.

~

Pale sunlight,
pale the wall.

Love moves away.
The light changes.

I need more grace
than I thought.

Performance Notes

The music contained here-in was composed such that the Soprano and Piano are heard as separate, and, equal musical structures. As a result the performers are asked to allow a large enough spatial gap between them such that the listener perceives two sound sources yet is aware of the combinations the two musics form together.


Accidentals remain in effect to the end of each individual bar.

1. Quietness

Pensively ♩ = 82

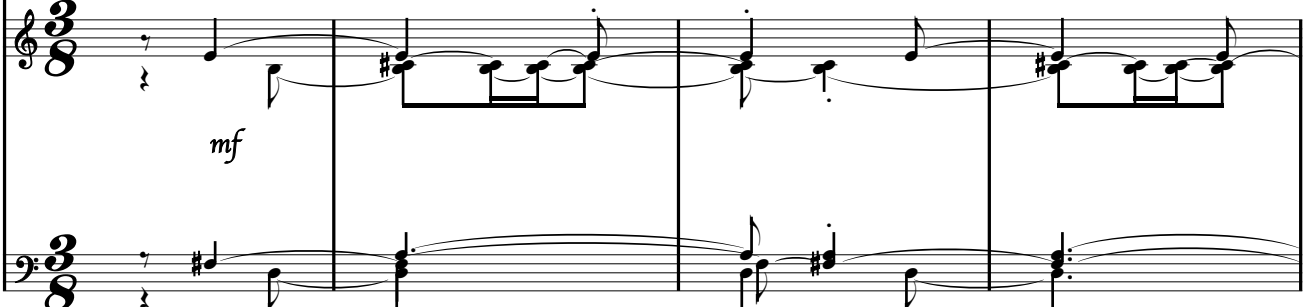
Nathaniel Eschler

Soprano



Piano

with a light rocking motion

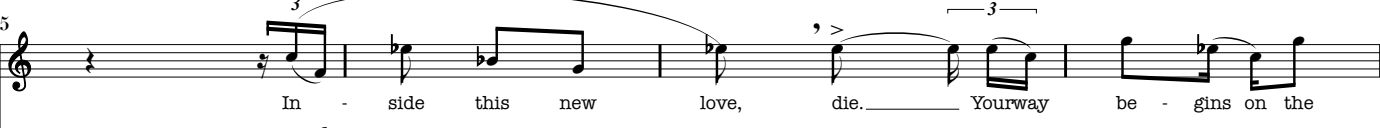


mf

S

some what spoken

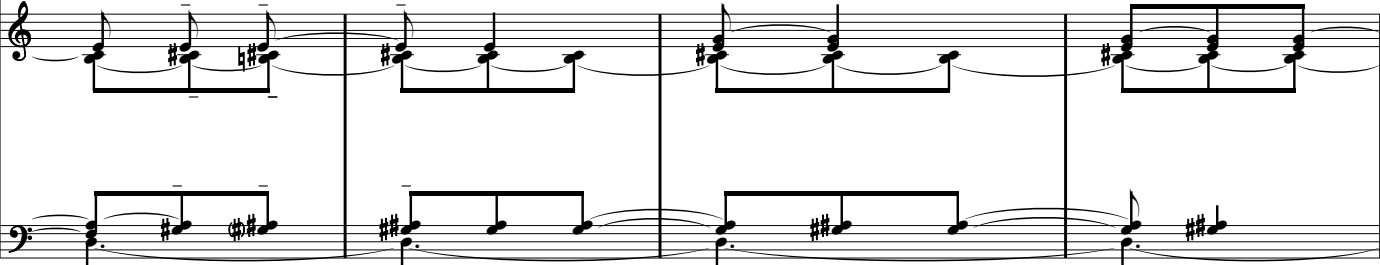
5



In - side this new love, die. Your way be - gins on the

mf


Pno.



S

lyrical w/ dramatic vib

9



o - ther side. Be - come the sky. Take an axe to the pri - son wall. E -

some what spoken

Pno.



S 13

scape. Walk out like some-one sud-den-ly born in - to co - lor. Do it now.

Pno. 13

S 17

You're co - vered with thick cloud. Slide out the side. Die,

lyrical w/ dramatic vib

cresc. -----

Pno. 17

flowingly

f

5

S 21

and be qui - et. Qui - - et - ness is

Pno. 21

rocking motion

mf

mp

flowingly

mf

Quietness

25

S

the sur - est sign that you've died.

Pno.

f *mf*

rocking motion

29

S

Your old life was a fran - tic

Pno.

mf *f* *mf* *f* *mp*

flowingly

33

S

ru - ning from si - lence. The speech - less

Pno.

mf *cresc.*

rocking motion

some what spoken

attacca

S
37 full moon comes out now

Pno.
37 *flowingly*
mf *f* *mf*

2. A Community of the Spirit

somewhat spoken w/little vib.

♩ = 82

S
40 There is a community of

Pno.
40 *dryly*
mf *mp* *mf*

S
42 the spirit. Join it, and feel the delight

Pno.
42 *poco cresc.* *poco*

44

S

lyrical w/ dramatic vib

of wal - - - king in the noi - - - sy street, and

f *f*

Pno.

w/estaticism

poco

f *mf* *f* *mf*

46

S

be - - - ing the noi - - - se. Drink all

mf *f*

Pno.

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

poco *(dryly)* *(w/estaticism)* *poco* *poco*

48

S

your pa - - - sion, and be a dis - - - grace.

mf *f* *mf*

Pno.

mf *poco cresc.* *poco* *poco*

f

A Community of the Spirit

S

50

Close both eyes to see with the o - - - ther

f *mf* *f*

Pno.

50

mf *f* *mf* *f* *poco*

S

52

eye. O - - - pen your hands if you want

mf *f* *mf*

Pno.

52

mf *mf* *mf* *f* *poco*

S

54

to be held. Sit down in

f *mf cresc.*

Pno.

54

mf *mf* *mf* *f* *poco*

A Community of the Spirit

S 56

this cir - - - cle. quit. act - - - - - ing

ff

Pno.

poco cresc. *poco*

S 58

like a wolf, and feel the she - - - pherd's love

mf *f*

Pno.

poco *mf* *poco* *mf*

S 60

fill - - - - - ing you. At night,

mf

Pno.

stemly *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *mf* *(dryly)*

62

S
 you're be - lov - ed wan - ders.

Pno.

poco *poco* (*sternly*)

mf *sfz* *sfz*

64

S
 Don't a - cept con - sol - a -

Pno.

sfz *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *mf*

(*dryly*)

66

S
 tions. Close your

mp *f*

Pno.

mf *sfz* *mf*

(*sternly*) (*dryly*)

S
68
mouth a - - - - gainst food. Taste your lo - - - - -
mf *f*

Pno.
68
aggressively
f *poco* *f* *mf* *poco* *mf* *f*

S
70
ver's mouth in yours. You moan,
mf *mf*

Pno.
70
poco *f* *mf* *poco* *mf* *(dryly)*

S
72
"She
poco cresc.

Pno.
72
(aggressively) *f* *poco* *f* *mf* *poco* *mf* *f* *poco* *f* *mf* *poco* *mf* *(dryly)*

74

S left me." "He *poco decr.*

Pno. *mf sfz sfz*
(sternly)

76

S left me." Two

Pno. *sfz sfz mf*
(dryly) *(aggressively)* *f poco mf poco*

78

S nty more will come, *poco*

Pno. *mf* *(dryly)* *(aggressively)* *f poco mf poco mf* *(dryly)*

80

S

Be - emp - ty of worr -

mf

Pno.

82

S

y ing. Think of who cre -

f

Pno.

mf *sfz* *sfz* *mf*

(sternly)

84

S

a - ted thought! Why do you stay in pri -

mf

rit. $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ 41

Pno.

f *poco f* *mf* *poco mf* *f* *poco* *f* *ff* *poco*

86 *almost faintly* $\text{♩} = 41$
(♩ 82)

S
son. When the
fp *pp* *p*

Pno.
almost faintly
p *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

88

S
door is so wide

Pno.
pp *p* *pp* *p* *poco*

90

S
o pen?
pp

Pno.
pp *p* *pp* *p*

92

S

Move

p

Pno.

94

S

out - - - side the tan - - -

pp *p* *p*

Pno.

96

S

gle of fear - - - think - - -

pp *p*

Pno.

S 98
ing. Live in si *pp*

Pno. 98
p *pp*

S 100
silence. Flow down *p*

Pno. 100
pp *pp* *poco* *p*

S 102
and down in *pp* *p*

Pno. 102
p

104

S

al - ways wi - den

p

Pno.

5 5 5 5

mp *mp*

mp *poco*

106

S

ing rings of being.

Pno.

5 5 5 5

mp *mp*

mp *poco* *mp* *poco*

108

S

There's a strange

mp *p*

Pno.

5 5 5 5

p *mp*

mp *poco*

110

S
fren - - - - - nzy in my

Pno.

112

S
head of birds fly - - - -

Pno.

114

S
ing, each par - - - - ti - - - -

Pno.

S 116
 cle ci - - - - - eu - - - - - lat - - - - -

Pno.
 Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 116-117. Includes 5-finger patterns, octaves, and dynamics *p* and *poco*.

S 118
 ing on its own. *p*

Pno.
 Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 118-119. Includes 5-finger patterns, octaves, and dynamics *p* and *poco*.

S 120
 Is the one I love *mf*

Pno.
 Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 120-121. Includes 5-finger patterns, octaves, and dynamics *mf* and *poco*.

A Community of the Spirit

24

122

S

e - - - - - ver - - - - - y.

Pno.

mp

mp

mp

mp

poco

poco

124

S

where? Drunks fear

Pno.

mp

mp

mf

poco

little by little cresc.

126

S

the po - - - - - lice, but the

mf little by little cresc.

Pno.

mp

poco

128

S

po - - - - lice are drunk too. Peo - - - - ple in

Pno.

128

130

S

this town love them both like

Pno.

130

132

S

diff - er - ent chess pie - ces.

poco rit.

ff mf

Pno.

132

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Soprano (S), the middle for the Piano Right Hand (Pno. RH), and the bottom for the Piano Left Hand (Pno. LH). The Soprano part begins at measure 134 with a single note. The Piano Right Hand part also begins at measure 134 with a series of chords, marked with a '5' and an accent (>). The Piano Left Hand part features a complex rhythmic pattern with a '5' marking and an accent (>). The score concludes with a double bar line.