

A PERFORMANCE AND PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PAUL BOWLES SONG  
SETTINGS OF POETRY BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

by

BENJAMIN CARL DAWKINS

(Under the Direction of Dorothea Link and Frederick Burchinal)

ABSTRACT

Before achieving critical acclaim as an expatriate novelist, Paul Bowles worked in New York City as a composer for the American Federal Theatre. During that time, Bowles met and developed a working relationship with American playwright Tennessee Williams. While working together, Williams gave Bowles a group of poems to potentially set as art songs. From that poetry, Bowles wrote eleven art songs, nine of which were incorporated into his song cycles *Blue Mountain Ballads* and *Gothic Suite*. This performance and pedagogical guide includes biographical information on Paul Bowles, a stylistic overview of his compositions, literary commentary on the Williams poems Bowles used as songs, musical analysis of those songs, and pedagogical strategies for musical preparation.

INDEX WORDS: *Blue Mountain Ballads, Gothic Suite*, Paul Bowles, Tennessee Williams

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my fiancée, Blair Hamilton, who has been extremely patient and supportive during my doctoral studies. I cannot adequately express my love and gratitude for all her help these past four years.

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## INTRODUCTION

American composer Paul Bowles (1910-1999) is perhaps best known as the expatriate novelist of popular fiction such as *New York Times* bestseller *The Sheltering Sky*, which was written in 1949. But before his work as a writer of novels and short stories, Bowles spent the 1930s and '40s as a music critic for the quarterly journal *Modern Music* and a composer for the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theatre, writing stage production scores for directors and playwrights such as Orson Welles, John Houseman, and Tennessee Williams.

During his working relationship with Williams, Bowles was given a group of poems by Williams to set as short songs. From these poems, Bowles wrote his song cycle (which he referred to as a "suite") *Blue Mountain Ballads* in 1946. The four songs in the suite are pastiches of Appalachian ballads, southern blues, and jazz, and their eclectic mix denotes a deceptive complexity which is not immediately apparent in such charming settings. This wide-range appeal has allowed the *Blue Mountain Ballads* to be accepted into the standard repertoire of American art songs.

The purpose of this study is to investigate Paul Bowles' compositional style by analyzing eleven settings of Tennessee Williams poems, including the four *Blue Mountain Ballads*. Since American art songs are largely unperformed as compared with nineteenth-century European works, composers such as Bowles are often overlooked. Although performed regularly in university and public recitals, *Blue Mountain Ballads* provides a small example of Bowles' work in the art song genre. Since his songs often reference American popular styles, Bowles'

compositions show great complexity in melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic variety and are worthy of deeper study. This study's major goal is to provide a performance and pedagogical analysis of the eleven Tennessee Williams songs.

Although quite a few articles, reviews, interviews, and analyses exist regarding Bowles' work as an author, relatively little literature exists concerning his work as a composer, with only scattered paragraphs referencing his songs. The two most significant scholars on Bowles and his music are Gena Dagele Caponi and Irene Hermann. Caponi's major work on Bowles is her 1994 "interpretive" biography, *Paul Bowles, Romantic Savage*, which studies the relationships between Bowles' life and his music, fiction, and autobiographical writing. However, Caponi devotes far more space to chronicling Bowles' life as an author and an expatriate than to his years as a composer and a member of the New York music intelligentsia. In addition to her biographical work, Caponi contributed an article to the journal *American Music* on Bowles' final years in New York, which includes a short description of his song style and sense of prosody. As the heir of Bowles' musical estate, Irene Hermann's scholarship focuses entirely on Bowles' music. As the author of the article on Bowles in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Hermann compiled Bowles' selective works list, which focuses on all of his significant published works and publicly performed theatre music. Hermann compiled a complete works list for Bowles' official website. Working with editor Timothy Mangan, Hermann compiled *Paul Bowles on Music*, a collection of articles written by Bowles as a professional music critic for the quarterly journal *Modern Music* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. This volume also contains Hermann's last interview with Bowles, which focuses specifically on his years as a music critic.

Aside from Caponi and Hermann, smaller articles on Bowles and his music were written by fellow composers Virgil Thomson, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, and Ned Rorem. Although these brief writings are mostly anecdotal in nature, their description of Bowles' style and aesthetic were useful in my analysis of Bowles' setting of text. Brief analyses of Bowles' songs are included in Ruth Freiberg and Robin Fisher's *American Art Song and American Poetry* (2012) and Carol Kimball's *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (2006). Both of these books focus primarily on *Blue Mountain Ballads*, and Freiberg and Fisher's gives a general background to the setting of Williams' poetry. To offer a personal perspective, quotations from *Conversations with Paul Bowles* (1993), a collection of interviews that he gave while living in Tangier, also contains insights on Bowles' career as a composer and how his work in New York relates to his later career as an author abroad.

This document is organized into three chapters: the first presents background information on Paul Bowles, including his education, a compositional overview, and his place as a contemporary of American modernists and American expatriate artists. This chapter uses secondary sources such as biographies, collections of letters, and critical articles. Because Paul Bowles is a figure of such varied interests and talents, this section provides a context for his compositions as a phase of a larger career.

The second chapter consists of the analysis of both the poetry and music of the eleven songs. I first provide an overview of major stylistic features of William's poetry and Bowles' music, followed by a brief profile of each of the eleven songs. For each poem, the analysis presents the structure of the poem followed by commentary on the poem's meaning and the various literary devices Williams uses to enrich it. Following the poetry, a theoretical analysis of each song provides a description of its form and Bowles' musical setting of Williams' poetry.

Because influences on Bowles included such modernist composers as Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Francis Poulenc, modal models of tonal centrality will be the primary analytical tools to describe form and tonality. When appropriate, I use functional harmonic analysis to describe the sonorities in more tonal passages. In the text setting portion of the musical analysis, I describe the principal musical features that clarify the relationship between text and music and provide musical examples to illustrate those features.

The third chapter analyzes the songs as a group with regard to preparation and performance within the framework of a bel canto technique. Complete transcriptions of the lyrics into International Phonetic Alphabet provides a suggested standardization of vowel placement in order to facilitate proper tone production. The primary goal of this chapter is to provide enough information for the singer to make individualized but informed choices with stylistic authenticity.

## CHAPTER 1: PAUL BOWLES BACKGROUND

### Early Life and Career

Paul Frederic Bowles was born on December 30, 1910 in Jamaica, Long Island, to upper-middle class parents, Claude Dietz Bowles, a dentist, and his wife Rena Winnewisser Bowles. His interest in music began at the age of six after receiving a piano and being enrolled in lessons. The results of these early experiences demonstrated his strong-willed nature. In an interview with Harvey Breit of the *New York Times Book Review*, Bowles said, "Instead of playing my Czerny exercises, I composed little pieces; and my father, who wanted to see me practice, in a rage sent the piano back. If that hadn't happened, I think eventually I'd have given up music. But I stuck to it now out of spite."<sup>1</sup>

After graduating from high school in 1928, Bowles attended the University of Virginia for a year but left abruptly to go to Europe in the spring of 1929. As Bowles described to the *Mediterranean Review*, "[I went to] Paris. I ran away. Flipped a coin one night to decide whether I should take poison or go to Europe. It come out heads, which meant going to Europe. I was very happy. I don't know what would have happened if it came out tails. I might have tossed again."<sup>2</sup>

The following fall, Bowles returned to New York and met Henry Cowell, who saw examples of Bowles' music and said that it "out-Frenched the French" and wrote a letter of introduction to Aaron Copland, who became Bowles' first composition teacher.<sup>3</sup> Bowles said of

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Bowles, *Conversations with Paul Bowles* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Copland, "With Aaron I had a lesson every day, and my whole musical and intellectual background was formed by him."<sup>4</sup>

After spending another year at the University of Virginia, Bowles left school once again to travel to Paris. While he was there, Bowles made the introductions which would involve him with the authors, poets and musicians of the Lost Generation, the generation named by Ernest Hemingway who came of age during World War I. Of these, the two most influential figures to his later life were American composer Virgil Thomson and the writer Gertrude Stein, Bowles' surrogate grandmother whose salon included such literary figures as Ernest Hemingway.<sup>5</sup> Of these early visits to Paris, Bowles remarked, "I was never aware of wanting to become part of a community. I wanted to meet them. I suppose I simply felt like taking pot shots at clay pipes. Pop! Down goes Gertrude, down goes Jean Cocteau, down goes Andrew Gide. I made a point of those things -- meeting Manuel de Falla, for example, for no reason at all."<sup>6</sup> These seemingly random introductions would influence the path of his professional life from New York to Morocco.

After returning to New York from Paris, Bowles' compositions began to be performed at concerts put on by the League of Composers and introduced by Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, and Virgil Thomson.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after these performances, Bowles started to work for Project 891 of the WPA's Federal Theatre Project, composing incidental music for Orson Welles.<sup>8</sup> Through the projects associated with the Federal Theatre, Bowles' reputation brought him to work with Tennessee Williams, who was beginning to come into prominence in the American Theatre.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., xx.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 118.



## Paul Bowles and Tennessee Williams

In 1940, theatre producer Lawrence Langner suggested that Tennessee Williams visit Paul Bowles while Bowles and his wife Jane were vacationing in Acapulco. Since the Theatre Guild in New York was producing Williams' play *Battle of Angels*, Bowles was invited to hear a rehearsal when he returned to the city. After Bowles finished an engagement writing incidental music for a Theatre Guild production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Bowles visited the set of *Battle of Angels*, calling Colin McPhee's incidental music "very fine."<sup>9</sup>

In 1943, Williams visited Bowles in his New York apartment with the manuscript for his play, *The Glass Menagerie*, offering him the contract for the incidental music but only giving him the weekend to complete it.<sup>10</sup> The play was a great success, and many aspects of Bowles' composition, including the use of the celesta to indicate tinkling glass, have become indelibly linked with the production.

After moving to Tangier in 1947, Bowles was hired to return to New York to work on Williams' latest play, *Summer and Smoke*, which marked Bowles' most significant collaboration with the playwright. Although Bowles' incidental music was widely heard through his work with the Federal Theatre and later with Williams and the Theatre Guild, Bowles often received very little personal acclaim for the music. *Summer and Smoke* was a notable exception, which brought popular acclaim to his music. One such letter reads:

Regarding "Summer and Smoke," I note that the critics all praised the producer, the stage designer and the principals. But, as a musician, I regret to note that no one has made mention of the composer, Paul Bowles, who in this score has created exactly that haunting, recurring, eerie fixation which is truly tremulous with beauty and which, with

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>10</sup> Gena Dangel Caponi, "A Nomad in New York: Paul Bowles 1933-1948" in *American Music*, Vol. 7, No. 3 [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989], 303.

my deep admiration, I put on a par with the original creation of Tennessee Williams' fabulously poignant work.<sup>11</sup>

During their collaboration, Williams gave Bowles copies of several poems to set as songs. Although he didn't use all of the poems Williams gave him, Bowles told the story of a few of them to Mike Steen, author of the book, *A Look at Tennessee Williams*:

I remember in '46 TW gave me some lyrics and asked me if I would like to use them to write songs. One was called "Gold Tooth Woman." I remember that. I didn't use that. But I did use four called "Blue Mountain Ballads" which I set to music: "Heavenly Grass," "Lonesome Man," "The Cabin," and "Sugar in the Cane." They made a suite which Schirmer published separately. They sell very well. They have gone on selling now for 20 years. They have gone into the repertory now. I did another one called "Three," which was published. And then he gave me one which I very much like called "Her Head on a Pillow," which I set in '49 in Tangier and promptly mislaid. It was gone for about fifteen years and then I found it on the bottom of an old bag, a valise, and brought it out but I never did anything with it. Now I had lost it again. It is somewhere in Tangier. It is probably the best of all the songs of his that I have set.<sup>12</sup>

#### The End of Bowles' Compositional Career

By 1947, Bowles had begun to steadily withdraw from his professional life in New York. Although he still returned to compose incidental music for such plays as *Summer and Smoke*, he also began to publish short fiction, and his distaste for professional life in New York grew. In an interview with Jeffrey Bailey of *The Paris Review*, Bowles said, "I couldn't compose professionally outside of New York because I had to make a living at writing music. If I had a private income, I could have composed anywhere, as long as I'd had a keyboard. A few composers don't need even that but I do."<sup>13</sup>

In 1949, one year after completing *Summer and Smoke*, Bowles finished and published his first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, which brought him critical and commercial success. After the novel's publication, Bowles returned to the United States sporadically, and although he continued to compose on his own time, he was a novelist professionally from that point on. From 1949 to his death in 1999,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>12</sup> Bowles, *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, 35.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 118.

Bowles published three more novels, eighteen collections of short stories, and five books of poetry. Although his novels were popular, none were as critically acclaimed as *The Sheltering Sky*. His friend and fellow writer Gore Vidal speculated about possible reasons for this decline in popular and critical response, saying, "The reputation of our best short-story writer, Paul Bowles, has suffered because he is, equally, a fine composer: for musicians, he is a writer; for writers, a composer."<sup>14</sup>

### Bowles' Compositional Style

In his book *A Ned Rorem Reader*, American composer Ned Rorem wrote a short profile of Bowles' music following his death. As a young man in his late teens, Rorem met Bowles in New York City, and grew to consider Bowles a mentor and major musical influence whose approval he sought throughout his compositional life. In the profile, Rorem described the major difference between Bowles' work as a composer and writer:

Composers when they prosify (Schumann, Debussy, Thomson), inevitably deal with music or with autobiography. Bowles is the sole fiction writer among them, and his fiction is as remote from their prose as from his own music. His books are icy, cruel, objective...His music is warm, wistful, witty and redolent of nostalgia for his Yankee youth; it wears its heart on its sleeve, and is all cast in small forms.<sup>15</sup>

Despite his relatively small catalogue of songs, Bowles' work was rather well-received by his contemporaries. Composer Virgil Thomson, a significant mentor to Bowles both as a composer and music critic, wrote in his preface to Bowles' *Selected Songs*, "Paul Bowles's songs are enchanting for their sweetness of mood, their lightness of text, for in general their way of being wholly alive and right."<sup>16</sup> According to Ned Rorem, "No American in our country has composed songs lovelier than Paul Bowles's. None of these songs is currently available in print. That fact, in its way, echoes the indifferent world that he elsewhere so successfully portrays."<sup>17</sup> Rorem's statement regarding the print availability of Bowles' songs is only partly true; *Blue*

<sup>14</sup> Caponi, "A Nomad in New York," 278.

<sup>15</sup> Gary Pulsifer, "Ned Rorem." *Paul Bowles by His Friends* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1992), 121.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Bowles, *Selected Songs* [Santa Fe: Soundings Press, 1984], 2.

<sup>17</sup> Pulsifer, "Ned Rorem." *Friends*, 121.

*Mountain Ballads* has remained in print by G. Schirmer since its initial date of publication, but his point remains valid. Paul Bowles' songs remain widely unknown despite their appeal to his peers.

In a short profile of Bowles, composer Phillip Ramey writes, "If, as the American composer, essayist and one-time Tangier resident Ned Rorem has proposed, all concert music is either of French or German orientation, then Paul's personal taste runs -- as does his music -- decidedly to the former."<sup>18</sup> Due to his experiences in Europe and his training under Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson, it is not surprising that Bowles' music exhibits characteristics of the French school of composition. Both of his mentors trained under Nadia Boulanger, a French composer and teacher who taught many of the major composers of the twentieth century. At Copland's suggestion, Bowles began to take lessons with Boulanger, but discontinued them because he found her "worrying and crotchety."<sup>19</sup> Even though he did not study directly under Boulanger, Bowles' compositions follow the French school with sparse accompaniments and vocal lines that avoided grand statements in the style of German Romantic lieder.

Despite Bowles' familiarity with the New York song idiom through his involvement with the theatre in the thirties and forties, Bowles avoided the most common tropes of the period. "I am...against Gershwin-esque introductions, and the practice of playing the first chorus out of tempo in a cocktail lounge mood, and then getting into tempo only in time to make a chorus or two before the piece ends."<sup>20</sup> His introductions are typically used to indicate place or mood, as demonstrated in the hard "back and forth" of the rocking chair in *Lonesome Man*. Even without these familiar elements of early Broadway writing, Bowles' songs still have the character of

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<sup>18</sup> Gary Pulsifer, "Phillip Ramey." *Paul Bowles by His Friends* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1992), 96.

<sup>19</sup> Bowles, *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, 197.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Bowles, *Paul Bowles on Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 108.

theatre pieces where events, subtext, dramatic arc, and characterization all combine to create miniature stories.

Another major influence on Bowles' style of song composition stems from folk songs of many different cultures. Unlike other composers who were mainly interested in their native culture's folk music, Bowles' interests focused on folk song in general. In an interview with Ira Cohen, Bowles described this difference:

"I think the thing is that Bartok was a Hungarian musician interested in Hungarian music, Stravinsky was a Russian interested really only in Russian music. De Falla was a Spaniard, and he used nothing but Spanish music, and so on. Copland and Thomson use nothing but American folk music. But, in my case, I like folk music all over, in every part of the world, completely dispersed, which is a different thing."<sup>21</sup>

Despite his assertion that most folk music isn't particularly developed, Bowles drew great inspiration from rhythm, a quintessential element in the folk music of Latin America, North Africa, and the rural United States. In his personal life, Bowles was described by friends as continually tapping polyrhythms whether at home, on a walk, or in the car. This rhythmic variety created a quality of authenticity in his pastiches of styles ranging from mountain ballads to jazzy urban flavors such as those found in *Sugar in the Cane*.

Bowles linked most of his rhythmic variety to the natural patterns of speech, or prosody. Bowles referred to his settings as accenting the "spaces between words."<sup>22</sup> With melodic lines, Bowles often matched that natural rising and falling of pitch within normal speech. In a critical article written for *Modern Music*, Bowles wrote, "Unless a very special point is being made, there must be some resemblance (and the more the better) between the line's direction and the inflections of speech."<sup>23</sup> Perhaps this attention to the details of the natural inflection, rhythm, and cadence of speech allowed Bowles to compose song settings that are simultaneously witty

<sup>21</sup> Bowles, *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, 22-23.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Bowles, *Paul Bowles on Music*, 161.

and tuneful. Given the right text, Bowles had a reputation among the musical intelligentsia of New York for his ability to write songs which "fit their texts like a peach to its skin."<sup>24</sup> Such a talent for text-setting would be wasted without high-quality material to set as songs, so a large majority of Bowles' song output was set to texts by major authors of the period such as William Saroyan, Federico Garcia Lorca, and Tennessee Williams.

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<sup>24</sup> Bowles, *Selected Songs*, 2.

## CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to serve as a comprehensive analysis of both Williams' poetry and Bowles' music in the eleven songs. By investigating these two principal components, this chapter will provide a concise and organized reference tool for deeper study of the eleven songs. The profiles of the poems and songs follow a clear, consistent format, which also facilitates comparative study between the individual works.

The first part of this chapter presents the methodology and terms that will be used in the analysis of the eleven poems and songs. This section is followed by a stylistic overview of Williams' poetry and Bowles' music. The overview of Williams' poetry presents common literary features present in all eleven poems. The overview of Bowles' music provides a general analysis of Bowles' style in regards to form, tonality, and the setting of text.

After the presentation of stylistic and literary information, the eleven songs are presented in the following format: First, if the songs are part of a larger cycle, I present background information on the work as a complete cycle and explain any thematic commonalities that link the individual songs together. Next, the full text of the poem are reprinted as published, without any markings or interpretive formatting with a side-by-side printing of the poem's text with indications for musical structure. When clear harmonic and melodic patterns denote a musical section, they are referred to by a capital letter, as in an A section. When a through-composed song is broken into discrete sections without motivic or harmonic cohesion, the section is denoted with a lower-case letter. Third, the form of the poem is defined with regards to strophes,

lines, and rhyme scheme. Then, an interpretive commentary is presented both to give a possible explanation of deeper meaning as well as to define any literary devices that Williams uses to heighten the poem's meaning. After the poetic commentary, the form of the song is presented and compared with the structure of the poem. The key regions and central pitches for each of the larger sections of musical form are also defined in this section. Finally, Bowles' text setting of each song is analyzed to describe his treatment of each poem. In this section, a primary musical characteristic of text setting is explained with musical examples. As there is often more than one important feature of Bowles' text setting, any striking secondary features are described as well.

#### Overview of Analytical Methodology

For the poetic analysis, the form of the poems are presented followed by a commentary on meaning. The poetic form is analyzed with regards to the size of strophes and lines, the rhyme scheme, and any irregularities that are presented in the text. To avoid ambiguity, terms which have different meanings in poetry and music are not used to describe the poetry. For general formal terms, the words poetic strophe are used to denote any separate large section of text, and the word line will be used for a single line of text. To describe groupings of lines, the standard terms are couplet, triplet, and quatrain. However, because the term triplet has significant musical meaning, the designation three-line strophe is used where appropriate. When analyzing rhyme, a distinction is made between perfect rhyme and near-rhymes such as "moss" and "frost," as well as internal rhymes which do not fit within standard rhyming schemes.

For the poems' commentary sections, literary devices are the primary terms used to describe the possible meaning behind the text. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, a device is "an all purpose term used to describe any literary technique employed to



achieve a specific effect."<sup>1</sup> The important literary devices Williams uses in the poems analyzed are: theme, symbolism, metaphor, imagery, *ekphrasis*, hyperbaton, onomatopoeia, and plot.

Although many of these literary terms are used commonly in the English language, they will be defined here to avoid any ambiguity. Theme is "a salient abstract idea that emerges from a

literary work's treatment of its subject matter."<sup>2</sup> Symbolism is the use of "anything that stands for or represents something beyond it."<sup>3</sup> Metaphor is a "figure of speech in which one thing,

idea, or action is referred to by a word or expression normally denoting another things."<sup>4</sup>

Imagery refers to "the uses of language in a literary work that evoke sense impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or 'concrete' objects, scenes, actions, or states."<sup>5</sup> *Ekphrasis*

is "a verbal description of, or meditation upon, a non-verbal work of art, real or imagined,

usually a painting or sculpture."<sup>6</sup> Hyperbaton is "a figure of speech by which the normal order of words in a sentence is significantly altered."<sup>7</sup> Onomatopoeia is "the use of words that seem to

imitate the sounds they refer to."<sup>8</sup> Plot is "the patterns of events or situations in a narrative

dramatic work."<sup>9</sup> Because interpretive readings of literary works are subjective, I refer to specific passages to support the context for these devices in the analysis.

In the musical analysis, each song is described with regards to form and text setting. For the musical form, capital letters are used to describe the overall form of the pieces. As a visual representation of the form, these letters are presented beside the poetic text as a visual representation of the sections described in the prose. With each section, tonal centers are defined

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<sup>1</sup> Chris Baldrick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

as standard keys or with names derived from the church modes. To describe the text setting, at least one primary musical feature that Bowles uses to heighten the poetic text is analyzed in detail. Whenever a new feature is presented for a song, musical examples are provided to display that feature in context.

### Williams' Poetry

In 1946, Tennessee Williams began to give copies of his unpublished poems to Paul Bowles to set as songs. Bowles set to music and published *Blue Mountain Ballads* in 1946 and *Three* in 1947, all of which received their first public exposure as songs. *In the Winter of Cities*, Williams' first collection of poems, was published in 1956.<sup>10</sup> With the exception of *The Goths* and *Three*, all of the Tennessee Williams poetry that Bowles set to music was printed in *In the Winter of Cities*, which contained the fifty-two "poems Williams cared to be remembered."<sup>11</sup> In 1977, Williams published a smaller collection of poems called *Androgyne, mon amour*, but none of those poems were set by Bowles. Since Williams' death, another thirty poems, including *Three* and *The Goths*, were published posthumously in *The Collected Poems of Tennessee Williams* in 2002.<sup>12</sup>

As a writer, Tennessee Williams' style is characterized by his indirect and sentimental treatment of realistic themes and intense emotional content. His poems are made up of short strophes that are often comprised of rhyming couplets. With many of his poems, Williams distinguishes important lines by repeating them. This repetition is often used to highlight the

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<sup>10</sup> Tennessee Williams, *In the Winter of Cities: Poems by Tennessee Williams* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions Books, 1956)

<sup>11</sup> John Willingham, "In the Winter of Cities by Tennessee Williams, a Review." *Books Abroad* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 377.

<sup>12</sup> Tennessee Williams, *The Collected Poems of Tennessee Williams*, ed. David E. Roessel and Nicholas Moschovakis (New York: New Directions Publishing, 2002)

message presented in the final lines of his poems. When repeating lines, sometimes Williams slightly alters the syntax to heighten meaning or present an alternate reading of the preceding line. As in his plays, many of Williams' poems have a plot, which serves to heighten Williams' themes. A review of titles in Philip Kolin's guide to research reveals a number of themes in Williams' poetry: man's fall from grace, the reconciliation of body and soul, sexuality, and decay and death in nature.<sup>13</sup> In his works, Williams' characters and settings are often in decline. By superimposing a Judeo-Christian morality onto those characters, Williams demonstrates a strong conflict between spiritual and physical desires resulting in those characters falling from grace and status. Williams also shows an interest in the separation and rejoining of the soul with the body in his writing; his poetry sometimes focuses on the experience of the body before birth or during and after death. Williams also infuses subtle sexuality into his poetry and demonstrates the violence and vitality of his characters' sexual lives. Bowles places many of his poems in rustic, natural settings and often uses the physical state of both buildings and plant life in his settings as parallels to the lives of his characters.

#### Bowles' Music

In analyzing twentieth-century pieces such as those written by Paul Bowles, many characteristics within and outside of the purview of common practice tonality must be investigated. In his melodies, Bowles typically uses diatonic Western scales, but he often does not follow the strict functions of common practice tonality. Despite these deviations from function, these scales use the key signatures of traditional major and minor scales as a frame of reference for his sense of tonality. Like with traditional major and minor scales, a pitch class is

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<sup>13</sup> Philip C. Kolin, ed., *Tennessee Williams: A Guide to Research and Performance* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 234-235.

often emphasized as a tonic, which gives aural significance to the specific makeup of intervals following each possible central pitch class. In these cases, the names of the medieval church modes will be used to label these scales (e.g. F mixolydian). This use of modal scales paired with typical major or minor scales is a typical feature of jazz and popular music, and Bowles makes frequent use of these idioms in his stylistic pastiches.

A review of Bowles' songs collected in *Selected Songs* reveals the use of the quintal trichord in the left hand of the piano accompaniment as a common feature of Bowles' songs. The quintal trichord, or a stacking of two perfect fifths, is often used by Bowles as a substitute for traditional functional chords. By weakening the third in the piano in relation to a strong bass in the left hand, Bowles typically places the impetus for the introduction of the tonality-defining third scale degree in the voice, thereby unifying the harmonic texture between voice and accompaniment.

Musically, Bowles approaches the setting of Williams' poems syllabically with very few exceptions. A syllabic setting is where a single note is paired with one syllable from the poetry. Bowles combines this syllabic setting with melodic contours that mimic the natural inflections of the English language. This lends a "spoken word" feel to the text setting and makes rhythm a primary concern in approaching the text from an artistic and analytical perspective.

### *Blue Mountain Ballads*

In a letter to George Antheil, Bowles mentioned writing "a lot of songs" during the summer of 1946.<sup>14</sup> During this period, Bowles wrote the cycle that would include his best-known songs, *Blue Mountain Ballads*. *Blue Mountain Ballads* is made up of four songs from

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Bowles, *In Touch: The Letters of Paul Bowles*, ed. Jeffrey Miller (New York: Noonday, 1995), 173.

poems that were given to Bowles by Williams in 1946. According to Freiberg and Fisher, "'Blue Mountain' of *Blue Mountain Ballads*, is a mythical town in Mississippi that represents Camden and/or Clarksdale where Williams had lived happily with his grandparents as a boy. In a number of Williams' plays set in the south, there are recurring references to towns such as Blue Mountain or Glorious Hill."<sup>15</sup> By using this fictional setting, Williams allows for more personal connections between the reader and place without engaging preconceived notions about real places. These four songs differ in compositional and literary style from one another, but linked with the "Blue Mountain" theme, each presents a picture of rural Mississippi life, emotion, and character. The differences in style allowed Bowles to compose four contrasting pastiche songs that capture the tone and mood of Williams' poems. The cycle was published in 1946 by G. Schirmer, and it has remained in print continuously since then. The cycle has been recorded by many renowned interpreters of American art song, including Donald Gramm, Thomas Hampson, William Sharp, and Samuel Ramey. The songs are particularly popular as standalone pieces in university repertoire, appearing separately in many anthologies geared towards students. However, it is as a complete cycle that shows Bowles' diversity as a composer, ranging in style from folk ballad to jazz-inspired musical theatre.

Each poem in *Blue Mountain Ballads* deals with different scenes of rustic Southern life, and the four together display literary similarities that tie them together. All four poems have an easily discernible rhyme scheme, which is cast in rhyming couplets. All four poems are character studies, and each uses a mixture of subtle and overt language to reveal the subtextual struggle of these poor mountain people.

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<sup>15</sup> Ruth C. Freiberg and Robin Fisher, *American Art Song and American Poetry* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 199.

## "Heavenly Grass"

	Musical Form
My feet took a walk in heavenly grass.	A
All day while the sky shone clear as glass.	
My feet took a walk in heavenly grass,	A
All night while the lonesome stars rolled past.	
Then my feet come down to walk on earth,	B
And my mother cried when she give me birth.	
Now my feet walk far and my feet walk fast,	A <sup>I</sup>
But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.	
But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.	

Figure 1: Text and form diagram of "Heavenly Grass"

### Poetic Form

"Heavenly Grass" is structured as a single strophe of four rhyming couplets, with the final line repeated. The rhyme scheme mixes both perfect rhymes such as "grass" and "glass," as well as near-rhymes such as "grass" and "past."

### Commentary

"Heavenly Grass" is a first-person narrative of the soul leaving Heaven to be born on Earth. In the first line of each couplet, the narrator uses "my feet" as a metaphor for his soul. The plot of the poem is grouped into two main parts. The first part describes the soul walking in Heaven, with lines two and four showing imagery of a clear sky and beautiful stars. The second part describes life on Earth, starting with the narrator's birth in line six. The imagery of the second half of the poem moves away from visual descriptors to the aural experience of his mother's cries in line six and the tactile reference to the soul's itch in lines eight and nine. This tactile imagery is set up at the beginning of the final couplet by alliteration on alternating words in "my feet walk far and my feet walk fast." These continuous fricative sounds in works such as "feet" and "still" are set apart by the plosive ending sound of "itch," which highlights the longing to return to a purely spiritual existence.

### Musical Form

The form of the song is AABA<sup>1</sup>. The first two A sections are short antecedent-consequent phrases with the first part, "my feet took a walk" in E minor with a lowered seventh and the second part, beginning "all day" in G major ended in an imperfect authentic cadence. The B section is also in E minor ending on a half cadence. The return of the A section at the end of the song is identical to the first two instances of its theme until the repetition of "but they still got an itch for heavenly grass." In this section, instead of ending on B-natural as before, the repeated section ends on an E minor triad (see figure 4). This upward resolution plays against the expectation presented in the first three sections where the cadence is highlighted by descending motion.

### Text Setting

The primary feature of the text setting in "Heavenly Grass" is Bowles' use of different time signatures to set apart the separate poetic statements. All of the antecedent settings of the A sections, "my feet took a walk in heavenly grass" and "now my feet walk far and my feet walk fast," are in 5/4 time with emphasis on the third beat. This sets apart the words "walk," "grass," "far," and "fast," lending a conversational tempo to the opening lines. The melodic settings of these sections are in the lower middle voice, which follows the common register of speech. The consequent sections of A are all set in common time, setting apart the imagery with a lyrical melody set in a higher register (see figure 2). The B section contrasts with a faster passage in 3/4 time. The rising melodic material of the A sections is contrasted here by 4 short descending passages (see figure 3). The descending passages in the B section highlight the pain and reality of the birth experience as contrasted by the spiritual reverie of the A sections.

$\text{♩} = 66$

Voice

My feet took a walk in heav-en-ly grass All

Piano

Pno.

day while the sky shone clear as glass, My

Figure 2: "Heavenly Grass," mm. 4-9

$\text{♩} = 66$

Voice

stars rolled past. Then my feet come down to walk on earth, and my

Piano

Figure 3: "Heavenly Grass," mm. 13-15

*poco meno mosso*

Voice

still got an itch for heav'n - ly grass.

Piano

*poco meno mosso* *molto rit.*

Figure 4: "Heavenly Grass," mm. 25-27



## "Lonesome Man"

	Musical Form
My chair rock-rocks by the door all day But nobody ever stops my way, Nobody ever stops by my way.	A
My teef chaw-chaw on an old ham bone An' I do the dishes all alone, I do the dishes all by my lone.	A
My feet clop-clop on the hardwood floor 'Cause I won't buy love at the hardware store, I don't want love from the mercantile store.	B
Now the clock tick-tocks by my single bed While the moon looks down on my sleepless head, While the moon grins down at an ole fool's head.	A <sup>I</sup>

Figure 5: Text and form diagram of "Lonesome Man"

### Poetic Form

The form of "Lonesome Man" is set in four strophes of perfectly rhyming three line groups. The third line of each strophe is repeated with only small changes in the word choice, so it is possible to view the structure of "Lonesome Man" as four rhyming couplets with a repeated second line in each strophe. This repetition is a change in a typical blues verse, which uses a single statement of a final line to emphasize the songwriter's point.

### Commentary

"Lonesome Man" is a first-person narrative describing an old man's solitary life. The main device used to heighten the language of "Lonesome Man" is onomatopoeia. Each strophe begins with two-syllable sound indicators: "rock-rocks," "chaw-chaw," "clop-clop," and "tick-tocks." These clear sound descriptors set up the remainder of the poem, which is filled with simple description. The first two strophes depict the man sitting by himself and eating his meals alone. The third strophe's "I won't buy love at the hardware store," is more figurative. The line is a possible allusion to carpeting as a tactile replacement for the touch of another person. The

fourth strophe provides another straight description of the old man lying awake in bed watching the moon. Williams' characterization of the old man is generic, but the third strophe's "I don't want love from the mercantile store" hints at a strong-willed character that is alone perhaps by choice.

### Musical Form

The form of "Lonesome Man" is AABA<sup>I</sup>, with the first phrase of each A section set in a different key. The first instance of A is in E-flat major, and the second is in D-flat major. Both sections' repeated lines, "nobody ever stops by my way" and "I do the dishes all by my lone," are set identically, ending on E-flat. The B section moves through a new key region in each measure, from E-flat to D-Flat to C-flat, ending in F-minor at "I don't want love from the mercantile store." The A<sup>I</sup> section combines the opening phrase of the two earlier A sections, which is set this time in G-flat major. The second half of the strophe is identical to the ending phrase of the B section, ending in F-minor.

### Text Setting

Rhythm is the primary musical feature used to set the text and atmosphere of "Lonesome Man." The opening vocal phrases of the A sections are characterized by non-syncopated rhythms in 4/8 time, as in "my chair rock-rocks by the door all day" below in figure 6. The second half of each phrase places syncopated stress on the text as follows, "no-BO-dy ev-ER STOPS my way." The repeated phrase in the first two strophes is identical, which also stress "ev-ER STOPS." The B section is characterized by even rhythms throughout "my feet clop-clop on the hardwood floor 'cause I won't buy love at the hardware store" (see figure 7). These squared rhythms may indicate irritated stomping through the man's house. Finally, the ending phrase of both the B and A<sup>I</sup> sections is set by Bowles at half the metronome indication of the

preceding passages. This sudden slowing combined with the use of a single chord in the piano part gives a recitative effect, which emphasizes strong moments of introspection at "I don't want love at the mercantile store" and "while the moon grins down at an ole fool's head." This slowing at the end of the recitative section causes the resulting return of the "rocking" theme to seem more agitated by contrast in the final strophe.

The atmospheric use of rhythm in the piano part serves to provide a sense of internal restlessness that heightens the narration. The regular ragtime-flavored ostinato in A sections hints at the back and forth sound of the old man's rocking chair and the ticking clock in the final strophe. Freiberg and Fisher's book interprets the short rhythmic groupings in 7/16 in the second half of the A sections as suggestive of "an agitated state of mind...causing an occasional acceleration in the chair's regular rocking."<sup>16</sup> Freiberg and Fisher also relate the stopping of the old man's chair in the recitative passages to the stop of the spinning wheel in Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*.<sup>17</sup>

Another interesting musical feature of the text setting is the contrast of the melodic contours between the A and B sections. The opening phrases of the three A sections are marked by mid-ranged melodies of rising contours with falling motives connecting them. In the B section, the pattern is inverted by starting at the top of the song's range and consisting on initially falling melodies with rising connective material. These contrasting contours can be seen with the rising A contour in figure 6 and the falling contour in figure 7.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 205.

Voice

door all day but no-bo-dy ev-er stops my way,

Piano

No-bo-dy ev-er stops by my

Pno.

Figure 6: "Lonesome Man," mm. 5-10

Voice

feet clop-clop on the hard-wood floor 'cause I won't buy love at the hardware store

Piano

*mf*

*p*

*rit.*

*fz*

*rit.* Tempo I

Pno.

*subito p*

I don't want love from the mercantile store.

Figure 7: "Lonesome Man," mm. 20-25

## "Cabin"

	Musical Form
The cabin was cozy and hollyhocks grew Bright by the door till his whisper crept through. The sun on the sill was yellow and warm Till she lifted the latch for a man or a storm.	A A
Now the cabin falls to the winter wind And the walls cave in where they kissed and sinned. And the long white rain sweeps clean the room Like a white-haired witch with a long straw broom!	B A

Figure 8: Text and form diagram of "Cabin"

### Poetic Form

The poetic structure of "Cabin" is built as two strophes consisting of two perfectly rhyming couplets apiece.

### Commentary

"Cabin's" narrative is different from the other poems of *Blue Mountain Ballads* because it is told from a third-person perspective. The story describes a woman's fall from grace as her cozy cabin becomes increasingly dreary and dilapidated. The primary literary devices are imagery and metaphor. The imagery in the first strophe focuses on the bright colors of the sun and flowers contrasting with the quiet whisper of the man's voice. The images of the second strophe are much darker in tone, which describe the cabin becoming increasingly dreary and desolate. Freiberg and Fisher write "the cabin...seems to stand for the woman's innocence, and the winter storm that now sweeps it, for the passion that destroyed them both."<sup>18</sup> This metaphorical reading of the house as the girl's innocence is supported most clearly in the strophe, "Now the cabin falls to the winter wind/and the walls cave in where they kissed and

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 200.

sinned." The final strophe describing the rain dripping into the cabin's room may indicate the woman's return to purity in her old age.

### Musical Form

"Cabin" is in AABA form. The three A sections are written in F-sharp minor and are identical in voice leading. In the final A section, the piano part is transposed up an octave. Bowles uses the quintal trichord in the left hand of the accompaniment to weaken the tonal feel of these sections, which creates an open character to the harmony that the melody doubled in the voice and right hand of the piano fills. The B section is in A minor with a prominent lowered seventh scale degree with arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand of the piano part.

### Text Setting

The primary feature used in the text setting of "Cabin" is the movement back and forth between short passages in 6/8 and 9/8 time (see figure 9). Freiberg and Fisher note the flexibility of this rhythmic scheme, which "adds a sense of spaciousness to the telling of the tale."<sup>19</sup> The only deviation from this back-and-forth pattern is in the B section (figure 10), which is entirely in 9/8, placing strong emphasis on the words "fall," "wind," "in," and "sinned." Bowles also uses two passages of *molto ritardando* to create extra space in the phrases "kissed and sinned" and "with a long straw broom."

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 200.

Voice:  $\text{♩}=108$   
 The cab-in was co - zy and hol- ly-hocks grew  
 Piano: *f*  
 Pno.: *meno mosso*, *p*  
 bright by the door Till his

Figure 9: "Cabin," mm. 4-7

Voice: *molto rit.*  
 cab - in falls to the win - ter wind and the walls cave in where they  
 Piano: *molto rit.*  
 Pno.: *molto rit.*  
 kissed and sinned. And the

Figure 10: "Cabin," mm. 13-16

## "Sugar in the Cane"

	Musical Form
I'm red pepper in a shaker, Bread that's waitin' for the baker. I'm sweet sugar in the cane, Never touched except by rain. If you touched me God save you, These summer days are hot and blue.	A
I'm potatoes not yet mashed, I'm a check that ain't been cashed. I'm a window with a blind, Can't see what goes on behind. If you did, God save your soul! These winter nights are blue and cold!	A

Figure 11: Text and form diagram of "Sugar in the Cane"

### Poetic Form

"Sugar in the Cane" is made up of two six-line strophes of three perfectly rhyming couplets apiece.

### Commentary

"Sugar in the Cane" is a first-person narrative where a young woman describes her desirability but warns that God save those who attempt to ruin her purity. The speaker uses metaphor as the primary device to heighten her description of her assets. She describes herself as spicy pepper, unbaked bread, raw cane sugar, unmashed potatoes, an uncashed check, and a covered window. The last two lines of each strophe are direct warnings stating that even though the weather of desire is unpleasant, God will punish those who touch or spy on her.

### Musical Form

"Sugar in the Cane" is in strophic form with identical musical material in both strophes. Both sections begin with an introductory section of unison motivic material in three octave registers in a boogie-woogie style, which ends in with triplet rhythms in the bass line. These triplets give the ending of each introductory section a "strutting" feel (see figure 12). The three



couplets of the poem are set as three phrases which are similar to each other in register and rhythmic content. The tonal center of the song moves back and forth between E minor and G major, E minor's relative major. The harmony is flavored with occasional instances of D-sharp (not shown in figure) and B-flat, which provide a blues flavor to the song.

### Text Setting

Bowles uses rhythm as the primary musical feature to set the text of "Sugar in the Cane." Until the third phrase of each strophe, triplet figures begin each phrase (see figure 12). In the third phrase, the rhythms switch to a squared rhythmic pattern setting apart the "God save your soul" warning of each strophe (see figure 13). The triplet feel of the song is supported continuously by the right hand of the piano accompaniment, and in the contrasting third phrases, the piano's triplet pulse on the first and third beats of the right hand lends another layer of syncopation to the two lines.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Sugar in the Cane," specifically measures 3 through 8. It is divided into two systems. The first system features a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The voice line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "I'm red pepper in a shaker". The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a triplet of chords and a left hand with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system continues the voice line with the lyrics "Bread that's waiting for the bak- er" and "I'm sweet su-gar in the cane,". The piano accompaniment continues with similar triplet patterns in both hands. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, stems, and triplet markings.

Figure 12: "Sugar in the Cane," mm. 3-8

Voice

Can't see what goes on be - hind.

Piano

Voice

If you did God save your soul these win-ter nights are blue and cold!

Pno.

Figure 13: "Sugar in the Cane," mm. 21-26

### *The Gothic Suite*

#### Background

The cycle *Gothic Suite* was commissioned in the early 1960s by American soprano Alice Swanson Esty, who sang the songs in a recital given in Carnegie Hall.<sup>20</sup> Bowles did not publish the cycle until 1984, when they were included in *Selected Songs*. No commercial recordings exist of the song cycle as a complete work with the exception of "Faint as Leaf Shadow," which was recorded for the 1994 Bowles collection, *An American in Paris*. Unlike *Blue Mountain Ballads*, *Gothic Suite* was not written as a single poetic cycle by Williams. In an interview, Bowles said that he chose the poems that would comprise the cycle.<sup>21</sup> Bowles' reasons for selecting these five particular poems for a single is unclear, as is his choice to name them *Gothic Suite*. Although "Testa dell' Efebo," "San Sebastiano di Sodoma," and "The Goths" can be

<sup>20</sup> Paul Bowles, *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Gena Dagel Caponi (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 35.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

grouped clearly under the Gothic theme by virtue of dealing with subject matter set in Rome, the other two poems are excluded in this interpretation. Possible interpretive threads for the cycle's subject are death and the Gothic literature of the Victorian era, which fit well with every poem but "Faint as Leaf Shadow," where it may be linked more obtusely to the subject of the poem.

### "Testa dell' Efebo"

	Musical Form
Of Flora did his lustre spring And gushing waters bathed him so that trembling shells were struck and held until his turning let them go.	<b>A</b>
Then gold he was when summer was; Unchangeable this turning seemed And the repose of sculpture told how thinly gold his shoulder gleamed.	<b>B</b>
A cloud of birds awoke him when Virgo murmured half awake. Then higher lifted birds and clouds to break in fire as glasses break.	<b>C</b>
A lunatic with tranquil eyes He must have been when he had dimmed and that town burned wherein was turned this slender copper cast of him.	<b>A<sup>I</sup></b>

Figure 14: Text and form diagram of "Testa dell' Efebo"

#### Poetic Form

"Testa dell' Efebo" is structured in four strophes built of individual quatrains. Each quatrain rhymes on lines two and four. Internal rhymes are also found in every strophe except for the third, for example "told" and "gold" in the third and fourth lines of the second strophe. The lines are characterized by irregular capitalization and punctuation, which creates some ambiguity to the boundaries of the line when read aloud.

### Commentary

"Testa dell' Efebo" or "head of Efebe," is an *ekphrastic* poem in third-person perspective describes a sculpture of a young man preserved in ash following the destruction of Pompeii by the eruption of Vesuvius. In a letter to Oliver Evans, Williams described seeing the copper statue of a boy killed in Pompeii while visiting Naples.<sup>22</sup> The four strophes describe the sculpture in images related to the four seasons. In the first, the foliage grows around him while the rains of spring nurture the "flora" and washes away the dirt and grime of winter. In the second, the golden sculpture is cast gleaming in seemingly permanent summer sunshine. The third verse describes the birds flying south in the beginning of fall with the mention of Virgo, an autumn sign. Instead of overtly describing the winter season, the fourth verse instead describes his death, a symbolic winter, in the phrase "that town burned wherein was turned this slender copper cast of him." Williams frequently used hyperbaton in this poem to break up the normal syntax of lines, while keeping some in a more standard order. When reading the poem aloud, the shifting of the important points of syntax causes stresses to fall away from the subjects and actions, which also gives a sense of unsettled rhythm.

### Musical Form

The form of "Testa dell' Efebo" is ABCA<sup>I</sup>. The harmonic character of the piece does not demonstrate functional tonality, but each strophe is clearly centered on one or two pitch classes. The A sections are centered primarily on G-sharp, and each ends on a type of half cadence gesture on a D-sharp. The B section modulates to a pitch center on A-natural and ends with on a short passage in F minor. The C section highlights C-sharp as a central pitch and then

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<sup>22</sup> Tennessee Williams, *The Selected Letters of Tennessee Williams*, ed. Albert Devlin and Nancy Tischler (New York: New Directions Publications, 2000), 164.

retransitions after the end of the third poetic strophe to reintroduce D-sharp before the A<sup>I</sup> section returns the pitch center to G-sharp.

### Text Setting

Bowles uses shifting starting points in his syllabic setting of the text of "Testa dell' Efebo" to emphasize his interpretation of the stresses of Williams' poem. Each section but the second half of B is set in 4/4 time, and Bowles starts phrases on different beats within measures to place the strongest emphasis on different words in each sentence (see figure 15). For example, the first two lines begin on the third beats of their respective measures, while the third begins on the second half of the fourth beat. By shifting the emphasis, Bowles creates tension against the hyperbaton written into the poem by placing emphasis regularly on the most important words of the sentence, irrespective of their syntactic placement. In the second half of the B section, Bowles sets the text in 3/4 time (see figure 16), which sets "and the repose of sculpture told how thinly gold his shoulder gleamed," a phrase that is not set in hyperbaton, to its normal stress, which is particularly emphasized on the word "told."

An interesting musical feature of the accompaniment is angular contrapuntal figures built on large leaps contrasting with the setting of the text, which is largely based on stepwise motion and small leaps. The B section is the only section which is not contrapuntal in every voice. In this section, one voice in the piano, the left hand in the first part and the right hand in the second, supports the angular figure in the opposite hand with a chordal accompaniment to allow more tonal anchoring to the B section.

Figure 15 shows a musical score for the first system of "Testa dell' Efebo," measures 4-7. The score is in 4/4 time. The voice part (top staff) has the lyrics: "lus - tre spring and gushing waters bathed him so that". The piano part (middle and bottom staves) consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Figure 16 shows the second system of the score, measures 13-16. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4. The voice part has the lyrics: "Turning seemed and the re - pose of sculpture told how thinly gold his shoulder gleamed". The piano part continues with a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment, featuring chords and a bass line.

Figure 15: "Testa dell' Efebo," mm. 4-7

Figure 16 shows a musical score for the second system of "Testa dell' Efebo," measures 13-16. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4. The voice part has the lyrics: "Turning seemed and the re - pose of sculpture told how thinly gold his shoulder gleamed". The piano part continues with a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment, featuring chords and a bass line.

Figure 16: "Testa dell' Efebo," mm.13-16

## "San Sebastiano di Sodoma"

	Musical Form
How did Saint Sebastian die? Arrows pierced his throat and thigh which only knew, before that time, the dolors of a concubine.	<b>a</b>
Near above him, hardly over, hovered his gold martyr's crown. Even Mary from her tower of heaven leaned a little down.	<b>b</b>
and as She leaned, She raised a corner of a cloud through which to spy. Sweetly troubled Mary murmured as She watched the arrows fly.	<b>c</b>
And as the cup that was profaned gave up its sweet, intemperate wine, All the golden bells of heaven praised an emperor's concubine.	<b>d</b>

Figure 17: Text and form diagram of "San Sebastiano di Sodoma"

### Poetic Form

"San Sebastiano di Sodoma" is made up of four strophes of two couplets apiece. The first strophe is made up of rhyming couplets, while the remaining couplets contain a perfect rhyme at the second and fourth line of each strophe. The second strophe also contains a subtle internal near-rhyme at "over" and "tower."

### Commentary

In its imagery, this *ekphrasis* is fairly straight-forward in the descriptive narration of the Giovanni Antonio Bazzi painting, which hangs in the Uffizi Palace in Florence, Italy.<sup>23</sup> Bazzi, who was also known as *Il Sodoma*, the Sodomite, was a contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci. In the painting, an angelic being watches while carrying a martyr's crown for Sebastian as he is executed. Williams casts the angelic being as the Virgin Mary, who murmurs, possibly praying,

<sup>23</sup> Charles Christian Heyl, *The Art of the Uffizi Palace and the Florence Academy*. (Boston: Colonial Press, 1912), 238-239

while Sebastian is shot with arrows. This poem follows Williams common theme of falling from grace, although there is considerable moral ambiguity implied since the "golden bells of heaven praised" the emperor's concubine who is the reason for Sebastian's execution. According to Heyl, Sebastian did not actually die from his wounds, and his sentence was not for adultery but because he testified on the part of two Roman soldiers who were sentenced to die.<sup>24</sup> Williams may be alluding to Bazzi as the subject of the poem because according to the Uffizi Gallery's website, the name *Il Sodoma* may have been a politically-inspired character attack.<sup>25</sup>

### Musical Form

Although the poem is clearly divided into four strophes, the form of "San Sebastiano di Sodoma" is through-composed, and until the final strophe, there are few clear musical indicators to denote separate sections of the poetry.<sup>26</sup> The harmony in the piano part is characterized by chromatic voice leading, which clashes frequently against the vocal melody, which shifts between modal passages and short, chromatic motives (see figure 18). Until the last strophe, each new section of poetry is only separated by a single quarter rest, which Bowles also uses to separate many of the phrases of the song.

The main musical device that Bowles uses to provide a semblance of form is with similar melodic contours opening the two phrases at the beginning of the first, second, and fourth poetic strophes. The interval content is not exactly the same, but the melodic contour provides a recognizable pattern that provides a sense of cohesion to the largely through-composed song.

### Text Setting

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>25</sup> Antonio Natali, "Il Sodoma," The Uffizi Virtual Gallery Website, <http://www.virtualuffizi.com/giovanni-antonio-bazzi-called-sodoma.html> (accessed April 4, 2014)

<sup>26</sup> In the musical form presented with the poetic text, each section is indicated with a lowercase letter to denote a section that does not contain clear cohesive harmonic or melodic elements.



Like many of Bowles' songs, "San Sebastiano di Sodoma" is set syllabically, with one note accounting for a single syllable of text. An interesting feature that Bowles uses to set "San Sebastiano di Sodoma" is the use of longer durations to set apart emphasized words of the song (see figure 19). The forward motion of the piece is largely informed by eighth notes, and so when dotted quarter notes, half-notes, and dotted half notes are introduced, words like "spy" in the third strophe set up important events in the text. After "spy," Williams sets apart "murmured as she watched the arrows" in a distinct hemiola placing the four notes in each bar of the vocal line against three beats in the piano.

The image shows a musical score for three measures (mm. 8-10) of the song "San Sebastiano di Sodoma". The score is written for Voice and Piano. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Voice part is in a single treble clef staff. The Piano part consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: "knew before that time the do-lors of a con-cu-". The music is set syllabically, with one note per syllable. The piano accompaniment features a hemiola pattern in the final measure, where four notes are placed against three beats.

Figure 18: "San Sebastiano di Sodoma," mm. 8-10

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is for Voice and Piano. The Voice part is in 3/4 time and has lyrics: "cloud through which to spy sweetly troubled Mary Murrured as she". The Piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with chords and some moving lines. The second system is for Pno. (Piano) and has lyrics: "watched the ar - rows". It also consists of two staves with chords and some moving lines. There are some markings above the notes, possibly indicating phrasing or dynamics.

Figure 19: "San Sebastiano di Sodoma," mm. 23-28

### "The Goths"

Men who could drink the wolf's hot blood  
 or stuff their bellies with dry grass.  
 The Goths were giants and they came on  
 when spring unlocked the mountain pass.

Crazed fugitives declared they wore  
 headdress of horns but were not shoon  
 and women they had ravaged bore  
 gigantic babes that burst the womb.

The Romans on their golden plain  
 doubted that half this talk were true.  
 Goths might devour a woman's breast  
 But could they bite a man's skull through?

Musical Form

**a**

**b**

**c**

Figure 20: Text and form diagram of "The Goths"

### Poetic Form

"The Goths" is structured into three strophes made up of two couplets apiece. In each strophe, the second and fourth line rhyme, and in the second strophe, the first and third line rhyme as well.

### Commentary

"The Goths" is a third-person description of the Romans' fears of the attacking barbarians. The exaggerated images are direct, describing the Goths in paranoid hyperbole. The ending of the poem highlights the Romans' skepticism of these tales, but the graphic question in the last couplet suggests that they are still quite afraid.

### Musical Form

Harmonically and motivically, "The Goths" does not exhibit a cohesive form, but the placement of full measures of rests and the staccato piano part that continuously fills the musical texture set apart the three main strophes in an obvious way.

The opening strophe begins with an irregular scale which descends and ascends starting, resting, and ending on E-flat in at the ends of an octave. In the first strophe, the two couplets are set apart by a measure of rest, which is the only place this happens within a strophe. The separation sets apart the entrance of the "Goth" motif, which is made up octave leaps occurring on "the Goths were giants." After two measure of rests, the second strophe begins with two measures setting up B-natural as the central pitch. After a transitional passage, the "Goth octaves" return on "bore gigantic babes that burst" ending with an appoggiatura returning to B-natural. The final strophe is more lyrical in melodic setting, emphasizing F-sharp in the opening couplet and centering on D-sharp in the final couplet.

### Text Setting

The melody of "The Goths" mimics the rise and fall of the telling of a suspenseful folk tale. The "Goth octaves" that were mentioned in the form section are the clearest instances of word painting, which portray the stomps of the rampaging giants and their offspring bursting out of the wombs of conquered women. The piano part from "the Goths were giants" until the end of the second strophe is set down an octave to heighten the "monster story" atmosphere (see figure 21). To contrast this, the third strophe is written with a lyrical melody to suggest that the Romans' final question "but could they bite a man's skull through?" is delivered ironically (see figure 22).

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Goths". It consists of two staves: a voice staff and a piano staff. The voice staff is in 4/4 time and features a melody that rises and falls. The piano staff is in 4/4 time and features a rhythmic accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. The lyrics are "Goths were gi-ants and they came on when spring un-". The piano part is set down an octave to heighten the "monster story" atmosphere.

Figure 21: "The Goths," mm. 5-6

The image displays a musical score for the piece "The Goths" (mm. 19-21). It is written in 4/4 time and features a voice part and a piano accompaniment.

**Voice:** The vocal line is in a treble clef. The lyrics are: "Goths might de-vour a wo-mans breast But could they bite a man's skull".

**Piano:** The piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed notes and rests. The left hand plays a simpler accompaniment with chords and single notes. Both hands are marked with a forte dynamic (*fz*).

**Second System:** This system shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment. The right hand continues with complex textures, and the left hand provides harmonic support. The dynamic remains *fz*.

**Third System:** This system shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment. The right hand continues with complex textures, and the left hand provides harmonic support. The dynamic remains *fz*.

Figure 22: "The Goths," mm. 19-21

## "Faint as Leaf Shadow"

	Song's Text	Musical Form
Faint as leaf shadow does he fade and do you fade in touching him. And as you fade, the afternoon fades with you and is cool and dim.	Faint as leaf shadow does he fade and do you fade in touching him.	<b>a</b>
A wall that rises through no space, division which is shadow-thin, His eyelids close upon your eyes' quicksilver which bewilders him.	His eyelids close upon your eyes' quicksilver which bewilders him.	
And then you softly say his name as though his name upon your tongue a wall could lift against the drift of shadow that he fades among.		
Sometimes these frontiers of the twain may seem no longer to exist, But why, then, is the breath disturbed, and does the silver body twist,	At times these frontiers of the twain may seem no longer to exist, But why, then, is the breath disturbed, and does the silver body twist,	<b>b</b>
and why the whisper of a name As though enquiring, Is it true? Which goes unanswered until sleep has loosened his fierce hold of you.	and why the whisper of a name As though enquiring, Is it true? Which goes unanswered until sleep has loosened his fierce hold of you.	<b>c</b>

Figure 23: Text and form diagram of "Faint as Leaf Shadow"

### Poetic Text Edited by the Composer

"Faint as Leaf Shadow" is unique among the eleven songs analyzed in this document in that it is the only one where Bowles edited text in the song setting. By cutting the second couplet of the first strophe, the first couplet of the second strophe, and deleting the third strophe entirely, Bowles changed the overall form of the poem for his purposes as a composer. The comparative study of the original and edited poem are above, and Bowles' edited text with musical analysis is presented below.

### Poetic Form

In Bowles' edited version of "Faint as Leaf Shadow," the form is three strophes of two couplets each, which rhyme on the even lines.

### Commentary

"Faint as Leaf Shadow" is set in the third-person perspective. Unlike many of Williams' poems, the specific place and plot of the poem is unclear. The "he" and "you" of the poem obviously suggest two people, but the "he" may be a personification of God or death, which would provide a better link for "Faint as Leaf Shadow" among the other poems of *The Gothic Suite*. The primary device used in the poem is imagery, which paints an experience of light touches and sounds contrasted with stronger sensations such as disturbed breath in line seven and "his fierce hold" in line twelve. The first strophe suggests surrender to this intimate experience with two beings fading into each other. The first couplet of the second strophe describe an intimacy where the separation of the two is unnoticeable, but the second couplet hints at a violent physical response to such intimacy. The final strophe describes the ending of the intimate encounter, which seems unreal to the "you" of the poem. If the interpretation of death as the poem's theme is followed, the intimate encounter could be the actual act of dying, which is ended and explained once the soul has surrendered to the death experience.

### Musical Form

"Faint as Leaf Shadow" is a through-composed song set in three musical sections. Throughout the song's modal melodic figures, F-sharp is emphasized as a central pitch with secondary emphasis of G-sharp. The first poetic strophe, which is in the F-sharp Dorian mode, is set apart from the other two by a seven measure piano interlude. The second poetic strophe, and the first couplet of the third are grouped together with a largely modal tonality that begins in F-sharp Dorian, moves to G-sharp Phrygian, and then returns again to F-sharp Dorian. The last couplet takes the pitch center from F-sharp to G-sharp, which is where the song ends.

## Text Setting

The three sections of "Faint as Leaf Shadow" are separated by changes in meter, with the a and c sections in 3/4 and the b section in 4/8. The setting of the a and c sections are both lyrical, with largely descending contours that begin in higher registers than in the middle section.

Bowles sets apart the b section with triplet eighth notes in 4/8. The lilting feel of these passages ends suddenly in each phrase with a sustained note (see figure 24). Although these phrases are still written in a legato style, the even triplet rhythms place strange emphasis on the text and contrasts markedly with the lyricism of the opening and closing sections.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Faint as Leaf Shadow" from measures 27 to 31. It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The voice line is in 4/8 time and contains the lyrics: "twist. And why the whis-per of a name As". The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a corresponding triplet in the left hand. Dynamics include *cresc.* above the first measure, *fz* above the final measure, and *subito p* below the final measure. The second system continues the voice line with the lyrics: "though en-qui-ring is it true?". The piano accompaniment continues with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand. Dynamics include *pp* in the left hand and *molto rit.* above the first measure of the piano part.

Figure 24: "Faint as Leaf Shadow," mm. 27-31



## "Death is High"

	Musical Form
<p>Death is high; It is where the exalted things are. I know, for breathlessness took me to a five-pointed star.</p>	<b>a</b>
<p>I was exalted but not at ease in that space. Beneath me your breathing face cried out, Return, Return.</p>	<b>b</b>
<p>Return, you called while you slept. And desperately back I crept Against the ascending fall.</p>	
<p>It was not easy to crawl against those unending torrents of light, all bending one way,</p>	<b>c</b>
<p>And only your voice calling, Stay!</p>	
<p>But my longing was great to be comforted and warmed once more by your sleeping form,</p>	<b>d</b>
<p>to be, for a while, no higher than where you are, little room, warm love, humble star!</p>	

Figure 25: Text and form diagram of "Death is High"

### Poetic Form

"Death is High" is the final poem in *The Gothic Suite*, and it is also the last poem printed in Williams' *In the Winter of Cities*.<sup>27</sup> It is the most irregularly-structured of the Williams poems that Bowles set to music. The strophes are grouped in equal-sized pairs with "and only your voice calling, Stay!" standing as an independent line. The first two strophes are built of two couplets apiece. The second two strophes are both three lines in length. After the standalone line, the last two strophes are also made up of three lines apiece. The rhyme scheme is also irregular. The first strophe rhymes on even lines. The second strophe rhymes on its second and

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<sup>27</sup> Williams, *In the Winter of Cities*, 121.

third line. The third rhymes in its first two lines. The final line of the fourth strophe rhymes with the independent line the last two lines of the final two strophes rhyme.

### Commentary

"Death is High" is a first person description of existence immediately after death. Williams combines subtle imagery with at least one strong action in each strophe. In the first strophe, the narrator is dead. He describes his body ceasing to breathe and the "five-pointed star" of the afterlife. The second strophe describes his unease with his new existence because he can hear the voice of his love calling to him. In the third and fourth strophes, the speaker fights against the lights of the afterlife, crawling desperately towards his love. The lone line reading "and only your voice calling, Stay!" is enough motivation for the speaker to continue his journey, which is described further in the sixth full strophe. The final strophe describes the speaker's potential arrival at his love's room, which is called a "humble star" in comparison to the "five-pointed star" at the beginning of the poem.

### Musical Form

"Death is High" is a through-composed song with musical groups of irregular length. Bowles sets the first poetic strophe as a single musical grouping. After three measures of rest, the second section follows, which sets the second and third poetic strophes together. After another piano transition, the third section sets the fourth poetic strophe by itself, and the isolated line, "and only your voice calling stay," is set apart after that. Finally, Bowles sets the last two poetic strophes together ending with a single chord after "humble star."

### Text Setting

Bowles sets most of "Death is High" in tight melodic patterns with only a few leaps at the ends of phrases. Unlike his other settings of Williams' poetry, Bowles does not always observe

the proper punctuation and stress of the poem. An interesting example of this is in his setting of "It is where the exalted things are/I know, for breathlessness." In his setting, Bowles groups the words "I know" with the previous phrase and separates the rest of the sentence from the verb (see figure 26). To set apart the "return, return" section, Bowles puts two bars into 2/4 time to set common emphasis on each word. In this section, Bowles sets this portion of text apart with almost no melodic variation (see figure 27), casting the words in groups of repeated pitches that vary only by major and minor seconds until the end of "against the ascending fall."

The image shows a musical score for the setting of "Death is High," measures 17-20. It consists of two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line has the lyrics: "are. I know, for breath - less - ness". The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic marking. There is a fermata over the piano part in the second measure. The score is written in a standard musical notation style.

Figure 26: "Death is High," mm.17-20

Figure 27 shows a musical score for the piece "Death is High" (mm. 34-42). It consists of two staves: Voice and Piano. The Voice staff is in 3/4 time and contains the lyrics "out, re - turn, re - turn, re - turn, you". The Piano staff is also in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings "subito *p*" and "sempre *pp*".

Figure 27: "Death is High," mm.34-42

### *Three*

	Musical Form
One I kept Two I lost Three is shelter'd under frost.	A
One I tired of Two still wanted. Three the starry meadows haunted.	A
One was faithful Two was clever Three stayed in my heart forever.	A

Figure 28: Text and form diagram of *Three*

#### Poetic Form

*Three* is written in three strophes of three lines apiece. The second and third lines of each strophe are set in a perfect rhyme. The most interesting formal feature of *Three* is that the third line of each strophe is equally as long as the first two combined.

#### Commentary

*Three* is a short first-person narrative where the speaker reminisces about the three loves of his life. From a literary perspective, most of the language is direct. There are three loves mentioned in the poem: one faithful love that the speaker kept but with whom he grew bored,

one clever love that left him pining after her, and one love who died and remains vividly in his thoughts. The third love is described most thoroughly. Bowles uses allusion, an indirect literary reference,<sup>28</sup> to refer to her death as "sheltered under frost" and "the starry meadows haunted," which also demonstrates hyperbaton.

### Musical Form

*Three* was composed in strophic form with a brief piano introduction, which is repeated before the third strophe. The introductory material is nearly identical in both instances with the second instance adding a parallel fifth and octave to the right hand in the piano part. Each strophe is built of three short semi-phrases that group together to form a complete musical phrase. The first phrase, the first line of each poetic strophe, is written over an A minor chord. The second phrase is set to a G major triad. The third phrase is in two parts with the first section's harmony in F major and the second section in D major. The harmonic language of the text setting is built over the tonally weak quintal trichord which is arpeggiated over the tonic's pedal tone. The song ends with a weak two chord cadential figure with motion from F minor to B minor in the right hand and a quintal trichord based on D arpeggiating down to an open fifth and then to D. Although this cadential figure doesn't confirm a key as it commonly might in tonal music, the descending arpeggio provides a clear "winding down" feel to end the song.

### Text Setting

The text setting of *Three* is simple and tonal in nature and is characterized by lyrical unity between the voice and piano accompaniment. The opening semi-phrase of each strophe is stepwise with a passing tone between each chord tone. The second semi-phrase outlines a G

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<sup>28</sup> Baldrick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 9.

major triad, ending on the fifth of the chord. The third phrase ascends stepwise then descends into an appoggiatura which leads into the third of a D major triad (see figure 29).

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system is for the first system of the piece, featuring a Voice line and a Piano accompaniment. The Voice line is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature, and the Piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "One I kept Two I lost Three is shel-ter'd un-der frost." The second system is for the second system, featuring a Pno. line and a Piano accompaniment. The Pno. line is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature, and the Piano accompaniment is in grand staff with a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "One I tired of Two still want-ed".

Voice

One I kept Two I lost Three is shel-ter'd un-der frost.

Piano

Pno.

One I tired of Two still want-ed

Figure 29: *Three*, mm. 4-10

*Her Head on the Pillow*

<p>In the morning I watched her rise          And in the night lie down,          And I swear that her head on the pillow was bright          as Holy Mary's crown.          I swear that her head on the pillow was bright          as Mary's golden crown.</p>	<p>Musical Form  <b>A</b></p>
<p>The heart is drawn to a thing so light.          And the hand to a thing so warm,          But I swear that I pressed a stone to my heart          when I took the lady by storm;          I swear that I pressed my heart to a stone          When I covered her by storm.</p>	<p><b>B</b></p>
<p>A shadow fell on her face that night          And her hand on the lace of her gown,          But I swear that her head on the pillow was bright          as Holy Mary's crown.          I swear that her head on the pillow was bright          as Mary's golden crown.</p>	<p><b>A<sup>1</sup></b></p>

Figure 30: Text and form diagram of *Her Head on the Pillow*

### Background

According to the annotations to the autograph score in *Selected Songs*, Bowles composed *Her Head on the Pillow* in 1961 in Tangier,<sup>29</sup> but in *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, Bowles mentions setting the poem in 1949 and mislaying the only copy.<sup>30</sup> It is unclear if the setting included in *Selected Songs* is the same as the 1949 version or if Bowles attempted to recreate the song twelve years later. Like *Blue Mountain Ballads* and *Three*, *Her Head on the Pillow* was a gift from Tennessee Williams.<sup>31</sup> Unlike those songs, *Her Head on the Pillow* was not published until its inclusion in *Selected Songs* in 1984.

### Poetic Form

<sup>29</sup> Paul Bowles, *Selected Songs*, ed. Peter Garland (Santa Fe, NM: Soundings Press, 1984), 120.

<sup>30</sup> Bowles, *Conversations*, 35.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

The poetic form of *Her Head on the Pillow* is three strophes of three couplets apiece with perfect rhymes on the ends of each couplet. The last couplet of each strophe is a repetition with minor paraphrasing of the second couplet, which can be seen as a recurring feature in the Williams poems collected within *In the Winter of Cities*.

### Commentary

*Her Head on the Pillow* is told in first-person perspective by a man watching a woman sleep after an apparent rape. According to the narrator, he watches her when she rises and goes to sleep and feels an emotional and physical need for her. The second and third couplet of the second strophe alludes to violent conquest, whether by rape or other undefined domestic violence. Freiberg and Fishes see his comparison to the woman's head haloed by her pillow with the Virgin Mary's crown as indicative of remorse.<sup>32</sup>

### Musical Form

*Her Head on the Pillow* is set in ABA form with small differences in melodic contour between A sections. The A sections are set in A minor, and the B section is in G minor.

### Text Setting

*Her Head on the Pillow* is set with A sections in 4/4 time and the B section in 3/8. The main differences in the two time signatures is the placement of emphasis on the text. In the A sections, the 4/4 time signature places primary stress on fewer words (See Figure 31), but in 3/8, almost every other word is emphasized (See Figure 32). The triplet pulse of the B section supports the obsessive drive that compelled the man to take the woman "by storm." The accompaniment supports this agitation with a contrapuntal texture that is in constant motion.

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<sup>32</sup> Freiberg and Fisher, *American Art Song*, 206.



The forward motion of the voice and piano stops twice, first at the end of the second strophe on "storm" and next on the final measure's released setting of "crown."

Figure 31 shows a musical score for the piece "Her Head on the Pillow" in 4/4 time. The score is divided into two systems: Voice and Piano. The voice part begins with a long note on the word "crown" (mm. 10-11), followed by the phrase "I swear that her head on the pil-low was bright as" (m. 12). The piano accompaniment features a right-hand melody with eighth-note patterns and a left-hand bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Figure 31: *Her Head on the Pillow*, mm. 10-12

Figure 32 shows a musical score for the piece "Her Head on the Pillow" in 3/8 time. The score is divided into two systems: Voice and Piano. The voice part begins with the phrase "heart is drawn to a thing so light and her hand to a" (mm. 15-19). The piano accompaniment features a right-hand melody with eighth-note patterns and a left-hand bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Figure 32: *Her Head on the Pillow*, mm. 15-19

### CHAPTER 3: PEDAGOGICAL AND PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

Before addressing the specific issues related to the performance of twentieth-century music, popularly-inspired art song in general, and the works of Paul Bowles in particular, it is important to address the basics of healthy sound production. With every generation of song and aria that moves away from the *bel canto* model, the basic concepts of that technique must be stressed to avoid potential performance pitfalls related to the performance of rhythm, diction, and angular vocal lines, which require great technical facility to render.

The three basic factors that affect all singing are dynamic breath, optimal space, and focused resonance. As Richard Miller describes in *The Structure of Singing*, those three basic concepts can be described physically as: a "source of power," the breath; "vibratory action," the gentle and continuous vibration of the vocal folds initiated by that breath mechanism; "the facility of articulation," the agile forming of the basic vowel and consonant structures within the mouth; and "systems of resonance," the optimal balance of resonant vibrations to allow the free ring of the singer's natural voice.<sup>1</sup>

Although these three basic concepts are simple in theory, they require continuous practice throughout a singer's career to maintain them. For the developing singer, each factor comes with inherent difficulties that hinder both natural, healthy production and the artistic rendering of vocal music. With inefficient use of breath, the phrases required by art music become extremely

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing* (New York: Schirmer Books), 195.

difficult, if not impossible, to render lyrically. In more extreme circumstances, the throat and jaw tension caused by inefficient breath can result in thin, pressurized pitches that require increasing tension to force an approximation of correct intonation. If the column of air set into vibration by the vocal folds does not pass through proper vowel spaces, the sound rings in suboptimal registers that fail to project from the body, which produces a muffled, over-darkened sound. Finally, if the sensory feedback from the points of resonance is not focused sufficiently, then the remaining resonators in the body are prevented from performing their acoustic functions, and the most acceptable vocal qualities in the Western tradition are thereby unreachable.

James McKinney states, "Many singers abandon conscious controls before their reflexes are fully conditioned and inherit chronic problems thereby."<sup>2</sup> Fundamentally, a solid breath technique consists of low abdominal expansion, a relaxed clavicle, and an open rib cage. According to Richard Miller, this technique is an extension of the natural breathing action that occurs in speech, and the reliance on the simplistic breath action used in speech is insufficient to support a vibrant tone.<sup>3</sup> Upon inhalation, the diaphragm lowers simultaneously drawing air into the lungs and displacing the viscera in the abdominal cavity. This displacement creates a sensation of front and back expansion of the abdomen and lower back. After this relaxed inhalation, the lower abdominal muscles gently engage to move the viscera and in turn, the diaphragm back into place. Through this cyclical action, a continuous, efficient stream of air is produced, which allows an energized initiation and maintenance of breath.

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<sup>2</sup> James McKinney, *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults* [Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2005], 48.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18.

The proper configuration of vocal space can be best solidified by addressing clear, Italianate vowel production. For this process, five of the seven Italian vowels: [a], [ɛ], [i], [o] and [u] are visualized mostly for their clear, open positions. In English lyric diction, the fifteen basic vowel sounds have a tendency to be indistinct when sung fully. If dialectic concerns are integrated to the singer's approach, a unified sense of vowel space becomes extremely difficult. To simplify this process, one of the five Italianate vowel positions is maintained as the primary vocal space per written note in a song. In the case of English diphthongs, the first vowel is always primary, and the second vowel is articulated with the next consonant or at the note's cutoff.

With proper breath and space in place, resonance becomes a matter of sensory awareness and a focus on consistent vibration within a single optimal tract. Starting with [i], which is the naturally brightest vowel position, each of the remaining four primary Italianate vowels must be lined up into the [i] placement. From there, that clean, bright ring of [i] is worked into the tall, open [a] position. With this simplified approach, the singer enjoys a naturally open position which allows for a relaxed larynx and a strong neutral position from which to sing most repertoire.

Once these fundamental concerns are addressed, the more specific problems related to the performance of twentieth-century music come into consideration. Complex rhythms, angular dissonances, and large leaps are just a few of the disadvantages the singer must be aware of when performing American music of the post-tonal school. With the Bowles songs considered in this document, each of these issues occurs multiple times, but with appropriate preparation and attention to detail, university-level singers are capable of overcoming these challenges.

Rhythm and prosody, both considered major strengths of Bowles' compositional style, can cause significant problems with intonation and legato in young singers. Because Bowles was so attuned to the natural rhythms of the language, his rhythmic writing is quite specific and requires disciplined attention to detail. Unfortunately, when a young singer works to attack complicated or very precise rhythms, their work often is counterproductive to the execution of a legato vocal line. By singing a broken line, the singer continually disengages and reengages the articulators and the complex musculature around the larynx, which places undue stress on the vocal tract. This stress hinders all three major aspects of good vocal production, and out-of-tune singing is the most common result.



Figure 33: "Sugar in the Cane," m. 5

In figure 33, the precise rhythms combined with plosive consonant content provide several possibilities for broken legato and immediate tension in the throat and jaw. This phrase complicates matters because it is the opening line of the song, which requires relaxation to successfully negotiate two f-sharps later in the passage. The usual tendency here is to overpronounce the following underlined consonants, "I'm red pepper in a shaker." Fortunately, because of the naturally percussive sounds of the text, very little attack is generally necessary for clarity in the consonants. By easing off of the hard quality of the consonants, the breath builds less pressure behind the consonants and allows the continuous flow necessary to sustain a well-bound legato. In this passage, it is necessary to elide the consonants into a continuous, fluid motion of the tongue and lips. By eliding the ending of the upward lingual articulation of the [d]

in "red" with the combined bilabial plosive and lingual descent of the first [p] in "pepper," the overall articulation of the consonants develops a bound sense that allows a clean connection between vowels within the legato line.

With the principals of consonant elision and continuous vowel formation in mind, two simple exercises correct the tendency to sing off of a strong legato line, and they are applicable in practically all songs irrespective of consonant or rhythmic issues. The first is to separate the text from the music and speak it as a poem with a legato speaking voice supported by long, sustained exhalations. This exercise must be done with great discipline because generally, young singers are prone to self-conscious readings of spoken text. Although it may sound stilted, slow and clear declamation of the text of a song will train the articulators to use the proper amount of muscular engagement to pronounce a line rather than over-pressurizing phonation. The second exercise involves singing each individual phrase of the song as a vocalise by singing only the primary vowel involved with each note. For the previous figure, the vowels used would be, "[a], [ε], [ε], [a], [i], [a], [ε], [a]," which is represented below in figure 34. By singing the line without engaging any glottal strokes, the voice is trained to approach the line as a phrase rather than as a series individual notes. After building comfort with these two exercises, reintroducing gentle consonants into the vocal line is not difficult.

Voice

I'm red pepper in a sha-ker  
[a ε ε a i a ε a]

Figure 34: "Sugar in the Cane," m. 5

To aid in vowel selection and alignment for the eleven songs analyzed in this document, appendix A provides a complete transcription of each song's text into International Phonetic Alphabet. In each transcription, the vowels for each word were chosen for authenticity and vocal facility. With the non-Italianate vowels such as [ə] and [æ], the singer should form the nearest Italianate vowel space to provide the proper acoustic environment for precise intonation. By using this resource, arranging vocalises like the example above is a simple matter of note-for-note transcription from the IPA transcriptions.

Within a consistent legato phrase, passages with rhythmic consonant action may cause vowels to close too early within the duration of a single note. When this happens, the pitch is immediately dampened and, depending on the consonant, significant jaw tension may be transferred as well. This particular fault applies to English speakers who attempt to sing as they might speak, grouping each regular phonetic syllable onto a single note or small melismatic passage. While this may not seem to significant on the surface, it is generally desirable to limit any tendency to close to an ending consonant within a single note. In the following musical example, prematurely closing to consonants presents a major obstacle to intonation.



Figure 35: "Cabin," mm.5-6

In this phrase, most American singers will group the text as follows, "The cab-in was coz-y, and holl-y-hocks grew." With this reading, the voice sticks to the [b] of "cabin," the [z] sounds of "was" and "cozy," and the [l] sound of "hollyhocks." Instead, each separate note or small grouping should end with a vowel sound, and the ending consonants should be grouped at

the beginning of the next note. The revised reading of the phrase is, "The ca-bi-nwa-sco-zy a-ndho-lly-ho-cksgrew." Although this text appears strange by itself, when written as a part of the score as indicated below, this transcription reminds the singer to focus on allowing the legato to be carried primary through longer vowel sounds and shorter bursts of consonants. The important exception to this rule is when a phrase ends in a consonant. In this case, the consonant occurs on the cut-off.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Cabin". It features a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The voice line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 9/8 time signature. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. The lyrics are written below the voice line.

Voice

Cab-in was co - zy and hol - ly - hocks grew  
 Ca-bi- nwa-sco - zy a - ndho- lly - ho - ckscrew

Figure 36: "Cabin," mm.5-6

An issue with art songs that generally contain short introductory passages involves the plotting of initial breaths. With the shorter introductions preferred by composers like Bowles, a consistent and exact starting point of an inhalation is essential to begin a phrase without the slight delay that impairs ensemble and exact tempo.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Lonesome Man". It features a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The voice line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major) and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The tempo marking is "Very rhythmically" with a metronome mark of 160. The lyrics are written below the voice line.

Very rhythmically ♩ = 160

Voice

My chair rock-rocks by the

Piano

Figure 37: "Lonesome Man," mm.1-4



With "Lonesome Man", the introduction (shown above in figure 37) is a short blast of ragtime piano, and a young singer will tend to take a quick breath and begin the vocal line as if taken by surprise. Or, if the singer anticipates the breath, inhaling a bit too early and holding the breath briefly before phonating, the initial line starts from a place of tension. Instead, the singer should plan an exact pace of inhalation, usually two to four beats long, timing the breath so that the inhale peaks just before phonation. When this is timed correctly, the breath can be engaged before the vocal folds approximate, allowing for a clear even beginning phrase rather than a punched beginning that drives the voice into a strident, sharp tone. The marking included in the above example indicates the optimum position for the beginning of the breath cycle, which allows ample time for a complete inhalatory cycle prior to phonation. With this cyclical breath in place, consonants and vowels may be articulated with the precision necessary for rhythmic accuracy. Initial vowel sounds must be articulated directly on the beginning beat of a phrase, and beginning consonants must be articulated just before the starting beat to avoid any lag on the overall tempo of the phrase.

Once basic issues related to inhalation, vowel production and dexterity in pronunciation are adequately addressed, problems of tonality and pitch accuracy become a problem in twentieth century music. Because of this, the singer must locate all instances where initial or difficult pitches are referenced either in the piano part or in earlier statements of the vocal line. In some cases, it is also useful to indicate implied resolutions where none might exist to give the singer a context for the pitch within the confines of more familiar styles of music.

Once a reference is plotted for these initial pitches, the singer must train his ear for intervals and melodic contours that may be unusual within more familiar tonal music. The

simplest way to prepare more difficult passages is to separate small phrases and rehearse them as vocalises. The following phrase in figure 38 is ideal for this treatment:



Figure 38: "Faint as Leaf Shadow," mm.9-10

By first transposing this line down a perfect fifth, the majority of pitches are then placed in the central portion of most voice categories, facilitating the training of the intervals without involving the technical difficulties that often arise with higher passages. After the intervals are memorized in a simple range, it can be raised in ascending half-steps until the singer has assimilated the line in the correct key.

Although the Bowles songs presented in this document are each present different challenges, none of them are inaccessible to young singers. By properly segmenting the music and understanding the harmonic and formal characteristics of the songs, undergraduate singers can broaden their technical capacity to experience the varied stylistic requirements of twentieth century American song. With a methodical approach to technique and preparation, students may program these seldom-performed songs into recitals and auditions, setting themselves apart from their competition that typically draws from more traditional repertoire.

### Conclusion

Through attentive use of the pedagogical strategies presented in this chapter and the consistent application of fundamental vocal technique, each of the eleven songs presented in this

document are within the technical capabilities of most undergraduate voice students. By applying these techniques with the information provided in the background and analysis chapters, undergraduates can apply their training in vocal technique, musicology, and music theory into an engaging performance informed by integrated study. Ideally, this approach to the performance of art songs should be applied with equal diligence to all repertoire, which will result in the potential for nuanced performance and rich understanding of the art song as a genre.

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## APPENDIX A: IPA TRANSCRIPTIONS OF BOWLES SONGS

This appendix of International Phonetic Alphabet transcriptions is designed as a supplement to the pedagogical strategies found in chapter three. Because these transcriptions are following the natural inflections and vowel patterns of American English speech, the singer must remember to select an appropriate primary vowel sound for each note (see pg. 60 for an in-depth description of this process). Each of these songs has also been transcribed with regards to the stress necessary for polysyllabic words where stress is indicated with the ['] symbol.

For those unfamiliar with the basic rules and symbols governing International Phonetic Alphabet for the English language, John Moriarty's *Diction* and Joan Wall's *Diction for Singers* are recommended for further study. Full bibliographic citations of both books can be found in the references section of this document.

"Three"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

One I kept

[wʌn ʔaɪ keɪpt]

two I lost

[tu ʔaɪ lɒst]

Three is shelter'd under frost.

[θri ʔɪz 'ʃeltəd ʔʌndə frɒst]

One I tired of

[wʌn ʔaɪ taɪəd ʔəv]

two still wanted

[tu stɪl 'wʌntəd]

Three the starry meadows haunted.

[θri ðə 'stɑːri 'meɪdɔːz 'hʌntəd]

One was faithful

[ʌwʌn wəz 'feɪθfəl]

two was clever

[tu wəz 'kleɪvə]

Three stayed in my heart forever.

[θri steɪd ɪn maɪ hɑːt fɔːr'evə]

"Her Head on the Pillow"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

In the morning I watched her rise

[ʔɪn ðə 'mɔːnɪŋ ʔaɪ wɑːtʃd hæ raɪz]

and in the night lie down,

[ʔænd ʔɪn ðə naɪt laɪ daʊn]

and I swear that her head on the pillow was bright as Holy Mary's crown.

[ʔænd ʔaɪ swɛə ðæt hæ hed ʔan ðə 'pɪləʊ wəz braɪt ʔaz 'hɒli 'mɛrɪz kraʊn]

I swear that her head on the pillow was bright as Mary's golden crown.

[ʔaɪ swɛə ðæt hæ hed ʔan ðə 'pɪləʊ wəz braɪt ʔaz 'mɛrɪz 'ɡoʊldən kraʊn]

The heart is drawn to a thing so light.

[ðə hɑːt ɪz drɔːn tu ʔə θɪŋ sɒʊ laɪt]

And the hand to a thing so warm,

[ʔænd ðə hænd tu ʔə θɪŋ sɒʊ wɜːm]

but I swear that I pressed a stone to my heart when I took the lady by storm.

[bət ʔaɪ swɛə ðæt ʔaɪ prɛst ʔə stəʊn tu maɪ hɑːt mɛn ʔaɪ tuːk ðə 'leɪdɪ baɪ stɔːm]

I swear that I pressed my heart to a stone when I covered her by storm.

[ʔaɪ swɛə ðæt ʔaɪ prɛst maɪ hɑːt tu ʔə stəʊn mɛn ʔaɪ 'kʌvəd hæ baɪ stɔːm]

A shadow fell on her face that night

[ʔeɪ 'ʃɑːdəʊ fɛl ʔəpən hæ feɪs ðæt naɪt]

And her hand on the lace of her gown,

[ʔɛnd hæ hand ʔan ðə leɪs ʔɒv hæ gaʊn]

but I swear that her head on the pillow was bright as Holy Mary's crown.

[bət ʔaɪ swɛə ðæt hæ hed ʔan ðə 'pɪləʊ wəz braɪt ʔaz 'hɒli 'mɛrɪz kraʊn]

I swear that her head on the pillow was bright as Mary's golden crown.

[ʔaɪ swɛə ðæt hæ hed ʔan ðə 'pɪləʊ wəz braɪt ʔaz 'mɛrɪz 'ɡoʊldən kraʊn]

"Testa dell' Efebo"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

Of Flora did his luster spring

[ʔəv 'florə dɪd hɪz 'ləstə sprɪŋ]

And gushing waters bathed him so

[ʔænd 'gʌʃɪŋ 'wətəz bæɪðd hɪm sou]

that trembling shells were struck and held

[ðæt 'tremblɪŋ ʃelz wə strək ʔænd held]

until his turning let them go.

[ʔəntɪl hɪz 'tɔ:nɪŋ let ðem gou]

Then gold he was when summer was;

[ðen gould hɪ wəz mɛn 'sʌmə wəz]

Unchangeable this turning seemed

[ən'tʃeɪndʒəbəl ðɪs 'tɔ:nɪŋ si:md]

and repose of sculture told how thinly gold his shoulder gleamed.

[ʔænd ðə ri'pouz ʔəv 'skʌlptʃə tould hau 'θɪnli gould hɪz 'ʃouldə glɪmd]

A cloud of birds awoke in him when

[ʔə klaʊd ʔəv bɜdz ʔə'wouk ɪn hɪm mɛn]

Virgo murmured half awake.

['vɪrgo 'mɜməd haf ʔə'weɪk]

Then higher lifted birds and clouds

[ðen 'haɪjə 'lɪftəd bɜdz ʔænd klaʊdz]

to break in fire as glasses break.

[tu breɪk ɪn faɪə ʔæz 'glasəz breɪk]

A lunatic with tranquil eyes

[ʔeɪ 'lunətɪk wɪð 'trɛnkwiɪ ʔaɪz]

he must have been when he had dimmed,

[hɪ mʌst hæv bi:n mɛn hɪ hæd dɪmd]

and that town burned wherein was turned

[ʔænd ðat taʊn bɜnd mɛr'ɪn wəz tɔ:nd]

this slender copper cast of him.

[ðɪs 'slendə 'kɒpə kæst ʔəv hɪm]

"San Sebastiano di Sodoma"  
Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

How did Saint Sebastian die?  
[haʊ dɪd seɪnt seɪ' bæstjən daɪ]  
Arrows pierced his throat and thigh  
[' ʔeɪrəʊz pɪəsd hɪz θrəʊt ʔænd θaɪ]  
which only knew, before that time,  
[mɪtʃ ' ʔəʊnlɪ nu bæ' fəʊə ðæt taɪm]  
the dolours of a concubine.  
[ðə 'dɒləʊz ʔən ʔə 'kɒŋkjubəɪn]

Near above him, hardly over,  
[nɪə ʔəʊvən hɪm 'hɑːdli ' ʔəʊvə]  
hovered his gold martyr's crown.  
['həʊvəd hɪz ɡəʊld 'mɑːtəz kraʊn]  
Even Mary from her tower  
[' ʔɪvən 'mɛrɪ frəm hɜː 'tɔːə]  
of heaven leaned a little down  
[ʔən 'heɪvən lɪnd ʔə 'lɪtl daʊn]

And as She leaned, She raised a corner  
[ʔænd ʔæz ʃɪ lɪnd ʃɪ reɪzd ʔə kɒnə]  
of a cloud through which to spy.  
[ʔən ʔə klaʊd θru mɪtʃ tu spaɪ]  
Sweetly troubled Mary murmured  
['swɪtli 'trʌbəld 'mɛrɪ 'mɜːməd]  
as She watched the arrows fly.  
[ʔæz ʃɪ wɒtʃt ðɪ ' ʔeɪrəʊz flaɪ]

And as the cup that was profaned  
[ʔænd ʔæz ðə kʌp ðæt wəz prəʊ'fænd]  
gave up its sweet, intemperate wine,  
[ɡeɪv ʔəp ɪts swɪt ɪn' tɛmpərət waɪn]  
all the golden bells of heaven  
[ʔɒlðə 'ɡəʊldən bɛlz ʔən 'heɪvən]  
praised an emperor's concubine.  
[preɪzd ʔən ' ʔɛmpərəz 'kɒŋkjubəɪn]



"The Goths"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

Men who could drink the wolf's hot blood

[mɛn hu kɔʊd driŋk ðə wɒlfs hɒt blʌd]

or stuff their bellies with dry grass,

[ʔʊə stʌf θeɪə 'bɛlɪz wɪθ draɪ grɑs]

The Goths were giants and they came on

[ðə gɔθs wə 'dʒaɪənts ʔænd ʔəz ðeɪ keɪm ʔən]

when spring unlocked the mountain pass.

[mɛn ðə sprɪŋ ʔən'lækt ðə 'maʊntən pæs]

Crazed fugitives declared they wore

[kreɪzd 'fjuːdʒɪtɪvz dɪ'kleəd ðeɪ wɔʊə]

headdress of horns but wore not soon,

['heddres ʔən huəz bət wɜ nat ʃʊn]

and women they had ravaged bore

[ʔænd 'wɪmən ðeɪ hæd 'rævədʒd bɔʊə]

gigantic babes that burst the womb.

[dʒaɪ'gæntɪk beɪbz ðæt bɜrst ðə wʊm]

The Romans on their golden plain

[ðə rɔʊmənz ʔən ðeɪə 'gəʊldən pleɪn]

doubted that half this talk were true,

['daʊtəd ðæt hæf ðɪs tak wə tru]

Goths might devour a woman's breast,

[gɔθs maɪt də'vaʊə ʔə 'wɔmənz brɛst]

but could they bite a man's skull through?

[bət kɔʊd ðeɪ baɪt ʔə mænz skʌl θru]

"Faint as Leaf Shadow"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

Faint as leaf shadow does he fade

[fɛɪnt ʔæz lɪf 'ʃɑdʊ dʌz hɪ feɪd]

and do you fade in touching him.

[ʔænd du ju feɪd ɪn 'tætʃɪŋg hɪm.]

his eyelids close upon your eyes'

[hɪz 'ʔaɪlɪdz kləʊz ʔə'pən juə ʔaɪz]

quicksilver which bewilders him.

[kwɪk'sɪlvə wɪtʃ bə'wɪldəz hɪm]

At times those frontiers of the twain

[ʔæt taɪmz ðəʊz frən'tɪəz ʔəv ðə twɛɪn]

may seem no longer to exist,

[meɪ sɪm noʊ 'lɔŋgə tu eg'zɪst]

but why, then, is the breath disturbed,

[bət maɪ ðɛn ɪz ðə brɛθ dɪs'təbd]

and does the silver body twist,

[ʔænd dəz ðə 'sɪlvə 'bɒdɪ twɪst]

and why the whisper of a name

[ʔænd maɪ ðə 'wɪspə ʔəv ʔə neɪm]

as though enquiring, is it true?

[ʔəz ðəʊ ɪn'kwɔɪrɪŋg ɪz ɪt tru]

Which goes unanswered until sleep

[wɪtʃ ɡəʊz ʔən'ʔænsəd ʔəntɪl slɪp]

has loosened his fierce hold of you.

[həz 'lusənd hɪz fɪəs hoʊld ʔəv ju]

"Death is High"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

Death is high;

[dεθ ɹɪz haɪ]

it is where the exalted things are.

[ɹɪt ɹɪz mεə ðɪ ʔεg 'zaltəd θɪŋgz ʔa]

I know, for breathlessness took me

[ʔaɪ noʊ foʊə 'breθlɛsnɛs tʊk mi]

to a five-pointed star.

[tu ʔə faɪv 'pɔɪntəd stɑ]

I was exalted

[ʔaɪ wəz ʔεg 'zaltəd]

but not at ease in that space

[bət nat ʔæt ɹɪz ɹɪn ðat speɪs]

Beneath me your breathing face

[bə'niθ mi jʊə 'brɪðɪŋ feɪs]

cried out, Return, Return.

[kraɪd ʔaʊt rɪ'tɔn rɪ'tɔn]

Return, you called while you slept.

[rɪ'tɔn ju kɔld maɪ ju slept]

And desperately back I crept

[ʔænd 'dɛspərətɪ bæk ʔa krept]

against the ascending fall.

[ʔə'ɡɛnst ðɪ ʔə'sɛndɪŋ fal]

It was not easy to crawl

[ɹɪt wəz nat ɹɪzi tu kral]

against those unending torrents of light,

[ʔə'ɡɛnst ðoʊz ʔən'ɛndɪŋ 'tærənts ʔəv laɪt]

all bending one way

[ʔal 'bɛndɪŋ wən weɪ]

And only your voice calling, stay!

[ʔænd ʔoʊnlɪ jʊə voɪs 'kɔlɪŋ steɪ]

But my longing was great  
 [bət maɪ 'lɒŋɡɪŋ wəz grɛɪt]  
 to be comforted and warmed  
 [tu bi 'kɒmfətəd ʔænd wɔːmd]  
 once more by your sleeping form,  
 [wəns moʊə baɪ jʊə 'slɪpɪŋ fɔːm]

To be, for a while, no higher  
 [tu bi foʊə ʔə maɪ noʊ 'haɪjə]  
 than where you are,  
 [ðæn meə ju ʔə]  
 little room, warm love, humble star!  
 ['lɪtəl ruːm wɔːm lʌv 'hʌmbəl stɑː]

"Heavenly Grass"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

My feet took a walk in heavenly grass.

[maɪ fɪt tʊk ʔa wɔ:k ʔɪn 'heɪvənli grɑ:s]

All day while the sky shone clear as glass.

[ʔal deɪ maɪ ðə skɑɪ ʃhəʊn klɪə ʔɑz glɑ:s]

My feet took a walk in heavenly grass,

[maɪ fɪt tʊk ʔa wɔ:k ʔɪn 'heɪvənli grɑ:s]

All night while the lonesome stars rolled past.

[ʔal naɪt maɪ ðə 'ləʊnsəm stɑz rəʊld pɑst]

Then my feet come down to walk on earth,

[nəʊ maɪ fɪt kʌm daʊn tu wɔ:k ʔən ʔəθ]

And my mother cried when she give me birth.

[ʔænd maɪ 'mɑðə kraɪd mɛn ʃɪ ɡɪv mi bɜ:θ]

Now my feet walk far and my feet walk fast,

[nəʊ maɪ fɪt wɔ:k fɑ ʔænd maɪ fɪt wɔ:k fæst]

But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.

[bʌt ðeɪ stɪl ɡɒt ʔən ʔɪtʃ fɔ: 'heɪvənli grɑ:s]

"Lonesome Man"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

My chair rock-rocks by the door all day

[maɪ tʃeɪə ɹək ɹəks baɪ ðə dɔːə ʔal deɪ]

But nobody ever stops my way,

[bʌt 'nɒbədi ʔevə stɒps maɪ weɪ]

Nobody ever stops by my way.

['nɒbədi ʔevə stɒps baɪ maɪ weɪ]

My teef chaw-chaw on an old ham bone an'

[maɪ tɪf tʃɑːtʃɑːʊ ʔən ʔænd ʔold hæm bəʊn ʔæn]

I do the dishes all alone,

[ʔaɪ du ðə 'dɪʃɪs ʔal ʔaləʊn]

I do the dishes all by my lone.

[ʔaɪ du ðə 'dɪʃɪs ʔal baɪ maɪ ləʊn]

My feet clop-clop on the hardwood floor 'cause

[maɪ fi:t kloʊp kloʊp ʔən ðə 'hɑːdvwuːd flɔːr kɔːz]

I won't buy love at the hardware store,

[ʔaɪ wəʊnt baɪ lʌv ʔæt ðə 'hɑːdweɪ stɔː]

I don't want love from the mercantile store.

[ʔaɪ dəʊnt wɑːnt lʌv ʔæt ðə 'mɜːkəntaɪl stɔː]

Now the clock tick-tocks by my single bed while

[naʊ ðə klɒk tɪk təks baɪ maɪ 'sɪŋɡl bɛd waɪl]

the moon looks down on my sleepless head,

[ðə mʌn lʊks daʊn ʔən maɪ 'sliːpləs hɛd]

While the moon grins down at an ole fool's head.

[waɪl ðə mʌn lʊks daʊn ʔən ʔæn ʔəʊld fuːlz hɛd]

## "Cabin"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

The cabin was cozy and hollyhocks grew  
 [ðə kæbɪn wʌz 'koʊzɪ ʔænd 'hɒli'hɒks grʊ]  
 Bright by the door till his whisper crept through.  
 [braɪt baɪ ðə dɔːr tɪl hɪz 'wɪspə kɹept θru]  
 The sun on the sill was yellow and warm  
 [ðə sʌn ʔən ðə sɪl wʌz 'jelə ʔænd wɜːm]  
 Till she lifted the latch for a man or a storm.  
 [tɪl ʃi 'lɪftəd ðə lætʃ fɔːr ə mæn ʔoːr ə stɔːm]

Now the cabin falls to the winter wind  
 [naʊ ðə 'kæbɪn fɔːlz tu ðə 'wɪntə wɪnd]  
 And the walls cave in where they kissed and sinned.  
 [ʔænd ðə wɔːlz keɪv ɪn weə ðeɪ kɪst ʔænd sɪnd]  
 And the long white rain sweeps clean the room  
 [ʔænd ðə lɒŋ waɪt reɪn swiːps kliːn ðə ruːm]  
 Like a white-haired witch with a long straw broom!  
 [laɪk ə waɪt heɪəd wɪtʃ wɪθ ə lɒŋ strə brʊm]

"Sugar in the Cane"

Lyrics by Tennessee Williams

I'm red pepper in a shaker,  
 [ʔaɪm ɹɛd 'pɛpə ʔɪn ʔə 'ʃeɪkə]  
 Bread that's waitin' for the baker.  
 [brɛd ðætʰs 'weɪɪn fɔʊə ðə 'beɪkə]  
 I'm sweet sugar in the cane,  
 [ʔaɪm swi:t 'ʃʊgə ʔɪn ðə keɪn]  
 Never touched except by rain.  
 [nevə tʌtʃt ʔɛk'sɛpt baɪ reɪn]  
 If you touched me God save you,  
 [ɪf ju tʌtʃt mi ɡɔd seɪv ju]  
 These summer days are hot and blue.  
 [ðɪz 'sʌmə deɪz ʔə hɔt ʔæn blu]

I'm potatoes not yet mashed,  
 [ʔaɪm pə'tetəʊz nɔt jɛt mæʃt]  
 I'm a check that ain't been cashed.  
 [ʔaɪm ʔə tʃɛk ðæt ʔeɪnt bi:n kæʃt]  
 I'm a window with a blind,  
 [ʔaɪm ə 'wɪndəʊ wiθ ʔə blaɪnd]  
 Can't see what goes on behind.  
 [kænt si wɔt ɡəʊz ʔən bi'hɑɪnd]  
 If you did, God save your soul!  
 [ɪf ju dɪd ɡɔd seɪv jəʊə səʊl]  
 These winter nights are blue and cold!  
 [ðɪz 'wɪntə naɪts ʔə blu ʔænd kəʊld]