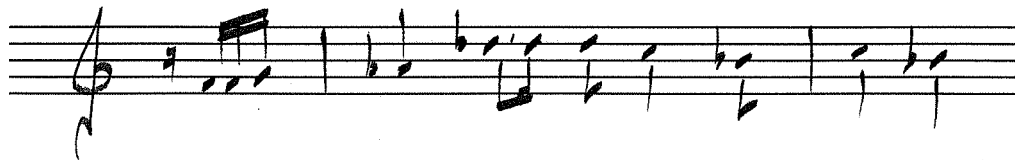


Donald Cobb

Boats in a Fog

Songs on Poetry of Robinson Jeffers

for voice and piano



Donald Cobb was born in 1936 in Oakland, California. His music-making began in the family home, and at age 15 in a hotel summer band. He studied with composers Richard Donovan, Leon Kirchner and Darius Milhaud. He has taught and led musical ensembles in many schools and colleges, including Mills College, the Athenian School, Wildshaw School in San Francisco and Friendsville Academy in Tennessee. Community and traditional song has been an abiding study. In the 1970's, he was musical director of the Oakland Museum Spring Concerts, highlighting music of American and California composers.

The composer's path of finding musical expression through poetic language and the contours of our spoken language led first to the Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, and his *Crazy Jane Poems*, and followed over years to the possibilities for song in the work of admired American poets, including Walt Whitman, Vachel Lindsay, Robinson Jeffers, whose poems are the basis for the current volume, *Boats in a Fog*, and Gary Snyder, whose translation of *Cold Mountain Poems* by Han-shan is the basis of another recent volume, *Cold Mountain Songs*, scored for high voice, violin and piano.

for Steve

BOATS IN A FOG



BY DONALD COBB:

CRAZY JANE SONGS *

*Six songs on poems of W. B. Yeats
for voice and piano*

CONFUCIAN ODES

*Translations by Ezra Pound
Three SATB choruses, unaccompanied*

COLD MOUNTAIN SONGS *

*Poems by Han-shan, translation by Gary Snyder
for voice, violin and piano*

THE TOWN OF AMERICAN VISIONS
THE SPRINGFIELD OF THE FAR FUTURE

*Poetry of Vachel Lindsay
for SATB chorus, with piano*

COME, SAID THE MUSE *

*Three songs on poetry of Walt Whitman
for voice and piano*

FIVE ORCHESTRAL SONGS

for orchestra

CHILDREN'S SONGS *

*On poetry of Vachel Lindsay, James Stephens, Christina Rossetti,
James Hogg, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Whitcomb Riley
for voice and piano*

PATHS

A four movement work for orchestra

REMNANTS

9 pieces, for violin, clarinet, double bass and piano

BOATS IN A FOG *

*Songs on the poetry of Robinson Jeffers
for voice and piano*

SEVEN SONGS *

*Billy Boy, The Curtains of Night, The Old Ship of Zion,
Colorado Trail, A Life on the Ocean Wave, Brave Wolfe, Polly Wolly Doodle
Arranged for voice and piano*

IN COUNTRYSIDE

A set of seven pieces – for clarinet, trumpet, trombone and piano

FIDDLER JONES, PASTORAL AND OTHER SONGS

*On poetry of Thoreau, Melville, Masters, Cummings,
Frost, Sandburg and Williams
for voice and piano*

* Engraved song publications available from the composer.

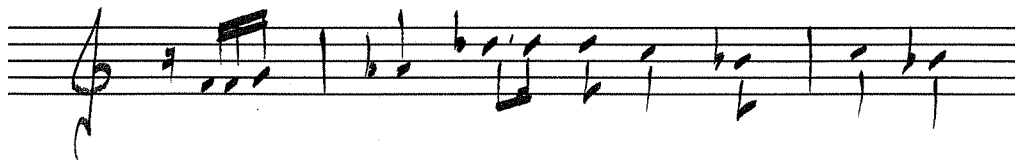
CHILDREN'S SONGS with illustrations by Josy Cobb,
CRAZY JANE SONGS and COME, SAID THE MUSE with illustrations by Diane Cobb,
SEVEN SONGS with illustrations by Thomas Eakins

Donald Cobb

Boats in a Fog

Songs on Poetry of Robinson Jeffers

for voice and piano



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The Roan Stallion (1924-25)

Thurso's Landing (1930-31)

A sudden fog-drift muffled the ocean,
A throbbing of engines moved in it,
At length, a stone's throw out, between the rocks and the vapor,
One by one moved shadows
Out of the mystery, shadows, fishing-boats, trailing each other
Following the cliff for guidance,
Holding a difficult path between the peril of the sea-fog
And the foam on the shore granite.

One by one, trailing their leader, six crept by me,
 Out of the vapor and into it,
 The throb of their engines subdued by the fog, patient and cautious,
 Coasting all round the peninsula
 Back to the buoys in Monterey harbor. A flight of pelicans
 Is nothing lovelier to look at;
 The flight of the planets is nothing nobler; all the arts lose virtue
 Against the essential reality
 Of creatures going about their business among the equally
 Earnest elements of nature.

The Roan Stallion (1924-25)

THE BED BY THE WINDOW

I chose the bed downstairs by the sea-window for a good death-bed
 When we built the house; it is ready waiting,
 Unused unless by some guest in a twelvemonth, who hardly suspects
 Its latter purpose. I often regard it,
 With neither dislike nor desire; rather with both, so equalled
 That they kill each other and a crystalline interest
 Remains alone. We are safe to finish what we have to finish;
 And then it will sound rather like music
 When the patient daemon behind the screen of sea-rock and sky
 Thumps with his staff, and calls thrice: "Come, Jeffers."

Thurso's Landing (1930-31)

RETURN

A little too abstract, a little too wise,
 It is time for us to kiss the earth again,
 It is time to let the leaves rain from the skies,
 Let the rich life run to the roots again.
 I will go down to the lovely Sur Rivers
 And dip my arms in them up to the shoulders.
 I will find my accounting where the alder leaf quivers
 In the ocean wind over the river boulders.
 I will touch things and things and no more thoughts,
 That breed like mouthless May-flies darkening the sky,
 The insect clouds that blind our passionate hawks
 So that they cannot strike, hardly can fly.
 Things are the hawk's food and noble is the mountain, Oh noble
 Pico Blanco, steep sea-wave of marble.

Solstice (1933-35)

1. Summer Holiday

Robinson Jeffers

Donald Cobb

Moderato ♩ = ca. 72

Voice

f >

When the sun shouts and people a - bound One thinks there were the a - ges of

Piano

f >

mp

stone and the age of bronze And the i - ron age;

mf *mp*

mf

I - ron the un - sta - ble met - al; Steel made of i - ron, un-sta-ble as his

mf rhythmic

3

3

moth - er;_____

The to-wered-up ci-ties Will be stains of rust on mounds of plas-ter__

Broader

Roots will not pierce the heaps for a

First tempo, animated

time, kind rains will cure them, — Then no-thing will re - main of the i - ron age

And all these peo-ple but a thigh-bone or so, a —

poem Stuck in the world's thought, — splin-ters of glass In the rub - bish

poco rall. A tempo, broadly

dumps, a con-crete dam far off in the moun - tain...—

rall. Remain a bit slower

with movement

a tempo

Somewhat slower

2. The Place for No Story

With movement

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50, \text{ in } 1$

mf

The coast hills at Sov - ra - nes Creek: No trees, but

very short

mf *mp* *mf*

dark — scant pas - ture drawn thin O - ver rock shaped like flame;

very short

Darker

The old o - cean at the land's foot, the vast Gray ex - ten - sion be -

Animated

yond the long white vi - o - lence;

f

3

Smoother

mf

A herd of cows and the bull Far

mp

poco rall. *a tempo* *poco rall.*

dis - tant, — hard - ly ap - pa - rent up the dark slope;

a tempo

And the gray air haunt-ed with hawks:

legato *mf* *f espr.*

This place is the no - blest

mp rocking slightly *poco*

thing I have ev - er seen. — No im - ag - i - na - ble Hu - man pres - ence

poco

here could do a - ny - thing But di - lute the lone - ly self - watch - ful pas - sion.

poco rall.

a tempo

mf

(no slowing)

mp

3. Boats in a Fog

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 88$ *poco rall. a tempo*

f Sports and gal-lan-tries, the

mf with movement

stage, the arts, the an - tics of danc - ers, The ex - u - ber-ant voic - es of

f *mf*

Broaden somewhat

mf mu - sic, Have charm for chil - dren but lack no - bil - i - ty —

f *accented*

Broaden

it is bit - ter ear - nest-ness that makes — beau - ty;

legato *f*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins in 4/4 time with a tempo of approximately 88 beats per minute. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into four systems. The first system shows the vocal melody starting with a forte (f) dynamic, with lyrics 'Sports and gal-lan-tries, the'. The piano accompaniment is marked 'mf with movement'. The second system continues the vocal melody with lyrics 'stage, the arts, the an - tics of danc - ers, The ex - u - ber-ant voic - es of'. The piano part features triplets and is marked with 'f' and 'mf' dynamics. The third system is marked 'Broaden somewhat' and shows a change in tempo and dynamics, with lyrics 'mu - sic, Have charm for chil - dren but lack no - bil - i - ty —'. The piano part includes an 'accented' section. The fourth system is marked 'Broaden' and shows further tempo and dynamic changes, with lyrics 'it is bit - ter ear - nest-ness that makes — beau - ty;'. The piano part includes a 'legato' section. The score concludes with a final measure in 4/4 time.

press forward

The musical score for this system consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part has a treble and bass staff. The right hand plays a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. The vocal line is written on a single staff with lyrics. The tempo is marked 'press forward'.

poco rall. **A bit slower** **A tempo**

The mind Knows grown a - dult. —

mp *p floating*

The musical score for this system consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part has a treble and bass staff. The right hand plays a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. The vocal line is written on a single staff with lyrics. The tempo is marked 'poco rall.', 'A bit slower', and 'A tempo'. The dynamics are marked 'mp' and 'p floating'.

mp each phrase separately, freely

A sud - den fog - drift muf - fled the o - cean, A throb - bing of

p

The musical score for this system consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part has a treble and bass staff. The right hand plays a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. The vocal line is written on a single staff with lyrics. The tempo is marked 'mp each phrase separately, freely'. The dynamics are marked 'p'.

mf

en - gines moved in it, At length, a stone's throw out, be - tween the rocks and the va - por,

The musical score for this system consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part has a treble and bass staff. The right hand plays a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. The vocal line is written on a single staff with lyrics. The tempo is marked 'mf'.

Even tempo

poco *singing*

One by one moved shad - ows Out — of the mys - ter - y, shad - ows, fish - ing

boats, trail-ing each oth - er — Fol-low-ing the cliff for guid - ance,

poco rall.

Hold-ing a dif-fi-cult path be-tween the per-il of the sea - fog And the foam on the shore gran-ite.

a tempo **Freely**

One by one, — trail-ing their

lead - er, six crept by me, — Out of the va - por and in - to it,

Steady pulse

The throb of their en - gines sub-dued by the fog, — pa-tient and

mp pulsing

legato

cau - tious, — coast - ing — all — round the pen-in - su - la Back to the

bu - oys in Mon-te-rey har - bor.

mf

f sonorous

*poco rall.**a tempo, somewhat freely*

mf

A flight of pel - i - cans is no - thing love - li - er to

p

mf

look at; — The flight of the pla - nets is no - thing no - bler; — all the

mf

p

Moving steadily*poco cresc.*

arts lose vir - tue a - gainst the es - sen - tial re - al - i - ty Of crea - tures go - ing a - bout their

poco cresc.

Broaden

busi - ness a - mong the e - qual - ly ear - nest el - e - ments of na - ture. —

mf

p

A tempo

First system of music, marked **A tempo** and **f strongly**. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. There are triplets in the right hand towards the end of the system.

Broaden

Second system of music, marked **mf** and **Broaden**. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. There are triplets in the right hand towards the end of the system.

A bit more movement

Broaden

Third system of music, marked **A bit more movement** and **Broaden**. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. There are triplets in the right hand towards the end of the system.

Fourth system of music, marked **f** and **mf**. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. There are triplets in the right hand towards the end of the system.

A bit more movement

Fifth system of music, marked **mp gliding** and **p**. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. There are triplets in the right hand towards the end of the system.

4. The Bed by the Window

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 66$

mp quietly, legato

I chose the bed down - stairs by the sea - win - dow for a

mp quietly, legato

good death - bed When we built the house;

poco

mf with movement

poco rall. *a tempo* *less legato, bit of whimsy*

It is read - y wait - ing, Un-used un - less by some

mp

poco

The musical score is written for voice and piano in 2/2 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as approximately 66 beats per minute. The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains the first line of the vocal melody and the first four measures of the piano accompaniment. The second system contains the second line of the vocal melody and the next four measures of the piano accompaniment. The third system contains the third line of the vocal melody and the final four measures of the piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a variety of textures, including sustained chords, moving lines, and dynamic markings such as *mp*, *mf*, and *poco*. The vocal melody is characterized by a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. The lyrics are written below the vocal line, and the piano part is written below the vocal line.

guest in a twelve-month who hardly suspects Its later purpose.

mf

flowing

I often regard it, With neither dislike nor de-

flowing

mf

poco rall. *a tempo*

sire; rather with both, so equalled That they kill each other

playfully

mf

and a crys - tal-line in-terest Re - mains a -

mf

mp

p

rall. *a tempo* **Holding back**

rall. *a tempo* **Holding back**

lone. We are safe to fin - ish what we have to

A bit more movement

A bit more movement

fin - ish;

mf

Animated

f

And then_ it will sound rath-er like mu - sic When the pa - tient

mf

f *mf*

dea - mon be - hind the screen of sea-rock Thumps with his staff, and calls thrice: "Come,

A bit separated

Jef - fers."_

mf *mf*

Broaden

f *f* *mf*

5. Return

Moderato ♩ = ca. 72

mf simply

A lit-tle too ab-stract, a lit-tle too wise, It is

mf poco *f* *f*

legato, with movement *short*

time for us to kiss the earth a - gain, It is time to let the leaves rain from the

mf legato *short* *short*

short *f not heavy*

skies, Let the rich life run to the roots a - gain. I will go

short *short* *f not heavy*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The tempo is Moderato, with a quarter note equal to approximately 72 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into three systems. The first system is in 4/4 time and includes the lyrics 'A lit-tle too ab-stract, a lit-tle too wise, It is'. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). The second system continues the melody and includes the lyrics 'time for us to kiss the earth a - gain, It is time to let the leaves rain from the'. The piano part has a long, flowing melody in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). The third system concludes the piece and includes the lyrics 'skies, Let the rich life run to the roots a - gain. I will go'. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). The score includes various performance markings such as 'mf simply', 'poco', 'f', 'legato, with movement', 'short', and 'f not heavy'.

down to the love - ly Sur Riv - ers___ And dip my arms in them up to the shoul - ders.___

3

mf with clarity

a bit more f

I will find my ac-count-ing where the al-der leaf qui-vers In the o-cean

Broaden

wind o - ver the ri - ver boul-ders. I___ will touch things and things and no more

espr.

with clarity

thoughts, That breed like mouth-less May-flies dark-en-ing the sky, The in - sect

mp

poco rall.

clouds that blind our pas-sion-ate hawks_ So that they can - not strike, hard-ly can

Fervently

fly.____ Things are the hawk's food and no - ble is the

f

mf

moun-tain, Oh no - ble Pi - co Blan - co, steep sea - wave of mar - ble.

f

mf solidly

f espr.

ff

f

mf

Broaden

poco rall.

f

poco

mp

p



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