

Prach Boondiskulchok

Goose Daughter

*a quasi-tragicomic chamber operatic song cycle
for
voice, violin, viola, cello and piano*

Goose Daughter

a song cycle

for voice, violin, viola, cello and piano

- I. Proverb
- II. The Lychee Tree
- III. No Name
- IV. Lullaby
- V. Profit, Loss

I. Proverb

“It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters.”

II. The Lychee Tree

This is the tale of the woodsman’s daughter. Born with a box
of ashes set beside the bed,
in case. Before the baby’s first cry, he rolled her face into the cinders –
held it. Weak from the bloom
of too-much-blood, the new mother tried to stop his hand. He dragged
her out into the yard, flogged her
with the usual branch. If it was magic in the wood, they never
said, but she began to change:

her scar-ridged back, beneath his lashes, toughened to a rind; it split
and crusted into bark. Her prone
knees dug in the sandy ground and rooted, questing for water,
as her work-grained fingers lengthened
into twigs. The tree – a lychee – he continued to curse as if it
were his wife – its useless, meagre
fruit. Meanwhile the girl survived. Feathered in greyish ash,
her face tucked in, a little gosling.

III. No Name

He called her *Mei Ming*: No Name. She never learned to speak. Her life
maimed by her father’s sorrow.

For grief is a powerful thing – even for objects never conceived.

He should have dropped her down
the well. Then at least he could forget. Sometimes when he set
to work, hefting up his axe
to watch the cleanness of its arc, she butted at his elbow – again,
again – with her restive head,

till angry, he flapped her from him. But if these silent pleas had
meaning, neither knew.

IV. Lullaby

The child's only comfort came from nestling under the
lychee tree. Its shifting branches
whistled her wordless lullabies: the lychees with their watchful eyes,
the wild geese crossing overhead.
The fruit, the geese. They marked her seasons. She didn't long to join
the birds, if longing implies

a will beyond the blindest instinct. Then one mid-autumn, she craned
her neck so far to mark the geese
wheeling through the clouded hills – it kept on stretching – till
it tapered in a beak. Her pink toes
sprouted webs and claws; her helpless arms found strength
in wings. The goose daughter
soared to join the arrowed skein: kin linked by a single aim
and tide, she knew their heading
and their need. . .

*(... so manchen süßen Traum.
Als riefen sie mir zu:
"komm her zu mir, Geselle,
hier findest du deine ...)*

V. Profit, Loss

. . . They spent that year or more in flight, but where –
across what sparkling tundra wastes –
I've not heard tell. Some say the fable ended there. But those
who know the ways of wild geese
know too the obligation to return, to their first dwelling place. Let this
suffice: late spring. A woodsman
snares a wild goose that spirals clean into his yard – almost like
it knows. Gripping its sinewed neck

he presses it down into the block, cross-hewn from a lychee trunk.
A single blow. Profit, loss.

Tame
by Sarah Howe

(with a fragment from *Der Lindenbaum*
in *Winterreise* by Franz Schubert)

Notes for performance

- 1.) This work can be performed by male or female voices.
- 2.) Dynamics in the vocal part are relative to the part alone, and seek to depict the character and feel of a phrase. The words should always be clear and intelligible.
- 3.) Harmonics on the piano are achieved by touching the nodes on the struck strings. The nodes are notated as if they are fingered harmonics on a stringed instrument. The pianist will have to find those nodes and mark their location with a pencil on the strings.
- 4.) In *Lullaby*, the instrumentalists sing using their plain, untrained voice, very softly like singing a lullaby to child. This can be sung at any octave.
- 5.) In *Profit, Loss*, the viola (and also violin at the end) should sound like a folk fiddle as much as possible. Slurs are used in the Classical sense that they indicate release as well as legato. Please feel free to add fiddle ornaments, but never losing a very quiet, nostalgic, and simple atmosphere.

Goose Daughter

a quasi-tragicomic chamber operatic song cycle

on the poem *Tame* by
Sarah Howe

Prach Boondiskulchok (2016)

I. Proverb

$\text{♩} = c. 216$ wisely spoken, but high voice
poco rubato

Voice

It is more pro fit-a ble to raise geese

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Piano

f vivacemete poco meno *f*

9

Voice

than daugh- ters.

Vln.

pizz. sempre sonoro

p *pp*

Vla.

pizz. sempre sonoro

p

Vc.

(arco)

p

Pno.

8^{vb}

16

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

ppp
sempre delicatissimo

con Ped.

20

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

23

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

5

27

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

31

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

35

Rall.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

piu secco (sempre ppp)

40

Vc.

Pno.

ppp

Attacca

II. The Lychee Tree

Moderato semplice

♩ = 100

1

mp molto non grazioso

This is a tale of the woods-man's daughter.

Moderato semplice

♩ = 100

arco

mp molto non grazioso
arco

mp molto non grazioso
arco

mp molto non grazioso

pp

7

Born with a box of ashes set beside the bed,

Born with a box of ashes set beside the bed,

mp

mp

mp

pp

*Time signatures with + or - are performed as if in that time signature adding or subtracting a 16th note per + or - sign.

E.g. 3++/4 = 3/4+2/16 = 7/8

13

pp in case. *mf* Be - fore the

Vln. *pp* *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Pno. *pp* *mf*

16

ba - by's first cry,

Vln. *pp* *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Pno. *pp* *mf*

19

he rolled her face in - to the cin - ders,

Vln. *f* *pp marc.* *n*

Vla. *f* *mp* *n*

Vc. *f* *mp* *n*

Pno. *f* *mp* *n*

25 *p* pochiss. rit. a tempo

held it.

ord. senza vib

pp *n* *fff* (b) *tr*

pp *n* *fff*

senza vib *slide*

senza vib *slide*

pp *n* *fff* *s.p. molto vib*

pp *n* *fff* *n*

p pochiss. rit. a tempo

pp *pp mesto*

p

30 *f* *mf* *n*

f *mf* *n*

pp *rall. trem.* *5* *3* *accel. trem. presto - - rall . . . molto a . .*

p *ppp* *p*

ppp

33 *mp espr.*

pp sempre *5* *5*

pp sospirando

36 *p*

Weak from the bloom of too - much - blood,

Vln. *pp* *espr.*

Vla. *s.t.* *pp nebbioso* *gliss.* *n* *ppp* *gliss.*

Vc. *p dim.* *cresc.*

Pno.

40 *mf*

the new mo-ther

Vln. *poco cresc.*

Vla. *>n* *p espr.* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Vc. *p dim.* *cresc.*

Pno.

44

tried to stop his hand - , his hand - , his...

mf

mp

poco cresc.

47 (Tempo I)

He dragged her out in - to the yard - ,

f

mf

(Tempo I)

f

8va

f

mf

51 *f*

flogged her with the us - u - al branch -

Vln. *s.p.*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *mp*

55

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *p*

p espressivo

58 *p espressivo*

If it was ma - gic in the wood,

Vln. *p*

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *pp*

60

they ne - ver said, but she be-gan to change - : her

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

pp

62

scar - ridged - back be-neath his lash - es tough - ened to a

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

s.t.
ppp

s.p.
pp poco marcato

4

64

p

rind; it split and crus - ted in - to

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

poco a poco cresc.

66

bark. Her prone knees dug in the

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

68

sand - y ground and root - ed quest-ting for wa - - ter.

mf

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

70

as her work - grained

Vln.

Pno.

mp

72

fin - gers leng - thened in - - to

Vln.

Pno.

73

bran - molto vib. . . ches The

Vln.

Pno.

cresc.

tr

74 "falsetto"

tree

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

f

f

f

f

f

f

f *sonoro*

75

molto grazioso e dolcissimo

Pno.

mf

mp

a

76

ly - chee.

Pno.

dim.

pp

78 *mp* molto non grazioso

He con - ti - nues

Vln. *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *pp* *pp* (*sempre*)

81

to curse as if it were - his

Vln. 3

Vla. 3

Vc. 3 *8va*

Pno.

84

f *rallentando, molto pathetico*

wife, its use - less, mea - gre fruit. —

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

6 *f*

87

A Tempo, molto rallentando e sospirando

p *ppp*

con Ped.

90 **piu tranquillo, senza rallentando**
p semplice

Mean-while the girl sur - vived. Feath - ered in grey - ish ash,

piu tranquillo, senza rallentando
p semplice

Pno.

96 *pp* *tenute*

her face tucked in, a litt - le gos - ling

delicatissimo

Vln. *pp* *ppp*

Vla. *pp* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *ppp*

Pno. *pp* *ppp delicatissimo*

III. No Name

Very fast
♩ = 160-184

1

Vln. *fff* totally crazy
sempre stacc.
e marcatiss.

Vla. *fff* totally crazy
sempre stacc.
e marcatiss.

Vc. *fff* totally crazy
sempre stacc.
e marcatiss. (ossia = swap b-flat and e-flat)

Pno. *fff* totally crazy
sempre stacc.
e marcatiss.

5 (attacca)

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

Recitativo, meno mosso
Declamatory, Beijing Opera style

mf espressivo, bel canto *p seufzen pp*

9 He call - ed her Mei-Ming Mei - Ming Mei - Ming

Recitativo, meno mosso
gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss around - following the melody

Vln. *pp* *n*

10 **Very fast**

Mei - Ming

Very fast
ff stacc., marcatis.

Vln. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Vla. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Vc. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Pno. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

15 *Whisper*
mf dim poco a poco

No - Name Mei Ming No Name No Name No Name no name

Vln. *mf dim poco a poco*

Vla. *mf dim poco a poco*

Vc. *mf dim poco a poco*

Pno. *mf dim poco a poco*

22 *ppp*

Perc. no name no name no name no name no no no...

Pno.

p pitchless knocking noise made by holding strings tightly with R.H. and playing several notes with L.H.

29 *Beijing Opera*

Recitativo, meno mosso

She ne-ver learned to speak, ne-ver learned to speak, to speak

p doloroso *pp*

Recitativo, meno mosso
pizz, following melody, with Ped.

Pno.

30 **Very fast**

to speak to speak to

Very fast

Vln. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Vla. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Vc. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Pno. *ff stacc., marcatis.*

Whisper

fff dim molto

37

speak to speak to speak to speak to speak to speak to speak

Vln. *f dim molto* pitchless scratch, over-pressed, getting shorter and quieter.

Vla. *f dim molto* pitchless scratch, over-pressed, getting shorter and quieter.

Vc. *f dim molto* pitchless scratch, over-pressed, getting shorter and quieter.

Pno.

44

Perc. *p* to speak *pp* to speak to speak speak speak speak sp sp

Vln. *pp* *n*

Vla. *pp* *n*

Vc. *pp* *n*

Meno mosso

"Im Legenden Ton"

54

Her life_ maimed by her fa-ther's sorr - ow. For grief_ is a pow - er - ful thing -

Meno mosso

Pno. *f sonoro* like a gong

56 *molto vib. e gliss.*

e - ven for ob - jects ne - ver con - ceived.

Pno.

57 **Very fast (attacca)**

He should have dropped her down the well the well the well the well the well the well the well.

Very fast (attacca)

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno. *ff marcatis. e stacc.*

fff

66 *f denial* *f sempre marcato*

Then at least he could for - get. Some - times when he set to work,

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno. *mf scherzando* *ff*

69 *ff ugly* *rough, almost savage*

hef - ting up his axe to watch the clean -

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

73 *normal* *sempre ff*

ness of its arc, she but - ted at his el - bow a - gain a -

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

78

gain *repeat words... gradually loing vowel sound and pitch* a g a a

Pno.

a - gain a - gain a - gain a - gain a - gain a -

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

*semi-screaming,
whatever the pitches*

mime ff but no sound coming out

Freeze

95

ff gain a - gain a - gain *ffⁿ* a - (gain) (a - gain) (a -

repeat till unbearable

Freeze

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

Quasi Recitativo

p liberamente

dolcissimo

Beijing Opera

p lontano

101

she but - ted at his el - bow a - gain with her res - tive head, till

Quasi Recitativo

Pno.

mp doloroso, ma sempre dolcissimo

102

an - gry, he flapped her from him. But if these si - lent pleas had

Pno.

pp

104

mea - - - - - ning, nei - ther knew.

Vln.

Vla.

Pno.

semplice

pp

ppp

lontanissimo

IV. Lullaby

1 **Mäßig, gemütlich rauschend** con "super sordino"

Vln. *pp*

Pno. *pp lontanissimo*
ppp profundo
Ped.

3

Vln. *lontanissimo, amabile*
pizz.

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *etc.*

5

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

7 *mp dolce*
The child's on - ly com - fort

Vln. *arp. simile*

Vc.

Pno.

9

came from nest - ling un - der the

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

11

ly - chee tree.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

13

Its

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

15

shift - - ing branch - es whis - tled her word _____ less lull - a -

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

17

bies:

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

19

the

senza sord.

mf

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

21

ly - chees with their watch - ful eyes, the

mf

Vln. *pp* 9 9 9 "super sordino"

Vla.

Vc.

Pno. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

23

wild geese cross - ing ov - er - head

Vln. 9 9 9 6 6 6 6

Vla.

Vc.

Pno. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

25

Vln. 6 6 6 6 6 6 *n*

Vla.

Vc.

Pno. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

27 *molto espressivo* *mp*

The fruit, the

"super sordino" ord.

p *molto espress.*

Piano accompaniment with triplets and sustained bass notes.

29

geese.

senza sord. *pp espr.*

Piano accompaniment with triplets and a sextuplet.

31

They marked her

pp *arco* *pp*

Piano accompaniment with sextuplets and triplets.

sea - - sons.
(senza sord.)

Vln. *pp* *piu vicino* molto s.t., shadowy

Vla. shadowy *ppp*

Vc. *p* *n* *n* *p* *n*

Pno.

p
She did not long to join them, if

Vln.

Vla. *3*

Vc. *n* *p* *n* *n* *p* *n*

Pno.

long - - - ing im - plies
vib. *tr*

Vla. *mp* *n*

Vc. *n* *p* *n*

Pno.

38

pp
a will be - yond the blind - dest the blind - - est

Vln. *sempre s.t.* *pp shadowy* *n*

Vla. *pp* *shadowy* *n*

Vc. *n* *6* *6* *p* *6* *6* *n* *n* *6* *6* *p* *n*

Pno. *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

40

in - - stict.

Vln. *pp* *n*

Vla. *pp* *n*

Vc. *n* *pp* *n*

Pno. *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

41

Vln. *pp* *n*

Vla. *pp shadowy* *n*

Vc. *n* *pp* *n*

Pno. *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

42

Vln. *pp* *n*

Vla. *pp* *n*

Vc. *pp* *n*

Pno. *pp* *n*

43

Vln. *pp* *n*

Vla. *pp* *n*

Vc. *pp* *n*

Pno. *pp* *n*

44

Vln. *pp* *n*

Vla. *pp* *n*

Vc. *pp* *n*

Pno. *disappearing*

46 *p*

Then one mid - au - tumn, she craned her neck so

Vln. *pp* *lontano* *poco cresc.*

Vla. *pp* *lontano* *poco cresc.*

Vc. *n*

Pno. *n*

48 *mp*

far to mark the geese wheel - ing through the cloud - ed hills, it kept on

Vln. *mf* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *pp*

Pno. *pp*

50 *cresc.*

stretch - ing, till it tap - ered in a

Vln. *poco a poco cresc.*

Vla. *poco a poco cresc.*

Vc. *poco a poco cresc.*

Pno. *poco a poco cresc.*

51

mf sempre cresc.

beak. Her pink toes sprout - ed

Vln. *3 3 3 5 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 5*

Vla. *3 3 3*

Vc. *5 5 6 3 6 3*

Pno. *3 3 3 6 3 6 3*

53

webs and claws; her help - less arms found strength in

Vln. *f 6 6 6 6 5 3 5 9*

Vla. *f 5 5 6 3 6 6*

Vc. *f 3 3 3 6 pizz.*

Pno. *f 6 6 6 6 6 6 3 6 6*

59

Vln. *14*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *6*

repeat this pattern very freely while walking until off stage
keep playing till end of piece but barely audible on stage

60

Vln. *n*

Vc. *n*

Pno. *pochiss. calando*
pp lontanissimo come prima

62

Vla. *pizz. p*
ppp

Vc. *pizz. p*
ppp

Pno. *pp lontanissimo come prima*

pp dolciss.
kin linked

so man - chen süß - en Traum.
sing lullaby: very simple and intimate

so man - chen süß - en Traum.
sing with viola and cello

64

by a sin - gle aim and tide, she

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

66

knew their head - ing and their need.

als rie - fen sie mir
als rie - fen sie mir

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

68

zu: "komm her zu mir, Ge sel - le, hier findest du
zu: "komm her zu mir, Ge sel - le, hier findest du

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

71

Vla. *dei - ne..."*

Vc. *dei - ne..."*

Pno. *dim. molto*

73

Pno. *pppp*

V. Profit, Loss

Flowing ♩ = 112

1 *arco*

Vla. *pp folk-fiddle, release with each slur, hairpins should be very natural and subtle*

6

Vla. *pp*

11 *p very simple, folk style, with some portamento*

Vla. *They spent that year or more in flight, but where, a - cross what spark-ling*

17

Vla. *tun - dral wastes, I've not heard tell. Some*

22

say the fa - ble end - ed there, but those who know the ways of wild geese know

Vla.

27

too the ob - li ga - tion to re - turn to their first dwell ling place.

Vla.

Vc.

arco

pp

32

Vla.

Vc.

cresc.

mf

cresc.

mf

36

Vla.

Vc.

p sub.

p sub.

con sordino

40

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

p off stage, frail but still with some energy, walk through audience towards stage 14

(Piano enters only from second time)

Repeat twice or three times depending on how long it takes for the violin to enter stage.

Pno.

ppp
sempre delicatissimo

ppp con Ped. sempre
sempre delicatissimo

now on stage

(still ad lib.)

20

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

move towards seat slowly

44

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

48

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

52

Vln. *vc.*

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

(same tempo)

55

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno.

piu secco (sempre ppp)

58

Vln. *tr accel.* *gliss.* *collapse into seat* *Molto Rallentando* *(seated, con sord.)*

Vla. *s.p.* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *pp*

61

Vln. *scratchy* *over-pressed, pitchless*

Vc. *s.p.* *ppp* *n*

Pno.

a tempo, poco meno mosso

narrating, not dramatic

67

a tempo, poco meno mosso

Vln.

Vla.

pp come prima

p molto marcato

A

72

woods-man snares a wild— goose that spi-rals clean in-to his yard, al - most like it knows.

Vla.

Pno.

p cantabile

77

Grip - ping its— si - newed neck, he pres-ses it down, he

Vln.

Vla.

Pno.

82

pres-ses it down_ in - to the wood-en block... the woo-den block,_crossed hewn from a

Vla.

Pno.

pp

