

STITCH-COUNTING: A DRAMATIC SONG CYCLE

Words from poems by E. E. Cummings

Music by Christopher J. Hossfeld
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i. now two old ladies sit peacefully knitting

Adagio ♩ = 72

Oboe *p* *piu p*

Bass Clarinet in B♭ *p* *piu p*

Violin *p* *piu p*

Violoncello *p* *piu p*



Moderato ♩ = 92

11

Ob. *pp* *p*

B. Cl. *pp* *p*

Narr. now two old la - dies sit peace - ful - ly

Pno *p*

Vln. *pp* *p*

Vc. *pp* *p*

"now two old ladies sit peacefully knitting," "may i feel said he", "i like my body when it is with your", and "don't get me wrong oblivion" from COMPLETE POEMS: 1904-1962, by E. E. Cummings, Edited by George J. Firmage, are used with the permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation. Copyright (c) 1923, 1925, 1935, 1951, 1953, 1963, 1973, 1983, 1991 by the Trustees for the E. E. Cummings Trust. Copyright (c) 1973, 1976, 1978, 1983 by George James Firmage.

20

Ob. *cresc.* *mf*

B. Cl. *cresc.* *mf*

O.L.1 *f* (ALWAYS)

Narr. knit - ting, and their names are some - times and al - ways

Pno *cresc.* *mf*

Vln. *cresc.* *mf*

Vc. *cresc.* *mf*

25

Ob. *p*

B. Cl. *p*

O.L.1

Narr. can't un - der - stand what life could have seen in him
stitch - count - ing al ways se - vere - ly re - marks;

Pno *p* pizz. *p*

Vln. *pizz.* *p*

Vc. *p*

30

O.L.1 (interrupting) *f*

O.L.2 (SOMETIMES) *att*

Narr. *mf*

Pno *mf*

Vc. *arco*

and her sis-ter (suppress-ing a yawn) coun-ters

o i don't know; death's ra-ther att-ract-ive



37

Ob.

B. Cl.

O.L.1

O.L.2

Pno *p*

Vln. *pizz.*

Vc. *pizz.*

rac-tive! why how can you say such a thing? when i think of my poor dear hus-band

now don't be ab-surd:

42

O.L.2

what i said was 'ra - ther att - rac - tive', my dear; and you know ver - y well that ne - ver was ver - y

Pno

cresc. *mf* *p* *cresc.*



48

Ob.

B. Cl.

O.L.1

O.L.2

Narr.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

good hea - vens!

much more than at - trac - tive — ne - ver was stun - ning

a crash. Both jump

mf *pp* *f*

54 (WOMAN enters)

O.L.1

O.L.2 what was that?

Narr. well here comes your daugh - ter
al - ways ex - claims soothes some - times; at which death's

Pno

Vln. arco *p*

59

Ob. *f* *p sub.*

B. Cl. *f* *p sub.*
(suddenly bored)

O.L.1

O.L.2 what
(suddenly bored)

Wom. (LIFE) what

Narr. that terr - i - ble child!
pret - ty young wife en - ters; wring - ing her hands and wail - ing some - times and

Pno *fp* *f* *p sub.*

Vln. *fp* *f* pizz.

Vc. *fp* *f* pizz. *p sub.*

Quick waltz tempo $\text{♩} = 54$

65

Ob. *p*

B. Cl. *p*

O.L.1

O.L.2

Wom. now? (anguished reminiscing)

Narr. *3* my doll: my beau-ti-ful—
al-ways to-geth-er cry

Pno *p*

Vln. Quick waltz tempo $\text{♩} = 54$ *p*

Vc. *p*



72

Ob. *simile*

B. Cl. *simile*

Wom. doll; the ver-y first doll you gave me, moth-er (when i could

Pno *simile*

Vln. *simile*

Vc. *simile*

79

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

scarce-ly walk) with the eyes that o-pened and shut (you re - mem - ber: don't you;

Pno

Vln.

Vc.



87

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

we called her love) my doll: (calmer)

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

94

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

my beau-ti-ful— doll; with the eyes that o-pened and shut



101

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

(you re-mem-ber: don't you, aun-tie; we called her love)

mp

mp

mp

mp

109

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

cresc.

and i've trea - sured her all these years, and to - day i went through a clo - set



115

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

p

cresc.

p

cresc.

mp

p

cresc.

pizz.

arco

p

pizz.

cresc.

arco

cresc.

look - ing for some - thing; and o - pened a box, and there she lay:

121

Ob. f

B. Cl. f

Wom. ff (angrily) $\text{—} 3 \text{—}$
and when he saw her, he begged me to let him hold her; just once:

Pno. fp ff fp ff *Ped.*

Vln. fp ff fp ff *Ped.*

Vc. fp ff fp ff *Ped.*



129

Ob. ff

B. Cl. ff

Wom. $\text{—} 3 \text{—}$ ff
and i told him 'man - kind, be care - ful; she's

Pno. *simile*

Vln. *Ped.* *Ped.*

Vc. ff ff

(WOMAN stops and looks at the OLD LADIES for a reaction, but they remain intent on their knitting)

139

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

terr-i-bly frag - ile: don't break her or moth - er'll be an - gry'

Pno

Vln.

Vc.



150 **Moderato** ♩ = 92

Ob.

B. Cl.

Narr.

and then (ex - cept for the click - ing of need - les)

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

Moderato ♩ = 92

156

Ob.

B. Cl.

Narr.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

there was si - lence

diminuendo



ii. may i feel said he

163

Adagio non espressivo ♩ = 72

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Man

Narr.

Vln.

Vc.

(i'll squeal

may i feel *p* just once

said he said she said

p *pp* *p* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

174

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Man

Narr.

Vln.

Vc.

it's fun how much why not

(may i touch a lot

he) said she said he said she said he) said



185

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Man

Narr.

Vln.

Vc.

mp *mp* *mf*

mf not too far where you are

(let's go *mf* what's too far

she said he said she said he said she)

mp *mp*

194

Ob. *pp*

B. Cl. *pp*

Wom. *p*

Man *p* (which way if you kiss

Narr. *p* may i stay like this
said he said she said he said she

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*



204

Ob. *crescendo* *mf*

B. Cl. *crescendo* *mf*

Wom. *crescendo* is it love (but you're kill - ing

Man *crescendo* may i move if you're will - ing *mf*

Narr. *crescendo* said he said she) said he said she *mf*

Vln. *crescendo* *mf*

Vc. *crescendo* *mf*

212 *cresc. poco a poco*

Ob. *p*

B. Cl. *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

Wom. *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

Man *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* but your wife ow_

Narr. but it's life *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* now_ tip-top
 said he said she said he) said she said he

Vln. *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

Vc. *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

222

Ob. *molto cresc.* *f* *dim.*

B. Cl. *molto cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Wom. *molto cresc.* *f* don't stop go_ slow *ff*

Man *molto cresc.* oh no *f* (c - c - come?)

Narr. *molto cresc.* said she said he) said she said he

Vln. *molto cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Vc. *molto cresc.* *f* *diminuendo*

230

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Man

Narr.

Vln.

Vc.

diminuendo

pp

pp

p

p

mp

p

ummm

(you are Mine—

you're di - vine

said she)

said he

said she)



iii. i like my body when it is with your

240 **Fast tango** ♩ = 144

Man

Pno

f

f

i like my bo-dy when it is with your bo-dy. It is so



246

Man

Narr.

Pno

quite a new thing.

Mus - cles bet - ter and nerves

f

i

251

Man *more.*

Narr. like my bo - dy when it is with your bo - dy. It is so quite a new

Pno



257

Man

Narr. thing. Mus - cles bet - ter and nerves more. i

Pno *piu f*



262

Man like your bo - dy. i like what it does, i like its hows. i like its hows.

Narr. like your bo - dy. i like what it does, i like its hows. i like its hows.

Pno *ff* *mf* pizz.

Vc. *ff*

267

Man
8
i like to feel the spine_ of your bo - dy and its bones, and the trem - bling - firm - smooth

Narr.
8
i like to feel the spine_ of your bo - dy and its

Pno

Vc.



271

Man
8
ness and which i will a - gain and a - gain

Narr.
8
bones and the trem - bling - firm - smooth ness and which i will a - gain and a - gain and a - gain

Pno

Vc.

276


Man  kiss,


Narr.  kiss,


Pno 


Vc. 

280


Man  i like kiss - ing this and that of you, i like, slow - ly strok - ing the, shock - ing

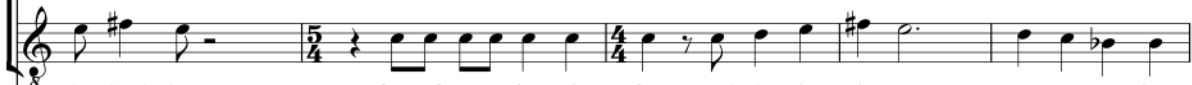
Narr.  i like kiss - ing this and that of you, i like, slow - ly strok - ing


Pno 

Vc. 

284

Man  shock - ing fuzz of your e - lec - tric fur, and what - is - it comes ov - er part - ing

Narr.  the, shock - ing fuzz of your e - lec - tric fur, and what - is - it comes ov - er part - ing

Pno 

289 **slower** **a tempo**

Man flesh.... And eyes big love - crumbs, —

Narr. flesh.... and

Pno *f*

295

Narr. poss - i - bly i like the thrill of un - der me you so quite new

Pno

iv. don't get me wrong oblivion

300 **Heavy** ♩. = 104

Ob. *ff* *f*

B. Cl. *ff* *f* *f*

Wom. don't get me wrong ob -

Pno *ff*

Vln. *ff* *fp* *f*

Vc. *ff* *fp* *f*

303

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

liv - i - on I ne - ver loved you kid - do you that was

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

fp *f* *fp*



306

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

al - - ways stick - ing a - round spoil - ing me for

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

f *mp* *pizz.* *mp*

309

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

e - ry - one else tell - ing me how it would make you

crescendo

crescendo

crescendo

crescendo

crescendo



311

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

nut - ty if I did - n't let you go the dis - tance and I gave you my breasts to

f

f

f

f

f

p

arco

p

arco

p

315

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

feel did-n't I and my mouth to kiss O I was too good to you ob

f

f

f

f

f

f



319

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

liv - i - on old kid that's all and when I

fp

f

fp

fp

fp

fp

322

Ob. *mp*

B. Cl. *mp*

Wom. might have told you to go a-head and croak your-self like you was al-ways

Pno *mp*

Vln. *f* *mp* pizz.

Vc. *f* *mp* pizz.



325

Ob. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Wom. threat-en-ing you was go-ing to do I did-n't I said go on you

Pno *f*

Vln. arco *fp* *f*

Vc. arco *fp* *f*

328

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

in - ter - est me I let you hang a - round and whim - per_ and I've been

Pno

mp

p *cresc.*

Vln.

p *cresc.*

Vc.

p *cresc.*



332

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

get - ting mine. Lis ten there's a fel - low I love like I nev - er loved an - y - one

Pno

fp

p

mp

Vln.

fp

p

Vc.

fp

mp

pizz.

Slightly faster ♩ = 112

Slightly faster ♩ = 112

336

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

else that's six foot two_ tall with a face an-y girl would die to kiss and a skin like a lit-tle kit-ten's

Pno

Vln.

Vc.



342

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

that's asked me to go to Murray's to-night with him and see the cab - a - ret and dance you know

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

349

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

well if he asks me to take an - o - ther I'm go - ing to and if he asks me to take an - o - ther af - ter



354

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

that I'm go - ing to do that and if he puts me in - to the ta - xi_ and tells the dri - ver to take her ea - sy and

360

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

steer for the mor - ning - I'm go - ing to let him and if he starts in right a - way put - ting it to me

arco

365

poco rit.

Heavy ♩. = 104

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

in - the cab I'm not go - ing to whis - per ob - liv - i - on do you get me

pp

pp

fp

pp

poco rit.

Heavy ♩. = 104

fp

pp

fp

pp

369 **freely**

Wom. not that I'm tired of au - to - mats and Childs's and hand - ing out rib - bon to old lad - ies that

Pno *crescendo*



371

Wom. ain't got three teeth and be - ing foll - owed home by pimps and stewed guys and sleep - ing

Pno



373 **Broad ♩. = 84**

Ob. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Wom. lone - ly in a white - washed room three thou - sand be - low Ze - ro oh no

Pno *mf* *f*

Vln. *mf* *f* **Broad ♩. = 84**

Vc. *mf* *f*

375 $\text{♩} = 168$

Ob. *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

Wom. *ff*
I could stand that but it's that I'm O Gawd how tir - ed of see - ing the white face of you and

Pno *ff*

Vln. *ff*

Vc. *ff* pizz. arco pizz.



379 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 112$

Ob. *dim.*

B. Cl. *dim.*

Wom. *dim.*
feel - ing the old hands of you and be - ing teased and joll - ied a - bout you and be - ing

Pno *dim.* *p*

Vln. *dim.* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *rit.*

Vc. *dim.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

384 **freely**

Wom. *3* prayed and im - plored and bribed and threat - ened to give you my *3*

Pno *fp*



387 **in tempo**

Wom. *6* beau - ti - ful white bo - dy kid - do that's... why *3*

Pno



392 **Adagio** ♩ = 72 **Optional Coda**

Ob. *p* *piu p*

B. Cl. *p* *piu p*

Vln. *p* *piu p*

Vc. *arco* *p* *piu p*

400

Ob.
B. Cl.
Vln.
Vc.

pp
pp
pp
pp

Detailed description: This musical score page contains four staves for measures 400 through 404. The instruments are Oboe (Ob.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 400: Ob. has a half note G4, B. Cl. has a half note G3, Vln. has a half note G4, and Vc. has a half note G3. Measure 401: Ob. has a half note A4, B. Cl. has a half note A3, Vln. has a half note A4, and Vc. has a half note A3. Measure 402: Ob. has a half note B4, B. Cl. has a half note B3, Vln. has a half note B4, and Vc. has a half note B3. Measure 403: Ob. has a half note C5, B. Cl. has a half note C4, Vln. has a half note C5, and Vc. has a half note C4. Measure 404: Ob. has a half note D5, B. Cl. has a half note D4, Vln. has a half note D5, and Vc. has a half note D4. The dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) is present in measures 403 and 404 for all instruments. The score concludes with a double bar line.