

STITCH-COUNTING: A DRAMATIC SONG CYCLE

Words from poems by E. E. Cummings

Music by Christopher J. Hossfeld
<http://www.christopherhossfeld.com>

i. now two old ladies sit peacefully knitting

Adagio ♩ = 72

Oboe
Bass Clarinet in B \flat
Violin
Violoncello

Moderato ♩ = 92

11

Ob.
B. Cl.
Narr.
Pno
Vln.
Vc.

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

"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) *i*

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 *p*

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.*

Vln. *pizz.*

Vc. *p*

30

O.L.1 (interrupting) *f*

O.L.2 (SOMETIMES) *att*

Narr. *mf*

Pno *mf*

Vc. *arco*

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

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



37

Ob.

B. Cl.

O.L.1 *rac-tive! why how can you say such a thing? when i think of my poor dear hus-band*

O.L.2 *now don't be ab-surd:*

Pno *p*

Vln. *pizz.*

Vc. *pizz.*

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*

(WOMAN enters)

54

O.L.1

O.L.2

Narr.

Pno

Vln.

what was that?

well here comes your daugh - ter

al - ways ex - claims

soothes some - times; at which death's

arco

p

59

Ob.

B. Cl.

O.L.1

O.L.2

Wom.

Narr.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

what

(suddenly bored)

what

(LIFE)

what

that terr - i - ble child!

pret - ty young wife en - ters; wring - ing her hands and wail - ing

some - times and

f *p sub.*

f *p sub.*

(suddenly bored)

fp *f* *p sub.*

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

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

Pno. *8* al-ways to-geth-er cry *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.

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

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.



101

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

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

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

109

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

cresc.

f

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.

mp

p

cresc.

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

pizz.

arco

p

pizz.

cresc. arco

cresc.

121

Ob. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Wom. *ff* (angrily) 3

and when he saw her, he begged me to let him hold her; just once:

Pno. *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vln. *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vc. *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

Ped.



129

Ob. *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

Wom. 3 *ff*

and i told him 'man - kind, be care - ful; she's

Pno. *simile*

Vln. *ff* *ff*

Vc. *ff* *ff*

Ped.

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

139

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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



150 Moderato ♩ = 92

Ob.

B. Cl.

Narr.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

12

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.

p

pp

p

pp

p

pp

p

pp

may i feel just once
said he said she said

(i'll squeal)

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 *p* 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 *crescendo* 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. *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* but it's life 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*

Man. don't stop *molto cresc.* go_ slow *ff*

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

pp

pp

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

Narr.

Pno

more.

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

257

Man

Narr.

Pno

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

piu f

262

Man

Narr.

Pno

Vc.

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

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

ff *mf*

pizz.

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 stok - 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* *arco* *fp* *f*

Vc. *ff* *fp* *f*

303

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

fp *f* *fp*



306

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

mp *mp* *f* *mp* *pizz.* *mp*

309

Ob. *crescendo*

B. Cl. *crescendo*

Wom. eve - ry - one else tell - ing me how it would make you

Pno *crescendo*

Vln. *crescendo*

Vc. *crescendo*



311

Ob. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

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

Pno *f* *p* arco

Vln. *f* *p* arco

Vc. *f* *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



319

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

fp

f

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.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

mp

p cresc.

p cresc.

p cresc.



332

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

Slightly faster ♩ = 112

p

mp

fp

p

mp

Slightly faster ♩ = 112

fp

p

pizz.

mp

336

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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



342

Ob.

B. Cl.

Wom.

Pno

Vln.

Vc.

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

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.

pp

pp

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

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. *sul D* *pp* *f* **Broad ♩. = 84**

Vc. *sul D* *mf* *f*

375 ♩ = 168

Ob. *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

Wom. 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. ♩ = 112

Ob. *dim.*

B. Cl. *dim.*

Wom. 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.* arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. *rit.* ♩ = 112

Vc. *dim.* arco pizz. 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

À des fins d'étude seulement. For study purposes only.