

Loop Walks

Words for voices

Billy Mills

(transcribed for vocal ensemble by David Bremner)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

1. The work is to be performed by 4 pairs of voices, labelled in the score A, B, C, and D. Each pair should speak in approximate rhythmic unison. All singers should speak in their natural speaking register. When allocating singers to the 4 pairs, it should be decided what balance of male+female, male+male and female+female pairs is desired, and how to allocate the pairs accordingly.
2. The work is not intended to be coordinated more closely (between the pairs) than on a system-by-system basis. Circular conducting may be considered as a means of showing the approximate position on a system without implying a further precision that is unnecessary. When a pair has a phrase that crosses over a bar-line, the conductor may need to follow them in order not to disrupt the phrase's flow.
3. Words in italics are performance instructions and are not to be spoken.
4. It is encouraged that the audience participate in the final Chorale, and that the page be distributed among them for this.
5. Graphic notation is used to suggest the different manners of speech for the 9 texts that the work consists of. The notation used is intended to suggest not only pitch and rhythm, but other parameters such as changeability vs. consistency of dynamic, timbre (warm vs. urgent tone) etc. It is intended to act as a blend of intuitive and literal instruction. Every graphic element should be interpreted in some way, whether as a literal interpretation of one syllable, or to suggest the type of tone/energy for a longer passage. Each singer is encouraged to come to their own interpretation of each text, so as to have a diversity of interpretations within the performance.
6. On occasions where a recurring pitch/pitches is asked for, the relevant syllables should be spoken so that each time the same pitch is audible at some stage during the syllable.

Loop Walks

Words for voices

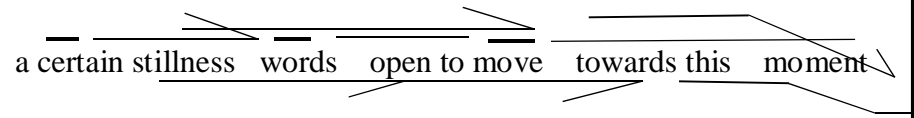
Billy Mills

(transcribed for vocal ensemble by David Bremner)

Pair A

Briskly

(the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches)



Pair B

Tired, at 3 AM

(the dotted lines indicate atmosphere/energy rather than precise pitches; the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches)

Pair C

Walking into a gale, the

words become indistinct (/ = a sharp inhalation, \ = exhale while speaking; the dark objects indicate recurring pitches)

Pair D

Staccato, with a dying fall at the end (clip vowels,

sustaining final consonants)

start here & move in no particular haste the path indeterminate light enters & fills this space

because there are no answers walk into waves whose strength

Musical notation for Pair B and Pair C. Pair B features dotted lines for atmosphere and thick lines for recurring pitches. Pair C includes sharp inhalation (/) and exhale (\) symbols, and dark objects for recurring pitches.

between trees between these movements & what matters shakes life from a flurry of twigs stunted &

it is dark & we are walking in the city it is dark

is syntax whose current gram - mar whose sound makes questions

Musical notation for Pair C and Pair D. Pair C uses dotted lines and sharp symbols. Pair D uses solid lines and dark objects for recurring pitches.

pure these trees wave steadily light waves words rock & air collide & flow great boles stand for nothing

& we are young & walking home & there is traffic a little between us

words a land - scape rich & rare & full bust stop junction lights landfall

poco meno mosso *atempo*

Musical notation for Pair D, including tempo markings *poco meno mosso* and *atempo*.

pass them now each leaf shows life itself the path curves & falls & follows earth's vicissitudes

passing variously in the dark to cross at night these lines bonding &

at last begin again sound out beyond a sentence as the end arrives as it un - folds

a fissure that binds the long descent between lines of houses finally of sight a steady traffic

parting a dance the streets dark & alive weaving steadily between us

oh me walk to the tomb below sand & sea wind to cross

this road made new and small & frail as air & hangs there waiting an answer that does not come

enter this fixed estate placed just so & home

the light absent shines uncertain & clear in time

& enter fields of lichen ruined stones a lake of swans not symbols to me bell

& cannot in this place finding unexpectedly the coming day

these lines we make weaving home which we do not know

oh see a road that ends by sea follow the earth curved air only

wakeful almost in the rain the slow dawning as it comes & rises what is not here

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Pair A

Pair B

Pair C

*The first three phrases slowly,
then rapid until the end (the filled-in circles indicate a recurring pitch)*

Pair D

*Walking in a bog, pauses to identify
safe spots and jump from one such to the next (relative pitches are indicated by position of words)*

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| <i>Perpetuum mobile cantabile</i> <small>(relative pitches indicated by corners of waves)</small> | |
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again unseen in the lee of what it is to wake here in the wind the canvas pulling & the inescapable water

oh look now out over move stare as ever seen here &

but fills the air & the earth flows our feet un-steady be-neath us

hold it now the senses stretched taut lines mirroring across the bay listen people are sleeping stars see them still you cannot

Reflective, as if speaking to yourself

having done nothing

it is quiet under the trees these low mounds plain stones each alone

where there is rock the flow turns where there is water

walk through undistinguished dark tides dragging the moon diminished stand by water & feel little which is a state

what to sing? such ordinary things as come

that they died is singular & true & that they are (& are not) here

the rock accommodates the exhilarating difficulty of movement one-foot sucked down

wind drives boats ashore empties the silence wave & walk on doggedly whatever changes lives a method: the road climbs

& make a life simple & strange



still oh see it so as it is nothing but silence now invisible & green

the other fumbles towards leverage these browns so many & such richness

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|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| slowly & stops level see | distant hills as if | a badly painted backdrop | in which little happens | & words exceed it |
| item: | child in a tin | car pedalling | through | |
| in | poverty | walk | carefully | into |
| | | | an | air |
| | | | to | fall |
| | | | | from |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| pack them away | they're all we have | as stay against disaster | to be still & still moving | light pours slowly through |
| time | the fact of it | | & it is red | & |
| a | land | to | swim | in |
| | | | water | around |
| | | | & | little |
| | | | | fire |

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|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|------|
| sweet & cold & never seen | when nothing is said | it's best said slowly | | |
| glamorous | & | gleams in memory | multiple | & so |
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| Pair A |
| Pair B Walking into a gale, the words become indistinct ( = a sharp inhalation,  = exhale while speaking; the dark objects indicate recurring pitches) |
| Pair C Tired, at 3 AM (the dotted lines indicate atmosphere/energy rather than precise pitches; the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches) |
| Pair D Briskly (the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches) |

it is dark & we are walking in the city it is dark

Staccato, with a dying fall at the end (clip vowels, sustaining final consonants)

because there are no answers walk into waves whose strength

& we are young & walking home & there is traffic a little between us

is syntax whose current gram - mar whose sound makes questions

passing variously in the dark to cross at night these lines bonding &

poco meno mosso words a land - scape rich & rare & full *atempo* bust stop junction lights landfall

parting a dance the streets dark & alive weaving steadily between us

a certain stillness words open to move towards this moment

at last begin again sound out beyond a sentence as the end arrives as it un - folds

the light absent shines uncertain & clear in time

start here & move in no particular haste the path indeterminate light enters & fills this space

this road made new and small & frail as air & hangs there waiting an answer that does not come

oh me walk to the tomb below sand & sea wind to cross

these lines we make weaving home which we do not know

between trees between these movements & what matters shakes life from a flurry of twigs stunted &

& cannot in this place finding unexpectedly the coming day

& enter fields of lichen ruined stones a lake of swans not symbols to me bell

pure these trees wave steadily light waves words rock & air collide & flow great boles stand for nothing

wakeful almost in the rain the slow dawning as it comes & rises what is not here

oh see a road that ends by sea follow the earth curved air only

pass them now each leaf shows life itself the path curves & falls & follows earth's vicissitudes

Pair A
Walking in a bog, pauses to identify safe spots and jump from one such to the next (relative pitches are indicated by position of words)

Pair B
The first three phrases slowly, then rapid until the end (the filled-in circles indicate a recurring pitch)

Pair C

Pair D
Perpetuum mobile cantabile (relative pitches indicated by corners of waves)

Reflective, as if speaking to yourself

but fills the air & the earth flows our feet unsteady beneath us
 still a time to waver between these two
 what to sing? such ordinary things as come
 hold it now the senses stretched taut lines mirroring across the bay listen people are sleeping stars see them still you cannot

where there is rock the flow turns where there is water
 oh look now out over move stare as ever seen here &
 & make a life simple & strange
 walk through undistinguished dark tides dragging the moon diminished stand by water & feel little which is a state

the rock accommodates the exhilarating difficulty of movement one foot sucked down
 it is quiet under the trees these low mounds plain stones each alone
 item: child in a tin car pedalling through
 wind drives boats ashore empties the silence wave & walk on doggedly whatever changes lives a method: the road climbs

the other fumbles towards leverage these browns so many & such richness
 that they died is singular & true & that they are (& are not) here
 time the fact of it & it is red &
 slowly & stops level see distant hills as if a badly painted backdrop in which little happens & words exceed it

in poverty walk carefully into an air to fall from

still oh see it so as it is nothing but silence now invisible & green

glamorous & gleams in memory multiple & so

pack them away they're all we have as stay against disaster to be still & still moving light pours slowly through

a land to swim in water around & little fire

sweet & cold & never seen when nothing is said it's best said slowly

Pair A
Walking into a gale, the words become indistinct (/ = a sharp inhalation, \ = exhale while speaking; the dark objects indicate recurring pitches)

Pair B Staccato, with a dying fall at the end (clip vowels, sustaining final consonants)
because there are no answers walk into waves whose strength

Pair C
Briskly (the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches)

Pair D
Tired, at 3 AM (the dotted lines indicate atmosphere/energy rather than precise pitches; the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches)

oh me walk to the tomb below sand & sea wind to cross

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a certain stillness words open to move towards this moment

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words a land - scape rich & rare & full bust stop junction lights landfall

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it is dark & we are walking in the city it is dark

oh see a road that ends by sea follow the earth curved air only

at last begin again sound out beyond a sentence as the end arrives as it un - folds

between trees between these movements & what matters shakes life from a flurry of twigs stunted &

& we are young & walking home & there is traffic a little between us

& soon we go no more return & follow the signs that follow

this road made new and small & frail as air & hangs there waiting an answer that does not come

pure these trees wave steadily light waves words rock & air collide & flow great boles stand for nothing

passing variously in the dark to cross at night these lines bonding &

& cannot in this place finding unexpectedly the coming day

pass them now each leaf shows life itself the path curves & falls & follows earth's vicissitudes

parting a dance the streets dark & alive weaving steadily between us

wakeful almost in the rain the slow dawning as it comes & rises what is not here

a fissure that binds the long descent between lines of houses finally of sight a steady traffic

the light absent shines uncertain & clear in time

molto rit.

feet on the earth but not connected yet

enter this fixed estate placed just so & home

these lines we make weaving home which we do not know

- Pair A**
The first three phrases slowly,
then rapid until the end (the filled-in circles indicate a recurring pitch)
- Pair B**
Walking in a bog, pauses to identify
safe spots and jump from one such to the next (relative pitches are indicated by position of words)
- Pair C**
- Pair D**

what is the water for? & where does it go?

because there are no answers walk into waves whose strength

having done nothing

but fills the air & the earth flows our feet un-steady be-neath us

is syntax whose current gram - mar whose sound makes questions

what to sing? such ordinary things as come

a time to move a time to stand

where there is rock the flow turns where there is water

words a land - scape rich & rare & full *poco meno mosso* *atempo* bust stop junction lights landfall

& make a life simple & strange

still a time to waver between these two

the rock accommodates the exhilarating difficulty of movement one-foot-sucked down

at last begin again sound out beyond a sentence as the end arrives as it un - folds

item: child in a tin car pedalling through

oh look now out over move stare as ever seen here &

the other fumbles towards leverage these browns so many & such richness

this road made new and small & frail as air & hangs there waiting an answer that does not come

time the fact of it & it is red &

it is quiet under the trees these low mounds plain stones each alone

in poverty walk carefully into an air to fall from

& cannot in this place finding unexpectedly the coming day

glamorous & gleams in memory multiple & so

that they died is singular & true & that they are (& are not) here

a land to swim in water around & little fire

wakeful almost in the rain the slow dawning as it comes & rises what is not here



still oh see it so as it is nothing but silence now invisible & green

feet on the earth *molto rit.* but not connected yet

Pair A
Tired, at 3 AM
(the dotted lines indicate atmosphere/energy rather than precise pitches; the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches)

Pair B
Briskly
(the thicker lines indicate recurring pitches)

Pair C

Pair D
Walking into a gale, the words become indistinct ( = a sharp inhalation,  = exhale while speaking; the dark objects indicate recurring pitches)

it is dark & we are walking in the city it is dark

a certain stillness words open to move towards this moment

oh me walk to the tomb below sand & sea wind to cross

& we are young & walking home & there is traffic a little between us

start here & move in no particular haste the path indeterminate light enters & fills this space

Staccato, with a dying fall at the end (clip vowels, sustaining final consonants) because there are no answers walk into waves whose strength

& enter fields of lichen ruined stones a lake of swans not symbols to me bell

passing variously in the dark to cross at night these lines bonding &

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| <p>feet on the earth but not connected yet</p> |
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| Pair A |
| Pair B |
| Pair C <i>Walking in a bog, pauses to identify safe spots and jump from one such to the next (relative pitches are indicated by position of words)</i> |
| Pair D |

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| <p>what is the water for? & where does it go?</p> |
| |

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| <i>Reflective, as if speaking to yourself</i> | having done nothing |
| <i>Perpetuum mobile cantabile</i> <small>(relative pitches indicated by corners of waves)</small> | sweep quickly out to seawards into the gale the rain head down & legs braced against what must be day |
| <p>but fills the air</p> | <p>& --- the earth flows</p> |
| <p>our feet un- -steady</p> | <p>be- -neath us</p> |
| <i>The first three phrases slowly, then rapid until the end (the filled-in circles indicate a recurring pitch)</i> | |

what to sing? such ordinary things as come

again unseen in the lee of what it is to wake here in the wind the canvas pulling & the inescapable water

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a time to move a time to stand

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hold it now the senses stretched taut lines mirroring across the bay listen people are sleeping stars see them still you cannot

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in poverty walk carefully into an air to fall from

it is quiet under the trees these low mounds plain stones each alone

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------|-------------------|------|
| glamorous | & | gleams | in | memory | multiple | & | so |
| slowly & stops level see | distant hills as if | a badly painted backdrop | | | in which little happens | & words exceed it | |
| a | land | swim----- in | water | around | & | little | fire |
| | to | | | | | | |
| that they died | is singular | & true | | | & that they are | (& are not) | here |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| pack them away | they're all we have | as stay against disaster | | | to be still & still moving | light pours slowly through | |
| | | | | | | | |
| still oh | see it so | as it is | | | nothing but | silence now | invisible & green |

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| sweet & cold & never seen | when nothing is said | it's best said slowly |
| | | |
| | | |

ATTACCA CHORALE

Chorale

(stately, highlighting the formal pattern)
(= lengthen the vowel; > = accent (higher pitched and more emphatic))

the air [>]fills us
& we [>]fill the air
[>]sing it a [>]single step
[>]foot on the earth
earth on [>]something
time under all

& time [>]fills us
we [>]fill the time
[>]hear it a strong [>]pull
draws us [>]onwards
a [>]moment's calm
light streams through

& [>]light [>]fills us
we [>]fill the light
[>]feel it the waves [>]turn
[>]radiant & clear
att[>]ending the world
eye appreh[>]ends

& [>]eye [>]fills us
we [>]fill our eyes
with all that's here
towards our end
a simple matter
nothing more