

Dear Next Reader

Music by Rick Leinecker

Text by Alec Wilder

SATB and Piano Accompaniment

Dear Next Reader

Music by Rick Leinecker

Text by Alec Wilder

Permission granted by his estate

♩ = 84

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

mp *espress.*

The per - son

mp *espress.*

per - son

mp *espress.*

The per - son

mp *espress.*

per - son writ -

♩ = 84

Piano

mf

mf

mp

S

A

T

B

rubato

wri-ting this is so far o-ver on the see - saw of life or

wri - ting this far on see - saw life or

wri-ting this far so far on-the see - saw - saw of life or

ting so far ting see - saw of life or

Pno.

rubato

Dear Next Reader

10 *a tempo mp*

S death that he finds his life's fail-ure

A death he finds his life's fail-ure worse than he be-

T — death that he finds his life's fail - ure

B death — finds life's fail - ure

10 *a tempo mp*

Pno.

15 *mf*

S worse than he be-lieved pos-si-ble... pos-si-ble... yet —

A lieved pos-si-ble... worse than he pos-si-ble...

T worse than he be-lieved pos-si-ble...

B worse thank he be - lieved pos-si-ble...

15

Pno.

Dear Next Reader

19

S *mf* bet - ter than the lives of most suc - cess - full e - ven em - i - nent e - ven

A *mf* bet - ter than lives of most most em - i - nent

T *mf* yet bet - ter than the lives of most suc - cess - ful e - ven

B *mf* bet - ter than most bet - ter than most

Pno. *mf*

23

S *rubato cantabile* em - i - nent peo - ple. The loath - ing Wag - ner -

A *cantabile* em - i - nent peo - ple. The loath - ing of Wag - ner -

T *cantabile* em - i - nent peo - ple. Loath - ing of Wag - ner -

B *cantabile* em - i - nent peo - ple. Loath - ing Wag - ner -

Pno. *rubato*

Dear Next Reader

28

S
and the pro-found Poul - enc

A
love and the love of Poul - enc

T
and the pro - found love of Poul - enc

B
pro - found love of Poul - enc

a tempo

Pno.

32

S
mo - ment mo - ment mo - ment as op - posed to an hour _____ *p* a

A
mo - ment mo - ment mo - ment as op - posed to an hour _____ *p* a

T
a mo - ment mo - ment mo - ment as op - posed to an hour - - - -

B
a mo - ment mo - ment mo - ment as op - posed to an hour - - - -

32

Pno.

Dear Next Reader

38

S *mf* tear ra-ther than a tan - trum *mp* These are what

A *mf* tear ra-ther than a tan - trum *mp* These are what life

T *p* a tear tan - trum *mp* These are *mp*

B *p* a tear tan - trum *mp*

Pno. *p* *mf* *mp*

43

S life was a coup-le of hours out of se-ven - ty three

A was — these are what life was hours of sev - en - ty three

T what life was life was sev - en - ty — three

B life was these are what life was life was

Pno. *mp*

Dear Next Reader

S *p espress.*
 years — The sad - dest of fin - al breath ing

A *p espress.*
 years — sad - dest of fin - al fin-al breath ing — is

T *p espress.*
 years — The sad - dest of fin - al breath-ing breath - ing

B *p*
 years — sad - dest breath - ing

Pno. *espress.*
pp
rit. *pp* *a tempo*

S *rit.*
 not that the per - son died, but that no one could e - ver know what

A *a tempo*
 not that the per - son died, no one could e - ver know what his life — his

T *a tempo*
 not that the per - son died, but that no one — could e - ver — know what

B *a tempo*
 per-son died, no one could — know

Pno. *rit.* *a tempo*

57

S his life had been. That, my next read - er, is why art

A life his life had been. That _____ my is why art

T his life had been. That my _____ read - er is why art

B life had been. That my next _____ read - er is _____ is why

Pno.

62

S is so pro - found ly god - like: It's the best of

A is so pro - found - ly god like: best of

T is so pro - found - ly - god - like: best of lives

B is so pro - found - ly god - like: best of _____

Pno.

rit. *a tempo* *ritissimo*

ff *mp*

ff *mp*

ff *mp*

ff *mp*

ff *p* *mp*

ffp *mp*

Dear Next Reader

68

S the _ lives of the dead who o - ther - wise would have been si -

A lives of the dead who would have been si - lent or o -

T 8 _ of the dead who would o - ther - wise would have been si - lent or o - ther -

B lives of _ dead si - lent who would o -

Pno.

72

S lent or _ whol - ly un - known.

A ther wise whol - ly un - known.

T 8 - wise whol - ly _ un - - - - known.

B ther - wise whol - ly un - known. _

p *rit.*

Pno.

p *rit.*

When in graduate school at Ohio University, Ron Socciarelli, the Wind Ensemble director, read a poem attributed to Alec Wilder. He had recently died, and the poem was found in a book that he had recently handled. I was touched by the poem, and knew that I would eventually set it to music. It follows.

The person writing this is so far over
on the seesaw of life or death,
that he finds his life's failure
worse than he believed possible...
yet better than the lives of most
successful—even eminent—people.

The loathing of Wagner—
and the profound love of Poulenc—
a moment as opposed to an hour—
one tear rather than a tantrum—
These are what life was—
a couple of hours out of 73 years.

The saddest of final breathing
is not that the person died,
but that no one could ever know
what his life had been.

That, my next reader, is why
art is profoundly godlike:
It's the best of the lives of the dead,
who otherwise would have been silent
or wholly unknown.