

*That Lonesome Whistle*

for high voice and piano

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*That Lonesome Whistle* for high voice and piano (2010)

The title of this short (twelve minute) song cycle may recall a phrase from a well-known song by Hank Williams, best known from a recording by Johnny Cash. My taste in music does not run that way, but this particular phrase is an almost Proustian exception. I associate it with certain childhood memories of listening, in bed late at night, to train whistles sounding across the Pennsylvania countryside, where my great aunt had a house. The house lay barely a minute's walk from a railroad crossing by a general store, which I haunted by day and which by night became the imaginary listening post for fantasies whose chief value for me today is not their content--I have no idea what they were--but the sense of distance, tinged with both melancholy and discovery, that came along with the lonesome whistles that evoked them. I wrote the texts to this cycle to give the music the substance of this reminiscence.

1. Forty Love

The net seems to jounce a little.  
The wind, like a breath on glass,  
Blurs the high masses of leaf around  
The courts, then lets them clear.

These empty tennis courts run on  
For miles, shifting and angling  
Like a river that mists above its  
Courses and lends the eastern banks

A certain sheen; the western ones, with  
The railroad tracks, a certain mystique.  
Boats ache at mooring for a hand  
On the tiller; across the dark

Without an origin you can hear,  
Hear that lonesome whistle blow.  
Everywhere I look goes on without me,

Fades along the track of these lonely  
Infinite courts in a closed club. Why  
Am I here? I don't play tennis.

## 2. The Iceboats: Rum Running to Detroit, 1925

Some forgot all the money. Lake St. Clair  
Turned into Lake Lucerne, say Leman, no,  
Lucarno: Lake Neither-Here-Nor-There.

The grimy lights from the two grimy cities  
Wheeled, tore loose, silvered; miles away,  
A parking couple heard the night's noises,

The long wind's like the other's breath, drawn taut,  
The light, the ever-so-light clink  
Of the precious cargo. Was it wind chimes?

The rummies on Lake St. Clair became their boats.  
They could feel their pullovers puff, then shimmer,  
Their wool caps go floating amid the sparkle

Of sky and ice. All that steered  
Was sleeve; even the thugs on shore,  
Crouching by clumps of pilings, could see that.

Some of the older boatmen got lost for good.  
One simply skated away, a streak of breath  
Between Detroit and Windsor. And the boats?

"A ring of steel-shod runners, a ghostly flash  
Of billowing sail, and they are gone." So wrote  
The Detroit police, blinking at Lake Claire de Lune.

## 3. That Lonesome Whistle

Under the bridge that year, no more shaken  
By trains from Omaha, Fresno, or anywhere,  
Yet spanning the river breathlessly as ever,  
Even the young trees seemed to close their eyes.

Strange, it was November, yet to waken  
The grass and leaves seemed easy as to share  
The growing warmth of light lust, the delicate sweet fever  
That ran from limb to limb, the cries

Of the water in leaf, lost rumble of trains  
That used to cry in the night, lost American refrains  
Like old blues songs played faintly downstairs

When we were kids. The river heard the cry;  
Caught our names; ruffled its leaves; left its voice  
In a quick kiss before it got shy and went away.

# 1. Forty Love

♩ = 80

*p*

Voice

Then net \_\_\_\_\_ seems to jounce a

Piano

*pp*

*p*

*Red.* \*

4

lit-tle. The wind, \_\_\_\_\_ like a breath on glass, \_\_\_\_\_ blurs \_\_\_\_\_

4

*Red.* \*

*Red.* \*

8

\_\_\_\_\_ the high mas - ses of leaf \_\_\_\_\_ a - round the courts, \_\_\_\_\_

8

*Red.* \*

*Red.*

That Lonesome Whistle

11 *rit.* *a tempo*

then lets them clear.

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal line for measures 11 and 12. Measure 11 starts with a half rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4 with a flat, and a quarter note E4. Measure 12 begins with a half note G4, which is tied to the end of the line. The lyrics "then lets them clear." are written below the notes.

11

*Red.*

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 11 and 12. The right hand plays a series of quarter notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The left hand plays a series of quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. There are asterisks under the piano part in measures 11 and 12. The word "Red." is written below the piano part in measure 12.

13 *mp*

These

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal line for measures 13, 14, and 15. Measure 13 has a half rest. Measure 14 has a half rest. Measure 15 has a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The lyrics "These" are written below the notes. The dynamic marking *mp* is at the end of the line.

13

*Red.* \* *Red.* \* *Red.* \*

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 13, 14, and 15. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The left hand plays a series of quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. There are asterisks under the piano part in measures 13, 14, and 15. The word "Red." is written below the piano part in measures 13, 14, and 15.

16

emp - ty ten - nis courts run on for miles, shift -

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal line for measures 16, 17, and 18. Measure 16 has a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. Measure 17 has a quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note G3. Measure 18 has a quarter note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The lyrics "emp - ty ten - nis courts run on for miles, shift -" are written below the notes. There are triplets over the notes in measures 16 and 17.

16

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 16, 17, and 18. The right hand plays a series of quarter notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The left hand plays a series of quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. There are asterisks under the piano part in measures 16, 17, and 18.

# That Lonesome Whistle

6  
18

3

- - ing and ang-ling like a ri-ver that mists a-long its course-es

18

*p*

*ppp*

21

— and lends the east-ern banks a cer-tain sheen,

21

*ppp*

23

3

3

*molto rit.* *a tempo*

— the west-ern ones, with the rail-road tracks, a cer-tain

23

That Lonesome Whistle

26 *pp*

mys-tique. \_\_\_\_\_ Boats \_\_\_\_\_ ache at

26 *pp* *sva* *p* *p*

*svb*

30 *rit.*  $\text{♩} = 66$

moor - ing for a hand - on the til - ler. \_\_\_\_\_

30 *rit.* *a tempo* *Lea.* \*

33 *rit.* *a tempo*

— A - cross <sup>3</sup> the dark,

33 *rit.* *a tempo* *Lea.* \*

That Lonesome Whistle

8  
35 *accel.*  $\text{♩} = 80$

A - cross the dark with - out an o - ri - gin — you can hear,

35

39  $\text{♩} = 66$  *accel.* *p* *p cresc.*  $\text{♩} = 80$

you — can hear, — hear —

39 *p* *pp* *p cresc.*

44 *f*

that lone - - - -

44 *f*

*Lead.* \* *Lead.* \* *Lead.* \*

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'That Lonesome Whistle'. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 8-35) features a vocal line with lyrics 'A - cross the dark with - out an o - ri - gin — you can hear,' and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 80$  and includes an 'accel.' marking. The second system (measures 35-39) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'you — can hear, — hear —' and piano accompaniment. The tempo changes to  $\text{♩} = 66$  and includes 'p' and 'p cresc.' markings. The third system (measures 39-44) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'that lone - - - -' and piano accompaniment. The tempo returns to  $\text{♩} = 80$  and includes an 'f' marking. The piano part includes various dynamics like 'p', 'pp', and 'p cresc.', and features 'Lead.' and '\*' markings. There are also triplets and a 4/4 time signature change.



That Lonesome Whistle

48 *rit.* *a tempo* *p*

some whis - tle \_\_\_\_\_ blow. \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 48 through 51. The melody starts with a quarter note on G4, followed by a dotted quarter note on A4, and then a half note on B4. The lyrics 'some whis - tle' are aligned with these notes. There is a fermata over the 't' in 'whistle'. The melody continues with a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4. The lyrics 'blew.' are aligned with these notes. The piece concludes with a quarter rest and a quarter note on G4. Performance markings include 'rit.' (ritardando) at the start, 'a tempo' (return to tempo) above the first measure, and 'p' (piano) above the final measure.

48

Loco. *loco* *loco* *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 48 through 51. The right hand plays a series of chords: G4-A4, G4-A4-B4, G4-A4-B4, and G4-A4. The left hand plays a bass line with notes G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, and F3. There are two 'loco' markings above the left hand in measures 49 and 50. The piece ends with a quarter note on G3. Performance markings include 'Loco.' at the beginning, 'loco' above the left hand in measures 49 and 50, and 'p' (piano) above the final measure.

52 *rit.* ♩ = 66 *p* 3

Ev - ery - where \_\_\_\_\_ I

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 52 through 54. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4. The lyrics 'Ev - ery - where' are aligned with these notes. There is a fermata over the 'e' in 'where'. The melody continues with a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4. The lyrics 'I' are aligned with these notes. The piece concludes with a quarter rest. Performance markings include 'rit.' (ritardando) at the start, '♩ = 66' (tempo marking) above the first measure, 'p' (piano) above the first measure, and a '3' (triple) above the first measure of the second phrase.

52 *f rit.* *ff*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 52 through 54. The right hand plays chords: G4-A4, G4-A4-B4, and G4-A4. The left hand plays a bass line with notes G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, and F3. There are two 'f' (forte) markings above the right hand in measures 53 and 54, and a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking above the right hand in measure 53. The piece ends with a quarter note on G3. Performance markings include 'f rit.' above the right hand in measure 53 and 'ff' above the right hand in measure 54.

55 3

look goes \_\_\_\_\_ on with - out me. \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 55 through 57. The melody starts with a quarter note on G4, followed by a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4. The lyrics 'look goes' are aligned with these notes. There is a fermata over the 'e' in 'goes'. The melody continues with a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4. The lyrics 'on with - out me.' are aligned with these notes. The piece concludes with a quarter rest. Performance markings include a '3' (triple) above the first measure of the second phrase.

55 *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 55 through 57. The right hand plays chords: G4-A4, G4-A4-B4, and G4-A4. The left hand plays a bass line with notes G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, and F3. The piece ends with a quarter note on G3. Performance markings include 'p' (piano) above the right hand in measure 56.

# That Lonesome Whistle

10  
58

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

3

Ev - ery - where \_\_\_\_\_ I look goes \_\_\_\_\_ on with - out me. \_\_\_\_\_

*ff* *f*

*ff* *f*

Lea. \* Lea. \*

61

*p*  $\text{♩} = 80$  *p*

3

— Fades \_\_\_\_\_ a-long the track \_\_\_\_\_ of those lone -

*p* *p*

Lea. \* Lea. \*

65

*f* *p* *fp* *f*

- - ly in \_\_\_\_\_ in - fi in - fi-nite

*ff* Lea. \* Lea. \* Lea. \* Lea. \*

Catch harmonic

That Lonesome Whistle

70 *p*

courts \_\_\_\_\_ in a closed club.

74 *mf* *p*

Why am I here? I \_\_\_\_\_

77

\_\_\_\_\_ don't play ten - nis.

## 2: The Iceboats: Rum Running to Detroit, 1925

$\text{♩} = 88$

Spoken (freely):

Voice

Some for - got all the mo - ney. -

Piano

*f* *mf* *p* *fp*

5

5

*f* *mf* *mf*

8

8

*mf* *f* *f*<sub>3</sub>

Lake St. Clair turned \_\_\_\_\_ in-to Lake Lu-erne,

*fp* *f*

That Lonesome Whistle

11 *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

say Le - man, No, Lu - car - no, Lake Nei - ther

*p* *cresc.*

13 *f* *p*

Here nor there. The

*f* *p*

17 *f* *mf*

gr - my lights from the two gri-my ci-ties wheeled, tore

*f* *mp*

That Lonesome Whistle

20 *mp*

loose, sil - - - vered.

23 *p*

Miles a - way

25 *mp* *rit.*

a park-ing cou-ple heard the night's noi - ses.

# That Lonesome Whistle

28 *a tempo*

*p*

The long wind \_\_\_\_\_ like the o-ther's breath \_\_\_\_\_

32

\_\_\_\_\_ drawn taut, the light, \_\_\_\_\_ e-ver so light

36

$\text{♩} = 76$

*mp*

clink of the pre-cious car-go. \_\_\_\_\_ Was it wind \_\_\_\_\_

*leggiero* *p* *mp*

*Leg.* \* *Leg.* \*

That Lonesome Whistle

40

chimes? \_\_\_\_\_

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \* *cresc.*

43 *accel.* *p* *mp* ♩ = 88 *mf*

The rum-mies on Lake St. Clair \_\_\_\_\_ be-came their boats.

*p* *mp* *mf*

46 *f*

They could feel \_\_\_\_\_ their pull-o-vers puff - - - then shim - mer, \_\_\_\_\_

*f*



That Lonesome Whistle

49 *mf*

their wool caps go float - ing

51 *f*

a - mid the shim - mer of

53 *pp* ♩ = 76

sky and ice.

That Lonesome Whistle

56 *pp* *rit.* *p*

All that steered was sleeve. E - ven the

Red. \*

58 *a tempo*

thugs on shore, crouch-ing by clumps of pil - ings, could see that.

61 *mp* *mf* *p*

Some of the old-er boat - men got lost for

That Lonesome Whistle

64 *mp* *pp*

good. One simply skat-ed a - way,

8vb

67 *mp* *p* *pp*

a streak of breath be - tween De - troit and Wind - sor.

*sfz* *Red.* \*

70 *mp* *p*

And the boats? "A

That Lonesome Whistle

73

ring of steel - shod run - ners, a ghost - ly flash of bil - low - ing sails.

8va

*p*

75

and they are gone." So wrote the De - troit

*pp*  $\text{♩} = 76$  *p*

8va

78

— po - lice, blink - ing at Lake Claire de Lune

8vb

### 3. That Lonesome Whistle

$\text{♩} = 66$

Voice

Un-der the bridge that year, no more shak - en

Piano

*pp* *p* *pp*

*ped.* \*

4

by trains from O - ma-ha, Fres - no, or a - ny where.

Piano

*p*

*ped.* \*

7

a - ny where, yet span - ning the

Piano

*pp* *p*

*ped.* \*

That Lonesome Whistle

2

11 *mf* *p*

ri - - - ver breath-less - ly as e - ver, —

*mf* *mp* *p*

*Red.* \*

14 *p*

e - ven the young trees

*p* *8vb*

16 *rit.*

seemed to shut their eyes. —

*p* *mp*

That Lonesome Whistle

19 *a tempo* *mp*

Strange, it was No-ven - ber, yet to wak -

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal line for measures 19-21. It starts with a whole rest in measure 19, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4 in measure 20. Measure 21 contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. There are two triplet markings over the notes in measures 20 and 21. The lyrics are "Strange, it was No-ven - ber, yet to wak -".

19 *p* *mp* *p* *cresc.*

*ped.* \* *ped.* \*

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 19-21. Measure 19 has a whole rest. Measure 20 features a piano (*p*) accompaniment with chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. Measure 21 continues with a piano accompaniment, including a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a triplet in the right hand. Pedal markings (*ped.*) and asterisks (\*) are present under measures 19 and 21.

22 *cresc.* *mf* *p*

- - en the grass and leaves seemed ea - sy,

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal line for measures 22-24. Measure 22 starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 23 contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. Measure 24 has a whole rest. There are two triplet markings over the notes in measures 22 and 23. The lyrics are "- - en the grass and leaves seemed ea - sy,".

22 *mf* *p*

*ped.* \*

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 22-24. Measure 22 has a piano accompaniment with chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. Measure 23 continues with a piano accompaniment, including a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a triplet in the right hand. Measure 24 has a piano accompaniment with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a triplet in the right hand. Pedal markings (*ped.*) and asterisks (\*) are present under measures 22 and 24.

25 *mf* *mf*

ea - sy as to share the grow - ing warmth of

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal line for measures 25-27. Measure 25 starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 26 contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. Measure 27 has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. There are two triplet markings over the notes in measures 26 and 27. The lyrics are "ea - sy as to share the grow - ing warmth of".

25 *mf*

*ped.* \* *ped.* \*

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 25-27. Measure 25 has a piano accompaniment with chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. Measure 26 continues with a piano accompaniment, including a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a triplet in the right hand. Measure 27 has a piano accompaniment with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a triplet in the right hand. Pedal markings (*ped.*) and asterisks (\*) are present under measures 25 and 27.

# That Lonesome Whistle

4

28

light lust, the de-li-cate sweet fe - ver that ran from limb to limb,

*mf* *p* *f* *p*

Ped. \*

32

the cries of the wa - - - ter in

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

8vb 3

34

leaf, lost rum - ble of trains that

*f* *p* *rit.* *mp* *p*

3



That Lonesome Whistle

37 *Molto Adagio* *pp*  $\text{♩} = 66$  *p*

used to cry \_\_\_\_\_ in the night, lost A - mer - i - can re - frains

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 37 to 40. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is 'Molto Adagio' and the time signature is 3/4. The first measure (37) has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The second measure (38) has a quarter rest, quarter note D5, quarter note E5, and a half note F#5. The third measure (39) has a quarter rest, quarter note G5, quarter note A5, and a half note B5. The fourth measure (40) has a quarter rest, quarter note C6, quarter note B5, quarter note A5, and a half note G5. There are triplets of eighth notes in measures 38 and 40. Dynamics are *pp* at the start and *p* at the end.

*pp* *p*

*ped.* \*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 37 to 40. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature is one sharp. The piano part is mostly silent in measures 37 and 38, then enters in measure 39 with a *pp* dynamic. In measure 40, the piano part has a *p* dynamic. There are *ped.* markings and asterisks in measures 39 and 40.

41 *rit.* *a tempo*

like old blues songs \_\_\_\_\_ played soft - ly \_\_\_\_\_ down - stairs \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 41 to 44. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The tempo changes from 'Molto Adagio' to 'rit.' (ritardando) and then 'a tempo'. The first measure (41) has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The second measure (42) has a quarter note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure (43) has a quarter note G5, quarter note F#5, quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure (44) has a quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, and a half note G4. Dynamics are *rit.* and *a tempo*.

*pp* *p*

*ped.* \*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 41 to 44. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature is one sharp. The piano part has a *pp* dynamic in measure 41 and a *p* dynamic in measure 44. There are *ped.* markings and asterisks in measures 43 and 44.

44

when we were kids. The ri - ver

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal line for measures 44 to 47. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The first measure (44) has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The second measure (45) has a quarter note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure (46) has a quarter note G5, quarter note F#5, quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure (47) has a quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, and a half note G4. There is a triplet of eighth notes in measure 44. Dynamics are *pp* and *p*.

*pp*

*ped.* \*

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for measures 44 to 47. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature is one sharp. The piano part has a *pp* dynamic in measure 44. There are *ped.* markings and asterisks in measures 46 and 47.

That Lonesome Whistle

6

47 *mp* *mf* *f*

heard the cry, caught our names, ruf - led its leaves

*p* *mp* *mf* *f*

Red. \*

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line with chords in the left hand. Dynamics range from mezzo-piano to fortissimo. Performance markings include accents and a 'Red.' (Reduction) marking with an asterisk.

51 *p*

left its voice in a quick kiss

*p*

3 3

8vb - - -

Detailed description: This system contains measures 51-54. The vocal line has a rest for the first two measures, then quarter notes D5, E5, and F5. The piano accompaniment continues with eighth-note patterns and includes triplet markings. Dynamics are marked piano. Performance markings include accents and a '8vb' (8va below) marking.

54 *molto allarg.*

be-fore it got shy and went a-way.

*p* *mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 54-57. The vocal line has a rest for the first two measures, then quarter notes G4, A4, and B4. The piano accompaniment features a more complex eighth-note pattern. Dynamics range from piano to mezzo-piano. Performance markings include accents and a 'molto allarg.' (ritardando) marking.

That Lonesome Whistle

57

57

*p*

*pp*

The image shows a musical score for the piece "That Lonesome Whistle". It consists of two systems of staves. The first system is a single treble clef staff with a vocal line starting at measure 57. The second system is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with piano accompaniment starting at measure 57. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The score ends with a double bar line.