

# Questions of Travel

For Cello and Piano

2009

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The title *Questions of Travel* alludes to a poem (and a book) of the same name by Elizabeth Bishop. The metaphor involved is traditional, indeed Homeric: the external voyage away from home maps a voyage of self-discovery. Although in latter-day versions the sense of discovery is often equivocal, the determination to come to terms with otherness and claim a sense of arrival is--lucky for us—almost irresistible, as Bishop's lines attest:

But surely it would have been a pity  
Not to have seen the trees along this road,  
Really exaggerated in their beauty.  
Not to have seen them gesturing  
Like noble pantomimists, dressed in pink.

The irony of the noble pantomimists is palpable, but so is the not-so-exaggerated need for them.

My own *Questions of Travel* is a musical imagining of the same troubled but finally unregretted journey. The first of the work's two movements, "In the Distance," responds to the call from afar; it traces a gradual recession in tonal and rhythmic space until the point of departure drops from the horizon. The second movement, "At the Threshold," continues the movement (adopting the tempo at which "In the Distance" arrives) in a different, more urgent tone. Its question, the true question of travel, is how to come home to oneself from a more inner distance by learning to stand still.

Both the fascinations of the two-movement format, understood as a frame for relationship, not conflict or contrast, and the cello's capacities for both lyricism and nimbleness, gave the impetus to this piece, which is about twelve and a half minutes long.

# In the Distance

♩ = 84

Cello

Piano

*mp*

*p*

Red. \*

Vlc.

Pno.

*mp*

*p*

Red. \*

Vlc.

Pno.

*mp*

*p*

Red. \*

In the Distance

$\frac{2}{10}$

Vlc.

Pno.

*p*

10

Lead.

Vlc.

Pno.

13

Lead.

Vlc.

Pno.

*f*

16

In the Distance

Vlc. 18 *p*

Pno. 18 *p*

Vlc. 21 *fp* *pp*

Pno. 21 *Red.*

Vlc. 25 *p* *mp* *pp*

Pno. 25 *pp*

In the Distance

4/28

Vlc.

Pno.

*p*

31

Vlc.

Pno.

*pizz.*

*mp*

*f*

33

Vlc.

Pno.

*arco*

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

*pp*

In the Distance

35

Vlc.

*pp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Pno.

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

38

Vlc.

Pno.

*p*

Red. #

42

Vlc.

*mp*

Pno.

In the Distance

6  
46

Vlc.

3

f

Pno.

50

Vlc.

*fp* *fp*

50

Pno.

*fp* *f*

52

Vlc.

*f* *mf*

52

Pno.

*f*



In the Distance

54 *rit.* *a tempo*

Vlc.

Pno.

*p*

*ped.*

59 *Slower* ♩ = 72

Vlc.

Pno.

*ped.*

62 *p*

Vlc.

Pno.

*ped.*

In the Distance

8  
65

Vlc.

Pno.

68

Vlc.

Pizz. arco

*p* *f* *p*

Pno.

8<sup>va</sup>

72

Vlc.

Pno.

In the Distance

75 *p* *rit.* *a tempo*

Vlc.

Pno.

78 *rit.* *fp* *sul G* *a tempo* *rit.*

Vlc.

Pno.

83 *a tempo* *rit.*

Vlc.

Pno.

# At the Threshold

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$\text{♩} = 72$

The score is divided into three systems, each with a Violoncello (Vlc.) part and a Piano (Pno.) part. The Cello part is written in bass clef, and the Piano part is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

**System 1:** Cello part begins with a *p* dynamic. The Piano part features a *p* dynamic and includes a *Ped.* (pedal) marking in the bass line.

**System 2:** Cello part includes a *mp* dynamic and features triplet markings (3) and a *>* (accent) marking. The Piano part includes a *mp* dynamic and *Ped.* markings in the bass line.

**System 3:** Cello part includes a *mf* dynamic and features triplet markings (3) and quintuplet markings (5) with *>* (accent) markings. The Piano part includes a *mf* dynamic and *Ped.* markings in the bass line.

2  
72

Vlc.

*f*

Pno.

*f*

\* Ped.

16

Vlc.

16

Pno.

*sffz* *sffz* *sffz* *sffz* \*

Ped.

3

19

Vlc.

19

Pno.

Ped.

\* Ped.

21

Vlc.

Pno.

\* Ped.

23

Vlc.

Pno.

*ff*

*ff*

\* Ped.

\* Ped.

\* Ped.

25

Vlc.

Pno.

Ped.

\* Ped.

\* Ped.

4/27

Vlc.

Pno.

*p*

27

ped.

\*

Vlc.

Pno.

*ff*

31

3

5

ped.

\*

ped.

\*

ped.

\*

ped.

\*

Vlc.

Pno.

*p*

33

3

3

3

3

ped.

\*

ped.

37

Vlc.

Pno.

*Ped.* \*

40

Vlc.

Pno.

*Ped.* *sffz* \*

44

Vlc.

Pno.

*f* *Ped.* \*



47

Vlc. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

\* Ped. \*

50

Vlc. *p* *ff*

Pno. *p* *ff*

*p* *ff*

*p* *ff*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Ped. \*

53

Vlc.

Pno.

3

Ped. \*

55

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *p*

3 5 3 5

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

\* Ped.

58

Vlc.

Pno. *pp* *p*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Ped. \* Ped.

61

Vlc. *pizz.*

Pno. *pizz.*

3 3 3

\* Ped. \* Ped.

64 arco

Vlc. *pp* *p*

Pno. *mf* *p*

\* Ped. \*

68

Vlc. *mf* *f* *ff*

Pno. *mf* *f* *ff*

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

71 pizz.

Vlc. *mf* *f* *ff*

Pno. *mf*

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



85

Vlc. *mp* *mf* *p*

Pno.

*8<sup>vb</sup>* *Lead.*

88

Vlc. *f*

Pno. *f*

*Lead.* *Lead.*

92

Vlc. *ff* *p*

Pno. *subito p* *ff* *f*

*Lead.* *Lead.*

96

Vlc. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

100

Vlc. *rit.*

Pno. *rit.* *fff* with fist

*Red.*

104

Vlc. *a tempo* 5 3 *p > pp*

Pno. *a tempo* *p* *Red.*

12

109

Vlc.

Pno.

\* Ped. \*

114

Vlc.

Pno.

*f* *pp* *p*

*sfz* *p* *sfz* *pp* *p*

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

117

Vlc.

Pno.

*pp* *p*

*pp*

Ped. \* Ped. \*

sul G

120

Vlc. *fp* sul D

Pno. *p* *p*

124

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

127

Vlc. *f*

Pno. *f*



130

Vlc. *fp*

Pno. *f* *p*

*Leg.* \* *Leg.*

133

Vlc. *fp* sul pont. ordin.

Pno. *mp*

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

138

Vlc.

Pno.

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