

# The Wind Shifts

For high voice and piano

Lawrence Kramer

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*The Wind Shifts*

This is how the wind shifts:  
Like the thoughts of an old human,  
Who still thinks eagerly  
And despairingly.  
The wind shifts like this:  
Like a human without illusions,  
Who still feels irrational things within her.  
The wind shifts like this:  
Like humans approaching proudly,  
Like humans approaching angrily.  
This is how the wind shifts:  
Like a human, heavy and heavy,  
Who does not care.

*To the Roaring Wind*

What syllable are you seeking,  
Vocalissimus,  
In the distances of sleep?  
Speak it.

A shift in the wind is both a commonplace natural occurrence and a metaphor for a change in the tenor of experience. This duality is at the core of Wallace Stevens's early lyric "The Wind Shifts" and also of the composition inspired by it. The music understands the shifting winds, in both senses, as elements in a larger life cycle. Cyclical movement gives the music its character at several levels. The work proceeds continuously but at the same time subdivides into definite sections which recur cyclically with different degrees of completeness and persistence. All but one of these sectional cycles (the one being the necessary exception and counterforce) are based on harmonic cycles that rotate by triad, one to a measure, along a fixed pattern without the rationale of traditional tonal syntax. The text setting, in keeping with the cyclical impulse, rotates (changing as it goes) from "The Wind Shifts" to a related related short lyric by Stevens, "To the Roaring Wind." Duration is about 10 minutes. The poems, published in 1917, are in the public domain.

# The Wind Shifts

♩ = 66

Voice

Piano

*pp* *p* *pp*

6

6

*p* *pp*

Leg. \*Leg. \*

10

10

What syl - la - ble, what

*p* *mp*

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14

syl - la - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ what syl - la - ble \_\_\_\_\_ are you seek - ing,

*mf* *mp*

18

\_\_\_\_\_ what syl - la - ble are you seek - ing, \_\_\_\_\_ Vo -

*p* *pp*

21

\_\_\_\_\_ cal - li - si - mus, \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

24

in the dis - - - tan -

27

ces, 3 in the dis - tan-ces of sleep?

31

Speak it. Speak it. Speak it.

The Wind Shifts

35

35

*mp*

*mf*

38

38

This is how the

*p*

*pp*

41

wind shifts. The wind shifts like this:

*p*

44

like the thoughts <sup>3</sup> of an old hu-man, who still thinks

*mp* *mf*

47

<sup>3</sup> ea-ger-ly, — and de-spair-ing-ly. —

*mp* *mf*

50

The wind shifts — like this: —

*f* *fp*

53 *rit.*

*fp* *pp*

57 *a tempo*

like a hu - man with - out il -

*p*

59 *rit.* ♩ = 48

lus - sions, who still feels ir - ra - tion-al

*p*



61

things with - in her.

*pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 61-63. The vocal line (treble clef) has a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. It features a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note on F4, a quarter note on E4, and a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a right hand with a series of sixteenth-note runs and a left hand with a sparse accompaniment of quarter notes and rests. A piano dynamic marking of *pp* is present at the start of the piano part.

62

*p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 61-63. The vocal line is empty. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. A piano dynamic marking of *p* is present at the start of the piano part.

63

*mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 61-63. The vocal line is empty. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a right hand with a long, sweeping sixteenth-note run that rises in pitch, and a left hand with chords and moving lines. A mezzo-piano dynamic marking of *mp* is present at the start of the piano part.

64

This is how the

*pp*

65

wind shifts.

*mp*

67

*pp*

68

The wind shifts The wind shifts \_\_\_\_\_ like

*p*

71 *accel.* ♩ = 66

this:

73

*sf* *pp*

75

like hu-mans ap-roach - ing an - gri - ly, like hu-mans ap-roach - ing proud - ly,

*p*

77

this is how the wind shifts, \_\_\_\_\_ the wind \_\_\_\_\_

*mp* *mf*

81

\_\_\_\_\_ shifts \_\_\_\_\_ like this: like a hu - man, hea-vy, and hea-vy, who

*p* *pp* *p*

*rit.*

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85 *a tempo* ♩ = 60  
(somewhat faster than before)

does not care. What

*pp* *mf*

88

syl - la - ble, what

*pp* *p*

90

syl - la - ble,

*pp*

91

what

*p*

*mp*

92

3

syl - la - ble are you seek - ing,

*mp*

*f*

12

93

Vo - ca - lis - si -

*p*

*pp*

94 *rit.*

mus, in the dis - tan - ces of

6 7 *mp*

96 ♩ = 48

sleep?

*pp*

97 *accel.*

Speak it.

*p* *p*

♩ = 63  
100 (slightly slower than before)

Musical score for measures 100-102. The vocal line consists of three whole rests. The piano accompaniment features a complex harmonic structure with chords and moving lines in both hands. Dynamics include *pp* and *p*.

103 This is how the wind shifts. \_\_\_\_\_ The

Piano accompaniment for measures 103-105. The music continues with intricate chordal textures and melodic lines. Dynamics include *mp*.

106 wind shifts like this: \_\_\_\_\_

Piano accompaniment for measures 106-108. The music features a more active piano part with *mf* dynamics.



109

like the thoughts \_\_\_\_\_ of an old \_\_\_\_\_ hu - man, \_\_\_\_\_ who still thinks

*mf*

112

ea-ger-ly, \_\_\_\_\_ and des - pair-ing - ly. \_\_\_\_\_

*fp*

114

This, this is how the wind \_\_\_\_\_

*fp* *pp*

117

shifts. The

*p* *mp*

120

wind shifts like this: like this:

*mf* *p*

124

like a

*p* *pp*

128 *mp* *mf* *p*

hu - man with-out il - lus - sions, who does not

131 *mf* *pp* *p*

care. What syl - la - ble,

135 *mp*

what syl - la - ble, what

138 *mp*

syl-la-ble are you seek - ing, \_\_\_\_\_ Vo-cal - li - si - mus, \_\_\_\_\_

138 *f* *mp*

141 *p* *fp*

\_\_\_\_\_ in the dis - tan - ces of sleep? \_\_\_\_\_

141 *p* *fp* *f*

144 *rit.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Speak it. \_\_\_\_\_

144 *mf* *mp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

♩ = 48

148

Speak it. \_\_\_\_\_ Speak it. \_\_\_\_\_

*p* *mf*

152

Speak \_\_\_\_\_ it, \_\_\_\_\_

*pp*

8<sup>vb</sup>