

Questions of Travel

For Cello and Piano

2009

Lawrence Kramer

lkramer@fordham.edu

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

$\text{♩} = 84$

Cello

Piano

Vlc.

Pno.

Vlc.

Pno.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff features a Cello part in bass clef, with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a triplet figure. The second staff contains a Piano part in treble and bass clefs, with a dynamic *p*. The third staff shows a Violin (Vlc.) part in bass clef, with a 'Reed.' instruction and a series of sixteenth-note patterns. The fourth staff contains a Piano part in treble and bass clefs, also with a 'Reed.' instruction. The bottom staff shows a continuation of the Violin part. Measures are numbered 3, 4, and 7 above the staves. The score concludes with a final measure ending with an asterisk (*) and a 'Reed.' instruction.

In the Distance

2
10

Vlc.

Pno.

p

Bassoon

Vlc.

3 *3* *3*

Pno.

3 *3* *3*

Bassoon

Vlc.

f

Pno.

f

In the Distance

3

Vlc.

18

Pno.

18

p

19

p

Reo.

Vlc.

21

Pno.

21

fp

pp

*

*

Reo.

Vlc.

25

Pno.

25

p

mp

pp

*

*

Reo.

In the Distance

4
28

Vlc.

p

28

Pno.

p

31

Vlc.

pizz.

mp

f

31

Pno.

pizz.

33 arco

Vlc.

mf mp

33

Pno.

mp pp

In the Distance

35

Vlc.

35

Pno.

36

38

Vlc.

38

Pno.

Rwd. *

Rwd. *

42

Vlc.

42

Pno.

*

In the Distance

6
46

Vlc.

This measure shows the Violin (Vlc.) playing eighth-note patterns with grace notes, and the Piano (Pno.) providing harmonic support with sustained chords. Measure 47 begins with a piano dynamic.

46

Pno.

The piano part continues with sustained chords and eighth-note patterns. Measure 48 begins with a piano dynamic.

50

Vlc.

The Violin (Vlc.) plays eighth-note patterns with grace notes. The piano part follows with eighth-note patterns. Dynamics include *fp* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte).

50

Pno.

The piano part continues with eighth-note patterns. Measure 52 begins with a piano dynamic.

52

Vlc.

The Violin (Vlc.) plays eighth-note patterns with grace notes.

52

Pno.

The piano part continues with eighth-note patterns. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

In the Distance

rit.

Vlc. 54

>*p*

Pno. 54

p

7

Reo.

59

Vlc.

Slower

d=72

p

Pno. 59

* *Reo.*

62

Vlc.

p

Pno. 62

* *Reo.*

*

In the Distance

8
65

Vlc.

Pno.

65

68

Vlc.

p

f

pizz.

arco

Pno.

68

8vb

72

Vlc.

$>$

$>$

$>$

Pno.

72

3

In the Distance

75 *rit.* *a tempo*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. { *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* ***

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

Vlc. *fp* *p*

Pno. { *p*

83 *a tempo* *rit.*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. { *p*

At the Threshold

J = 72

Cello *p*

Piano *p* *Reo.*

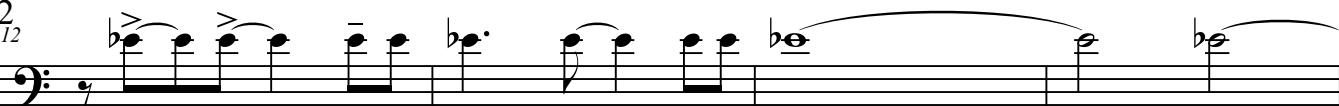
Vlc. 5 *mp*

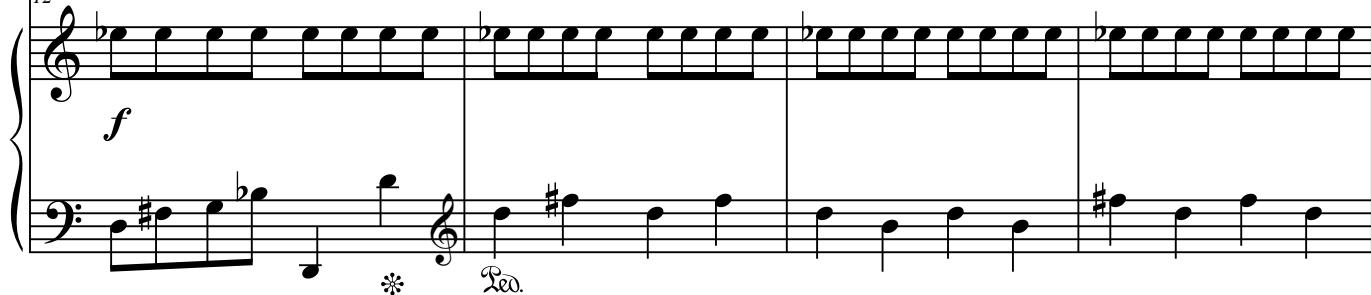
Pno. 5 *mp* *** *Reo.* ***

Vlc. 8 *mf*

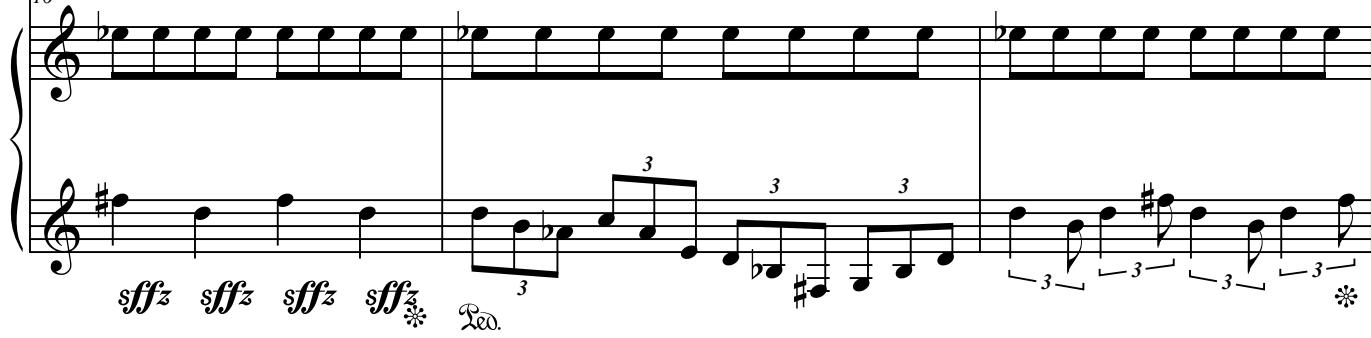
Pno. 8 *mf* *** *Reo.* ***

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is for the Cello, starting with a dynamic *p*. The second staff is for the Piano, with a dynamic *p* and a performance instruction *Reo.* below the staff. The third staff is for the Violoncello (Vlc.), featuring sixteenth-note patterns with dynamics *mp* and measure numbers 5 and 3. The bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno.), with dynamics *mp*, measure numbers 5 and 3, and performance instructions ***, *Reo.*, and ***. The score continues with two more staves. The fifth staff is for the Vlc., with measure numbers 8, dynamics *mf*, and measure numbers 3 and 5. The sixth staff is for the Pno., with dynamics *mf*, measure numbers 8 and 5, and performance instructions ***, *Reo.*, and ***. Measures are separated by vertical bar lines, and measures 3 and 5 are indicated by horizontal bar lines above the staff.

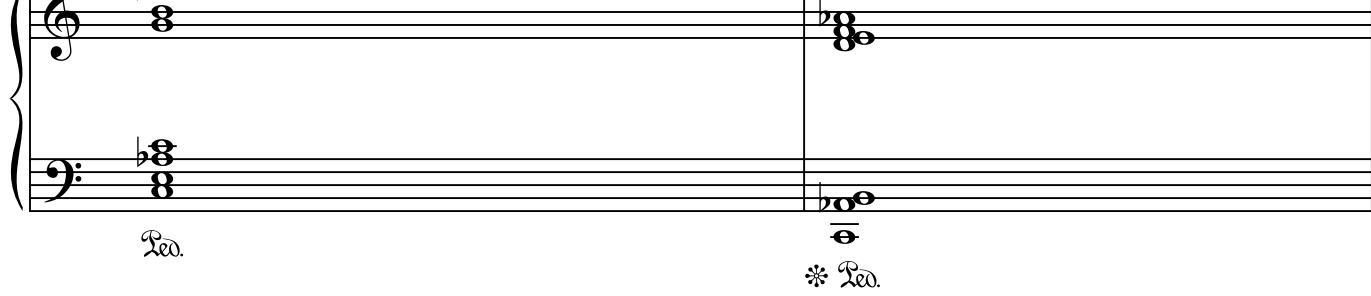
2
 Vlc. 

12
 Pno. 

16
 Vlc. 

16
 Pno. 

19
 Vlc. 

19
 Pno. 

3

21

Vlc.

Pno.

* *Réol.*

23

Vlc.

Pno.

ff

ff

* *Réol.*

Réol.

25

Vlc.

Pno.

ff

* *Réol.*

Réol.

* *Réol.*

* *Réol.*

* *Réol.*

4

Vlc.

27

Pno.

27

Vlc.

31

Pno.

31

Vlc.

33

Pno.

Detailed description: The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Violin (Vlc.), the middle staff is for the Piano (Pno.), and the bottom staff is for the Violin (Vlc.). Measure 4: Vlc. plays a sustained note. Measures 27-28: Vlc. plays a sustained note. Pno. plays eighth-note chords. Measure 27: Pno. plays eighth-note chords. Measure 31: Vlc. plays eighth-note chords. Pno. plays eighth-note chords. Measure 31: Vlc. plays eighth-note chords. Pno. plays eighth-note chords. Measure 33: Vlc. plays eighth-note chords. Pno. plays eighth-note chords. Vlc. plays eighth-note chords.

37

Vlc.

37

Pno.

40

Vlc.

40

Pno.

44

Vlc.

f

44

Pno.

f

47

Vlc.

Pno.

ff

48

ff

3

*** *Reo.*

50

Vlc.

Pno.

p

ff

Reo.

51

ff

Reo.

53

Vlc.

Pno.

p

ff

Reo.

54

ff

Reo.

55

Vlc.

Pno.

p

55

Pno.

p

*** ReD.**

58

Vlc.

58

Pno.

pp

p

*** ReD.**

61

Vlc.

pizz.

61

Pno.

*** ReD.**

*** ReD.**

64 arco

Vlc.

64

Vlc.

Pno.

65

Vlc.

Pno.

68

Vlc.

68

Vlc.

Pno.

69

Vlc.

Pno.

71

Vlc.

71

Vlc.

Pno.

72

Vlc.

Pno.

74

Vlc.

Pno.

ff

75

Vlc.

arco

Pno.

76

Vlc.

Pno.

77

Vlc.

8va >-

subito **p**

Pno.

8fz

subito **p**

8vb -

*

78

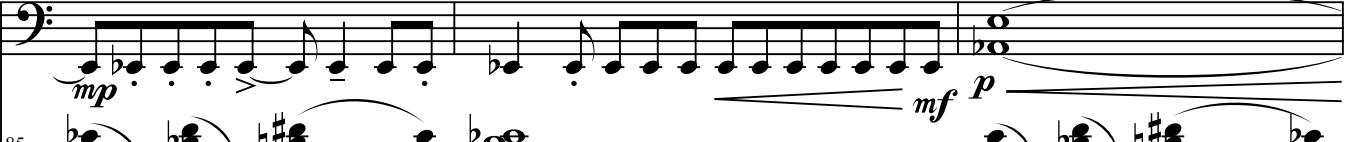
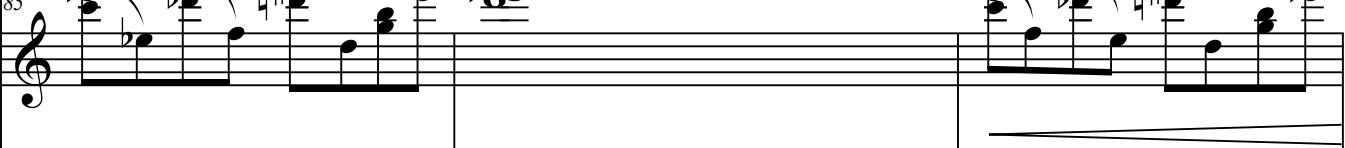
Vlc.

*

Pno.

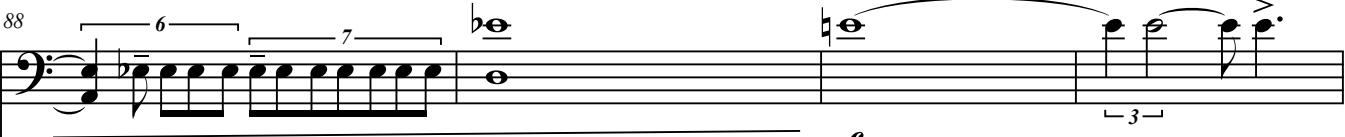
*

85 5 —3— —6— 7

Vlc. 
Pno. 

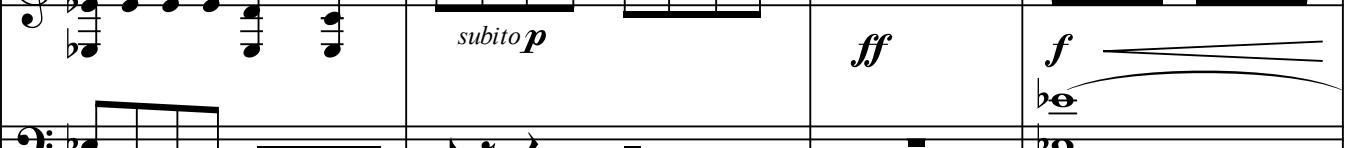
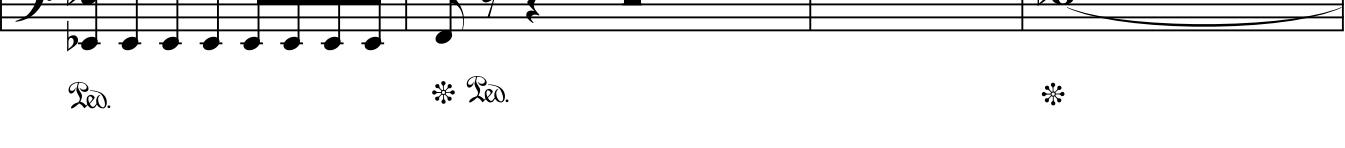
(8^{vb}) —
Rœd.

* Rœd. * Rœd. * Rœd. *

88 —6— —7— 
Vlc. 

Pno. 
Rœd. * Rœd. *

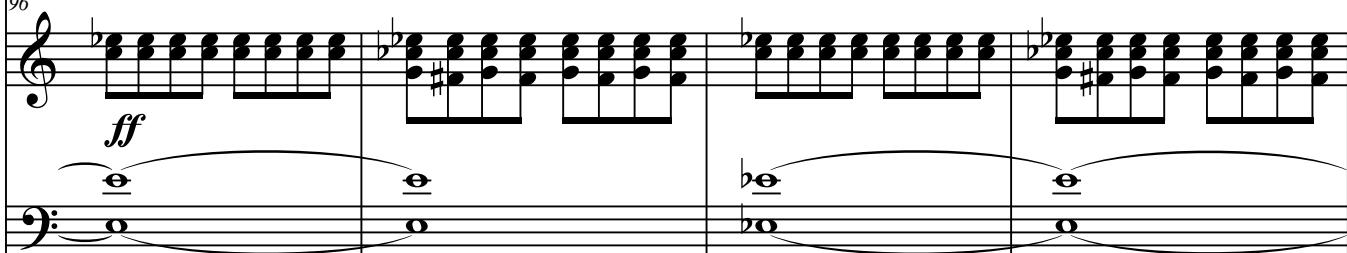
92 
Vlc. 

ff p 
Pno. 

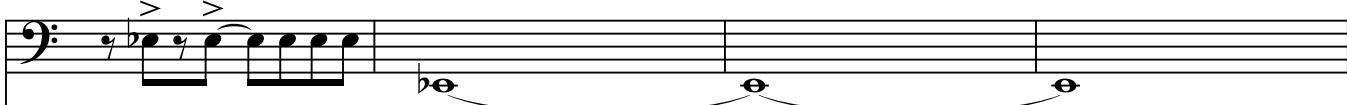
subito p ff f
Rœd. * Rœd. *

96

Vlc. 

Pno. 

100 *rit.*

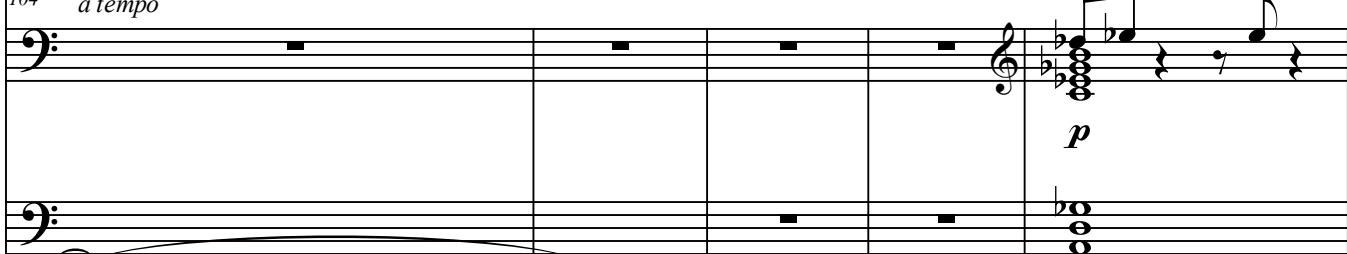
Vlc. 

Pno. 

rit.

104 *a tempo*

Vlc. 

Pno. 

a tempo

12

Vlc.

Pno.

109

109

*

Réo.

*

Réo.

Vlc.

Pno.

II4

5 3

f pp p

sfsz p sfsz pp p

*

Réo.

*

Réo.

*

Vlc.

Pno.

II7

> >

3 5

pp p

Réo.

pp

Réo.

*

sul G

120

Vlc. *sul D*

Pno.

120

p *p*

p *p*

124

Vlc. *mp*

Pno.

124

mp

mp

mp *mp*

127

Vlc. *f*

Pno.

127

f

f

f *f*

130

Vlc.

Pno.

Réo. * *Réo.*

fp

f

p

133

Vlc.

Pno.

sul pont.

ordin.

fp

mp

** Réo.* * *Réo.* * *Réo.* * *Réo.*

138

Vlc.

Pno.

** Réo.* * *Réo.* *