

GRAHAM LACK

IMAGES

Book II

for SSATBB choir
a cappella

1. Dusk
2. Beach Leaves
3. Desolation

HY 2053 G

Foreword

Imagist poetry has an emotional appeal: to my mind it should immediately be set to music. My first encounter with this poetic form was as a student with a small paperback anthology entitled simply *Imagist Poetry* originally published by Penguin Books in 1972 and edited by Peter Jones. Reissued in 2001 in the series Penguin Modern Classics, it remains the ideal way in to the subject, selecting as it does the best material from the four Imagist anthologies that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century and the final one from the 1930s.

The poems of the Imagist group are characterised by their brevity, precise descriptions, purity of texture, and concentration of meaning. This desire for direct treatment of “the ‘thing’, whether subjective or objective” – as the Imagist poet F. S. Flint once declared, coupled with advice by the group’s mentor, Ezra Pound, to “use no superfluous word...which does not reveal something”, provided a compositional point of departure. I tried to capture the essence of each poem and portray in an overt musical way the single object presented by each poet. At the back of my mind lingered an earlier idea, one formulated by Gerard Manley Hopkins: his joint notion of ‘inscape’, by which he meant the unified complex of characteristics that lend any given thing its uniqueness – thus differentiating it from other things, and ‘instress’, something he understood as the force of being that holds the inscape together and which emerges whole from the poetic description before being carried onward into the mind of the beholder.

Meeting on Thursday evenings from 1909 onwards in a London restaurant called the Eiffel Tower, *Les Imagistes* talked of the parlous state of contemporary English poetry, which they felt suffered from the burdensome legacy of the Georgian poets. They sought new paths that might help cast poems in forms reminiscent of the Japanese tanka and haikai, and debated how contemporary efforts might even be completely replaced by *vers libre*, as practiced by the French symbolist poets. Added to this heady mix were acknowledged Hebraic and Greek influences, as exemplified by forms favoured by figures such as Amy Lowell, Richard Aldington and Hilda Doolittle – the latter already having assumed the *nom de plume* H.D.

Most words in these *a cappella* settings are set syllabically, there emerging a strong intervallic and melodic response to the text. The untexted passages are sung occasionally to extraneous syllables beginning with consonants, but mainly to various vowels, or with half-closed lips, to ‘mm’. Thus, by gradually transforming one vowel into the next, an array of vocal colour is created, this timbral scale based on formant theory. It is as if the actual words sung appear in white, projected against a screen of ever-changing colours. Choral directors and singers in solo ensembles should feel free to experiment with vowel sounds, taking care that the words themselves – when they do appear – are not obscured by any brighter vocal timbres. As Peter Jones says in his introduction to my literary source of inspiration: “The image itself is the speech”.

The second book of IMAGES is issued variously in versions for vocal ensemble – appropriate clef codes and transpositions may be chosen – or chamber choir. The orthography, punctuation and line breaks of the following texts have been checked against first editions of the imagist anthologies. The poems, as well as the translations, might well be included in the programme notes to the concert.

Dusk: A bell tones, for the evening darkens; and sparsely / the greenish lights well out along the other bank. **Beech Leaves***: The beech-leaves are silver / For lack of the tree's blood. **Desolation:** Under the plum-blossoms are nightingales; / but the sea is hidden in an egg-white mist.

* Original title “October”

Vorwort

Die Poesie der Gruppe der sogenannten „Imagists“ hat einen in erster Linie emotionalen Reiz: für mich drängt sich ihre Vertonung geradezu auf. Als Student war ich zum ersten Mal mit dieser Form der Dichtkunst in Berührungen gekommen, als mir eine schmale Taschenbuchanthologie mit dem simplen Titel *Imagist Poetry* in die Hand fiel, zuerst veröffentlicht 1972 von Penguin Books und herausgegeben von Peter Jones. Als Wiederauflage von 2001, nun in der Reihe Penguin Modern Classics, bleibt es der ideale Zugang zu diesem Thema, vereint es doch die besten Beispiele aus den vier Anthologien der Imagists, die zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts erschienen waren, sowie der letzten aus den 1930er Jahren.

Die Gedichte der Imagists-Gruppe zeichnen sich aus durch ihre Kürze, Präzision der Beschreibung, Klarheit der Struktur und Konzentration der Bedeutung. Solches Streben nach direktester Behandlung „des ‚Dings‘, ob subjektiv oder objektiv“ – wie der Imagist F. S. Flint einst erklärte, verbunden mit dem Rat des Mentors der Gruppe, Ezra Pound, „kein überflüssiges Wort zu verwenden..., das nicht etwas offenbart“, boten auch den kompositorischen Ausgangspunkt. So versuchte ich, die Essenz jedes Gedichts zu fassen und auf eine offenkundige musikalische Art und Weise das einzelne Objekt zu porträtieren, das der jeweilige Dichter präsentierte. Im Hinterkopf hatte ich dabei eine frühere Idee, einst formuliert von Gerard Manley Hopkins: sein Konzept von „*Inscape*“, womit er den gesamten Komplex an Eigenschaften beschreibt, der jeder beliebigen Sache ihre Einzigartigkeit verleiht (und sie dadurch von allen anderen Sachen unterscheidbar machen), und von „*Instress*“, was er als die existentielle Kraft verstand, die das „*Inscape*“ zusammenhält und das gewissermaßen aus der poetischen Beschreibung hervortritt, bevor es in den Geist des Betrachters übertragen wird.

Ab 1909 trafen sich *Les Imagistes* immer Donnerstag abends in einem Londoner Restaurant namens The Eiffel Tower, um über die prekäre Situation zeitgenössischer englischer Poesie zu sprechen, die in ihren Augen unter dem erdrückenden Erbe der Georgian Dichter litt. So suchten sie nach neuen Wegen, die es erlaubten, Gedichte in Formen zu gießen, ähnlich der japanischen Tanka und Haikai, und sie diskutierten darüber, wie die zeitgenössischen Bemühungen möglicherweise ganz durch den *vers libre* ersetzt werden könnten, wie dies die französischen Symbolisten praktizierten. Zu dieser ohnehin schon wilden Mischung gesellten sich hebräische und griechische Einflüsse, wie sie etwa Amy Lowell, Richard Aldington und Hilda Doolittle bevorzugten – die letztere hatte sich zu dieser Zeit bereits das Kürzel H.D. zugelegt.

Der Großteil der Worte in diesen *a cappella*-Sätzen ist syllabisch vertont und bildet eine starke intervallische und melodische Antwort auf den Text. Die textfreien Passagen werden gelegentlich auf fremden mit Konsonanten beginnenden Silben gesungen, hauptsächlich aber auf Vokale oder, mit halbgeschlossenen Lippen, auf „mm“. Auf diese Weise entsteht durch graduelle Veränderung eines Vokals in den nächsten ein breites Spektrum an Stimmfarben, wobei diese Klangfarbenpalette auf den Erkenntnissen der Formanttheorie basiert. Fast so, als ob die tatsächlich gesungenen Wörter in Weiß erscheinen, projiziert auf eine Fläche unentwegt changierender Farben. Chorleiter und Ensemblesänger sollten sich ruhig die Freiheit nehmen, mit den Vokalen zu experimentieren, allerdings gilt es darauf zu achten, dass die Wörter selbst – wenn sie dann auftauchen – nicht von helleren Klangfarben überdeckt werden. Wie Peter Jones in seiner Einführung zu meiner literarischen Inspirationsquelle sagt: „Das Bild selbst ist die Sprache“.

Das zweite Buch der IMAGES existiert in verschiedenen Versionen für Vokalensemble – passende Transpositionen und Stimmen- bzw. Schlüsselbelegungen können ausgewählt werden – oder Kammerchor. Orthographie, Interpunktions- und Zeilenumbrüche der folgenden Texte folgen den Originalausgaben der Anthologien der Imagists. Die Gedichte mitsamt ihren Übersetzungen bieten sich für die Aufnahme in Programmhefte natürlich an.

Dusk: Eine Glocke läutet, denn der Abend dunkelt; und spärlich / die grünlichen Lichte, weit draußen entlang der anderen Seite der Böschung.

Beech Leaves*: Die Buchenblätter sind silbern / Aus Mangel an des Baumes Blut.

Desolation: Unter den Pflaumenblüten sind Nachtigallen; / aber das Meer ist versteckt in einem eierschalenen Nebel.

I
Dusk

J.C. SQUIRE

*Taken from a longer (untitled) poem;
abridged by F.S. Flint*

4 Calmo $\text{♩} = 76$

3

4

A bell tones for the
A bell tones for the
ah ah ah
ah ah ah
A bell tones for the
A bell tones for the

5 *quasi mf*

mp

3

eve - ning dark - ens ah
eve - ning dark - ens
oh ah dark - ens
ah ooh dark - ens
eve - ning dark - ens

10

6 ♩

(ah) _____

ah

p

ooh

ah

mm

mm

mm

mm

p

dark

ens

mm

mm

4 ♩

6 ♩

15

p

ooh

p

ooh

ah

mm

mm

ah

p

eve -

ooh

ah

mm

ah

p

eve -

3| 4|

oooh
ah
ah
oooh
ah
ah
ah
ah
ning

mp

20 *mp*

ah
mp
ah
mp
ah

2| 4| 3|

ah
(ah)

And *mf*
sparse - - ly the green -
oooh
ah

mf
And *mf*
sparse - - ly the green -

mp
mf
And *mf*
sparse - - ly the green -

And sparse - - ly the green -

4 7 4 9

poco a poco

25 *quasi f* lights ah ah
mf (ooh) ah
quasi f - ish lights ah
mf (ooh) ah
quasi f - ish lights -
quasi f - ish lights -

- ish lights _____

de- cresc- en- do 30 6 9

non rallentando

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
(ah) mm ooh
ah mm ooh
ah ooh mm ooh
ah ooh mm ah
ah ooh ah
ah

ah _____

4 *p*

35

well out a long the oth - er

p

ah ah ah ah

p

well out a long the oth - er

p

ah ah ah ah

p

well out a long the oth - er

p

well out a long the oth - er

40

bank

ah ah ah ah

bank

(ah) ah ah

bank

bank

40

p

35

well out a long the oth - er
 ah ah ah ah
 well out a long the oth - er
 well out a long the oth - er
 well out a long the oth - er
 well out a long the oth - er

40

bank
 ah ah ah ah
 bank
 (ah) ah ah
 bank
 bank

II
Beech Leaves

RICHARD ALDINGTON

Taken from a longer poem "October"

lugubrioso ♩ = ca. 60

3 ♩ 4 ♩

p Ah ah ah ah

p Ah ah ah ah

p Ah ah ah ah

p schwerfällig

The beech - leaves

4 ♩ , 3 ♩ mp 2 ♩ 4 ♩ 2 ♩

(ah) The beech - leaves the beech

(ah) The beech - leaves ah ah

p mp ah The beech - leaves ah ah

mp ah The beech - leaves ah ah

8 (ah) the The beech - leaves beech - leaves

(ah) The beech - leaves ah ah

the beech - leaves ah ah

4

10

- leaves - are sil-

(ah) ah

(ah) ah the beech

ah are

(ah) ah ah

are sil - ver ah

2

4

15

- ver - are

ah

sil - ver

leaves - are

ah

4.

3. 20

4.

sil - ver

sil - ver

ah_____

3 3 3

oh_____

ah_____

3 3 3

oh_____

p

(ah)

p

ah_____

2.

3. 25

4.

oh_____

oh_____

oh_____

3 3

oh_____

3

lack

of

for

lack

30

30

(oh)

oh

oh

oh

oh

oh

oh

the trees

blood,

for

lack

lack

of

of the

the

Musical score for voice and piano, page 10, measures 4-6.

Measure 4: Treble clef. Key signature: F major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal line consists of eighth-note patterns grouped by measure, with lyrics '(oh)' appearing three times. The piano accompaniment has eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: dynamic markings '3' above the notes, 'mf' at the end of the measure.

Measure 5: Treble clef. Key signature: F major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '6'). The vocal line continues with eighth-note patterns and lyrics '(oh)', 'ah', and 'the'. The piano accompaniment has eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: dynamic markings '3' above the notes, 'mf' at the end of the measure.

Measure 6: Treble clef. Key signature: F major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal line continues with eighth-note patterns and lyrics '(oh)', 'ah', and 'the'. The piano accompaniment has eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: dynamic markings '3' above the notes, 'mf' at the end of the measure.

Measure 7: Treble clef. Key signature: F major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal line begins with eighth-note patterns and lyrics 'the', 'trees', and 'blood'. The piano accompaniment has eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: dynamic marking 'mm' at the end of the measure.

Measure 8: Treble clef. Key signature: F major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal line continues with eighth-note patterns and lyrics 'the', 'trees', and 'blood'. The piano accompaniment has eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: dynamic marking 'mf' at the end of the measure.

Bass Clef Measure: Bass clef. Key signature: F major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal line continues with eighth-note patterns and lyrics 'the', 'trees', and 'blood'. The piano accompaniment has eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: dynamic marking 'mf' at the end of the measure.

3 35 4 3

— beech — leaves are sil - - - - - ver
— beech — leaves are sil - - - - - ver
beech — leaves are sil - - - - -
— beech — leaves are sil - - - - - ver
— beech — leaves are sil - - - - - ver

Musical score for orchestra and choir, page 10, measures 40-45. The score consists of five staves: Treble, Alto, Bass, Tenor, and Bassoon. The vocal parts sing "for lack of the tree's blood" in three-measure phrases, with melodic lines marked by dashed arcs. The bassoon part provides harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. Measure 40 starts with a forte dynamic. Measures 41-42 show melodic entries from the alto and bass. Measure 43 features a melodic line from the tenor. Measure 44 concludes with a melodic entry from the bassoon. Measure 45 ends with a melodic line from the bass.

3| 4| 3| 7|

45 *p*

the tree's blood
p
the tree's blood
p 3 the tree's blood ah
of the tree's blood ah
p the tree's blood ah
p the tree's blood ah
the tree's blood ah

2| 3| 2| 4| 3|

cresc- en- do poco à poco

50

lack of the tree's blood of the ,
ah 3 lack of the tree's blood of the ,
(ah) of the tree's blood of the ,
of the tree's blood

4 ♩

2 ♩

7 ♩ 55

— tree's blood

— tree's blood

— tree's blood

tree's blood

tree's blood,

tree's blood,

tree's blood,

blood 3

blood, 3

blood, 3

4 ♩ mp

7 ♩ >

9 ♩ > >

ma

ma

mm

ma, mm, ma

blood

blood

blood

3

3

3

4

60

(ma) mm

(ma) mm

blood

3

blood

3

blood

3

blood

3

blood

3

blood

ah

mp

ah

ma

3

ah

ah

mp

ah

ah

mp

ah

3

2

mm

ah

3

65

oh

sfzp >

3

ah

3

oh

sfzp >

3

ah

ooh

ah

ah

mm

4

(ah)

sfp

oh

oh

sfp

ah

70 *poco*

3

p

ah

p

oh

p

oh

p

ah

ah

4

9

4

mm

mm

mm

mm

mm

ah

ah

ah

p

The

mf

beech

3 ♦ 75 2 ♦ 6 ♦ 9 ♦ 3 ♦ lento 4 ♦ 80

sil - ver
 (ah) ah for lack of the
 (ah) are sil ah ah
 leaves ah ah
 leaves sil - ver for lack of the

III Desolation

AMY LOWELL

Graham Lack

9 ♫ (oh) _____

(on the breath)

6 ♫ oh _____

oooh _____

oooh _____

oooh _____

oooh _____

oooh _____

oooh _____

Un - - der the plum blos - soms

10

norm.

5♪ 3♪ 3+6♪ 2♪

9. 2. 3. 4.

oh - Un - der - (oh) - oh - oh - der -

20

2 ♩ 6 ♩ 9 ♩

This musical score page contains five staves of music. The top three staves represent vocal parts, likely soprano, alto, and tenor/bass, indicated by treble, alto, and bass clefs respectively. The bottom two staves represent a piano or harpsichord, indicated by a bass clef. Measure 20 starts with a rest in the top vocal staves, followed by eighth-note patterns with lyrics "oh" and "oh". Measure 21 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern in the top vocal staves, followed by eighth-note patterns with lyrics "oh" and "oh". Measure 22 continues with eighth-note patterns and lyrics "oh" and "oh". Measure 23 starts with a piano eighth-note pattern, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "(oh)" and "oh". Measure 24 begins with a piano eighth-note pattern, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "un - - der" and "the". Measure 25 concludes with piano eighth-note patterns.

3 ♩ 9 ♩ 5 ♩

25

This musical score page contains five staves of music. The top three staves represent vocal parts, likely soprano, alto, and tenor/bass, indicated by treble, alto, and bass clefs respectively. The bottom two staves represent a piano or harpsichord, indicated by a bass clef. Measure 26 starts with a piano eighth-note pattern, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "(oh)" and "ah". Measure 27 begins with a piano eighth-note pattern, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "un - - - der" and "the". Measure 28 continues with piano eighth-note patterns, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "(oh)" and "ah". Measure 29 starts with a piano eighth-note pattern, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "oh" and "ah". Measure 30 concludes with piano eighth-note patterns, followed by vocal eighth-note patterns with lyrics "(mm)" and "(mm)".

2.

3.

6.

4.

30.

3.

4 (ah) _____

6 the _____

the _____

the _____

8 (mm) plum_____ blos_____

(ah) oh_____ oh_____ oh_____ oh_____

oh_____ oh_____ the_____ plum_____

3 plum_____ blos_____

ooh_____ - soms_____

3 plum_____ blos_____

(mm) ooh_____ oh_____

(oh)_____ - soms._____

blo(s)_____ mm

40

6[♪]

soms -

9[♪]

un -

- soms -

oh 2

oh 2

oh 2

ooh

ah

un -

ah

45

6[♪]

- der

the

mm -

(ooh)

plum

oh

der

the

mm -

(oh)

plum

mm -

3.

4.

50

6.

(mm) oh mm
blo- are
blo soms.
oh are
blo soms.
(mm) mm oh oh
mm oh oh

9.

4. *frei entfaltet*

oh
night ing gales
night ing gales
night ing gales
(oh)

55

ossia:

60

3

(oh)

night

oh

oh

night

4

60

9

60

ing

- gales

ah

oh

oh

ah

(oh)

gales

ah

ah

ing

ah

ah

oh

2

2

9
mm _____

4
65 but the sea is hid - den

ah _____ but the sea is hid - den

(ah) _____

ah² _____

ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

ah² _____ ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

2
in _____ an _____ egg _____ white _____ mist _____

in _____ an _____ egg _____ white _____ mist _____

ooh, _____ ooh _____

ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

ah _____ ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

ah _____ ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

(ah) _____ ah _____ ah _____ ah _____

4.

6.

4.

75

6.

4 6 3 6

80

an egg white mist
an egg white mist
(oh) oh
ah ah
(ah) ah ah

4 6 3 2

85

oooh oh
(oh) ah ah
oooh oh
(oh) ah ah
oooh oh
(oh) ah ah
oooh oh
(oh) ah ah

6.

90

mm

oh

oh

ah

ah

ah

4.

6.

3.

4. $\text{J} = 60$

mm

ma

(oh)

ah

(oh)

un - der - the

un - der - the

ah

un - der - the

ah

7

95

3

4

but the sea is
but the sea is
but the sea is
— plum blos - soms ,
— plum blos - soms

6

100

2

4

3

hid - den in an egg white mist
egg white mist

4 ♩ 2 ♩ 4 ♩ 3 ♩

105

egg white mist.
egg white mist.

an egg white mist
an egg white mist

are night-ing-ales
are night-ing-ales
are night-ing-ales
are night-ing-ales
are night-ing-ales
are night-ing-ales

an egg white mist
an egg white mist

110
are night-ing-ales

2 ♩ 6 ♩

110

white mist
white mist
white mist
white mist

mm
mm
mm
mm

white mist
white mist
white mist
white mist

115

(mm) oh

(mm)

(mm)

and they

and they

9♪ 12♪ 6♪

120

(oh) oh oh oh

oh oh oh oh

and they

they

9.

125

6.

ah_____ ah_____ oh_____ ooh_____ ma_____

(oh) ah_____ oh_____ ooh_____ mm_____

ah_____ oooh_____ mm_____

ah_____ ah_____ ah_____ ah_____ ah_____

4
4
3
2

(oh) and they are
 (oh) and they are
 (oh) and they are
 mm and they are
 mm and they are
 (oh) and they are

3
2
3
6

ff si - - - - lent, , - ooh
 ff si - - - - lent, , p and are si - lent
 ff si - - - - lent, , p and are si - lent
 ff si - - - - lent, , p and are si - lent
 ff si - - - - lent, , p and are si - lent
 ff si - - - - lent, , p and are si - lent
 ff si - - - - lent, , p and are si - lent

9♪

 2♪ 145

 3♪

9♪

 6♪ 150

repeat and fade

155

(mm) mm. mm. mm. mm.

mm. mm. mm. mm. mm.

ma ma

ma

39

HY 2053 G