

# Hunger - The Journey of Tamsen Donner

Chamber opera in one act  
based on poetry by Ruth Whitman

Tom Baker (2008)

soprano  
clarinet (dbl harmonica)  
french horn  
acoustic guitar (dbl harmonium and harmonica)  
percussion (dbl harmonium and harmonica)  
contrabass (dbl harmonica)

(Score in C)

Frog Peak Music

where is the west?  
who shall fix its limits?  
he who attempts it will soon learn  
that it is not a fixed but a floating line.

-Elizabeth Cooke, 1858

# Hunger - The Journey of Tamsen Donner

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19. Empty Nest
20. How Can I Part
21. Hunger
22. Words

for six players:

soprano (double harmonium)  
clarinet (double harmonica)  
horn (double harmonica)  
acoustic guitar (double harmonica and harmonium)  
percussion (drum set, misc metal percussion, harmonium)  
contrabass (double harmonica)

HUNGER tells the tragic tale of the Donner Party through the eyes of Tamsen Donner, the matriarch of that ill-fated group of pioneers. The Donner family and their fellow travelers were determined to make it to the promised land - the California territory. After struggling across the prairie and the desert, losing most of their oxen and cattle, and nearly dying of thirst, they were convinced to modify their route by a hired guide. They reached the Sierra mountains, just miles from their destination, only to be trapped for months by blinding snow and bitter storms. Many perished. Some survived by resorting to cannibalism. They all experienced unimaginable suffering. The music of Tom Baker and the poetry of Ruth Whitman combine to give a moving account of this journey, told through Tamsen Donner's re-imagined words, thoughts and songs.

More information: [www.tombakercomposer.com](http://www.tombakercomposer.com)  
For parts: [tom@tombakercomposer.com](mailto:tom@tombakercomposer.com)

Text from pgs. 15, 19-20, 28-29, 37, 43-45, 49, 53, 58-61, 64-65, 67-72, 75 from  
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# Hymns and Folk Songs for Motivic Improvisation

## Sweet Betsy from Pike Motives

• = 120

Musical notation for the first system of 'Sweet Betsy from Pike Motives'. It consists of two staves in 3/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120.

## The Call For Reapers Motives

• = 130

Musical notation for the first system of 'The Call For Reapers Motives'. It consists of two staves in 3/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 130.

## It is Well Motives

• = 66

Musical notation for the first system of 'It is Well Motives'. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 66.

## Fair and Tender Ladies

• = 108

Musical notation for the first system of 'Fair and Tender Ladies'. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 108.

## Dying Cowboy motives

• = 50

Musical notation for the first system of 'Dying Cowboy motives'. It consists of two staves in 3/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 50.



# I. My Beginning Stirs Again

(soprano solo)

(Lights go up to find Tamsen lying on the stage alone, with the "Mountain" scene projected. This song is from the end of the journey, and it is a prelude to the coming memory of her trip.)

*freely* ♩ = 60

Soprano

How could I fore - see my end in that soft

5  
spring? I be-gan my jour - ney cer - tain that what

11  
was un - known would be made smooth and ea - sy. I for-got the

16  
an-ger of the land. Now in the white si - lence

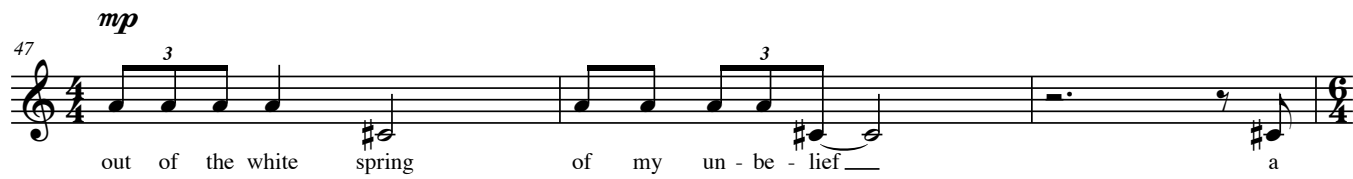
23  
I re-mem - ber wind blow - ing back the hair of the o - cean

28  
sun - light sli - cing through the clouds spring birds cir-cling south

34  
Un-der the ci - ties of snow Un-der the whi-rl pool of

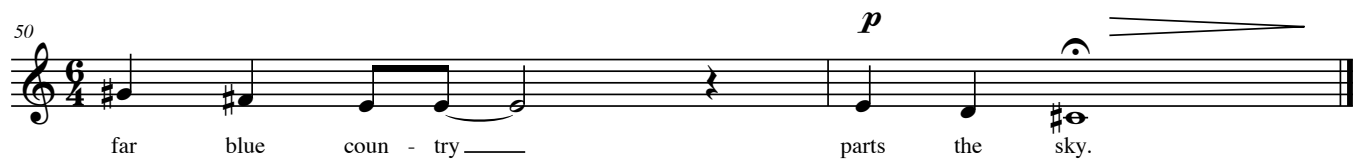
40  
leaves my be - gin - ning stirs a - gain

47 *mp*



out of the white spring of my un - be - lief a

50 *p*



far blue coun - try parts the sky.

## II. Traveling Music I

(Guitar plays music below, while Tamsen walks in a circuitous route around the space, ending up back on stage, with the scene changing from Mountain to Prairie. Along the way, she picks up 1) the clarinet player, who quietly follows her while improvising sparsely using the "Sweet Betsy from Pike" motives in D Major; 2) the bass player, who follows her while playing long note drones on the "A" harmonica; 3) the horn player, who follows her while playing long note drones on the "B-flat" harmonica; and 4) the drummer, who follows her playing a small gong or sus cymbal with a metal beater. When they reach the stage, they get into place for III, and fall silent while guitar ends Traveling Music I.)

**A** ♩ = 60

Guitar

4

3x

7

Repeat A several times, until all players are in place on stage, then after the last time through A, go to final ending below.

(last time only)

9





# III. The Wagons Move First

(Lights change to a brighter, somewhat sunny scene, as the party begins its travels across the prairie. Tamsen begins to write in her diary.)

Spoken: April 15th, 1846. Leaving Springfield, Illinois.

• = 104 *dreamily*

Soprano

Clarinet (score in C)

Guitar *p*

Percussion (add lib) (brushes on snare)

Contrabass *p* *pizz.*

7

S

Cl. *p*

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

13 *mp*

S  
The wa - gons move first,

Cl.

Gtr. *p*

Perc.

Cb.

19

S  
one be - hind the o - ther, — but then strag - gling. —

Cl.

Gtr. *p*

Perc.

Cb.

25

S  
Friends want to ride be - side friends, and we pass back and

Cl.

Gtr. *p*

Perc.

Cb.

31 *p* (intoned)

S  
forth. I ride next to George

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

37

S  
we are like two versions of a strain.....that come together and go apart. knowing the coming together in the end will thread into a single theme.

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

43

S

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

49 *mp*

S  
We are sur - round - ed by friends and at night we drown out the

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

55

S  
howl - ing of the wolves by the sing - ing of hymns a - round the camp -

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

61 *p* (intoned)

S  
- - fire. Sometimes when we are on our way

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

67

S  
one behind the other undulating over the prairie

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

73

S  
we have the appearance of a large funeral procession.

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

79

S

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

85

S  
Cl.  
Gtr.  
Perc.  
Cb.

Detailed description: This system of musical notation covers measures 85 through 90. The vocal line (S) is mostly silent, indicated by horizontal bars. The clarinet (Cl.) plays a melodic line with a slur and a breath mark (>) at the start. The guitar (Gtr.) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The percussion (Perc.) part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. The double bass (Cb.) plays a simple bass line with quarter notes.

91

S  
Cl.  
Gtr.  
Perc.  
Cb.

Detailed description: This system of musical notation covers measures 91 through 94. The vocal line (S) remains silent. The clarinet (Cl.) continues its melodic line, which concludes with a fermata in measure 94. The guitar (Gtr.) accompaniment features a prominent fermata over the final chord in measure 94. The percussion (Perc.) and double bass (Cb.) parts continue their respective patterns, with the bass line ending on a quarter note in measure 94.

# IV. HYMN - The Call for Reapers

♩ = 108

(Harmonium played by soprano or percussionist)

The musical score is arranged in a system with six staves. From top to bottom, the staves are labeled: Soprano, Clarinet, Horn, Guitar, Harmonium, and Contrabass. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The Soprano, Clarinet, Horn, Guitar, and Contrabass parts are mostly silent, indicated by horizontal lines. The Harmonium part is the only one with active notation. It begins with a half note G3 (B-flat) on the first staff, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, and C4 on the second staff. A slur covers the first four measures. In the fifth measure, there is a half note chord of G3 and B3. In the sixth measure, there is a half note chord of G3 and B3. In the seventh measure, there is a half note chord of G3 and B3. In the eighth measure, there is a half note chord of G3 and B3. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the first note.



6 *mf*

S  
 Far and near the fields are team - ing with the waves of  
 Sent O them thou forth with morn's first is beam - ing Send Gath - er them in of the  
 O thou whom thy Lord is send - ing Gath - er now the

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr. *(Starting on third verse: improvise using slide or prepared guitar - sparse and uncertain)*

Hrmn.

Cb.

12

S  
 rip - ened grain. Far and near their gold is gleam - ing  
 noon - tide's glare; When the sun's last rays are gleam - ing  
 sheaves of gold. Heav'n - ward then at ev - 'ning wend - ing

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

Hrmn.

Cb.



30

S  
Send them now — the sheaves to ga - ther Ere the har - vest

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

Hrnm.

Cb.

36

S  
time pass by.

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

Hrnm.

Cb.

attaca V

# V. The Land Flattens

spoken: April 21st, 1846: On the Missouri Prairie

15" 15" 15"

Soprano

Orchestra

*mp*

Sparse, pointillistic improv

Follow given pitch sets (ad lib)

Perc: pots, small metal, cymbals

G#A#CE

GbABF

GbABF

(clarinet cue Gb)

4 *mp* (intoned)

S

The land flattens out most suddenly

3"

long stretches of flat, fertile land

2"

Orch.

8

S

stands of young corn.

3"

The horizon is everywhere.

3"

Orch.

EDCG#

GC#DEb

12

S

We picnicked by a huge flat field with a sky broader and lower than ever in the East I could imagine

2"

Orch.

14

S Broad... low and blue... with herds of clouds. 5"

Orch.

GbABF

18

S The land flattens out most suddenly 2" The horizon is everywhere. 4"

Orch.

22

S The stretches are punctuated here and there with little isolated exclamation points. 2" A horse...

Orch.

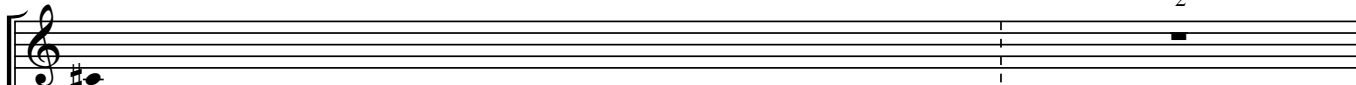
GC#DEb G#A#CE

25


S a barn... a sheild of trees. 3"

Orch.

28 2"

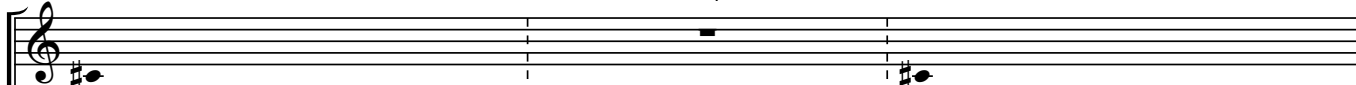
S 

These trees show either that water is present or someone brought a sapling to shade his house.


Orch. 

G#A#CE cont.

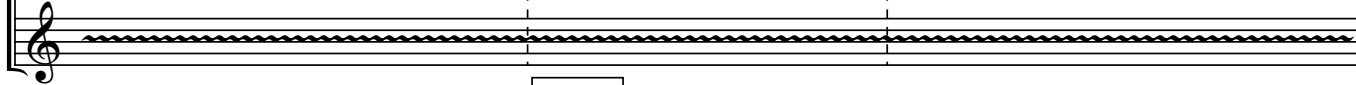
30 4"

S 

Otherwise, there are none.

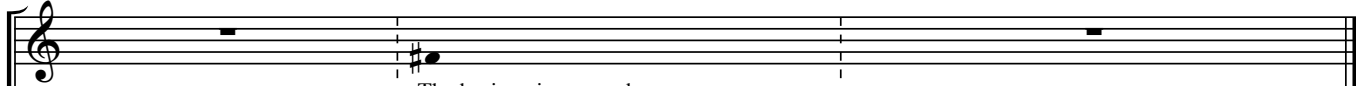


The land flattens out most suddenly.

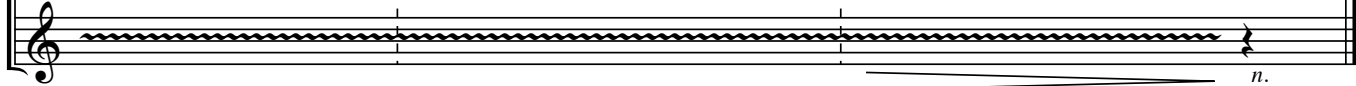
Orch. 

GbABF

33 3"      *p*      5"

S 

The horizon is everywhere.

Orch. 

*n.*



# VI. We Change

spoken: June 18, 1846: Along the Platte River

$\bullet = 60$

*p*

Soprano

Guitar

We \_\_ change in re-la-tion to the land. \_\_

S

Gtr.

We be-come smal - ler \_\_

*ppp*

S

Gtr.

smal - - - - ler. \_\_





# VII. The Great Divide

♩ = 100

spoken: July 19, 1846: Crossing the Great Divide

Soprano

Guitar

Contrabass

*mp*

*pizz.*

*mp*

5

S

Gtr.

Cb.

(2nd time) *mp*

9

S

Gtr.

Cb.

An end or a be - gin - ning? — Is this — the place where our

13

S

Gtr.

Cb.

be - ing — se - pa - rates — from it - self?

17

S

Gtr.

Cb.

21

S

At one in - stant — we are mov - ing

Gtr.

Cb.

25

S

bring - ing our — ex - ist - ence to a point where we are tak - en in — em - braced

Gtr.

Cb.

29

S

with - out an end. — rit. —

Gtr.

Cb.

33 *freely*

S

But no love \_\_\_ is so fin - al \_\_\_

Gtr.

*mf*

Cb.

*bowed*

*p*

34

S

hav - ing traced our - selves back \_\_\_ to our \_\_\_ be - gin - nings \_\_\_

Gtr.

Cb.

35

S

we leap \_\_\_ to a new love \_\_\_ plung - ing west - ward \_\_\_

Gtr.

Cb.

36

S

where once we looked back - ward \_\_\_ all the way. \_\_\_

Gtr.

Cb.

*pp*

♩ = 100

39

S

*a tempo*

Gtr.

*mp*

Cb.

*pizz.*

*mp*

43

S

Gtr.

Cb.

47

S

*mp*

Now hes-i - tant — a-mong the mountains, —

Gtr.

Cb.

51

S

we pass a - cross — the in - vis - i - ble bound - 'ry that di-vides self from

Gtr.

Cb.

55

S  
self. We move for - ward heart - long

Gtr.  
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Cb.  
#0 #0

59

S  
toward the oth - er sea, a twin a mir - ror,

Gtr.  
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Cb.  
#0 #0

63

S  
of our - selves.

Gtr.  
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Cb.  
#0 0 0

67

S  
*rit.*

Gtr.  
3 3 3 3

Cb.  
0 0



# VIII(a). Traveling Music II

Tamsen and horn player walk around the room, while singing/playing Fair and Tender Ladies - see VIII(b)

(Improvisation over given chords focusing primarily on intervals given in boxes: -2 is minor 2nd, 3 is major 3rd, etc.)

♩ = 80

Clarinet

Guitar

Contrabass

(ad lib bass line, very slight swing)

**E A**  
**E<sub>b</sub>**

**G C#**  
**F**

**E A**  
**E<sub>b</sub>**

solo improv  
-2,4,+4,5,7

sparse comp  
-2,4,+4,5,7

9

Cl.

Gtr.

Cb.

2, 3, +4, -6, -7

-2, 4, +4, 5, 7

**G C#**  
**F**

**E A**  
**E<sub>b</sub>**

17

3x

Cl.

Gtr.

Cb.

2, 3, +4, -6, -7

-2, 2, -3, 6, -7, 7

sparse comp  
-2,4,+4,5,7

solo improv  
-2,4,+4,5,7

**F# G#**  
**D**

**B C**  
**B<sub>b</sub>**

**G# D#**  
**A**



25

Cl.

Gtr.

Cb.

**F B**  
**G**

**G# D#**  
**A**

**F# E**  
**Bb**

33

Cl.

Gtr.

Cb.

**Db E**  
**D**

**E A**  
**Eb**

vamp until all players in places for IX

## VIII(b). Walking Music 2

Tamsen and horn player walk around the room, while singing/playing *Fair and Tender Ladies*, while clarinet, guitar and bass improvise from the stage - see VIII(a). During the 4th verse (humming), Tamsen and horn player return to stage.

$\text{♩} = 56$  softly, sweetly

Soprano

Horn

8

S

Hn.

15

S

Hn.

Come all you fair and ten-der la - dies  
 I wish I was some lit - tle spar - row,  
 But as I am no lit - tle spar - row,  
 (hmm) (hmm)

Be care - ful how you court young men. They're like a star in a sum - mer's  
 That I had wings could fly so high. I'd fly a - way to my false true  
 And have no wings, so I can't fly. I'll go a - way to some lone - some  
 (hmm) (hmm) (hmm) (hmm)

morn - ing they first ap - pear and then they're gone.  
 lov - er and while he - pear I'd pass by.  
 val - ley And weep and pass my trou - bles by.  
 (hmm) (hmm) (hmm)



# IX. HYMN - It Is Well

♩ = 92

Soprano

Clarinet

Percussion

Harmonium

(Harmonium played by soprano, hornist or guitarist)

6

S

Cl.

Perc.

Hrmn.

*mp*

When peace like a ri - ver at - ten - deth my

improv: gongs, pots, very sparse

12

S  
way, when sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - e - ver my lot, thou hast

Cl.

Perc.

Hrnm.

18

S  
taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul It is

Cl.

Perc.

Hrnm.

24

S  
well with my soul it is well it is well with my

Cl.

Perc.

Hrnm.

30

S

Cl.

Perc.

Hrmn.

soul.

36

S

Cl.

Perc.

Hrmn.

(to X)



# X. Brown Gray Hills

♩ = 50  
*expressively*

Soprano

Clarinet

*mp*

spoken: July 28, 1846 at Fort Bridger, Wyoming

4

S

Cl.

*mp* *pp*

7

S

Cl.

*mp* *mf* *p*

10

S

Cl.

*p*

12

S

Cl.

*mp* (intoned)

After miles of brown-gray hills, and buff colored deserts... Fort Bridger appears wonderfully green...

*mp*



14

S  
with rushing brooks and groves of trembling aspens. It eases our thirst just to look at them.

Cl.  
*p*

16

S  
There has been a change of plans. A certain Mr. Hastings sent us a letter promising to meet us here

Cl.  
*mp*

18

S  
and guide us across a shorter route to California. But he is not here.

Cl.  
3

20

S  
It is a two hundred mile cut-off around the Great Salt Lake and across a small desert.

Cl.

22

S  
George and the other men are eager to try it. My heart \_\_\_\_\_ mis -

Cl.  
*tr* *murmur\*\** *p*

♩ = 92

24

S  
gives me. We are \_\_\_\_\_ all wea - ry.

Cl.

29

S  
Ma - ny of us are sick. In a month sum - mer will be

Cl.

35

S  
o - ver. How can we trust an ab - sent guide?

Cl.

*ppp*

\*\*murmur technique: using pitches (in any octave) as a starting point, create a continuous texture with circular breathing and fast trills and tremolos using notes and multiphonics.



# XI. A White Blindness

Spoken: August 14, 1846: Crossing the Great Divide

♩ = 80

Musical score for the first system of "A White Blindness". The score is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves: Soprano, Clarinet, Horn, Harmonium (Guitar or Perc), and Contrabass. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 80. The Soprano part is mostly rests. The Clarinet, Horn, and Harmonium parts play a melodic line with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. The Contrabass part plays a bass line with notes G3, A3, B3, C4, and D4. Dynamics include *mp* and *bowed*.

Musical score for the second system of "A White Blindness". The score is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves: Soprano (S), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Harmonium (Hrmn.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Soprano part begins at measure 10 with the lyrics: "A white blind-ness of salt It makes us squint. It". The Clarinet, Horn, and Harmonium parts continue with the same melodic line as in the first system. The Contrabass part continues with the same bass line. Dynamics include *mp*. There are triplets marked with a "3" over the notes in measures 11 and 12.

18

S  
glares like snow-fields un - der the sun It glim - mers in sna - ky heat waves Our

Cl.

Hn.

Hrmn.

Cb.

26

S  
hair cloth-ing wa-gons cov - ered with white dust.

Cl.

Hn.

Hrmn.

Cb.

34 *freely* *p* (*intoned*)

S  
we can - not stop to wash a - way. After three days and nights in this desert of salt,

Cl.  
*pp*

Hn.  
*pp*

Hrnn.  
*pp*

Cb.  
*pp*

Improv: scratchy bow sounds (harsh and brittle)

36

S  
I am obliged to give the children little cubes of sugar to suck on to ease their thirst.

Cb.

37

S  
Finally, in the cold night, we sleep. Towards dawn with a mouth as dry as paper, I dream of a morning rain.

Cb.

38 *mp* *dream-like* ♩ = 60

S  
That gray sa - tin quilt the o - cean is ruf - fled

Hrnn.  
*p*

42

S  
by the rain. Ster - ling ar - rows — fall — on it. Ir - on mus - cles — be -

Hrnm.

46

S  
neath the quilt Let the steel drum-beats ce - le - brate — the

Hrnm.

50

S  
yeild - ing beast — the mix - ing e - le - ments — let gray be - he - moths — of — rain

Hrnm.

54

S  
en - ter and flood — my val - leys. —

Hrnm.

# XII. Traveling Blind

Spoken: September 5, 1846: In the Salt Desert

Soprano

Orchestra

2

S

Orch.

Improv: follow pitch sets, simmering, active but constrained.

BDEbG

*p*

30"

*mf*

3

S

Orch.

*f*

5

6

5

We are trav - el - ing blind, the tra - il thins and dis - ap - pears. di - min - ish like a ri - ver to a stream.

6

S

Orch.

3

5

the stream snakes down to a tric - kle in the ground. —

CFGbAb

10

S

Orch.

We are in the young - est can - yon — and still we climb,



13

S *3*  
 car - ving out on the steep-est ridge — an inch long place.

Orch.

16

S

Orch.

CFGbAb

C#EABb

19

S *5*  
 Cha - os of brush — and boul - ders — tan - gles of cot - ton - woods and wil - lows —

Orch.

21

S *5* *3* *3* *5*  
 We fumb - le through the same un - pas - sa - ble pas - sage — Our days be - come — like cliffs,

Orch.

24

S *3* *3*  
 a - round, a - round.

Orch.

27

S

Orch.

We are play-ing — blind-man's bluff hands outstretched. We are chil-dren in the dark —

32

S

Orch.

who can-not find one mapped fa - mil - iar face.

37

S

Orch.

15" 15"

BCEG# BDEbG



# XIII. Last Mountains

♩ = 45 2nd time: *Spoken*: September 25th, 1846, Near Mary's River, Nevada

Musical score for the first system of "Last Mountains". The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five staves: Soprano, Clarinet, Guitar, Percussion, and Contrabass. The Soprano, Clarinet, and Contrabass parts are mostly rests. The Percussion part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes on toms, marked *mp* and *mallets on toms*. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4 in the third measure and returns to 4/4 in the fourth measure.

Musical score for the second system of "Last Mountains". The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five staves: Soprano (S), Clarinet (Cl.), Guitar (Gtr.), Percussion (Perc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Soprano part begins with a rest and then has a melodic line starting in the third measure, marked *mp* and *3*. The lyrics "Fi-nal-ly \_\_\_ we are fac - ing \_\_\_ the last" are written below the Soprano staff. The Clarinet and Guitar parts have boxes indicating improvisation: "Improv sparsely using 'The Call For Reapers' motives: key of G" and "Improv sparsely using 'Fair and Tender Ladies' motives: key of D", both marked *ppp*. The Percussion part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *pizz.* and *mp*. The Contrabass part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *mp*. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4 in the third measure and returns to 4/4 in the fourth measure.

8

S  
 moun - tains — sometimes we walk beside the wa - gon — to rest — the lame ox-en. —

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

12

S  
 The moun-tains rise un - sca-la - ble —

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

*mf*

16

S  
the road is a fic - tion — I am not in - side this sto - ry — I am sit - ting be - side my hus - band —

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

*p*

20

S  
a frame to the pic - ture. —

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

23 *freely*

S  
There is a\_\_ surf I\_\_\_\_\_ know some where be - yond this\_\_ wall the end of \_ land a

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

26

S  
sum - mer\_\_ sea. (hmm)\_\_\_\_\_

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Cb.

# XIV(a). Traveling Music III

(Tamsen walks around the room with hornist and clarinetist, while humming/playing *The Dying Cowboy* - see XIV(b))

(Repeat until Tamsen returns and sets for XV)

Guitar

Contrabass

Improv: Short, quiet, bowed notes, harmonics, textures

Gtr.

Cb.

Gtr.

Cb.

Gtr.

Cb.

Gtr.

Cb.





# XIV(b). Traveling Music III

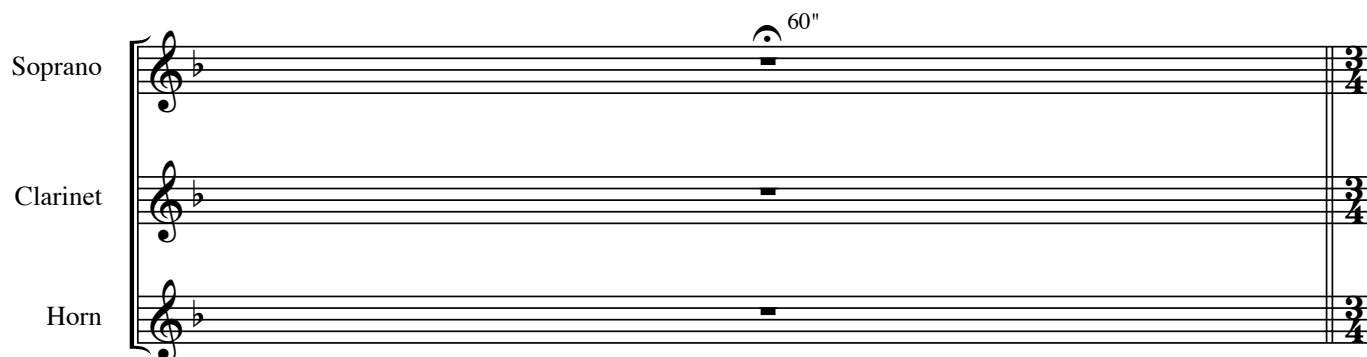
(Guitar and Bass begin Traveling Music 3 (see XIV(a)). After 60 seconds, Tamsen walks around room with hornist and clarinetist, while humming/playing *The Dying Cowboy* (below - note differing tempos). Tamsen and company return to stage at the end of the piece below.)

Soprano

Clarinet

Horn

60"



This block shows the beginning of the piece for three instruments: Soprano, Clarinet, and Horn. Each part is written on a single staff in 3/4 time. A large bracket above the staves indicates a 60-second rest for all three instruments. The Soprano part has a fermata over a whole note at the end of the rest.

2  $\text{♩} = 50$  *softly, sweetly*

S

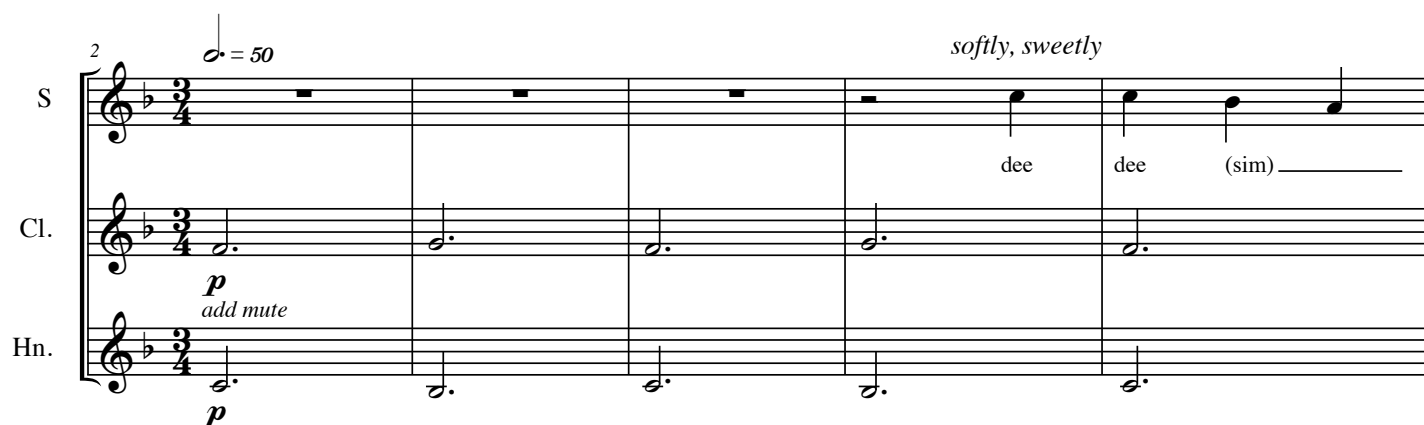
Cl.

Hn.

*p*  
add mute

*p*

dee dee (sim) \_\_\_\_\_



This block contains measures 2 through 6 of the piece. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 50. The Soprano part begins with a fermata in measure 2, then sings "dee dee (sim)" in measures 5 and 6. The Clarinet and Horn parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Horn part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an instruction to "add mute".

7

S

Cl.

Hn.



This block contains measures 7 through 12. The Soprano part continues with a melodic line, featuring a slur over measures 8-10. The Clarinet and Horn parts continue with their accompaniment.

13

S

Cl.

Hn.



This block contains measures 13 through 18. The Soprano part continues with a melodic line, featuring a slur over measures 14-16. The Clarinet and Horn parts continue with their accompaniment.

20

S

Cl.

Hn.

Musical score for measures 20-24. The Soprano part (S) has rests in measures 20 and 21, followed by a melodic line in measures 22, 23, and 24. The Clarinet (Cl.) and Horn (Hn.) parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment throughout the system.

25

S

Cl.

Hn.

Musical score for measures 25-30. The Soprano part (S) has a melodic line in measures 25 and 26, followed by rests in measures 27, 28, and 29, and a final note in measure 30. The Clarinet (Cl.) and Horn (Hn.) parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment throughout the system.

31

S

Cl.

Hn.

Musical score for measures 31-36. The Soprano part (S) has a melodic line in measures 31 and 32, followed by rests in measures 33, 34, and 35, and a final note in measure 36. The Clarinet (Cl.) and Horn (Hn.) parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment throughout the system.

37

S

Cl.

Hn.

Musical score for measures 37-41. The Soprano part (S) has a melodic line in measures 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41. The Clarinet (Cl.) and Horn (Hn.) parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment throughout the system.

# XV. Straining Downhill

Spoken: October 28, 1846, On the Truckee River

♩ = 60

Soprano

Harmonica 1 (C) - Cl.  
Harmonica 2 (D) - Gtr.

Harmonica 3 (Bb) - Hrn.  
Harmonica 4 (A) - Bass

breathe when necessary, as imperceptibly as possible, not together.

*ppp* *p*

4

S

Hrm 1  
Hrm 2

Hrm 3  
Hrm 4

10

*pp* (intoned, almost whispered)

S

Straining downhill, the axle breaks. The wagon falls to one side, but George scoops out the sleeping children. He starts to cut a piece of wood

Hrm 1  
Hrm 2

Hrm 3  
Hrm 4

16

S

to mend the break. The chisel carves across his hand. It is start - ing to snow.

Hrm 1  
Hrm 2

Hrm 3  
Hrm 4

22

S

It is start - ing to snow.

Hrm 1  
Hrm 2

Hrm 3  
Hrm 4

28

S

It is start - ing.

Hrm 1  
Hrm 2

Hrm 3  
Hrm 4

attaca: drums

# XVI. Stopped

15" *Spoken: November 3, 1846, By Alder Creek*

Soprano

Clarinet

Guitar

Percussion: Improv: loud, intense, active

Contrabass: *ff* (hard stop)

<sup>3</sup> 15" *f* 15"

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.: Resume improv (hard stop) Resume improv

Cb.

Unfilled note heads: long duration  
Filled note heads: medium duration  
Slurred notes: short duration

Clarinet, guitar and bass try to stay in rhythmic and pitch unison (or octave) with soprano, but allow it to be out of phase...

6 *f* (pitches approximate)

S  
Cl.  
Gtr.  
Perc.  
Cb.

We can go no fur-ther, — here stopped in the moun-tains. The flakes — thick - en down —

*f*

*pizz.*

9

S  
Cl.  
Gtr.  
Perc.  
Cb.

heav - i - er — and heav - i - er. — The white veils — swirl be-tween us — and the pass —

(soft stop)

11

S  
Storms hammer us. — Snow co-vers our shel-ter. Snow co-vers our wag-ons.

Cl.

Gtr

Perc. Resume improv

Cb.

14

S  
Snow co-vers our ox-en, a-live — and dead. Look-ing for food, —

Cl.

Gtr

Perc. Resume improv

Cb. (soft stop)



17

S  
George has shot \_\_\_\_\_ a co-yo-te an owl,

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

Cb.

20

S  
a wound-ed bear. Not e-nough food to cure our hun-ger.

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

Cb.

22 *p*  
(intoned)

15"

S We watch westward over the crest for help

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

Cb. *p*

24

S No - - - - one comes.

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

Cb.



# XVII. The Wound

10" *Spoken: December 15, 1846, by Alder Creek*

Soprano

Clarinet

Horn

Guitar  
e-bow  
*p*

Harmonium  
(Percussionist)

Contrabass

$\bullet = 96$

S

Cl. *simile*

Hrn. *p* *simile*

Gtr. *p*

Hrnm.

Cb.

7 *mp* (intoned)

S  
 The wound on George's hand does not heal. He is sick and cannot stand up. The poison seems to be traveling up his arm to his shoulder

Cl.  
 7

Hrn.  
 7

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

13

S  
 All the oxen and cows that were alive are now dead and lost beyond recovery under the snow. Fires are unsafe. All water frozen.

Cl.  
 13

Hrn.  
 13

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

19

S  
All light is shut out.

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrnn.

Cb.

25

S  
There is no choice We have somehow dark hole under with nothing to fill dried buffalo hide.  
survived these months in our twenty feet of snow us but

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrnn.

Cb.

31

S  
Many friends have died of hunger, of cold, of despair. And I am not sure with only a few skins left

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

37

S  
how we can keep from eating the bodies of our dead as the others are doing

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

*mp*

*mp*

43 *mp*

S  
Cl.  
Hrn.  
Gtr  
Hrnn.  
Cb. *pizz.*  
*mp*

These —

49

S  
Cl.  
Hrn.  
Gtr  
Hrnn.  
Cb.

moun - tains com - fort me, a — blaz - ing ar - my,



55

S  
 strad - dling the sky \_\_\_\_\_ with their long pines. Dark

Cl.

Hrn. 55

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

61

S  
 green, black green trees. Trees. A pro fu - sion of

Cl.

Hrn. 61

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

67

S  
trees. \_\_\_\_\_ At last a - gainst the em - 'rald

Cl.

Hrn. 67

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

73

S  
lake. \_\_\_\_\_

Cl.

Hrn. 73

Gtr

Hrmn.

Cb.

4x

Improv using "Sweet Betsy" motives, Key of Bb.

79

S  
 These shapes these colors, cleanse my eyes. I turn back to our evil-smelling cave

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrnn.

Cb.

85

S  
 a little stonger to confront the next and the next day, and the next.

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrnn.

Cb.

91

S

Cl.

Hrn.

Gtr

Hrnn.

Cb.



# XVIII. Devour Ourselves

Spoken: January 5, 1847, by Alder Creek

The musical score is written in 2/4 time and consists of three systems. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 120$ . The Soprano and Clarinet parts are mostly rests, with some chords in the final measures of each system. The Guitar part is marked *sweetly* and *mf with brushes*, featuring a melodic line with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Percussion part provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment with a *mp* dynamic.

**System 1:** Measures 1-8. Tempo:  $\text{♩} = 120$ . Dynamics: *mp*. Performance instructions: *sweetly*, *mf with brushes*.

**System 2:** Measures 9-16. Measure 9 is marked with a '9' above the staff.

**System 3:** Measures 17-24. Measure 17 is marked with a '17' above the staff. The system concludes with a double bar line.

24

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

32

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

9th fr.

40

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

Improv: slow and melodic  
Use predominantly:  
[-2, 4, +4, 5, 7]

48 4x

S  
Cl.  
Gtr  
Perc.

56

S  
Cl.  
Gtr  
Perc.

63 *mp*

S  
Cl.  
Gtr  
Perc.

Must we de - vour our - selves in or - der to sur - vive?\_



71

S

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

79

S

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

Is this new con - ti - nent a

87

S

Cl.

Gtr.

Perc.

place where we can live on - ly by

95

S  
thrust - ing down — that fra - gile bar - ri - er,

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

103

S  
the an - cient loath - ing — to eat — each oth - ers —

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

111

S  
flesh.

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

119

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

127

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

For — my child — ren —

9th fr.

135

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

I find it not so hard. I must give them — nour-ish — ment.

143

S they will not question where.

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

151

S But for me \_\_\_\_\_ I

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

159

S can - not see \_\_\_\_\_ how I could bear to live \_\_\_\_\_

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

167

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

by eat - ing my friends

175

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

death.

182

S

Cl.

Gtr

Perc.

9th fr.

# XIX. Empty Nest

Musical score for the first system of "XIX. Empty Nest". The score is written for five instruments: Soprano, Clarinet, Horn, Guitar, and Contrabass. The Soprano part features a melodic line with a fermata and a 15-second duration mark. The Clarinet and Horn parts have rests. The Horn part includes a box labeled "Improv GG#AD" with a *mf* dynamic marking. The Guitar part has a rest. The Contrabass part includes a box labeled "Improv EFF#A#" with a *mf* dynamic marking and a box labeled "TRILL".

Musical score for the second system of "XIX. Empty Nest". The score is written for six instruments: Soprano (S), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Guitar (Gtr), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Soprano part features a melodic line with a fermata and a 15-second duration mark. The Clarinet part includes a box labeled "Improv EFF#A#" with a *mf* dynamic marking. The Horn part includes a box labeled "TRILL". The Guitar part includes a box labeled "Improv EbCDB" with a *mf* dynamic marking and a box labeled "TRILL". The Contrabass part has a rest.

5 *mp* (intoned) 2" 2"

S TRILL I send my little ones away with the rescue party George begs me to go with the children, but I cannot.

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

Cb.

Clarinet, guitar and horn improv using chords from previous page, playing mostly trills. Overlapping, lots of space, always quietly.

Bass: slowly walk off-stage (with harmonica). Walk towards mark in NE corner of the room. Quietly play an "E" drone until the end of the song. Use drone to connect the end of XIX and the beginning of XX. Stop after 1st chord of XX, remain to play from NE corner.

Percussionist leave stage at same time, walk to NW corner of room.

8 4" 4"

S I will not leave him to die without my comfort. I dress them in layers of their best clothes and tell them to be sure to

Cl, Gtr and Hrn continue improv

10 4"

S tell everyone they meet that they are the children of George and Tamsen Donner.

Cl, Gtr and Hrn continue improv

11 2" 2" 4"

S I take them to the other camp. Kiss them each. And beg them not to cry.

Cl, Gtr and Hrn continue improv

14 15"

S I walk back alone to our empty nest.

Cl, Gtr and Hrn continue improv

# XX. How Can I Part

• = 120

Soprano

Clarinet

Horn

Guitar

*p*

*with e-bow*

9

S

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

*p*

How can I — store a - gainst this com - ing loss?

17

S

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

What fa - cul - ties of the heart can I bring a - gainst this



25

S  
part - ing? We tra - veled a -

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

33

S  
cross the land toward win - ter not toward spring.

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

41

S

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

49

S  
How can I \_\_\_ part with my sus - tain - ing lov - er \_\_\_ who was the

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

57

S  
fat - her \_\_\_ to the whole camp? How can I learn

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

65

S  
to sleep with - out \_\_\_ his shoul - der \_\_\_ to bed down my griefs? \_\_\_

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr

73

S

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

81

S

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

The sun stays hid - den for months. The sky

89

S

Cl.

Hn.

Gtr.

has wept its snow.

95

S  
Cl.  
Hn.  
Gtr.

Repeat vamp until  
horn player reaches  
station.

102

S  
Cl.  
Hn.  
Gtr.

Horn player leaves stage, improvising  
over vamp (take harmonica), retreats to  
SE corner of space, waiting for XXII.



# XXI. Hunger

10" Spoken: April 12, 1847, by Alder Creek 15"

Soprano

Clarinet

Guitar

Improv: sparse, quiet.  
Play without mouthpiece  
creating flute sounds.

*pp*

4 15" *pp*

S

Cl.

Gtr

cue Bb

Hun - ger \_\_\_\_\_ the

Improv: sparse, quiet.  
Use slide in high register

slowly and freely, dreamy,  
lots of air, microtonal shadings  
audible breaths

7

S

Cl.

Gtr

light - ness \_\_\_\_\_ of it. \_\_\_\_\_ my legs \_\_\_\_\_ will not \_\_\_\_\_

10 10"

S

Cl.

Gtr

hold me up \_\_\_\_\_ a - ny long - er \_\_\_\_\_

cue Bb

13

S  
 Sounds en - ter the sen - ses sharp - ly

Cl.

Gtr

16

S  
 co - lours are ve - ry bright I am filled with light a mu - sic

Cl.

Gtr

19

S  
 that the saints sought and called God. 10"

Cl.

Gtr

cue Bb

22 (intoned - almost whispered)

S  
 I am not quite in touch with the ground I am outside my own body. It would be so easy

Cl.

Gtr

25

S (sung)

to join the air and to float in - to no - thing - ness. —

Cl.

Gtr

27

S 30"

Cl.

Gtr

Clarinet and guitar walk off-stage to SE and SW corners, respectively, taking harmonicas. Clarinet continues improv until they reach off-stage places.





# XXII. Words

♩ = 60

*slowly, delicately*

Soprano

D Harmonica  
C Harmonica  
Bb Harmonica  
A Harmonica

play from four corners of room  
breathe as necessary, inaudibly as possible

If my

*pp*

6

S

bound-a - ry stops here I have daught - ers — to draw new maps. —

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

11

S

They will draw the lines of my face.

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

16

S

They will draw with my voice.

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

21

S

They — will speak — my words. —

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

26

S

They — will speak — my words.

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

31

S

They — will speak — my

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

35

S

words.

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

39

S

as long as possible

D Harm  
C Harm  
Bb Harm  
A Harm

*n.*