

NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING

FOR MIXED CHOIR, SOLO VIOLA, AND PIANO

text by Stevie Smith

[Full Score]

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October 2009

Not Waving But Drowning

Approximate Duration: 10:30

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TEXT:

Not Waving But Drowning text by Stevie Smith (1902 - 1971)

Nobody heard him, the dead man,
But still he lay moaning:
I was much further out than you thought
And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking
And now he's dead
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,
They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
(Still the dead one lay moaning)
I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.

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INSTRUMENTATION:

Soprano 1
Soprano 2
Alto 1
Alto 2
Tenor 1
Tenor 2
Bass 1
Bass 2

Solo Viola
Piano (half-stick)

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

-Choir:

Due to issues of balance, the choir should be at least 2 per part (preferably more). Dynamics may need to be adjusted according to the number and strength of voices involved.

-Piano:

The piano begins with both una corda and sustain pedals. Una corda ceases at measure 26. Grace notes are to be played before the beat. Piano should be performed half-stick.

-Viola:

ord. = ordinario; s.p. = sul ponticello; s.t. = sul tasto; lines between notes function as slides (the slides should begin on the note); grace notes are to be played before the beat. Harmonics may be exchanged for different fingerings, natural harmonics, etc, but resulting pitch must be the same. The viola is featured as a soloist (metaphorically the subject of the poem) and thus may be amplified for the purpose of balance against the choir if necessary.

PROGRAM NOTE:

When beginning to write this piece the choice of ensemble became very important to both my interpretation of the poem and the musical form of the composition. The solo viola literally represents the “dead man” who, in the poem, speaks in first person yet is referred to in third-person. The piano represents the implied water (or the inner psychological turmoil) that drowns the man. The choir serves as observer, commentator, mourner, and finally as embodiment of the drowning man, who could be any of us.

The piece can be broken down into four main sections: the first being an introduction and the following sections each framing one of the stanzas.

The piece begins with the solo viola continuously repeating and developing a single gesture – a call for help. The piano slowly creeps in, descending from its highest register and growing in density to drown out the viola. At the climactic point of the introduction the choir joins in to further smother the viola’s sound. The waters (piano) then settle, the viola emerging high in its register in a more plaintive voice. The introduction closes as the female voices sing a cluster of “Nobody.” The following section (stanza 1) features the choir in its role as observer. The piano and viola take a lesser role in this section until the climactic “not waving but drowning” recalling material from the introduction. Transition material then builds up to the 6/8, and a stark change in texture, marking the beginning of the second stanza. The viola “larks” in and out of the piano and choir. The choir, here, serves as commentator breaking into a homophonic chant climaxing on an A-flat major chord on the word “dead”. The piano then slows down its pacing – the sound evaporating until the piano plays its first low F sharp pedal tone, announcing the beginning of the final stanza (the choir takes on the role of mourner). The choir chants melodically over the piano pedal and viola lines. The choir as embodiment of the drowning man begins when the altos enter with their chant on the text “I was much too far out all my life / And not waving but drowning.” Slowly the rest of the choir joins in the chant until they are sharply cut off by the piano.

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♩ = 70

The score is divided into four systems, each containing a Viola part and a Piano part. The first system (measures 1-7) features a Viola line with dynamic markings *p*, *f*, *mp*, *fp*, *mp*, *f*, *fp*, and *mp*. The Piano part is mostly silent, with a *pp* marking and *una corda* instruction starting at measure 8. The second system (measures 8-13) includes a box labeled 'A' above measure 10. The Viola part has dynamics *p*, *s.p.*, *ord.*, *mp*, and *mp*. The Piano part continues with *pp* and *una corda*. The third system (measures 14-18) shows the Viola with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. The Piano part features a complex texture with many sixteenth notes and slurs. The fourth system (measures 19-20) has the Viola with dynamics *mf* and *f*. The Piano part includes *cresc.* markings and a *p* dynamic.

Vla. 23

Piano score for measures 23-24. The right hand features chords with slurs and a *mp* dynamic. The left hand has chords with slurs. A dashed line labeled *(8va)* spans the first two measures.

Vla. 25

B

Musical score for measures 25-29. The Violin part includes dynamics *ff*, *fff*, *mp*, *mf p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *p*. It also features *s.p.* (sordano) and *ord.* (ordine) markings. The Piano part includes dynamics *p* and *pp*, and a *tre corda* marking. A dashed line labeled *(8va)* spans the first two measures.

Vla. 30

Musical score for measures 30-34. The Violin part includes dynamics *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *f*. It also features *s.p.* and *ord.* markings. The Piano part includes a *mp* dynamic. A dashed line labeled *(8va)* spans the first two measures.

C

35

S1 *p* < *mp* > *p*
Wav - - - ing.

S2 *p* < *mp* > *p*
Wav - - - ing.

A1 *p* < *mp* > *p*
Wav - - - ing, wav - ing. Wav - ing.

A2 *p* < *mp* > *p*
Wav - - - ing, wav - - - ing, wav - ing. Wav - ing.

T1 *p*
Wav - - - ing.

T2 *p*
Wav - - - ing.

B1 *p* < *mp* > *mp*
Wav - - - ing, wav - - - ing.

B2 *mp*
Wav - - - ing.

C

Vla. *ff*

Pno. *mf* < *f* >

40 *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *ff*

S1 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing.

S2 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing.

A1 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing, drown - - - ing. *mf*

A2 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing, drown - - - ing. *mf*

T1 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing.

T2 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing.

B1 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing, drown - - - ing. *mf*

B2 Not wav - ing but drown - ing Drown - - - ing, drown - - - ing. *mf*

Vla. *>mp f* *ff* *mf* *mp*

Pno. *f* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mp* *f* *p*

45

S1

S2

A1

A2

T1

T2

B1

B2

Vla.

Pno.

mp , *p*

drown - ing, drown - ing.

drown - ing, drown - ing.

drown - ing, drown - ing.

drown - ing, drown - ing.

f *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mf* *s.p.*

f *p* *f* *dim...* *mp*

D

50

S1

S2

A1

A2

T1

T2

B1

B2

D

Vla. *ord.*

pp *p* *mp*

Pno.

p *mf* *p*

55 *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *fp*

S1 No - body No - body No - bo - dy No - bo - dy heard him - m

S2 *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *fp*
No No No heard him - m

A1 *mp* *pp* *p* *fp*
No - bo - dy No - bo - dy heard him - m

A2 *p* *fp*
No heard him - m

T1 *p*
The dead man

T2 *p*
The dead man

B1 *fp*
heard, the dead man,

B2 *fp*
heard him,

Vla. *pppp* *p* *mp* *f*

Pno. *mf* *pp*

60 *n* *mf*

S1 No - - - bo - dy No - - - bo - dy heard

S2 *n* *mf* The dead man

A1 *n* *mf* The dead man

A2 *n* *mp* No - bo - dy heard

T1 *n* *p* The dead man.

T2 *n* *p* The dead man.

B1 *mp* heard him - m - dead man.

B2 *mp* heard him - m - dead dead man.

Vla. *p* *n* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* sul pont.

Pho. *pp* *mp* *pp*

E

65

S1 *p* No - bo-dy — *pp* No - body — *p* No - bo-dy — No - body —

S2 *p* No — No — bo-dy — No - body — *pp* *p*

A1 *mp* But still he lay, — But still he lay —

A2 *mp* But still he lay, — But still he lay —

T1 *mp* But still — he lay — But still he lay —

T2 *mp* But still — he lay — But still he lay —

B1 *mp* But still — he lay — But still he —

B2 *mp* But still — he lay — But still he —

E

Vla. *pp* *mp*

Pno. *p* *mp* *mf*

F

70

S1 *mf* I _____ was much fur - ther out than you thought and *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

S2 *mf* I _____ was _____ *pp* *mf* *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

A1 *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

A2 *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

T1 *mp* Was _____ *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

T2 *mp* Was _____ *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

B1 lay _____ *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

B2 lay _____ *p* *mf* Not wav - ing but

F

Vla. *ord.* *pp* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Pno. *p*

Sub

Reo

75 *f* *mf* *ff*

S1
drown - ing Drown - - - ing.

S2
drown - ing Drown - - - ing.

A1
drown - - ing Drown - - - ing. *p* Poor,

A2
drown - ing Drown - - - ing. *p* Poor,

T1
drown - - ing Drown - - - ing. *p* Poor

T2
drown - - ing Drown - - - ing. *p* Poor

B1
drown - - ing Drown - - - ing.

B2
drown - - ing Drown - - - ing.

Vla.
ff *n*

Pno.
f *ff* *fff* *p*



♩ → ♩. = 80

80 *p*

S1 Poor, poor, poor, poor, poor, poor chap. Poor

S2 Poor, poor, poor, poor, poor, poor chap. Poor

A1 poor, poor, poor, poor, poor, poor chap. Poor

A2 poor, poor, poor, poor, poor, poor chap. Poor

T1 *sf* Poor *pp* chap. Poor

T2 *sf* Poor *pp* chap. Poor

B1 *mf* Poor

B2 *mf* Poor



♩ → ♩. = 80

Vla. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *cresc.*

leg

86 (mf)

S1
chap, poor chap. lark-ing, he al-ways loved lark-ing,

S2
chap, poor chap. lark-ing, he al-ways loved lark-ing,

A1
chap, poor chap. he al-ways loved lark-ing, he al-ways loved lark-ing,

A2
chap, poor chap. he al-ways loved lark-ing, he al-ways loved lark-ing,

T1
chap, poor chap. lark - - - -

T2
chap, poor chap. lark - - - -

B1
mp Poor chap. *mf* lark - - - -

B2
mp Poor chap. *mf* lark - - - -

Vla.
f *cresc.*

Pno.
mf *cresc.*

H

92

S1
poor chap lark - - - ing he al - ways loved

S2
poor chap lark - - - ing he al - ways loved

A1
poor chap poor chap.

A2
poor chap poor chap.

T1
f ing. *mf* poor chap *mp* poor chap. It must

T2
f ing. *mf* poor chap *mp* poor chap. It must

B1
f ing *mf* They said. They said.

B2
f ing *mf* They said. They said.

H

Vla.
ff *mp* *ff* *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

Pno.
f *dim...*

98 (mf)

S1
lark-ing lark - - - ing

S2
lark-ing lark - - - ing

A1
(mp)
It must have been too cold for him. It must have been

A2
(mp)
It must have been too cold for him. It must have been

T1
(mp)
have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been

T2
(mp)
have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been

B1
(mf)
They said. They said. They said.

B2
(mf)
They said. They said. They said.

Vla.
ord. → s.p. → ord. ord. s.p.

Pno.
(S^{no})
(S^{no}) mp

104 *mp* *f*

S1
too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. His heart

S2
too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold

A1
too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold

A2
too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold

T1
too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold

T2
too cold for him. It must have been too cold for him. It must have been too cold

B1
They said. They said. It must have been too cold

B2
They said. They said. It must have been too cold

Vla. *ord.* *ord.* *s.p.* *ord.* *ord.* *s.p.* *ord.*

Pno. *cresc.*

I

rit. → ♩ = 70

110 (*f*)

S1 gave way, too cold for him his heart

S2 (*mp*) for him. It must have been too cold, too cold for him his heart

A1 (*mp*) for him. It must have been too cold, too cold for him his heart

A2 (*mp*) for him. It must have been too cold, too cold for him his heart

T1 (*mp*) for him. It must have been too cold, too cold for him his heart

T2 (*mp*) for him. It must have been too cold, too cold for him his heart

B1 (*mf*) for him. It must have been too cold. too cold for him his heart

B2 (*mf*) for him. It must have been too cold. too cold for him his heart

I

rit. → ♩ = 70

Vla. (*ord.* → *s.p. ord.*)

Pno. (*cresc.*)

115

S1 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

S2 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

A1 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

A2 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

T1 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

T2 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

B1 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

B2 *ff* gave way *n* *lunga* *p* *< ff >* *p* *< ff >* *p* *<*

And _____ now _____

Vla. *fff* *fff* *lunga*

Pho. *f* *ff* *fff* *lunga*

120 *ff* *p* *ff* *pp* *n* *mp*

S1 he's dead. They said.

S2 he's dead. They said.

A1 he's dead.

A2 he's dead.

T1 he's dead. They said.

T2 he's dead. They said.

B1 he's dead. They said.

B2 he's dead. They said.

Vla. *ord.* *s.t.* *ff* *pp* *p*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p*

125

S1 (hum) mmm...

S2 (hum) mmm...

A1 *mp* They said... (hum) mmm...

A2 *mp* They said... (hum) mmm...

T1 *mp* They said... *p* dead.

T2 *mp* They said... *p* dead.

B1 *p* dead.

B2 *p* dead.

Vla. *ppp* *p* *n*

Pno.

J

130 *n* $\text{♩} = 50$

S1

S2

A1

A2

T1

T2

B1

B2

Vla. $\text{♩} = 50$

Pno. *pp* *ppp* *pppp* *f* $\text{♩} = 50$

135

Vocal staves for Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), Bass 1 (B1), and Bass 2 (B2). All staves are currently empty, showing only the clefs and staff lines.

Viola (Vla.) and Piano (Pho.) parts. The Viola part features dynamic markings *ppp*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*, along with performance instructions like *ord.*, *>*, *s.l.*, and *8va*. The Piano part includes a *mp* marking and a triplet of eighth notes.

K
142

S1

S2

A1

A2

T1

T2

B1

B2

p

p

p

p

Oh, no_ no no, it was_ too cold al - - - ways.

Oh, no_ no no, it was_ too cold al - - - ways.

And now

And now

And now he's dead.

And now he's dead.

K

Vla.

f

ppp < *p*

n *pp*

s.t.

8va

Pno.

p

p

mp

147

The musical score is arranged in a system with ten staves. The vocal parts are as follows:

- S1 and S2:** Soprano parts, both with lyrics "too cold al - ways" and a *pp* dynamic marking.
- A1 and A2:** Alto parts, both with lyrics "he's dead. too cold al - ways" and a *pp* dynamic marking.
- T1 and T2:** Tenor parts, both with the word "And" and a *p* dynamic marking.
- B1 and B2:** Bass parts, both with lyrics "Oh, no no no, it was too cold al - ways" and dynamic markings of *mp* and *mf*.
- Vln.:** Violin part with a *mp* dynamic marking and a *8va* marking.
- Pno.:** Piano accompaniment.

The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, slurs, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written below the corresponding vocal staves.

152 *n* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mf*

S1 Oh, no Oh, no Oh, no no no no

S2 no no no,

A1 Oh, no no no,

A2 no,

T1 now he's dead. (Still the dead one lay moan-ing) (Still the dead one lay moan-ing)

T2 now he's dead. (Still the dead one lay moan-ing) (Still the dead one lay moan-ing)

B1 Oh, no no no, it was too cold al - - - ways

B2 Oh, no no no, it was too cold al - - - ways

Vla. *fp* *mf* *p* *mf*

Pno.

L

157 sub. pp

S1 *p*
too ³cold. Oh no no_ no, it was too cold al - - ³ways

S2 *sub. pp*, *p*
too ³cold. Oh no no_ no, it was too cold al - - ³ways

A1 *f* ³ *n*
too cold.

A2 *f* ³ *n*
too cold.

T1 *p*
Oh, no no no it was ³ too cold al -

T2 *p*
Oh, no no no it was ³ too cold al -

B1

B2

L

Vla. *mp* *mf* *n* *mp* *n*

Pno. *pp* *mp*

165

S1

S2

A1
and not wav-ing but drown-ing. *mp* I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing

A2
and not wav-ing but drown-ing. *mp* I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing

T1
p I was much too far out all my life *mp* and not wav-ing but drown-ing

T2
p I was much too far out all my life *mp* and not wav-ing but drown-ing

B1

B2

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal and instrumental staves for measures 165-167. It includes Soprano 1 (S1) and Soprano 2 (S2) parts, which are mostly rests. Alto 1 (A1) and Alto 2 (A2) parts have lyrics and musical notation with triplets and crescendos. Tenor 1 (T1) and Tenor 2 (T2) parts have lyrics and musical notation with triplets and crescendos. Bass 1 (B1) and Bass 2 (B2) parts are rests. The time signature is 4/4.

Vla.

Pno.

Detailed description: This block contains the Viola and Piano parts. The Viola part features a melodic line with a trill and a triplet, marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The Piano part consists of a bass line with chords and triplets. The time signature is 4/4.

168 *p* *mf* *f*

S1 I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing I was much too far out all my life

S2 I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing I was much too far out all my life

A1 *mf* I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing *f* I was much too far out all my life

A2 *mf* I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing *f* I was much too far out all my life

T1 *mf* I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing *f* I was much too far out all my life

T2 *mf* I was much too far out all my life and not wav-ing but drown-ing *f* I was much too far out all my life

B1 *f* I was much too far out all my life

B2 *f* I was much too far out all my life

Vla. *cresc.* *f* transition to scratch tone

Pno. *cresc.* *f*

171 *ff*

S1
and not wav - ing but dr

S2
and not wav - ing but dr

A1
and not wav - ing but dr

A2
and not wav - ing but dr

T1
and not wav - ing but dr

T2
and not wav - ing but dr

B1
and not wav - ing but dr

B2
and not wav - ing but dr

Vla. *ord.* *fff* *p*

Pno. *fff* *8vb*