



WRITING THROUGH THE MUSIC

POEMS BY FRANCIS RAVEN

2005 chapbook ▶ SCARS PUBLICATIONS

(NOTE: ALL POEMS WERE WRITTEN DURING MUSICAL PERFORMANCES.)

ORGANIZATIONAL DEFICIENCY

The Segovia CD is not in its jewel box
with the Victorian idea of rainforest.
No, it is upside down on top of the refrigerator.

A string breaks, milk sours.
We only see the reflection of traffic
however within, and hear finally

the third Cello Suite transposed
for the curve of what Picasso
seems to have thought of as a woman.

The gift of gab

Finally some talk;
but if you're talking
I can't write and that's good.

I will anyway.
Mix me chatter bus-stop.
"Stubborn angle, aren't you?"

Here, you can do anything you want.
No one is standing over you;
but here, no one is watching.

A paradox of freedom;
a siren speaks exactly.
I love you redundant - don't have to listen.

"But you beg, don't you?"
"Listen to me god dammit!"
Mix me dance-hall lovely.

Ouch, you hit me
with that wall.
Ohh there it is, I can hear the curves.

Yes, thank you.
I 'll donate myself if you must.
Now I airplane

else mosquito pour of hourglass;
gab me, grab me
make me lullaby.

RAVEL

String Quartet in F Major

1.
The melodrama
of an overexposed
negative;
new print
in the wind.

We know that someone
is inevitably holding the bloody weapon,
or crying, or breaking a promise,
but we don't know who
must be in that spotlight.

2.
Familiar plucking
looking back at
the music of a bee;
memory mixed with
the occasional passerby.

Stretching the edges of a shape
without breaking the solitude and
thereby letting in the new century's pollution;
difficult to remain a romantic
while begging the question of broken images.

3.
The quixotic shrug of romance
realizing that it must
remain overblown just to survive
and so her overbite
surrounded the cloying apple.

But if you will:
whatever cynicism,
you must try to know beauty
however embarrassing
to be a person.

OPPORTUNE WAVES

Really quite funny,
looking like a small rock-star,
only it's different, really different.

It's experimental funny -
the screen is on and
I don't know why,

but as I see you
edges blur -
realize you're not playing the bass.

You're playing electric;
the photo out of focus.
Sexy abrupt edge makes it clear.

Did you feedback
and make it certain?
Ohh no, feedback is taking over.

Swallowed whole
like two hands around a bell,
but I can't see the ring

not even the brass.
I'm losing for myself
as the photo becomes clearer.

What did Yunnus say?
It's all in the body.
My body is becoming a cloud

slowly obliterated;
lucky for
the lights.

SCHUBERT

If I say something about music
will it be apt?
She removes her red jacket.
It falls off backwards onto her chair.
Repetition has something to do with it.



haydn

Divertimento no. 6 for Violin,
Viola, and Cello in D Major.

Singsong remove the buzz
or cover it;
cover your nose when you breathe.

Slow river
mocks noses off
composers' busts.

Severe marble floor
reflects the wind
of unused fans,

even steals back palm houses
for the violin player
filling one who had a garlic cutting accident.

TELEMANN

“in the guise of the storm
we will play, immediately”

Whatever is born in suspense

“this building is made
entirely of glass”

Shakes hands with the tail.

“if the sirens blare
you must convene bellies down

on the thick summer grass”

Climbing the scales of a fish
Out of music.

Climbing the clouds of God –

Thunder penetrating crevices
With letters sent on behalf

Of consumers and anonymous epitaphs.

DRUM TREE

PVC pipes covered in duct tape
provide the branches for
the alternately named “Drum Tree” and
“Drum Tower”; the lady in the pink feathers
in the birdcage yodels a little
and lets down her proverbial hair
along with some postmodern song lyrics
and titles which are attached to each other
with climbing rope and fishing line
such that when one goes up
the other disappears; perhaps
the flame will subside when the cymbal
hits, perhaps not,
but one thing is certain:
white makeup seals your fate
as “theater”.

MOZART

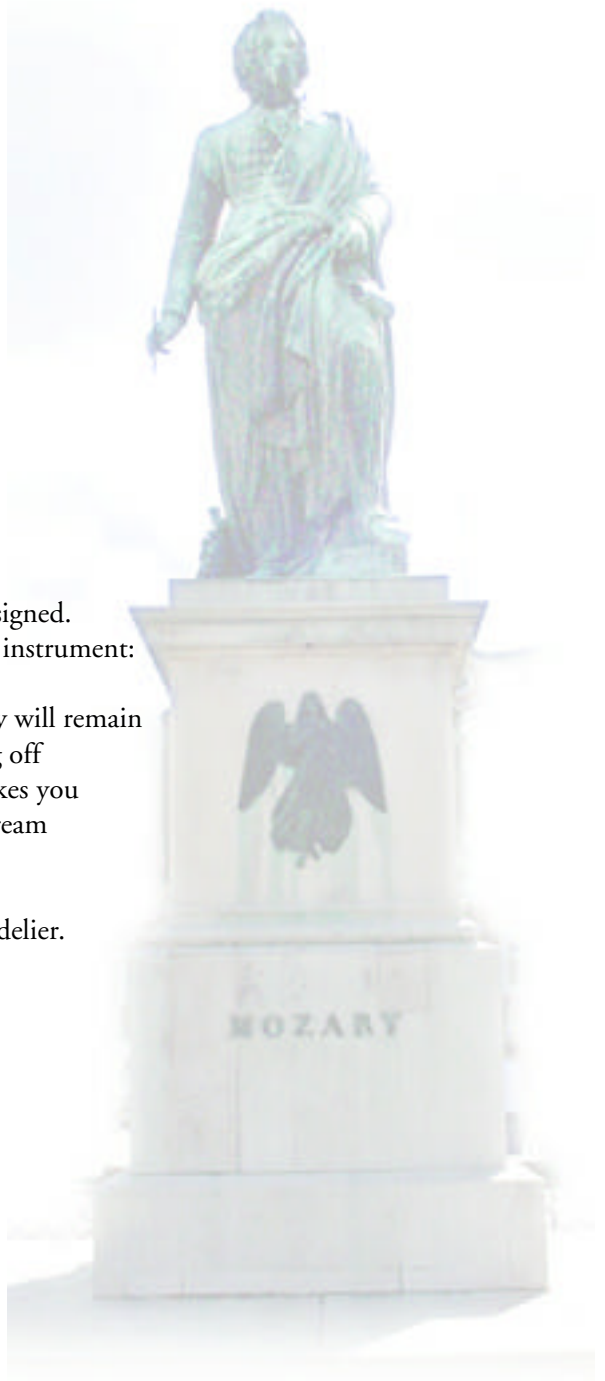
as if not speech,
but chants well designed.

Follow an instrument:

You'll see

personality will remain
wandering off

as music often makes you
into memory or dream
through a window
which reflects
an enormous chandelier.



CITY OF CONTRASTS

set side by side
melted
then set side by side again.

a scraping,
duck call of buildings,
walking past the shadow reader –
no extra lighting used.

rhythm of abstract talking
while tapping
shoes you might try on –
 melted and
 then cooled
 in economic shade.

“hey you there”
and the drums start asking
if the market
is a magic trick
like this cheap thing.

drums like flags
at half mast
meaning.

regular dirt
and public pools.
triumphant arches
and gardens plucked in your pocket.

horns like speech
in nice cars
being constantly worked on.

what is the true dimension of statues?
sometimes not more
than trinkets sold in tourist stands.

a jaunt around the bay w/ cocktails
or the immigration of refugees,
depends on the beginning of the film
melted, not in the washing machine,
but in the dryer.

AUTUMN FIRE

like two screenstruck lovers
and some new music in the drizzle,
 like some rift w/ an unknown cause
 some wind
 some borrowing of speed,
like some...

air knowing sycamore
tops of buildings and of fences,
looking out windows
supposedly like looking out eyes
blowing grass
puddle ripple a tone
of willow wafting
a dead winter eye
curl of hair
then motionless stone...

flicker,,,
light shooting upward
out of building
like finger upward pointing
taught cord
looking
like,
pull me.

like grain in the container
shaking
coal,
like
pick me up.

might as well,
here are the masks
but they don't teach about the woman.

meaning like
metal upon metal
knowing itself
through music.

a tree sweats
not knowing,
sleepless,
rattling almost anxious.

she doesn't come,
the pocket watch.

taught cords
maps
pathways through distance.

is that a violin
no one is playing?
is that a couple
who can't meet?

the window is opened,
eyes peeled,
the fresh air, knowledge, comes in.

the arms folded,
pen in hand
finally to paper;
trains charging tension.



Vivaldi

Warming up
Under formal reflections
Of romantic rain –

Ice thaws,
Slides from the violin string
It was threaded upon/

(The midpoint of the concerto
Is still the edge of a rug.)

Water's smooth potency
Is but the terrible crispness of frozen thought,
Transformed.

Makes my quilt to know it.
Makes my bed in fact.

But occasions still arise
To push the thread of this life
Through the eye of the storm
If just to reach the window
Of a dilapidated Victorian greenhouse.



chapius

Some types of flower
nonchalant plucks
on an ironic string,
followed reverently,
hopefully, with a river asking
“how do you
engage with the music?”

Some kinds of petal
fall, tormenting lovers
watching clouded glasses
from the leaves of their breath.

Some rivers
oppressively channeled
just to make it through
car laced cities.

The PAUL demARINI'S QUARTET

as seen at Webster University 9/9/02

and a sax floating
beneath constant tapping
of haiku cymbal.

red cheeks out of breath after applause
in blue sweaty shirt
steps away and nods

until his wave of flame is further requested
in conjunction with the exact smoke
of the bass' underlying bet.

if you want to know
what is ever done after we survive
ask a trumpet in the middle.

bass' voice functions as interlocutor,
not within punching distance, not within earshot,
but within speech itself.

argument the text provides
with its own instruments
however falling, however strings snapping.

she, unlike the trumpet, is subtly exact
in such a way that you cannot address her
as exactly arguing with you.

fiddling itself in between logical points,
music buries the case before the grand jury
in sheaf after sheaf of daydream map

until the quartet finally coheres
and the mind of the trial
is split into incomplete, but modern looking, poems.

the exactness of the trumpets is, of course, most obvious,
as in marching bands' almost snake charming
sense of footsteps and showmanship.

drums are so noisily immediately precise
you almost think they don't speak –
the code breaker is awake smoking in chalk covered boxers

finding guano-covered cave painting,
which, when scrubbed, directs you to
a mythical language of the oppressed.

saxophone leads and tells
his compatriots when they may rest, when they may
drink from their two liter bottles of naïve water.

and perhaps it is this order
we are socialized to love
in the academy.



MANHATTa

Into the dock perfectly
w/o an inch to spare

an illustration of a poem
inspiring another poem

tape-loop and trombone
almost dangle from scaffolding

folded frame
steam and drum

knocking into the city
on tiers of a skyscraper

what rustles and runs?
how many smoke stacks is the information age?

edges of boats like faces
diverse with barnacles

fiddling with masses, chimes,
chiming in

sun on the bay,
on the back.

WRITING ON THE SURFACE

To take attention spaces
grind them into your pulse
and approve.

Change the lighting
and offer a response -
Shimmer or reflection.

Oddify the possibilities;
through, of course,
dawn in the midst.

“All four speakers will be used,
so your listening experience
will be intended

if you
move towards
the center.”

Do not quantify,
but offer what you were
in the presence of that art.

“Do you, do you like yourself
in that space? Do you like yourself
when you are with that music?”

I enjoyed myself,
I liked myself there;
but I’ve been told to be skeptical.

Aural equations break glass
and come full circle
at some points; at some pointed sphere

touching one side, then another - two voices
in the midst, making what my mom
would call “complex recognizable patterns.”

Slide tube and crackle sound
of now leave me airplane -
“honey, the runway is wet; I’ll pick you up.”

“Would you pick me up
after this piece ends
and leaves me shattered?”

“Honey, stop writing.
You’re at a concert,
listen!” Too intellectual bullshit.

Now change scenes -
Small of a siren’s warning;
dark of an alcoholic’s felt doom.

Metronome and make me
applaud for the lights
turn on and new vision in absence.

beeTHOVEN

1.
Falling on top
and separating;
waves,
 roofs,
 but houses building.
2.
Tissues falling
on palm fronds
and the great gulps of music,
like fine coffee
on every taste bud.
3.
Cello lifts its voice
into dreams,
but, of a sudden,
a trigger is pulled
and the violin
 begins its elegant,
 if formal,
loop of speeches.

cocaine

For composer Chris DeLaurenti

I told you the streets
were experimental music
to be (not) (again) or what it is)

but I don't hear those weird parentheses
that they usually have in the titles of experimental music;
it doesn't feel approved. Approve me.

To be (not) violins,
none there. and there's
none of that weird

screwed up distortion -
I can just let
the bum sings.

I can just let -
letter me while I write.
Listen to me tell my story.

Begging again, aren't you
or assault? What is (again)
resurrected (to become)

blocks the reuptake
of nor-epinephrine;
leave my vesicles alone you cocaine.

Not so experimental unless
you've never heard any of that experimental music
and you're 16 and it seems so fucking wild.

Not so experimental,
but the sound;
I want to listen.

Abrupt shift -
wind sound
winding the speaking.

I can feel it
in my no(i)se
s (to become).

But look, see here,
how can I be cynical
when his story touches?

a RIVER FROM THE WALLS

They tell me it's water
but first I hear scraping metal -
you look like something's wrong.

But how can I be cynical
when you're playing the flute?
It's too big and blue out there.

You lead somehow
strange memories conjuring
lonely bachelor's trails -

suddenly, the suck sound of a fear
sewer: don't lead me there.
I'm tired and I can't rest on fear alone.

"Give me some bread."
"No, a flute has no bread;
only chambers of light trendy dabbled plates."

"Ohh, there's the meat -
but it's not in the flute.
It's in the backdrop."

The meat is like that same suck of dread,
but I desire it,
feeding my soul with cruxes.

Again, on that trail -
deeper hour; maybe dusk.
“Are you talking about dusk?”

You don't answer my questions -
Listen to me!! I'm asking you questions
and you're walking so fast.

Thanks for stopping -
there are the birds.
I won't disturb them.

They're on a confidential conference call
all the way from one end of this flute trail
to the soft white pucker of the end.

Sleep me pillows to dream.
Sleep me breath of air -
now fast, now lion.

I thought you were quieting.
I thought you were going
to let me enjoy myself.

Broken Boulder press recently published two of Francis Raven's chapbooks: "Notestalk" and "Notationing". His first novel Inverted Curvatures will be published this fall by Spuyten Duyvil. Sonnets, written in collaboration with Jeff Bacon, were published as an electronic chapbook by Beard of Bees. They are viewable online here: [http://www.beardofbees.com/pubs/Sonnets to Renew Your Subscription.pdf](http://www.beardofbees.com/pubs/Sonnets%20to%20Renew%20Your%20Subscription.pdf). Poems of his have been published in Mudlark, Conundrum, Untitled, Pindeldyboz, Big Bridge, Le Petite Zine, and Can We Have Our Ball Back? Essays and articles of his have been published in Jacket, Clamor, In These Times, The Fulcrum Annual, Rain Taxi, Sauce, and Pavement Saw.

*Images on pages 1, 2, 8, 10, 14 and 23 are U.S. Government
copyright © 2004 Janet Kuypers. All rights reserved.*

WRITING THROUGH THE MUSIC

FRANCIS RAVEN

SCARS PUBLICATIONS

Editor@scars.tv

<http://scars.tv>

829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155, USA, Northern Hemisphere,

Planet Earth, Solar System Milky Way Galaxy, the Universe

Freedom & Strength Press

the Copyright for the written pieces is retained by the author
Design Copyright © 2005 Scars Publications and Design

other publications from Scars:

Books: Sulphur and Sawdust, Slate and Mar row, Blister and Burn, Rinse and Repeat, Survive and Thrive, (not so) Warm and Fuzzy, Torture and Triumph, Oh., the Elements, Side A/Side B, Balance, Infamous in our Prime, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art, the Electronic Windmill, Changing Woman, the swan road, the Significance of the Frontier, The Svetasvatara Upanishad, Harvest of Gems, the Little Monk, Death in Málaga, Memento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.I.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Hope Chest in the Attic, the Window, Close Cover Beofre Striking, (Woman.), Autumn Reason, Contents Under Pressure, the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism), Changing Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blisters, Etc., Oeuvre, Exaro Versus, L'arte

Compact Discs: MFV the demo tapes, Kuypers the final (MFVinclusive), Weeds and Flowers the beauty & the desolation, The Second Axing Something is Sweating, The Second Axing Live in Alaska, Pettus & Kuypers Live at Cafe Aloha, Pointless Orchestra Rough Mixes, Kuypers Seeing Things Differently, SD/SD Tick Tock, Kuypers Change Rearrange, Order From Chaos The Entropy Project, Kuypers Six One One, Kuypers Stop., Kuypers Masterful Performances mp3 CD, Kuypers Death Comes in Threes, Kuypers Changing Gears.