

Score

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

2020

Spencer A. Roberts

I am.

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Adomus Publications

Performance Notes

The form of this piece is centered around the sum of its parts. There are three distinct styles of text: italicized words, bolded words, and underlined words. The first vocal part (Voice 1) is the first to perform from the text and reads only the italicized words within the poem. The second vocal part (Voice 2) is the second to perform from the text and reads only the bolded words within the poem. After both vocal parts have performed their particular sections, both vocal parts are to read their designated text styles as well as the underlined words intermediating and/or succeeding their parts in order from the beginning to the end of the full text. Grammar should still be observed however the flow of the wording is up to the unique individual taste of each performer. As each vocal part performs their portion of the text, an ensemble of tuned wine glasses to specific pitches (to be defined later) should be employed to set the atmosphere for the text, beginning just before and sustaining throughout the duration of the speech for each section.

Each “section” is denoted by the style of text that is displayed in the score. There are three sections in the music, marked solely by the visual appearance of the text within each section. “Section 1” is first and is to be performed by reading only the italicized words from the full text from the beginning to the end. Then comes “Section 2”, which is to be performed by only reading the bolded words from the full text from the beginning to the end. Last is “Section 3”, which is to be performed by both voices in tandem; Voice 1 is to read the italicized words and Voice 2 is to read the bolded words in accordance with their respective duties from the previous two sections, while also reading the underlined words intermediating and/or succeeding their parts. During this third and final section, the full text is to be read in order from top to bottom with each vocal part contributing during its specific moments in real time.

During “Section 1”, while Voice 1 is to read only the italicized words within the full text, performers playing wine glasses tuned to specified pitches (Ab5, B5, C6, E6) are to simultaneously play their pitches in the background, setting the aural mood for section 1. The wine glasses should begin sounding approximately five seconds prior to the beginning of the speech for this section, and end sounding approximately five seconds after the completion of the speech for this section.

During “Section 2”, while Voice 2 is to read only the bolded words within the full text, performers playing wine glasses tuned to specified pitches (D5, Eb5, F#5, G5) are to simultaneously play their pitches in the background, setting the aural mood for section 2. The wine glasses should begin sounding approximately five seconds prior to the beginning of the speech for this section, and end sounding approximately five seconds after the completion of the speech for this section.

During “Section 3”, both Voice 1 and Voice 2 are to read their designated parts within the full text, in order, from the beginning to the end. Additionally, both voice parts are to read all underlined words when they appear in context. All wine glass performers are to play their wine glasses in the background simultaneously, setting the aural mood for section 3. The wine glasses should begin sounding approximately five seconds prior to the beginning of the speech for this section, and end sounding approximately five seconds after the completion of the speech for this section.

When playing the wine glass, press down on the base of the wine glass with one hand, wet the index or middle finger of the other hand with liquid from the glass and rub around the rim of the glass for a sustained pitch. If the rubbing finger becomes dry and the sound dissipates, rewet that finger and continue the pitch.

Each voice part should be read by two voices that are fundamentally different in timbre and pitch; Voice 1 should be of Caucasian decent, whereas Voice 2 should be of African or African American decent. Dress for performance should reflect the tone of the text specific to each voice part; in line with this parameter, specific attire is at the discretion of each performer.

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Today, I am **Black.**

I contribute to a society that imprisons us,

devalues us,

hates us.

It's amazing how visceral human emotion can be,

a manifestation of a desire for good

and a desire for destruction.

The perfect storm.

And in spite of my best effort **evil remains triumphant,**

laughing in my face;

me,

a grown man,

made to look **weak,**

my ego whispering sweet nothings to me

working in tandem **with this demon.**

Today, I am **White.**

White with **fear,**

as I watch my kin being **discarded**

like a faulty appliance,

like a plastic **bottle**

destined to **decompose** slowly,

all the while **remembering what used to be.**

Fear is like a vampire

sucking the hope out of my dreams

feasting on my insecurities and my shortcomings,

leaving me but a **husk-less shell** of my former self.

Now, I am just "white."

No, now I am **Green.**

Green like the **Earth**

But **filled with deceit and envy.**

I want **what I don't have,**

need **what I can't have**

and admire everything that they have.

In what **reality is forgiveness earned**

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when summoned by greed?

How can we accept so much of this?

This is my least favorite version of myself.

"Mr. Green," the "Mean Green,"

coming for your hopes and dreams

so that mine can flourish

at your expense

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Today, I am Red.

With rage, I seek vengeance for my soul.

Look what you have done,

What you have created!

My destiny is to embody these horrible truths.

Now I look around me and see nothing but red

A potent, scarlet red

illuminating my thoughts, actions, experiences,

An all-encompassing,

relentless,

viscous,

unbearable,

red.

And yet, isn't this **the nature of our kind,**

walking around with **blood in our veins that is as red as our minds?**

Maybe **we are what we are;**

parasites, predators, the true scum of the Earth.

This green, green Earth.

I guess if **I want to find peace**

I am the real lunatic.

It's funny how that works,

realizing that your idea of **the world is false.**

It leaves a taste in your mouth that never quite disappears.

Maybe the true meaning of life is **but four colors:**

not an equation or an algorithm,

not a higher purpose,

not even existing for the sake of existence.

Just **four distinct colors.**

I am **Black.**

I am **White.**

I am Green.

I am Red.

*T*oday, *am* **FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

But what will I be tomorrow?

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