“River’s fray”

(pp. 95-111 from *Penury* by Myung Mi Kim)

female voice, flute, bass clarinet, alto saxophone

written by Eugene
for Germaine, Maria, Maarten, and Marc

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Below are excerpts from "Myung Mi Kim's performance of language" *by Jennifer Aglio. Source: <http://jacket2.org/article/myung-mi-kims-performance-language>.*

Penury is a text (and language) of lived experience that emerges through the dynamic sequences of motion and change, thus providing a space for the (re)telling of multiple narratives. At times, it feels as though Kim writes from the space of liminality — from an outside that was once inside. The emerging self is continually transformed and reformed by the implicit sequences that compose the hegemonic, patriarchal system in which they function.

[...]

The work moves through associative images and locations, a movement which speaks to the mutability of the construction of the self. The narratives exemplified in Penury are each enactments of possible truths, those that are unable to fit into an absolute representation of self. This design is based on a generation of self that relies on the external forces of a dominant discourse enveloped in a patriarchal system. A construction such as this does not have the capacity to represent selves who reside in the margins. That constructed self performs in a nonlinear sequencing of a multilayered narrative.

[...]

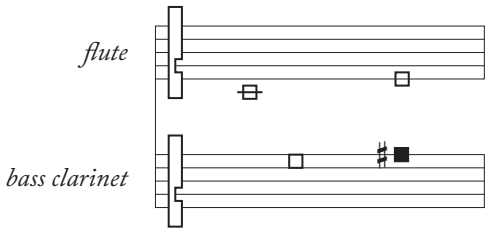
> [Language is] a social practice rather than any sort of intractable given, and once that rift enters your consciousness, it allows you to have an interrogative relationship to language. You have questions about what language is, what it performs, what it means to get recognized as a speaker of a particular language. This reflexivity prepares you to be an acute listener. This transitive space is a translative space — both linguistically and, I think, in terms of the person, the subject, if not spirit. This opens up multiplicity, plurality, in social and personal conceptions of language. (Myung Mi Kim)

[...]

The self, as performed through the disjunctive and queer narrative, is nearing not an absolute, essentialized version, but rather a representation of authenticity — an implied narrative (a combination of an event's presentation, the documentation of that event, and its spatial interpretation). Kim "queers" the page in Penury by highlighting the plurality/alternity of identity, disrupting traditional narrative, and deconstructing language through formal and sonic structures.

(95)

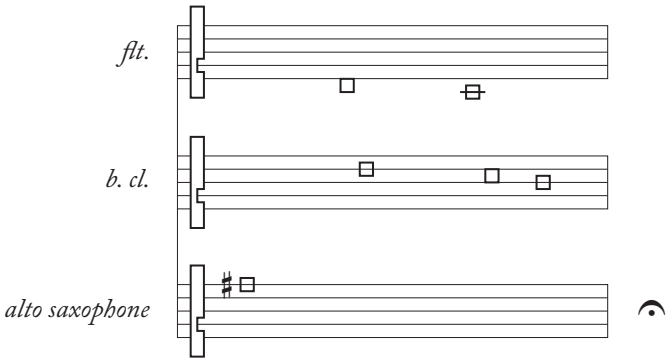
River's fray



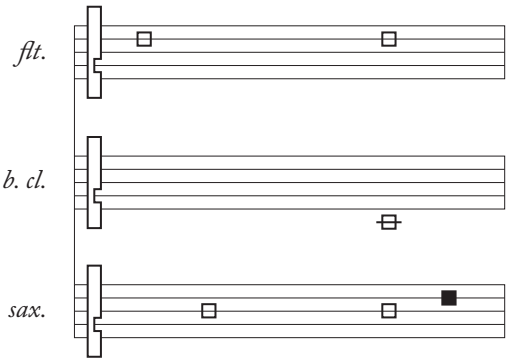
(Throughout the entire song, durations are free. Though, try to follow the vertical alignment of note against note, as well as the text of the poem to guide your playing. Project, but always listen to one another.

All words written above the instrumental lines are to be recited by the vocalist, but never above the instruments.)

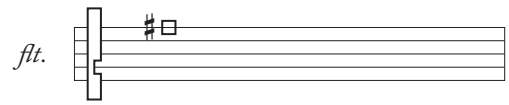
With head bowed walked trudged



Iron leaf once trumpets



Humpspine blackened with flies



(96–98)
Tacet, ca. 1 minute.

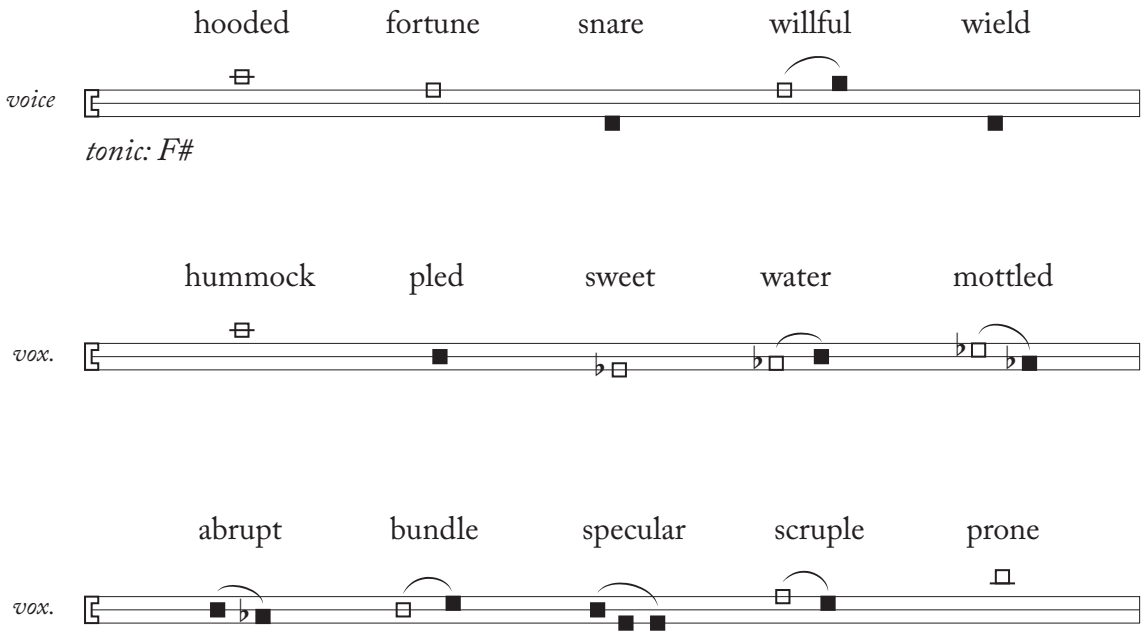
(99)

The voice sings the following words on the pitches given below. The clef is a "major tonic" (a.k.a. "moveable do") clef. The middle line stands for the tonic pitch given and all notes from it lie on a diatonic major scale. Focus on the intervallic relations between notes and their overall contour, less their precise pitch intonation and overall harmony. Feel free to inflect according to personal intuition of the situation.

Slowly, thoughtfully, maybe with a contained smile; a good pause after each line.

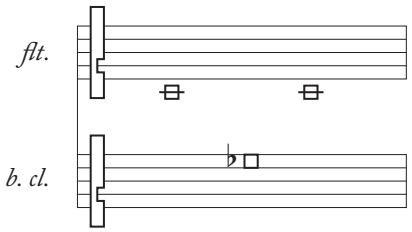
The flute, bass clarinet, and/or alto saxophone play the tonic note (at any octave transposition) once before the voice enters; and afterwards, only when the voice sings a word—however, it is not necessary to play under each and every word.

Always fleetingly, as quietly as possible.



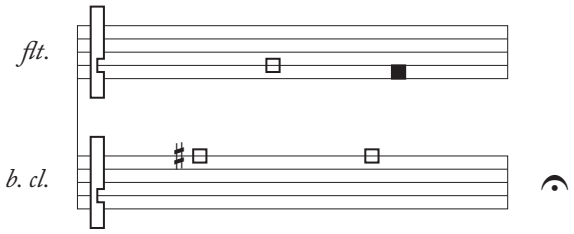
(100)

Fighting house by house

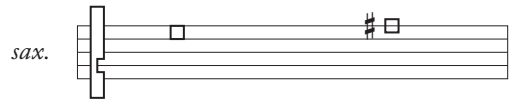


(As in 95.)

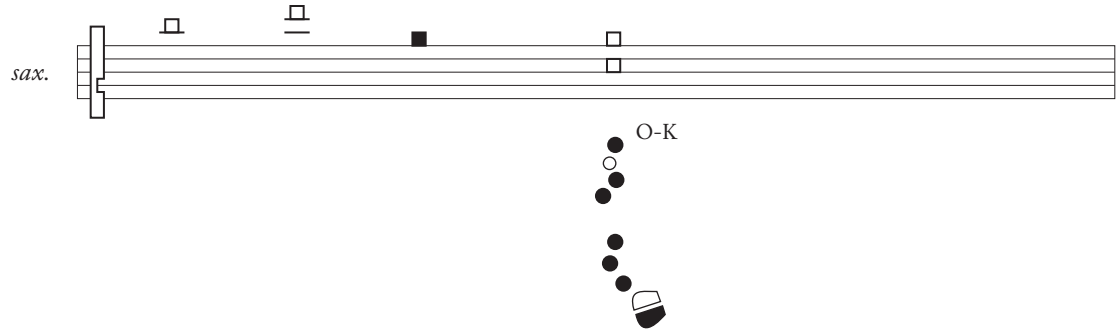
You saw it and heard it?



Grass grew from the sternum



Roots took over the mandible



(101)

The voice recites the text aloud clearly, with good articulation and never overly expressive.

The flute, clarinet, and saxophone are free to play (or not play) any respective material from (100) *and* (102)*; always thoughtfully in response, not too quietly, as if in private conversation.*

Near One, do you recall Day Ceremony

celebrated by a family for the welfare of all belonging to it

at the appointed time all work ceases

instruments of labor lie untouched

chants, though their precise meaning was long since become unintelligible

recited from a scroll

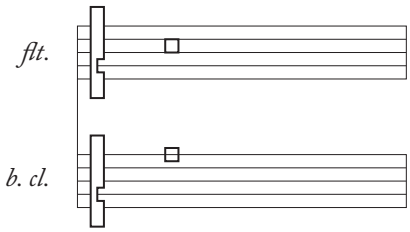
kept in the painted chest in the hall

sumptuous blossoms and green herbs thrown into the fire

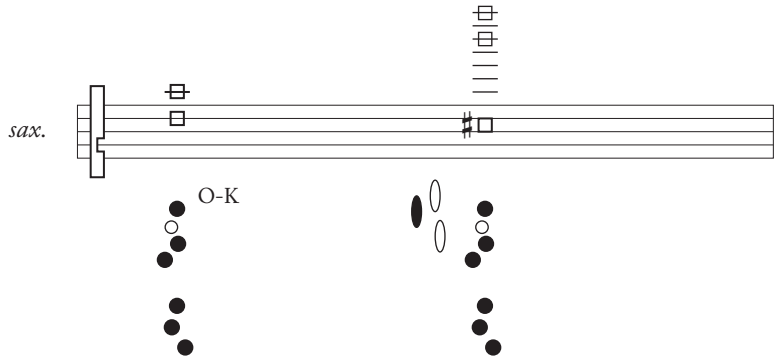
fresh gathered from a particular plot in the garden, set apart for this purpose

(102)

light of the full poor cell

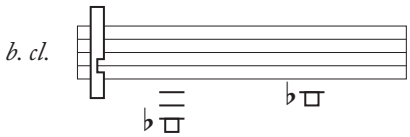


verdant meeting duty is

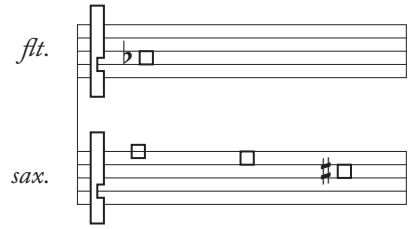


(103)

With the head of happiness

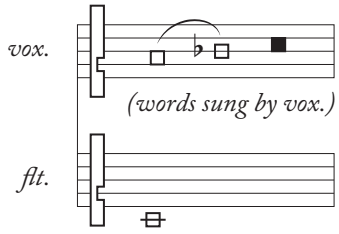


Comfortably full of air



Abdomen boat

O hewn

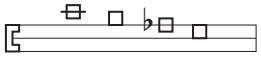


(104, 105)

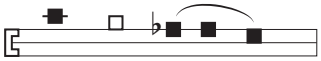
(As in 99.)

cherich apere

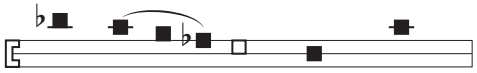
vox.
tonic: Eb



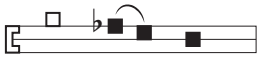
bliss and tenderage



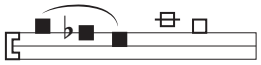
kind property brew speech rose



such errant rapt



refection, attend



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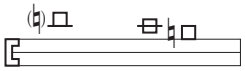
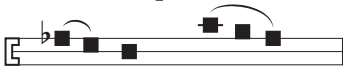
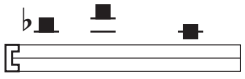


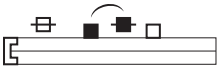
errant rapt refraction



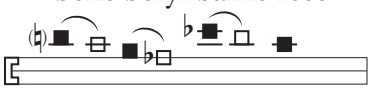
kind speech bliss



flur also thist

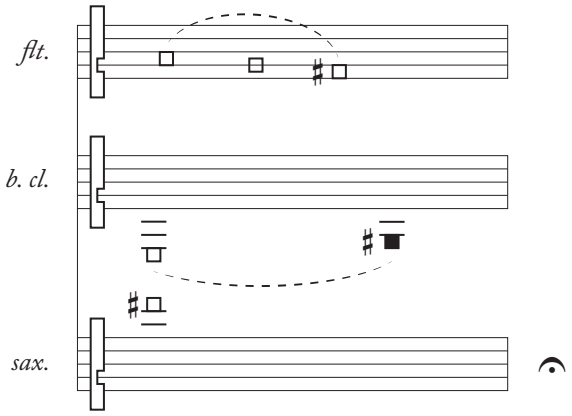


beris beryl barris rose

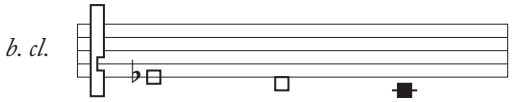


(106)

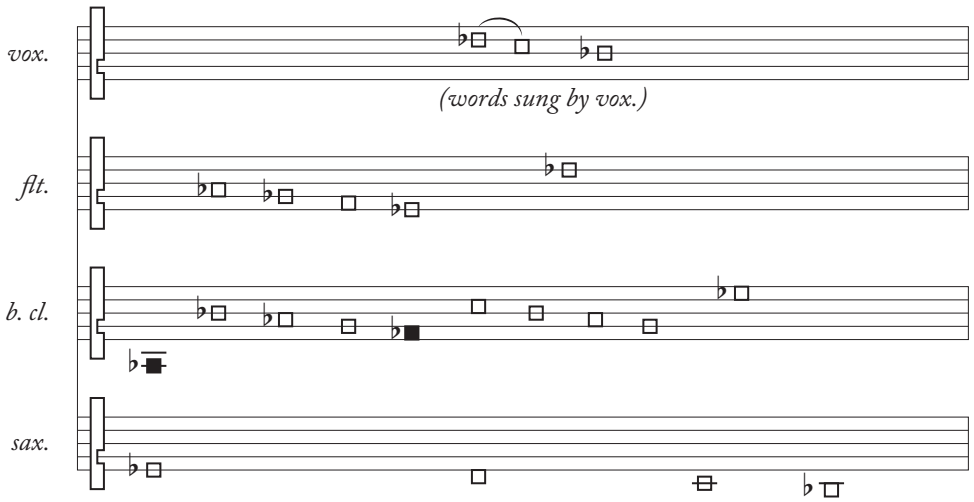
When the book opens and the dead march



barrow flower



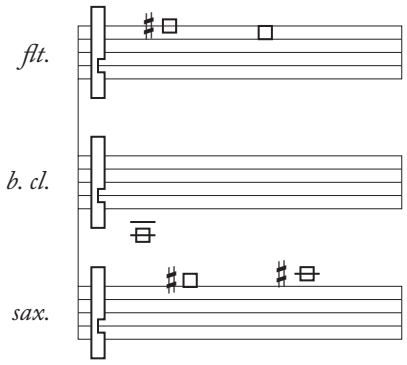
bulldozed | sun



(107-110)
Tacet, ca. 1 minute.

(111)

Radiant falcon
Scattering acacias

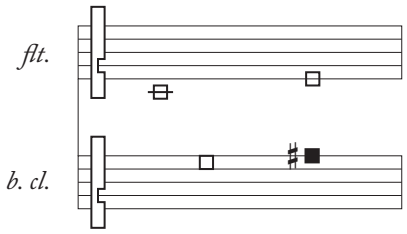


(Instruments sustain freely through both lines of the stanza above; all text is sung by the voice.)

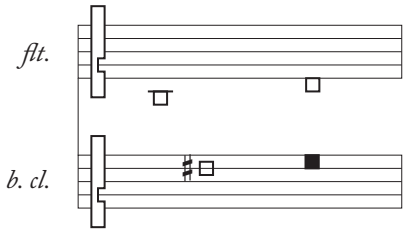
The recitation of acacias
A grove of riverbeds

Residence of years' repose
Patience aids such

A bank of wide hands

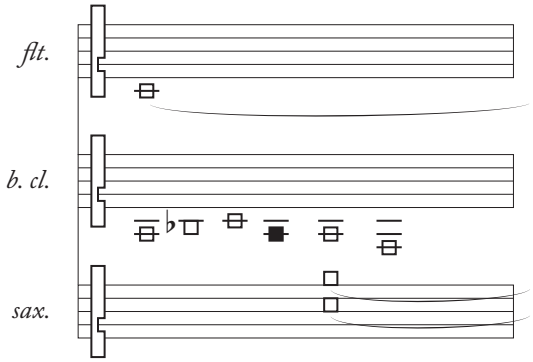


Tender petition



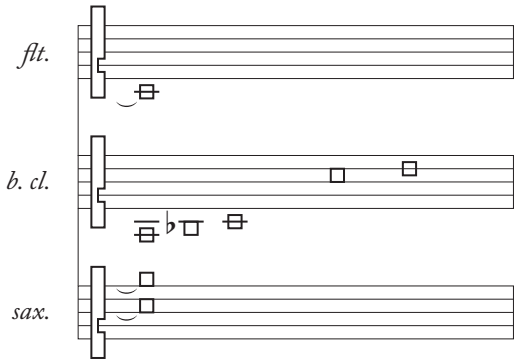
(111, continued)

Horizon slope, a hoop(ed) light



(Bass clarinet in partial homophony with voice.)

A fragrant sight beheld beholds



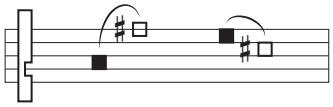
Where in this, further dwelt
Abide

Nestled close
Civil bound

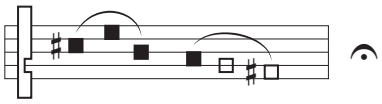
eugene a. kim
december 2014- may 2015
the hague

(111)

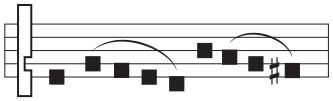
Radiant falcon

vox. 

Scattering acacias

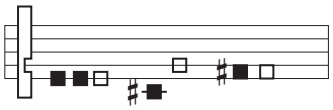


The recitation of acacias

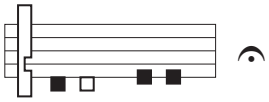


A grove of riverbeds

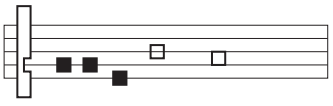
Residence of years' repose



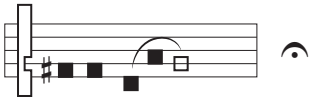
Patience aids such



A bank of wide hands

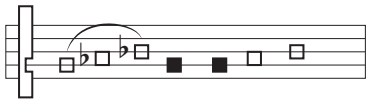


Tender petition

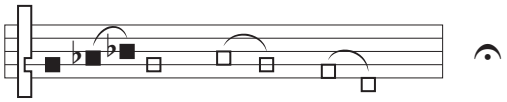


(111, continued)

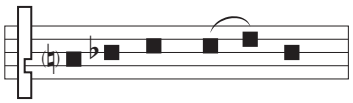
Horizon slope, a hoop(ed) light

vox. 

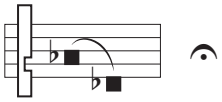
A fragrant sight beheld beholds



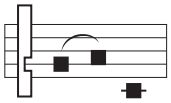
Where in this, further dwelt



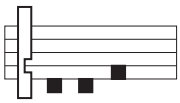
Abide



Nestled close



Civil bound



eugene a. kim
december 2014- may 2015
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