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Speaking of Love

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Speaking of Love

Song cycle on poems by Dana Gioia

for soprano, viola, pianoforte, and percussion

I. Speaking of Love
   II. Orchestra
   III. The Song

for Earl Kim on the occasion of his 75th birthday

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Speaking of Love

Dana Gioia

Adagio

Paul Salerni

Soprano: Speaking of love was difficult at first. We

Viola: groped for those lost, unmarred words

Marimba: That parents never traded casually at

home. The radio had not devalued. How little there seemed left to us.

poco rit.

A tempo

So, speaking of love, we

chose The harsh and leveling language of denial

Knowing only what we did not wish to say,

Choosing silence
in our terror of a lie. For surely love existed before words.

But silence can become its own cliche, And blows lie as skillfully as words.

In tempo (sung) (spoken) (sung) (spoken) (sung)

pp So, one by one we spoke the easy lines the other had resisted exp. but anticipated.

pp Trusting that love renewed their innocence. Was it

then that words became unstuck? That star no longer seemed enough for

star? Our borrowed speech demanded love so
and so beyond our power that we

saw How words were only forms of our re-

poco rit.

(piano)

A tempo

We speak again of love, Now that there is no-

left unsaid Surrendering our voices to the past,
Which has betrayed us.
Each of us alone,

sensed by memory,
befriend ed by desire,

with

no words left to summon back our love.

poco rit.
Soprano
Viola
Pianoforte

Orchestra

Andante sostenuto

Poco rit.

senza tempo, rubato

A tempo

Climbing the scales three octaves at a time,

I search for you among the high notes where the

tender flute resides.

But where are your sweet eyelashes?

Not there.

Then I descend a -

con pedale
without tempo, rubato

Soprano

Among the sunlit brasses their funnels glistening like fountains.

Viola

A tempo

Soprano

I let them splash me with their streaming.

Viola

A tempo

Soprano

Gold, but I can't find their lips. Then despairing, ever deeper I explore the

Viola

subito meno mosso

A tempo

cresc. e accel. poco a poco
Soprano

Viola

depths the elemental strings command. Their bows will not create a miracle without your stroking hand. The orchestra is still.

Animato

Soprano

Viola

24

27

32

depths the elemental strings command. Their bows will not create a miracle without your stroking hand. The orchestra is still.

Animato

Soprano

Viola

24

27

32
The score is blank.

Cold as a slide rule the brass-es, strings, and flute.

So no-rous lover, when will you re-turn? The orches-tra is mute.
How shall I hold my soul that it does not touch yours?

How shall I lift it over you to other things?

If it would only sink below into the darkness like some lost thing or slumber in some quiet place that did not echo your soft heart's beat.
But all that ever touched us— you and me touched us together like a bow that from two strings could draw one voice. On what instrument were we strung? And to what player did we sing our interrupted song?

espressivo e dolce

dim. a niente