

Michael Matthews

Bloody Jack

a song cycle based on poetry by

Dennis Cooley

i.

in february
when the cold cruises past
like a pet gander
in a snuffle of wind
when afternoon light
stumbles over the house
& the moon
elbows propped on the window
shimmy-shuffles in to our room
on cold hens feet
mercury curls in on himself
like an intestine
the tungsten frost
shunts the sky
like boxcars startled awake
& night
ratchets down on us
with a buzz

ii.

rain & wind
when they rub
my bones they rub
the linseed dark
the emery cloth wind

the mute bones
my rib bones
on its wet
gravel faces
tumbled smooth
as air in agate

when they blow
in the morning
to carbon
turning
my heel bones
they are running
slippery with rain

iii.

floors stuttering
like movie
people
flick past/
strobic flies/
flick/
flick/
flick/
white
curtains parted
flaking off
dark ribs of men

iv.

me here &
light lingers
bright fingers on
lift of your breast
dress fallen
)open
on half turning
skin naked
by the window
blind
one arm above you thin
and your hand
left in your hair

v.

pastoral

crowds

breaking winters entrails

shreds of fat

/dribbling

in their beaks

vi.

freeze up

a few pebbles of
rain red dust & the
creak of hinges working hard & dark cracks
open cranks its shutters open & will
not close for the night

viii.

so glad
just to
with
dance
to
glad
just
so
to
dance
with
just
you

vii.

when you die she sd
she sd
its like
ghosts
shucked off the white
flesh in your teeth
the bones melt
sweet (as butter)
in your mouth

she sd
look
its like zippered
silk
shucked off
she sd
the white teeth
sweat in the flesh
the wet seeds
sweet (as
salt) in my mouth melt

when you die
she sd

ix.

psychic

the hard thread
Fancia
over it
hand full of tendons
they are yellow
her crochet
needle hooks like thumb bones
in my chest pulling
and pulling
tight
she is
twisting
she is twisting
the red and purple
ligaments
together
inch by inch
she is
drawing in
a bed-spread
the limp weight of it
drowning the mouth and nose
up and over
the broken parts
knitting
together
knotting
shut

me a linen doily in her hands

x.

reached out to send you this line
out to send you this line reached
to send you this line reached out
send you this line reached out to
you this line reached out to send
this line reached out to send you
line reached out to send you this

xi.

hurry hurry hurry
drowning in air

as I go vertebrae
of boxcars shuddering to life
lights cruise somewhere
behind my eyes as I run

fire in my heel
my hands on fire

moon a tin of carbolic salve

xii.

she thinks of him

absent minded
find traces of you

till out of the jelly they will
come the heat of eyes
surprise me they are blond
blind with regret

the ache of blood in the head
in my whole body remembering you

xiii.

expecting / the sun

it has
jumped down
upon her
the sun
has jumped
& soon now
the moon
strolls slow
beside her
low inside her
like a white
foot

(floating)

xiv.

by the red river
river so low
walk by the willows
feel the rains blow

feel the slow rains dear
feel the rains flow
september mornin
cold rain like snow

if you cant call now
call when you can
warm in your voice love
glad in your hands

you at my window
you at my door
hold me once more dear
hold me once more

leave you a letter
leave you this song
leave you my love dear
sayin so long

by the red river
river so low
walk by the willows
blowin in snow

Accidentals apply for the entire measure.
Courtesy accidentals are used occasionally for clarification.

Voice:

x notehead - Sprechstimme (quasi parlando - more like speaking than singing).
Use the notated pitch as a starting point, but then fall away from it.

thank you, dennis, for all of your wonderful poetry over the years,
and your generosity for always letting me have my way with it.
m

Bloody Jack

Poetry by Dennis Cooley

Michael Matthews

i - in february

♩ = 104

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 5/4. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mp, pp, mf), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions like *poco rit.* and *Red.* (pedal). The lyrics are: "in february when the cold cruises past like a pet gander in a snuffle of wind".

System 1 (Measures 1-3): Voice starts with a rest, then sings "in february" (measures 1-2) and "when the cold cruises" (measures 3-4). Dynamics range from *p* to *mp*. Piano accompaniment features chords and triplets.

System 2 (Measures 4-6): Voice continues with "past like a pet" (measures 4-5) and "gander" (measures 6-7). Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. Piano accompaniment includes chords and triplets.

System 3 (Measures 7-9): Voice concludes with "in a snuffle" (measures 7-8) and "of wind" (measures 9-10). Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mp sub.*. Piano accompaniment includes chords, triplets, and a wavy line indicating a tremolo effect.

a tempo

10 *p*

when af - ter - noon light stum - bles

mp

13 *mp* *mf* *pp sub.* *rit.* -----

o - ver the house & the moon el -

pp *mf* *p* *pp*

16 *meno mosso* (♩ = 96) *mp* *dim.* *rit.* -----

bows propped on the win - dow shim - my - shuf - fles in to our

mp *p*

an afterthought

tempo I (♩ = 104)

20 *pp* < *mp* > *mp* EDIT *f*

room on cold hens feet mer - cu-ry curls in on him - self

ppp *mf* *f*

poco rit. ----- *meno mosso* ♩ = 96

25 *p sub.* EDIT *mf* > *p* *freely* ----- *p* EDIT

like an in - tes - tine the tung - sten frost

mp *p*

Red.

30 *pp* EDIT *rit.* ----- *mp* EDIT

shunts the sky like box - cars start - led a - wake

pp *Red.*

a tempo

rit. *a tempo* *pp*

34

8^a-----

ad lib.

p *dim.* *ppp*

rit. *meno mosso* (♩ = 72)

ppp *poco* *mp*

38

night _____ rat - chets down _____ on _____ us with _____ a _____ buzz _____

pp *dim.*

42

8^a-----

pp *dim.*