

musings

by Hannah Cai Sobel

text inspired by the queer and reflective conversations I share with Reuben Gelley Newman

“musings” (of a beard couple) for soprano, flute, alto saxophone, cello, and piano, is a selection of quotes pulled from my texts with my dear friend and poet, Reuben Gelley Newman. Reuben and I debrief everything: the simple things we feel from day to day, the larger patterns we’ve recognized about ourselves, the way we think, the way we love, and the way we interact with the world around us. Reuben, a queer, white man from NYC, and me, a queer, nonbinary person of color, also from NYC have many shared experiences and while sometimes we respond to these experiences in the exact same ways – sometimes we respond completely differently.

“musings” is a selection of some of the descriptors of said reactions to the way Reuben and I experience life.

1. strange
still strange that they're all straight
2. strophe
I never really like strophic music anyway
3. them
they were a necessary peacefulness
4. catharsis
calling people is quite scary but what if I did for necessary catharsis?
5. ready
we talked about queerness and neurodivergence but I wasn't ready
6. hate
I think maybe she hates me but I don't have a reason why
7. love
which humans which will I love today?
8. okay
tomorrow will maybe be okay

musings

text inspired by the queer and reflective conversations I share with Reuben Gelley Newman

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1. strange

♩ = 76

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-7) features a voice line with lyrics "s - ti - ll, s - ti - ll," and a piano accompaniment marked *p*. The flute and alto saxophone have rests, with the alto saxophone playing a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7. The second system (measures 8-11) features a voice line with lyrics "s - trange, still strange that they're all" and a piano accompaniment. The flute plays a triplet in measure 8 and a triplet in measure 9, followed by a *ff* dynamic and a slur over measures 10 and 11. The alto saxophone has a triplet in measure 11. The third system (measures 12-15) features a voice line with lyrics "s - traight." and a piano accompaniment. The alto saxophone has a triplet in measure 12. The viola part enters in measure 12 with a *mf* dynamic and a slur over measures 13 and 14, ending with a *p* dynamic. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern.

2. strophe

slowly, at your own pace

1 *mp*

Voice

Mm Ah

Fl. *improvise slowly on these pitches*
mp

Alto Sax. *take lengthy breathes as needed*
mp

Vc. *improvise harmonics at a fairly slow pace*
mf

Pno. *improvise plucking both these strings*
mf

3

Voice

I ne-ver-real ly like- I ne ver-real ly like- I ne ver-real ly like- stroph-ic mu-sic a-ny- way.

Fl. *a bit faster* *somewhat with the singer*

Alto Sax.

Vc.

Pno.

3. them

♩ = 60

1

Voice

Vc.

mf

cantabile

f

they were

7

Voice

Fl.

Vc.

Pno.

they were a nec - es - sa - ry peace - ful - ness.

Mm

p

mp

p

mp

4. catharsis

Spoken, hysterical:

calling people
is quite scary

Spoken, hysterical:

calling people
is quite scary

1 $\text{♩} = 72$

Voice

Fl. $\text{♩} = 72$
f

Alto Sax.
f

Vc.
f

Pno.
f

Spoken, calmer:

calling people
is quite scary

Spoken, calmly:

catharsis

5 *mf* //

Voice

but what if I did for ne-ces-sa-ry

Fl. *mp* *overblow* // *mp* 2 2 *f*

Alto Sax. (tr) // *f*

Vc. // *mp* *f*

Pno. // *mp* 2 2 *f*

5. ready

$\text{♩} = 42$

1

Voice *mp* We talked a-bout queer-ness,

Fl. *p*

Alto Sax. *p*

Vc. *p* *in and out of vibrato*

Pno. *p* *like bells* *tr.*

7

Voice *mf* we talked a-bout queer-ness, we talked a-bout we talked a-bout

Fl. *mf*

Alto Sax. *p*

Vc. *p*

13

Voice

queer-ness and neu - ro - di - ver - gence we talked a - bout queer-ness and

Fl.

p *mf*

Alto Sax.

mf

Vc.

Pno.

16

Voice

neu - ro - di - ver - gence but I was NOT rea - dy.

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Vc.

Pno.

6. hate

1 $\text{♩} = 112$

Voice f
I think may - be, may - be,

Alto Sax. f

Vc. f

Pno. f

8

Voice
may - be she hates me.

Alto Sax.

Vc.

Pno.

7. love

1 ♩ = 50 softly

Voice: *mp* which

Fl.: *mp*

Vc.: *mp*

Pno.: *mp*

5

Voice: *mf* which hu - mans

Fl.: *mf*

Vc.: *mf*

Pno.: *mf*

10

Voice: which will I love to - day?

Fl.:

Alto Sax.:

Vc.:

Pno.:

8. okay

Spoken, calmly:
tomorrow

Spoken, calmly:
tomorrow

9

Musical score for measures 1-6. The score includes staves for Voice, Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (Alto Sax.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 76$. The key signature has two flats. The voice part is silent. The flute and alto saxophone play melodic lines starting in measure 3, with dynamics *mp*. The cello plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamics *mp* and a slur. The piano accompaniment features chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics *p*. The annotation "like bells" is placed above the piano accompaniment in measure 2.

Spoken: tomorrow will
maybe be okay

Musical score for measures 7-12. The score includes staves for Voice, Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (Alto Sax.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The tempo is $\text{♩} = 76$. The key signature has two flats. The voice part begins in measure 7 with the spoken text "tomorrow will maybe be okay" and a melodic line in measure 8 with dynamics *mp*. The flute and alto saxophone are silent. The cello continues its rhythmic pattern with dynamics *mp*. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line, with dynamics *p*. The annotation "Mm" is placed below the voice line in measure 8.