

Libretto by Euan Tait

Part 1: The Cry of the Sea

1. Mammon in the Mind's Ocean

In the depths of our human ocean
under the immense pressure
of the mind's suppressing waters,
desire, our own private Mammon,
what we think we want, stirs in us,
the broken creature of our lives roars,
and with its bellow tears the waters
and leaves them wounded, poisoned.

2. I Call to You

I call to you, like a creature
caught in a nylon net,
and you call back: "What
is your name, what
is my name?" All night,
we sing to each other
as creatures of our minds,
we ululate, weep, whisper
across miles of damaged ocean
this mourning call, that you too,
all of you, know well: it sounds
with the agonised cry
of our wounded seas,
while our minds reel
with broken desire.
O sweet sister sea,
O damaged one,
O harm in ourselves,
We, children of Mammon.

3. The Wound in the Water

The same rivers sing, the same
seas dance; we're shaken by these
storms, as those we love;
yet from the glittering waters
from the rich soils
our naked feet touch
comes the same
terrible high cry
like a bird caught in flight
by the white heat
of the mammon-heart arrow
as if the light itself
is draining from the dance
of the water, as if light,
itself, bleeds, and we,
we are the archer.

4. The Song of the Sea

I have walked this shore
all my life; my children leap
among the waves
like a spray of fire,
and always I listen:
I'll know any change
in their voices, I'll hear
any hidden sound
of their anguish or fear,
and in the last years
I have been shocked
into silence here:
the song of this sea
is changing, its music
slowly unfamiliar,
the song becoming a cry,
like a vast creature
with a visceral wound.
The storm wind is howl.
I am no longer home,
I'm being led away
like a captive of myself,
like a sudden stranger,
like an exile.

5. The Cry of the Sea (Instrumental)

6. Interlude 1

Spirit, help us to hear
their cries like a coming storm
surging across the waters,
from boats packed with fear.

Part 2: The Cries of Exile

7. Song of Sea Exile

I, the exile,
my heart burning,
my lost life
a terrible fire,
songs of loved ones
crying all around me.
Oh endless,
endless home, the sea.
Oh my missing,
I am listening,
yet your silence
cannot answer me.
There, we left
our singing unfinished,
and our lives now
fall into the endless sea.
This the broken
gift of love:
the exile calls,
remembered names.
What you were
scorched on me,
your wounded names
sung to the endless sea.
Waves like voices
roar around you:
we're not silenced,
but cry out like the
sea.
Your anger,
fiery, living
is like love
that bleeds
like the endless sea.
Oh our exile,
torn by love,
singing words
you can no longer sing,
where's the shores,
the harbour, the horizon,
wanderer,
calling to the endless sea
calling to the endless sea?

8. The Shadow of the Boat

The shadow of the boat
though the bright beauty
of the exiles' clear water.
The body of the boat
and the voices streaming,
terrified, into the sea.
The quiet harbour,
the vacated houses,
and the trail of voices
evaporating, who cried
to the boat, carry me,
bear me like a child,
reborn, to another shore.

9. The Strangers

They, the strangers who walk among us,
carrying their imagined unborn
child in their minds;
They, the strangers who came to us
guessing, full of troubled beliefs,
meet the unexpected hiss.
They, the strangers none of us
have named, whom we do not know,
whose lives seem utterly closed to us.

10. The Song of Love

I return again to the burning sea,
again to the sea alive with sunlight,
the fire water teeming
with the voices that travel to me
light-fast through the deep,
drowning voices,
voices seeking home.
Victims of mammon,
victims of my desire
that erupts as all our wars,
wars that send our hearts,
our whole being,
into permanent exile.
Here is the seashore
I once knew, now
unknown to me:
the air howls
with the cries of the estranged:
what is the sea? What now
are the seasons?
Where will we go
to be at home
as the ground melts
under our feet?
Where will we go
to heal our broken song?
Where be at home
except in a shattered music?

11. Interlude 2

Spirit, help me to see
their broken stories
behind their eyes: a chair
overturned, the faint smear
of a last shared meal
in their abandoned room.

Part 3: The Heart of the Singer

12. The Singer's Dance

The leaves have fallen away, and dance
to the wind-song in the garden,

and through new naked trees, we see
the two great rivers in their beauty

and restless power. The driven clouds
burn like comets in our aerial ocean,

the air is alight with the cries of birds
flocking southwards like the music

once exiled from the heart, yet our hearts
erupt and here, on this wind-driven hill

we are drawn to the centre of the dance,
and we know we are helplessly singing,

and seeking whatever in us we cannot stop,
the song ceaseless, leaping, our utter yes.

13. The Singer's Voice

It's always there, sounding,
circling in us; we reach in

to drawn it out, and find it
a familiar, hidden friend:

our shared song, its threads
woven from steel

made gossamer, light
as laughter, tensile,

strongly invisible,
present in the love

we attempt, in what
we seek to unfold
in each others' lives
as students, friends,
in these singing,

unfinished days.
In our life-yes, our beings

sing from their depths;
and from our own lives
comes our answer of
thanks,

and our one song wings
into the falling, still fire

of the bright snow, slowly
turning our streets
to a deep and fragile
peace.

14. Sea-singer

It is not you alone, seasinger,
in the end, your voice
fizzing
into the oncoming waves,

but it is the grain of your
voice
like a choral thread in the
rock
linking you song to song,

and we are gathering, all of
us,
choir, at the Tromsø shore:
Arctic church, Hovig's spine,
bucks

like a horse-herd of
mountains,
and among us all, a singing
laughter
erupts like an unbroken sea.

15. Epilogue

Spirit, the cry has erupted
and now falls away
into the silence
of the seeking deaths
in the warm, bright waters.
Love, have mercy.
Love, say we knew you.
Love, that you knew us.

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