

## Alex Freeman: A Wilderness of Sea (2016)

*A Wilderness of Sea* draws from four of Shakespeare's most famous works and emphasizes a common thread among those works that addresses two of the most universal aspects of human existence: water and impermanence. In all of western literature it is doubtful that any single poet more artfully or thoroughly contemplated the ephemeral quality of "our little life". Indeed, we find this theme pervades his most tragic and most comic works.

Shakespeare also understood the smallness of mankind in the face of the nature, as well as very particular aspects of life on and near the sea. His descriptions and metaphors, as they pertain to the aquatic realm, reflect a remarkably refined perception of the natural world and mankind's place in it. For instance, his description of the state of a drowned sailor in Full Fathom Five has an almost scientific, chemical ring to it and represents a penchant for nuance on the microscopic level. Likewise, his prescient contemplation of "the hungry ocean" ultimately obliterating even the loftiest structures of mankind, offers us a glimpse of his unparalleled grasp of drama on the broadest imaginable scale.

Shakespeare's words, after scientists have warned that the ocean may well rise nearly a meter by the end of our century, resonate in a way that he could scarcely have imagined. His was an infinite ocean with unlimited size and power; ours is an ocean whose limits we have finally begun to breach and one that renders our civilisation in a position much akin to that of Titus Andronicus, when he exclaims:

For now I stand as one upon a rock  
Environed with a wilderness of sea,  
Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,  
Expecting ever when some envious surge  
Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.

– *Titus Andronicus*, Act III, sc. 1

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*A Wilderness of Sea* ammentaa neljästä Shakespearen tunnetuimmasta teoksesta ja korostaa näiden teosten yhteisiä aiheita, kahta ihmisen olemassaolon universaaleinta muotoa: vettä ja väliaikaisuutta. Koko länsimaalaisessa kirjallisuudessa tuskin kukaan runoilija on pystynyt taitavammin tarkastelemaan pienen ihmiselämän katoavaisuutta. Tämä teema täyttää niin hänen traagisimmat kuin koomisimmatkin teoksensa.

Shakespeare myös käsitti ihmisen pienuuden suhteessa luontoon ja ymmärsi mereen ja merenkulkuun liittyvän elämän erityispiirteitä. Hänen veden valtakuntaan liittyvät kuvauksensa ja metaforansa osoittavat hämmästyttävän tarkkaa havaintokykyä luonnollisesta maailmasta ja ihmisten paikasta tässä maailmassa. Esimerkiksi hänen kuvauksessaan hukkuneen merimiehen kohtalosta (Full Fathom Five) on lähes tieteellinen, jopa kemiallinen sävy, joka osoittaa mikroskooppiselle tasolle asti vietyä nyanssintajua. Samoin hänen kuin ennalta tietävä pohdiskelunsa "ahnaasta valtamerestä" pyyhkimässä pois jopa

ihmisen mahtavimmatkin rakennelmat tarjoaa vilauksen hänen vertaansa vailla olevasta, laajimman mahdollisen mittakaavan draamasta.

Kun luemme Shakespearen sanoja sen jälkeen, kun tiedemiehet ovat varoittaneet merenpinnan mahdollisesti nousevan lähes metrin vuosisadan loppuun mennessä, ne koskettavat meitä tavalla, jota hän olisi tuskin voinut kuvitella. Hänen merensä oli ääretön, kooltaan ja voimaltaan rajaton, kun taas meille meri on jotain, jonka rajoja olemme viimein alkaneet rikkoa. Se asettaa sivilisaatiomme hyvin samankaltaiseen asemaan kuin Titus Andronicuksen hänen julistaessaan:

Nyt luodolla ma seison niinkuin mies,  
Jok', ympärillään ärjy meri, näkee  
Kuink' aalto aallolt' yhä paisuu kuohu,  
Odottain vain, ett' ärjäs hyökylaine  
Kitaansa hänet nielee suolaiseen.

– *Titus Andronicus, Näytös III, kohta 1* käänös Paavo Cajander

Alex Freeman

Texts by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

**The Tempest (p. 2)**

Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell  
Hark! now I hear them – Ding-dong, bell.

**Sonnet 64 (p. 27)**

When I have seen by time's fell hand defaced  
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;  
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,  
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;  
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain  
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,  
And the firm soil win of the watery main,  
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;  
When I have seen such interchange of state,  
Or state itself confounded to decay,

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminare,  
That time will come and take my love away.  
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose  
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

**A Comedy of Errors (p. 62)**

I to the world am like a drop of water  
That in the ocean seeks another drop [...]

**The Tempest (p. 66)**

Where should this music be? i' the air or the earth?  
It sounds no more...  
This music crept by me upon the waters,  
...I have follow'd it,  
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.  
No, it begins again...

Hark! now I hear them, – Ding-dong, bell.

Duration: c. 15'

An alternate version with countertenor is available. Enquire from the publisher.

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In Honor of the 400th Anniversary of his Death  
Commissioned by Helsinki Chamber Choir  
**A Wilderness of Sea**

William Shakespeare

ALEX FREEMAN (2016)

♩ = 68

The musical score is arranged in a standard choral layout with 16 staves. The vocal parts are: Soprano 1 (S1), Alto 1 (A1), Tenor 1 (T1), Bass 1 (B1), Soprano 2 (S2), Soprano 3 (S3), Soprano 4 (S4), Alto 2 (A2), Alto 3 (A3), Alto 4 (A4), Tenor 2 (T2), Tenor 3 (T3), Tenor 4 (T4), Bass 2 (B2), Bass 3 (B3), and Bass 4 (B4). The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 68 beats per minute. It features various dynamics such as *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*, and includes vocalizations like 'mm' and 'yy'. A large, semi-transparent watermark 'SAMPLE' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

6

*p*

S 1

*p*

A 1

*solo mf*

T 1

Hear them now hear them now

B 1

*pp*

S 2

*pp*

S 3

*pp*

S 4

*pp* *mp* *p*

A 2

mm yy uu

*pp* *mp* *p*

A 3

mm yy uu

*pp*

A 4

(mm) yy uu (mm)

*pp*

T 2

*pp*

T 3

mm

*p* *mp* *p*

B 2

mm yy uu

*mp* *p*

B 3

yy

B 4

11

S 1 *mm*

A 1 *mm*

T 1 hark now I hear them end solo Ding

B 1 Ding

S 2 *p* Ding dong, bell

S 3 *p* Ding dong bell

S 4 *mm*

A 2 *p* Ding dong

A 3 *mp* Ding Ding

A 4 *mm* *mp* Ding

T 2

T 3

T 4

B 2

B 3

B 4

15 *mp*

S 1 *mm* Ding\_ dong\_ Ding

A 1 *mp* *mm* Ding\_ dong Ding

T 1 *mp* *mp* dong\_ bell Full fath-om five\_ thy

B 1 dong bell

S 2 *pp* *mm*

S 3 *p* *pp* *mm* *pp*

S 4 *mp* *pp* *mm* *mm* yy

A 2 *pp* *mp* *p* *mm* *pp* *mm*

A 3 *mp* *pp* yy full\_ *mm*

A 4 *mp* (n) yy *mm* full\_

T 2 *p* *mp* *mm* Full\_ fath-om five\_ thy

T 3 *mp* Full\_ fath-om five\_ thy

T 4 *mp* Full fath-om five thy\_

B 2 *mp* yy

B 3 *mp* yy

B 4

19

S 1  
 — dong Ding— dong — mm

A 1  
 Ding dong thy— fa - ther lies— mm mm

T 1  
 fath - er lies of his bones

B 1

S 2  
 mm mm mm

S 3  
 — Ding dong mm

S 4  
 mm

A 2  
 — full full fath-om— mm

A 3

A 4  
 — fath-om—

T 2  
 fath - - er lies of his bones *mf*

T 3  
 fa - - ther lies of his bones *mf*

T 4  
 — fa - - ther lies of his bones *p*

B 2  
 Full *p*

B 3  
 Full *p*

B 4  
 Full *p*



24

S 1 thy fath - er lies

A 1 Full fath - om five thy

T 1 are co - ral made

B 1 Full fath - om five

S 2

S 3 Full fath - om five thy fath - er lies

S 4 Full fath - om five

A 2 are cor - al made

A 3 Full fath om five thy fath - er lies

A 4 Full fath - om five thy fath - er lies

T 2 are co - ral made

T 3 are co - ral made

T 4 are co - ral made

B 2 fath - om five

B 3 fath - om five

B 4 fath - om five