

In Silence

*for SATB chorus and piano
on a poem by Thomas Merton*

by Kyle Gann

2015

In Silence

Be still.

Listen to the stones of the wall.

Be silent, they try
to speak your

name.

Listen
to the living walls.

Who are you?

Who
are you? Whose
silence are you?

Who (be quiet)
are you (as these stones
are quiet). Do not
think of what you are
still less of
what you may one day be.

Rather
be what you are (but who?)
be the unthinkable one
you do not know.

O be still, while
you are still alive,
and all things live around you

speaking (I do not hear)
to your own being,
speaking by the unknown
that is in you and in themselves.

"I will try, like them
to be my own silence:
and this is difficult. The whole
world is secretly on fire. The stones
burn, even the stones they burn me.
How can a man be still or
listen to all things burning?
How can he dare to sit with them
when all their silence is on fire?"

- Thomas Merton

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In Silence

Thomas Merton
(publ. 1957)

With a gently insistent momentum

Kyle Gann
2015

♩ = 104

Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B) vocal staves and Piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/2. The tempo is marked with a quarter note equal to 104 beats per minute. The lyrics for the first system are: "Be still. Lis-ten to the". The piano part begins with a *p* (piano) dynamic and features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

Continuation of the vocal and piano parts, starting at measure 8. The lyrics for the second system are: "stones of the wall. Be si - lent, they try to speak your name. and so on". The piano part continues with the same accompaniment pattern, maintaining the *p* dynamic.

14

— Lis-ten to the liv-ing walls. Who are you? Who are you?—

— Lis-ten to the liv-ing walls. Who are you?—

8 — Lis-ten to the liv-ing walls. Who are you? Who are you?—

— Lis-ten to the liv-ing walls. Who are you?—

21

Whose si-lence are you? Who are you?—

Whose si-lence are you? (be qui-et) (as these stones are qui-et)

8 — Whose si-lence are you? (be qui-et) (as these stones are qui-et)

Whose si-lence are you? (be qui-et) (as these stones are qui-et)

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27

Do not think of what you are Still less of what you may one day

Do not think of what you are Still less of what you may one day

Do not think of what you are Still less of what you may one day

Do not think of what you are Still less of what you may one day

33

be. Rath-er be what you are. Be the un - think - ab-le one you do not know.

be. Rath-er (but who?) Be the un - think - ab-le one you do not know.

be. Rath-er (but who?) Be the un - think - ab-le one you do not know.

be. Rath-er (but who?) Be the un - think - ab-le one you do not know.

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40

Oh be still while you are still a-live, and all

Oh be still while you are still a-live, and all

Oh be still while you are still a-live, and all

Oh be still while you are still a-live, and all

46

f things live a - round you (I do not hear) to your own be-ing,

f things live a - round you speak-ing to your own be-ing,

f things live a - round you speak-ing to your own be-ing,

f things live a - round you speak-ing to your own be-ing,

f *p*

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51 *subito*
mp *mf*

speaking by the un - known that is in you and in them selves.

speaking by the un - known that is in you and in them-selves,

speaking by the un - known that is in you and in them-selves,

speaking by the un - known in you and in them-selves,

mp *mf*

57 *f* *mp* *f*

"I will try like them to be my own si-lence: and this is dif-fi-cult. The

"I will try like them to be my own si-lence: and this is dif-fi-cult. The

"I will try like them to be my own si-lence: and this is dif-fi-cult. The

"I will try like them to be my own si-lence: and this is dif-f-cult. The

63

mp *p*

whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. The stones burn, e-ven the stones, they burn

mp *p*

whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. The stones burn, e-ven the stones, they burn

mp *p*

whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. The stones burn, e-ven the stones, they burn

mp *p*

whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. The stones burn, e-ven the stones, they burn

69

mf *p*

me. How can a man be still and lis-ten to all things

mf *p*

me. How can a man be still and lis-ten to all things

mf *p*

me. How can a man be still and lis-ten to all things

mf *p*

me. How can a man be still and lis-ten to all things

74

burn- ing? How can he dare to sit_ with them when all their si- lence is on fire?"

burn- ing? How can he dare to sit_ with them when all their si- lence is on fire?"

burn- ing? How can he dare to sit_ with them when all their si- lence, Their si- lence is on

How can he dare to sit_ with them when all their si- lence is on fire?"

79

"I will try like them to be my own si- lence:

"I will try like them to be my own si- lence:

fire? "I will try like them to be my own si- lence:

"I will try like them to be my own si- lence:

85

mf and this is dif-fi-cult. *f* The whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. *mf* Lis-ten to the *mp*

mf and this is dif-fi-cult. *f* The whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. *mf* Lis-ten to the *mp*

mf And this is dif-fi-cult. *f* The whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. *mf* Lis-ten to the *mp*

mf and this is dif-fi-cult. *f* The whole world is sec-ret-ly on fire. *mf* Lis-ten to the

92

stones of the wall. *p* Do not think of what you are. *mp* Be still, Who are

stones of the wall. *p* Do not think of what you are. *mp* Be still,

stones of the wall. *p* Do not think of what you are. *p* How can a man be still

stones of the wall. *p* Do not think of what you are. *p* How can a man be still

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