

Lie Still

for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Marko Marinic
2024

Perusal Score

Program Notes

Lie Still is dedicated to Anka Marinic, my great-grandmother. I called her Baka, which means grandmother in Croatian. In 2010, she suffered a stroke that confined her body to a wheelchair and required her to move to a care home. Despite her physical impairment, her mind remained as strong as ever, as did her persistence and sense of pride. Every day, for fourteen years, she needed the help of nurses to transfer her from the bed to her wheelchair. I remember our family talking about how she would be more comfortable if she would rest and lay down. Looking back on my memories of her, and the stories I've been told, it's clear to me that she was never one to lie still.

There's so much I would tell you; about her bravery, strength, selflessness . . . stubbornness; how she escaped with her three young children from socialist Yugoslavia in 1957; how she built a life for her family, and helped others of the Croatian diaspora find their way to Canada. My Dida (her son) always told me that he thought the story of their journey to Canada would make a great movie, but the story I want to share, that I feel really highlights her strength and pride, is from the 1990s after she had already firmly planted her roots in Canada. It comes from the perspective of my father (her grandson), who told this story as part of her eulogy:

"After Dida's passing, my wife and I moved in with Baka to help her as best we could. That next summer she was going to put the house on the market. She spent lots of time working outside making sure that the flower beds were in tip-top shape, the trees were pruned and the grass had been kept tidy. She would even be on her hands and knees weeding the gardens and trimming the grass around the edge of the flower beds with scissors because she didn't trust that the whipper snipper wouldn't scald the grass or, heaven forbid, throw grass clippings into her flowerbeds.

That summer was stifling hot and Baka wore black clothes as she mourned her husband. We would come home from work and she would be outside working in the yard. There were no words we could say to stop her from working to exhaustion in the heat. In our minds, there was no reason for her to work that hard, but she had so much pride in that home and in that yard that she did everything she could to make it the best it could be.

She had talked about ordering some soil as she wanted to level a low spot along the property line where there were some willow trees, because whenever it rained, water used to pool there. I told her: 'why bother...this spot was literally 200 or more feet away from the house. It's not going to make a difference to someone who wants to buy the house.' I knew she was not happy with me but we didn't talk about it again and I thought I had convinced her to leave it alone.

Well a few days later she had ordered, and had 10 yards of soil delivered while we were at work, and by the time we got home she had moved more than half of what was delivered. She didn't use a wheelbarrow to move the soil, NO, she used two 5-gallon pails that she would fill and then carry to the area, dump the pails and spread the soil.

This woman was 68 years old, suffered with arthritis in her hands, she was wearing black from head to toe and it was more than 30 degrees outside. Not that she should have been out there doing this in the first place, but when I asked her why she didn't at least use the wheelbarrow she said that she didn't want the tire marks from the wheelbarrow on the grass . . . are you kidding me?"

Program Notes (cont'd)

In the last months of her life, Anka was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer, but even this didn't stop her from getting out of bed and into her wheelchair. I saw her for the last time in early January, 2024, and am grateful that we had that chance to say goodbye to one another. *Lie Still* was completed on February 4th. Anka was freed from her suffering on February 9th, 2024 at the age of 97.

My father said it best:

"You were a true blessing to us all, a light that never dimmed. You built the foundation of strength, love, and kindness in our hearts. Know that your spirit will continue to live on in the garden of our memories; in the bloom of every flower, and in the rustle of every leaf."

Note on the Text

Adelaide Crapsey was an American poet whose work I adore. She suffered from tuberculosis for the last decade or so of her life, and in her final years was admitted to a nursing home at Saranac Lake in New York, where she wrote *To the Dead in the Graveyard Underneath My Window*. She passed away in 1914 at the age of 36. The text of *Lie Still* is adapted from this poem, which I have included in its full version below. The text used in this piece is highlighted in **bold** and adjustments are included in [brackets].

To the Dead in the Graveyard Underneath My Window

by Adelaide Crapsey

Written in A Moment of Exasperation

How can you lie so still? All day I watch
And never a blade of all the green sod moves
To show where restlessly you toss and turn,
And fling a desperate arm or draw up knees
Stiffened and aching from their long disuse;
I watch all night and not one ghost comes forth
To take its freedom of the midnight hour.
Oh, have you no rebellion in your bones?
The very worms must scorn you where you lie,
A pallid mouldering acquiescent folk,
Meek habitants of unresented graves.
Why are you there in your straight row on row
Where I must ever see you from my bed
That in your mere dumb presence iterate
The text so weary in my ears: "**Lie still**
And rest; be patient and lie still and rest."
I'll not be patient! I will not lie still!
There is a brown road [that] runs between the pines,
And further on the purple woodlands lie,
And still beyond blue mountains lift and loom;
And I would walk the road and I would be
Deep [with]in the wooded shade and I would reach
The windy mountain tops that touch the clouds.
My eyes may follow but my feet are held.
Recumbent as you others must I too
Submit? Be mimic of your movelessness
With pillow and counterpane for stone and sod?

And if the many sayings of the wise
Teach of submission I will not submit
But with a spirit all unreconciled
Flash an unquenched defiance to the stars.
Better it is to walk, to run, to dance,
Better it is to laugh and leap and sing,
To know the open skies of dawn and night,
To move untrammeled down the flaming noon,
And I will clamour it through weary days
Keeping the edge of deprivation sharp,
Nor with the pliant speaking on my lips
Of resignation, sister to defeat.
I'll not be patient. I will not lie still.

And in ironic quietude who is
The despot of our days and lord of dust
Needs but, scarce heeding, wait to drop
Grim casual comment on rebellion's end;
"Yes, yes . . Wilful and petulant but now
As dead and quiet as the others are."
And this each body and ghost of you hath
heard
That in your graves do therefore lie so still.

Performance Notes

Lie Still features many gestures in the vocal part that utilize grace notes. In all cases, grace notes should be thought of as light, pseudo-improvisatory embellishments on the syllable that they are connected to by slur. *mn*

*Grace notes occurring before their "main" note should be placed on the beat.

M-S. 28 *mp* 3 My eyes may fo - llow

Pno (8) *mp*

*Grace notes occurring after the "main" note should be placed between beats, or before the next syllable

Transitional tempo indications are always relative, and performers should feel welcome to push and pull the tempo, to suit their expression.

Similarly, tuplets larger than triplets should be treated as notated accelerando/rubato. In these instances (and throughout the piece in general), expression and momentum comes second to metrical accuracy.

Duration: ca. 4 minutes

Lie Still

for Anka

Marko Marinic
Text by Adelaide Crapsey

Like the surface of a pond, freezing $\text{♩} = 58$

Mezzo-soprano

Piano

mf non vib.

Lie still and

M-S. 7

rest, be pa - tient and lie still and rest

Pno

pp

M-S. 12

A Suddenly warming, becoming more flexible

There is a brown road that runs be - tween the pines and fur - ther

Pno

mf $> p$



Lie Still

15

M-S. on the pur - ple wood - lands lie and still be -

non vib. 3 → vib.ad lib.

poco rit.....a tempo

Pno { *mf* *p* 8va

17

M-S. - yond blue moun - tains lift and loom

rit.....

Pno { *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *pp*

B

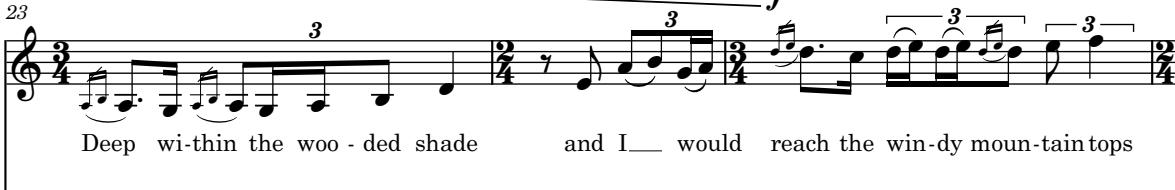
20

M-S. and I would walk the road and I would be

.....*pp* *p* 3 *f* 3

Pno { 3 *f* 3

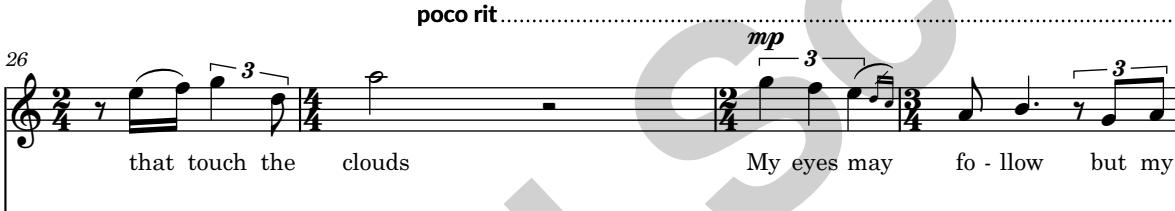
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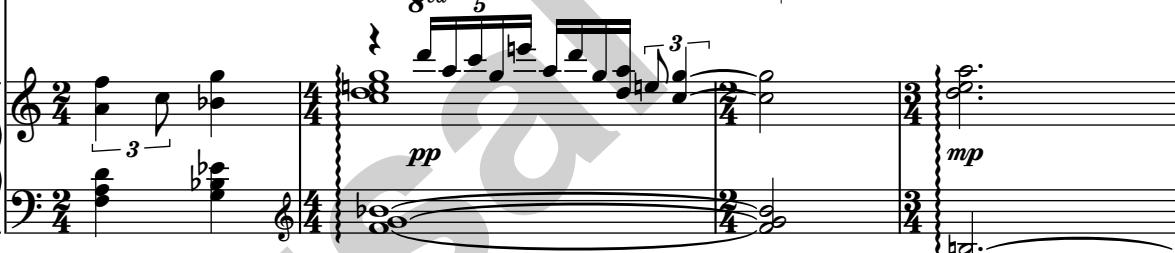
M-S. 

Pno

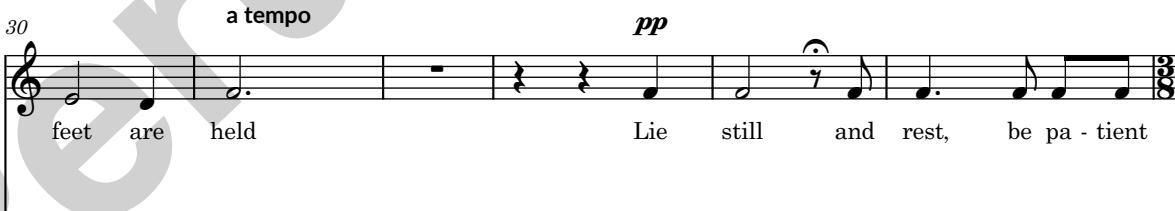


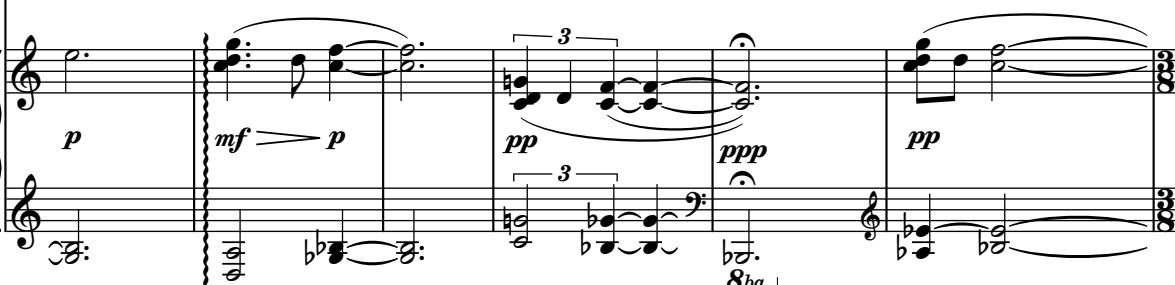
26

M-S. 

Pno 

30

M-S. 

Pno 

Lie Still

C a tempo

poco accel.....

36

M-S. and lie still, and rest, and if the ma - ny say - ings of the wise_____

Pno

poco accel.....

39

M-S. teach of sub - mi - ssion I will not sub - mit but with a

Pno

a tempo

42

M-S. spi - rit all un - re - con - ciled flash an un - quenched de -

Pno

44

M.S. - fi - ance to the stars I'll not be pa - tient, I will not lie

Pno

molto rit. *a tempo*

47 **D** *pp* still I'll not be pa - tient I will not lie

Pno

cresc. growing determination

52 still I'll not be pa - tient be pa - tient I will not lie

Pno

rit poco a poco

Lie Still

56 **E** *f* *dim.*

M-S. still I will not

Pno *f*

59 *pp*

M-S. lie still

Pno *p* *pp* *ppp* *8ba*

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 56-57) features a vocal part (M-S.) and a piano part. The vocal part starts with a dynamic 'f' and a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano part features chords and a bass line. The vocal part then transitions to a dynamic 'pp' with melodic lines and the piano part follows with dynamic 'ppp' and '8ba' markings. The second system (measures 58-59) continues with the vocal and piano parts, maintaining the dynamic levels and melodic patterns established in the first system.