

Sublime Nonsense

*Songs of
love and
heartbreak*



*Songs
free of
traditional
language*

Presented by

INVERSION ***ENSEMBLE***

Featuring new choral works by

Stephanie Andrews, Brent Baldwin, Phillip Bernard,
Adrienne Inglis, Alex Johnson, Robbie LaBanca, Fahad Siadat,
Trevor Shaw, and Toby Twining

Saturday, June 3
7:00pm

Westminster Presbyterian Church
3208 Exposition Blvd, Austin, TX 78703

-free admission-

Austin's Inversion Ensemble is a choral collective made up of composers and singers, formed to give voice to innovative choral works and to encourage the creation of new music, especially in the Austin area. A great deal of our repertoire is written especially for Inversion Ensemble by composers who sing within the ranks of the ensemble.

While many members of Inversion Ensemble perform, conduct, compose, study, and teach music full-time, the group also includes non-professional participants who are equally passionate about choral music and ensuring it thrives as a modern art form.

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Inversion Ensemble

presents

Sublime Nonsense

Echoes: Vocalise for Two Masked Singers*Robbie LaBanca
Nooshin Ghanbari and Sean Lee, Altos

Hee-oo-hm-haToby Twining
Robbie LaBanca, Counter Tenor

Hymn to AethonFahad Siadat
Mary Elizabeth Ashton, Soprano, Julianne Graper, Alto, and Cristian Cantu, Tenor

(a cry)Phillip Bernard

Cantus In Memorium Pauline Oliveros (1932 - 2016)*Brent Baldwin

Four Nocturnes*Alexander Johnson

Intermission

Eternal Place*Robbie LaBanca
Steven Soph, Tenor, and Thann Scoggin, Bass-Baritone

- I. *O Heart, O Love*
- II. *On the ship close to home*
- III. *Sure miss you*
- IV. *I sail your heart*

Letters to Faith*Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)

- I. *The Sunshine of Your Smile*
- II. *Music Is the Main Issue*
- III. *Climbing Mountains*
- IV. *Broiled Lobster*

Vampire*Robbie LaBanca

Here Before the Sunrise Blue*Robbie LaBanca

Wedding Prayer*Stephanie K. Andrews

Aether*Trevor Shaw
Alissa Floyd, Alto, and Eli Salazar, Tenor

- I. *Earth*
- II. *Water*
- III. *Air*
- IV. *Fire*

* *World première performance*

Guest Speaker

Dr. Jennifer Siegel is a Research Associate in the Center for Learning & Memory at the University of Texas at Austin. She earned her Master's Degree in Experimental Psychology in 2001 and her PhD in Behavioral Neuroscience in 2004 from Bowling Green State University in Ohio before moving to the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in Houston. Dr. Siegel has a long-standing interest in the neural basis of learning and memory processes, and currently is focusing her research efforts on identifying therapeutic targets to treat cognitive dysfunction in autism.



Austin Haller is a pianist, organist, conductor, vocal coach, arranger, and tenor who is particularly recognized for his artistic creativity and his deep sensitivity at the keyboard. Hailed as “always remarkable” (*Austin Chronicle*), he performs regularly with a number of Central Texas-based choral ensembles, including the Grammy®-winning Conspirare, as well as with Panoramic Voices, Amphion Youth Choir, and the Conspirare Youth Choir.

Austin serves as Associate Music Director of Texas State University’s Musical Theatre program. He has also music-directed many regional theatre productions and is the grateful recipient of Austin Critics’ Table and B. Iden Payne Awards for Music Direction. Favorite shows include Austin Shakespeare’s *Sunday in the Park with George*; Texas State’s *Legally Blonde*; TexArts’ [title of show] and *Ain’t Misbehavin’*; Zach Theatre’s *Rockin’ Christmas Party* and *Present Laughter*; and Zilker Theatre’s *The Music Man* and *My Favorite Year*.

His “fierce piano stylings” (*Austin Chronicle*) are frequently heard in jazz and cabaret performances with Austin Cabaret Theatre and elsewhere. His performances with singer Kara Bliss and band have been described as “a touch of old school with a modern insouciance” and are featured at a variety of theatre and concert venues.



Thann Scoggin, bass-baritone, is widely recognized for his versatility as a soloist and chamber musician. He has recently appeared as soloist in the Haydn Nelsonmesse, Fauré Requiem, and Bach Magnificat in addition to international touring throughout this season with Grammy-winning avant garde vocal band Roomful of Teeth. Thann joins Conspirare this season for performances in Texas, Boston, and Norway.

He has performed regularly with Boston Baroque, Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, ensemble viii, Emmanuel Music, Texas Early Music Project, and numerous other ensembles. He plays electric guitar and sings in the experimental music group Convergence. Thann has also appeared on recordings on the Harmonia Mundi, Linn, CORO, Gothic, and Albany labels, including Conspirare's 2014 Grammy-winning album *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*. He maintains a private voice studio in Austin, Texas, and is an avid hiker and lover of the outdoors.



Possessing a "sweetly soaring tenor" (Dallas Morning News) of "impressive clarity and color" (New York Times), tenor **Steven Soph** specializes in concert repertoire, performing throughout the U.S. and Europe. Recent solo engagements include Stravinsky's *Threni*, Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, and Bach's *Cantata 34* with the Cleveland Orchestra; Bach's *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions* and *B minor Mass* with Chicago Chorale; Reich's *The Desert Music* with the New World Symphony; Bach's *B minor Mass* with Symphony Orchestra Augusta, and Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and "*Waisenhaus*" *Mass* with the Mainly Mozart Festival, San Diego. An active collaborator, Steven performs with Grammy nominated Seraphic Fire, Grammy Award winning ensembles Conspirare and Roomful of Teeth, Trident, Cut Circle, Yale Choral Artists, Grammy nominated True Concord, and Spire. Steven holds degrees from the University of North Texas and Yale School of Music.

Program Notes

Echoes: Vocalise for Two Masked Singers*Robbie LaBanca

The concept for this piece came to me after performing in a concert with Texas Early Music Project that centered around French church music from the 12th and 13th centuries. The evocative use of single voice chant in many of the pieces for that concert left me wondering what a piece written now would sound like in that style. I began to spin a narrative in my head of two lovers who had been separated in some way, either through distance, heartbreak, death or even time. What if they had a song they once shared as a symbol of their bond, and now that they are apart, they use this song to call out to each other over the void of space and time? The melody begins simply and evolves with each repetition, becoming more desperate at its height and then resigned in the final two iterations. The use of the masks (which are the singers' hands cupped over their mouths) and the slight changes in vowel shape and tone quality are meant to add an otherworldly atmosphere to the experience. The singers will also remain unseen so that the listener can imagine the narrative in their own mind and creative imagery. The call and response styles are direct echoes of each other because I wanted to leave the question open-ended. Is the sound they are hearing coming back at them their lost lover trying to respond, or is it just the echo of their own voice?

Hee-oo-hm-haToby Twining

Hee-oo-oom-ha is among Toby Twining's earliest works for unaccompanied vocal ensemble, composed in 1987 with his voice as the subject for experimentation. At that time, Twining was very taken with yodeling and rhythmic panting in the traditional music of African peoples, especially the Ba Benzélé Pygmies of central west Africa and the Ewe people of Ghana.

Hymn to AethonFahad Siadat

This piece is an exploration of musical science fiction, horror, and mythology. It is based on a fringe religious group in ancient Greece, the Aethonians, who worshiped Aethon, the vulture-like creature who was sent daily to tear out and devour Prometheus' liver. This cult lived in perpetual fear of Olympian wrath and made supplications to the creature who administered divine punishments in hope of placating it and avoiding a similar fate. Here is an excerpt from their writings:

"...For the gods are jealous and guard their power from the recklessness of man. You, who grace Prometheus, the Titan, the fallen one, with your daily retribution, grant us your mercy and judgement. Revile the light-bringer who brought radiance to the living! Let his defiance

warn those who put themselves above the gods. Punish those who defy the will of Olympus and save us from our endless ambition. Soar, great bird, and from your lofty vantage watch the follies of the world. We live in awesome terror of your sublime wrath. Shackled to these cliffs, we reveal our greatest sins to your watchful gaze and await the ecstasy of your divine talons."

—*Excerpted from the Sermons of Pséftis, High Priest of the Aethonians*

Except....none of the above is true. The word Pséftis in Greek means liar or storyteller. I thought it would be fun to create my own religion around the sounds and melodies. Whether you tell that to the audience or not is up to you, for the premiere we never let them peek behind the curtain. Consider it a sort of highbrow practical joke, and know that I'll chuckle knowing people will Google "The Aethonians" in vain.

— *Fahad Siadat*

(a cry)Phillip Bernard

This piece represents the experience of trying to make sense of personal chaos and grief. The use of a constructed "text" (not based on any existing language in particular) and balanced structures reflect the mind's attempt to filter powerful and sometimes volatile emotions through cognitive and rational processes. However, the music also suggests that part of the healing process is simply being willing to spend time with ambiguity, messiness, pain, and confusion.

Cantus In Memorium Pauline Oliveros (1932 - 2016)Brent Baldwin

Pauline Oliveros was an American composer and a central figure in the development of experimental and post-war electronic art music. "Cantus" employs the late composer's philosophy of Deep Listening, namely an aesthetic based upon principles of improvisation, electric music, ritual, teaching and meditation.

Four NocturnesAlexander Johnson

Hardly a household name, Skipwith Cannéll's poetry first appears in Ezra Pound's 1914 anthology "Des Imagistes." Formed in 1912, the Imagists were a circle of poets, including H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Richard Aldington, James Joyce, and William Carlos Williams, of which the leader was the young Pound before being usurped by fellow poet Amy Lowell. During his tenure, Pound published the 1914 anthology in keeping with his "imagist" aesthetic, which Pound described as:

1. *Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.*
2. *To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.*
3. *As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.*

Pound's emphasis on vivid imagery, word economy, and natural "musical" phrases makes this style of poetry ripe for musical treatment. This setting of four of Cannéll's six Nocturnes is for six voice parts and takes a madrigalian approach to conveying his poetry by means of text painting, shifting mood, and of course, counterpoint. Various thematic images recur across these four nocturnes including birds, the sea, and the color gold. The first movement depicts naïve joy and adoring, "courtly" love, while the second movement is more subdued as fickle adoration becomes reverence as the speaker realizes he/she is under the beloved's spell. In the third movement, the music becomes more agitated as the speaker fights back against overwhelming emotion. In the fourth movement, the speaker succumbs and accepts the bittersweetness of unyielding love.

Eternal Place:Robbie LaBanca

The title for this piece comes from this amazing quote from Allen Ginsberg about his first interaction with his partner of 40 years, Peter Orvlosky.

"At that instant we looked into each other's eyes, there was a kind of celestial cold fire that crept over us and blazed up and illuminated the entire cafeteria and made it an eternal place."

I was drawn to write this work once I came across these magical letters between the poet Allen Ginsberg and his partner and fellow poet Peter Orvlosky. They first met in 1953 in San Francisco, and over time, became a couple that stayed together until Allen Ginsberg's death in 1997. What first struck me about these letters is that they were full of typos, misspelled words and virtually no punctuation, which I found odd seeing as they were written by two poets. It was clear that these were written in a mad rush of passion and emotion and were not meant to be publicly consumed. These private letters give us insight into their relationship as it was forming and also touch upon the political and social realities of their relationship being able to last in the 1960's. The Bill that is mentioned a couple of times in these letters is literary icon William S. Burroughs with whom Peter was friends and Allen only a uncomfortable acquaintance at the beginning of their correspondence. It was such an honor and joy to find the appropriate musical tone of each of these letters. The words here are, after all, actual words shared between two people who deeply loved each other. The music in the first movement is ethereal and light providing the setting for the tenor who sings the "role" of Allen Ginsberg to float above the piano. There are speech-like sections in which I removed the accompaniment completely to allow for a more musical theatre feel. The second movement is heavier and more grounded, just like Peter's text. I also wanted to give the sensation of the ship rocking as it approached New York. The harmonies shift from major to minor often as the subject matter that Peter is discussing becomes more pensive and then more hopeful. As the

text ends in a sunnier mood than the opening, I conclude with a light-hearted return of the opening tune with Peter whistling down the hall from writing his letter. The third movement harkens back to Allen's first piece with a reprisal of some of the musical themes. The music becomes more disjointed while he discusses the uncertainty of not only their relationship but the social and political climate of the time that might keep them apart. The final movement provided by Peter is the most complex in musical treatment. The shifting tonal centers help create an unstable feeling as Peter tries to navigate both his feelings for Allen and deal with the reality of the times. As he makes his way back to Allen and their shared love for each other, the opening theme of Peter's movement returns, providing a glimmer of hope to end the work.

Letters to FaithAdrienne Inglis (ASCAP)

Letters to Faith, an eight-voice a cappella choral work, sets to music two letters written by the composer's grandparents to their daughter, Faith Inglis, while she was a student at Pomona College. Faith's parents wrote these letters to comfort and encourage her after a poor showing on an exam, but unwittingly revealed amusing and poignant family characteristics.

The letters mention three well known songs of the day: The Sunshine of Your Smile, I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles, and The Good Ship Mary Ann. Elements of these songs are woven into the piece, allowing early twentieth century popular harmonies to blend with modern sounds, reaching back ninety years with a heartfelt genealogical family hug.

Family background:

- *Faith's passion and talent for music led her to a career as a voice teacher and choir director.*
- *Faith's mother, Ruth Penfield Inglis, had suffered from a brain tumor since her teenage years.*
- *Her brother, pioneering neurosurgeon Dr. Wilder Penfield, operated on her in 1928, extending her life until she died July 14, 1931, less than four years after these letters were written.*
- *Faith's father, John Percy Inglis, served in World War I as an army captain, and then had a career as a high school principal.*
- *Peg was Faith's gentle and soft-spoken sister.*
- *Lib, or Lizabeth, was Faith's ambitious and highly educated sister.*
- *Stuart, Faith's youngest brother, was the composer's father, not quite four years old at the time of these letters.*
- *Duke was the family dog.*

Vampire:Robbie LaBanca

This piece is based on text that I wrote several years ago. As a lover of the horror genre I have always had a fascination with the romantic creature known in modern culture as the vampire. I imagined in my mind the interaction between a mortal and an immortal creature. How would the mortal describe a romantic encounter with this creature that exists in the shadows, untouched by time? I used descriptive text to communicate the visceral details of this experience and make the listener create in their mind how the experience would have felt if they had experienced it. The encounter is intense and painful, but once it ends, the narrator feels empty and only has a mysterious melody to keep as a memory. I set the text for treble voices because I felt that the close harmonies I could accomplish with voices in the same register would lend itself well to the imagery. The piece is lush and smooth when the text demands it and sharp and angular when the text calls for that sound. Once the interaction is over, the voices break off into an aleatoric section in which each voice sings the phrase "Songs only bones can hear" fading away into nothingness just as the text suggests the vampire moves "into the velvet" void.

Here before the sunrise blueRobbie LaBanca

The text for the piece is from a poem by Janine Pommy-Vega, an American poet associated with the Beat movement. I came across her poetry in a collection published by the legendary San Francisco outfit City Lights. At my first reading of this poem, it spoke to me about lovers being apart and the yearning to be reunited. However, as I sat to work on the piece, something about the text kept nudging me to look deeper. Why does the narrator of the poem seem so confused? Why does she choose words like "solitude" instead of loneliness or "desolate" instead of dark? I decided to stop working on the piece and read more about Pommy-Vega. After high school she left her hometown to move to Manhattan and live with other poets. While living in New York, she met and fell in love with Peruvian painter Fernando Vega. In 1962 the couple moved to Paris where they lived a Bohemian lifestyle working on their art and cobbling together odd jobs to make ends meet. In 1965, her husband died suddenly of a drug overdose while away on the island of Ibiza. When I read about her husband's death everything made sense to me. This poem, written the same month he died, wasn't simply about wanting to be reunited with the one you love but rather having that desire and knowing it will never happen. The sober text mixed with bursts of optimism really speak to the sensation of losing someone you love and it completely changed my approach when setting the poetry to music. The piece is through-composed with no repeated text. It follows the flow of the poem as Pommy-Vega moves from one image to the next speaking directly to her lost love. There are moments where only one voice part sings an unaccompanied melody that forces its way out of the texture almost as if the yearning is too much to contain. The close harmonies and clustered chords also help to create the atmosphere that this poem or letter was written first thing in the morning when your brain is still foggy and you have to remind yourself that your love is, in fact, truly gone from you. The final chord of this piece does not resolve or follow harmonically the preceding line but rather emulates the opening of the piece in a way to create a musical representation of the unsettled nature of knowing that the narrator will continue to feel lost and in solitude.

A Wedding PrayerStephanie K. Andrews

“A Wedding Prayer” was composed in 2017 following my wedding in March of the same year. Originally, I had composed this piece as a vocal/piano solo arrangement for my wedding ceremony under the title “Apache Wedding Prayer.” As I created the choral arrangement, I decided that I wanted to incorporate text from Song of Songs Chapter 8 and revise the title accordingly. The Song of Songs text, “Set me as a seal upon your heart...for love is strong as death...Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it” speaks powerfully to the strength and enduring nature of divine and human love. The remainder of the text is, as the title “Apache Wedding Prayer” (or “Blessing”) suggests, taken from what is believed to be a Native American wedding blessing. It is my hope that the words and music of this piece will facilitate reflection on the nature of both human and divine love, and serve as a reminder of the very real need for such love to be shared with ourselves and all those within our sphere of connection.

AetherTrevor Shaw

There’s something intimidating about adapting the meticulously refined work of a friend. That’s especially true in this case, whereas Nooshin Ghanbari has previously received recognition for her outstanding poem, “Aether; letters to the elements and the men they used to be.” Each of the four elements acts as a stand-in for a man from the past and setting the text as four separate movements was more than obvious. Singing the title at the start and close of the movements was something I felt necessary to establish the mood apart from the textual body. I wanted to express how we recall general feelings associated with the past before we’re able to conjure up the specific details of of an event. Unapologetically, I’ve shared in the compositional style my love for a variety of musical languages; jazz, Impressionism, and even pop are probably the most apparent. “Earth” is the simplest, like a pop song, while the “Water” and “Air” texts conjured in my mind images painted by Monet and Renoir. There’s also undeniably a jazz-harmony undercurrent to all the first three settings. The vocalization of the final movement’s title, “Fire”, marks my first foray into serialism. When the idea returns at the end, the tone row is traded for a (nearly) random sequential arrangement of the C minor scale. My aim is to suggest that perhaps there is still more to say about this “fiery” person, who draws fonder recollections with each subsequent phrase, than was offered aloud.

Program Texts

Four Nocturnes:

- i. Thy feet,
That are like little, silver birds,
Thou has set upon pleasant ways;
Therefore I will follow thee,
Thou Dove of the Golden Eyes,
Upon any path will I follow thee,
For the light of thy beauty,
Shines before me like a torch.

- ii. Thy feet are white
Upon the foam of the sea;
Hold me fast, thou bright Swan,
Lest I stumble,
And into deep waters.

- iii. With the net of thy hair
Thou has fished in the sea,
And a strange fish
Hast though caught in thy net;
For thy hair,
Belovéd,
Holdeth my heart
Within its web of gold.

- iv. I am weary with love, and thy lips
Are night-born poppies [sic].
Give me therefore thy lips
That I may know sleep.

—*from Skipwith Cannell's Six Nocturnes*

Eternal Place

I. O Heart, O Love

Paris, France
January 20, 1958

Dear Petey:

O Heart O Love everything is suddenly turned to gold! Don't be afraid don't worry the most astounding beautiful thing has happened here! When Bill came I, we, thought it was the same old Bill man, but something has happened to Bill in the meantime since we last saw him...but last night finally Bill & I sat down facing each other across the kitchen table and looked eye to eye and talked, I confessed all of my doubt and misery - and in front of my eyes he turned into an Angel! I woke this morning with a great bliss of freedom & joy in my heart, Bill's saved, I'm saved, you're saved, we're all saved, everything has been rapturous ever since - I only feel sad that perhaps you left as worried when we waved goodbye and kissed so awkwardly - I wish I could have that over to say goodbye to you happier & without the worries & doubts I had that dusty dusk when you left. Bill's changed in nature, I even feel much changed, great clouds rolled away, as I feel when you and I were in rapport, well our rapport has remained in me, with me, rather than losing it, I'm feeling to everyone, something of the same as between us. And you? Dear Pete? Are you OK? Write me a happy letter, don't be sad, I love you, nothing can change lover, beautiful love, once we have it....

II. On the ship, close to home

On board ship returning to New York
January 22, 1958

Dear Allen:

On the ship, close to home, at night, full turkey stomach ache, sadness on my face but finally read through the brothers Karamazov & see the same madness in my family. Have been sick half the time from waves but eating marvelously, haven't smoked much at all. I know I goofed with Bill being so silent as if crying inside my throat. Yes, I guess I am meek, like you say. But at the end of eternity there's nothing to be embarrassed about....Love Bill like I love you, be a chair for him to sit and talk proudly from. On the first day out I saw land in the sky and thought it was real. It was only till I left you and Bill to get on the train did I feel lonely sadness pains and crying inside my throat but now I feel better. Though, when I left you, I felt our friendship was like sunset dust floating and separating away. Someone wants the typewriter so must move on off, I feel very good and consistent that things will work out well...

III. Sure miss you

London
February 24, 1958

Dear Peter:

Sure miss you, as if a golden soul of me were still there, to think on, floating six feet above ground across the Atlantic - keep thinking of Shakespeare's sonnet 'But when I think on

thee dear friend/ All losses are restor'd and sorrows end! I'm making it all right here but I miss you, your arms & nakedness & holding each other - life seems emptier without you, the soulwarmth isn't around, only lots of energy. I feel alone without you, I already daydream how sweet we'll be in Summer, it seems a short time off. Bill thinks new generation will be hip & will slowly change things - laws & attitudes, he has hope there - for some redemption of America, finding its soul. But we are so run by competition and deception, there is no possibility of mean being true - you have to love all life, not just parts, to make the eternal scene. I miss you like a home. Shine back honey & think of me. Goodbye Mr. February, as tender as ever, swept with the warm rain - love from your Allen.

IV. I sail your heart

New York
June 23, 1960

Dear Allen with dark Indian Death Eyes:

I also thought, Yesterday, that you feel I do harm to myself if we separated and you get married, or I get mad at you & so I think whatever we do (both get married or just you) - or be happy to each other at important times - Allen I love you, Please Allen, give me a sappy kiss. Write me more if you want I sail your heart - Love Peter

Letters to Faith:

Original letters from which the text was excerpted:

Dearest Faith:
Wed, Nov. 2, 1927

Cheerio. Most everybody has mountains to climb or dark corners to scout out. Keep a stiff upper lip and don't be frightened but accept the challenge. You know of the song "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles"—I sometimes sing it "I'm forever climbing mountains." But do this, send me a schedule of your day showing each day and from the time you get up till you go to bed. Class and study time, piano playing time, etc. What we are most anxious about is of course your music and we want to group things around that. Bring your schedule with you Saturday. Of course you had a snap course last semester here. How I do try to keep 12A's from taking snap courses. But Bravo, fling into the battle and let's _____.

We all love and & will help.
All send love to you and Elizabeth
Lovingly,
Dad

Dear Little Baby-Girl: Nov 3

Don't you dare feel discouraged! Those tests I suppose are necessary in this painfully efficient age. They help to classify in a way, but they make many mistakes, and never tell it all. Shucks, who cares about brilliance as compare with "the sunshine of your smile". I know I couldn't pass one of those tests either, but I am happy and I know my family loves me and couldn't get along without me! So why worry? Anyway, it doesn't signify that you are not intelligent, Dad says. Of course Lizabeth would probably pass such a test with flying colors, due to extensive reading more or less... but then no one ever told her that she had "musicianship", and she would love to have it. You are just different. Peg, our "comfort" would not rank high either way, but she has still other abilities and what a treasure she is. There are many things which cannot be card indexed which are the most valuable in the long run. Discouragement will do more harm than almost anything; so don't entertain it, dear. Come right back to the top of the wave where you belong—and just refuse to accept the verdict which that paper seemed to give. If you are carrying too much we must shave off the least important, but that will not be music for that is the MAIN ISSUE with you, and everything else must contribute to that, be subservient to that (Don't tell Lib, but I had to look in the dictionary before I dared to use that word. I thought it was a good one but wasn't just sure it was correct.) While gone, Stuart, always a help, wrote a message on your envelope, to tell you he loves you. I must go and bake cookies and do the rest of the morning work. It is so wonderful in the sunshine here on the porch. I hate to leave it but "duty" calls. Sunday, Dad and I stayed at the Penfield's a little longer, then we went to the "Good Ship Mary Ann" for half a broiled lobster, then we drove downtown in L. A., to see the lights, the windows and the people. It's always fun. I had not been down for so long, and dad seldom gets into that attractive part of town—his trips taking him to the warehouse & board of education rooms.

Loving you always—little Joy! And thankful for you just as you are.

Mother

When Duke yawns, Stuart says, "He whistled!"

Vampire

You are warm to me - thick and tepid.
And moving inside my skin - You scratch upon the insides of my sinewy muscles -
That writhe in sweet agony beneath your steely talons - piercing my paper skin
Drops of sunlight streaming down my wrists
Vampire marks screaming against my pale flesh
[Secret]
Empty me and move forward - away into the velvet void
Whispering as you leave me - songs only bones can hear

—From "Songs of Blood and Bones," Robbie LaBanca

Here Before the Sunrise Blue

Here before the sunrise blue & in the solitude
To you: come home. The moon is full over morning buildings,
The shade of solitude is upon my hand:
Come home. In this empty loft of high windows the shades are lifting, and people are
arrived;
To you: in the early silence between us that IS, folded deep into night & and the black well
of Sources
In-here is gone forth to meet in-there & we ARE bound below a sound or gesture;
Beneath distance, before time, at the foot of the silent forest, meet me here, I love you.
A fire is crackling, I have risen early before the dawn - love and how long I have need of
you all I feel;
Don't know where you are or what's happening, yet surely the morning stars will shed
their light in desolate places, and this just from me first thing in the morning, love.

—*Janine Pommy-Vega*

A Wedding Prayer

Now you will feel no rain for each of you will be shelter to the other
Now you will feel no cold for each of you will be warmth to the other
Now there will be no loneliness for each of you will be companion to the other
Now you are two bodies but there is only one life before you
Go now to your dwelling place to enter into the days of togetherness
And say your days be good and long upon the earth

Set me as a seal upon your heart
For love is strong as death
Many waters cannot quench love
Neither can floods drown it

—*text from traditional Apache Wedding Prayer and Chapter 8 of Song of Solomon*

Aether

Earth: I have a habit of destroying everything I love, and you were no exception. It is worse
that you still believe yourself to be a burden—for Atlas, for me. I wish I could show you
that I would be lost without you: no dirt beneath my nails, no sand to warm my feet, no
ground to walk on, no chance at Heaven. You are my reason for living.

Water: It was easy for you to drown, you said, but it was easier for me to drown in you. Our love was a storm, a glorious and prolonged fall: into sweet summer rain, into the padding of pink lilies, into the torrent of a hurricane. You were not enough to keep me afloat.

Air: I never meant to clip your wings. I just hoped I could hold you in my palms, even for a second. How are you now, up there in the clouds? Have you learned yet that there is nothing wrong with being grounded? Have you learned yet that there is nothing wrong with being grounded in me?

Fire: Do you ever stop moving? There is sunshine in your hair, winking beams of red orange yellow brilliant light beneath your skin. I envy your energy, your undying heat—but I can't tell if you wish to consume or be consumed. When you touch me, I burn. And baby, that will never be a bad thing.

—*From Aether; letters to the elements and the men they used to be, by Nooshin Ghanbari*

Inversion Ensemble

Sublime Nonsense, June 3, 2017

Soprano

Mary Elizabeth Ashton
Claudia Carroll
Jennifer Inglis Hudson
Jessica Nicholson
Courtney Pierce
Leslie Pollock
Lisa Solomon
Jennifer Wang

Alto

Stephanie K Andrews
Cayla Cardiff
Alissa Floyd
Nooshin Ghanbari
Julianne Graper
Adrienne Inglis
Sean H. Lee
Katie Lewis

Tenor

Cristian Cantu
Aaron Coronado
Ben Hummel
Robbie LaBanca
Phil Pollock
Eli Salazar
Trevor Shaw
Chris Truong

Bass

Phillip Bernard
Evan Cooper
Alex Johnson
Eric Johnson
Morgan Kramer
Doug Rensi
Daniel Robertson
Duane Roth
Steven Sifner