

CONFRONTATION

FROM THE BOOK OF JOB

for chorus and orchestra

Text selected from
the Book of Job

Music by
William Bergsma

I

Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.
Behold, I cry out of wrong, but am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.

He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

He hath destroyed me on every side; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

He hath broken me asunder; he hath taken me by my neck and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

His archers compass me around about; he cleaveth my reins asunder; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

Terrors are turned upon me: my face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death.

I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up and thou regardest me not.

Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

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Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down; he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not.

There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and the tender branch thereof will not cease.

But man dieth, and wasteth away; as the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not wake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

Oh, that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!

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As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

If my step hath turned out of the way, if any blot cleaved to mine hands;

Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

If mine heart hath been deceived by a woman, if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door.

Then let my wife grind to another, and let others bow down upon her.

If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail,

If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,
Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

Oh, that one would hear me! Call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak and answer thou me.

Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand.
How many are my sins? make me to know my sin.

II

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

Who is it that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Who laid the measures? who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? who laid the cornerstone thereof?

When all the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Hast thou commanded the morning? and caused the day?

Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth¹ in his season? canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with a thunder?
canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?

The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He sayeth among the trumpets, Ha, Ha; he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and answer thou unto me.

Wilt thou disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

Hast thou an arm like God? canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

Deck thyself now with majesty and excellence; cast abroad the rage of thy wrath;
and behold everyone that is proud, and abase him.

Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Then will I confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Behold now behemoth², which I made with thee; he moveth his tail like a cedar.

His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

Canst thou draw out leviathan³ with a hook? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

Will he make supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? wilt thou play with him as with a bird?

None is so fierce that dare stir him up; who then is able to stand before me?

Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? everything that is under the whole heaven is mine.

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Then Job answered the Lord, and said:

I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee:

Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.

¹ the Zodiac

² the hippopotamus

³ the whale