



# *Poetry in White*

*An Antarctic Portrait in Three  
Miniatures*

**Alexa Letourneau**

for flute and string quartet

Full Score

# Poetry in White

## An Antarctic Portrait in Three Miniatures

Flute and String Quartet

7'30"  
January 2020

*Poetry in White* began not with the intent to become a finished piece. Rather, while visiting Antarctica in December 2019, I needed an outlet to express the overwhelming beauty I saw around me, and composing short sketches provided me with emotional relief. As time went on, however, my understanding of the vast icy landscape deepened, and thus the sketches gained complexity as well. By the time our ship sailed back above the 60° south latitude line, I had a fully fledged draft completed, and an entrenched desire to draw on the Antarctic landscape and wildlife as musical inspiration. Thus *Poetry in White* was born.

The first movement, titled “Deception” after Deception Island, depicts the frigid conditions and heavy fog that greeted us there. Jagged cliffs jutted out from glaciers, with chunks of rock and ice occasionally breaking off with tremendous, otherworldly moans. As I watched the glaciers calving, two small icebergs broke off nearly simultaneously, and the resulting sounds as they hit the ocean created a tritone. Thus, this is the interval around which movement one is based.

Admiralty Bay lends its name to the second movement, “Admiralty.” The short, rather harmonically simple nature of this movement is mirrored by the scale of the passages through which one must sail to enter the bay. Admiralty Bay is also home to multiple research stations, where scientists work throughout months of darkness with very little contact with their friends and families. This isolation served as inspiration for the mournful, slow moving melodic fragments of this movement.

The third and final movement is called “Elephant” after Elephant Island. For me, Elephant Island was by far the most mysterious, truly awesome destinations we visited. Low clouds obscured the mountain peaks as we approached, and, rounding the other side of the island, we encountered an iceberg four miles long. The clinking and cracking of sea ice, represented in “Elephant” with ricochet col legno in the strings, was the only sound, as all onlookers were driven to silence by pure awe.

Alexa Letourneau



17

Fl. *ff* *flz.*

Vln. 1 *ff* *gliss.*

Vln. 2 *ff* *gliss.*

Vla. *ff* *gliss.*

Vc. *ff* *gliss.*

**With Hushed Confidence**

19  $\text{♩} = 120$

Fl. *sfz*

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *pizz.* *p sempre*

Vla. *p* 3

Vc. *pizz.* *p sempre*

22

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*f*

*f*

25

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

3

28

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*mp* pizz.

*p*

*pizz.*

*p*

3

flz.

*pp*

31

Fl.

*mf* *sfz*

6

Vln. 1

*mf*

Vln. 2

*mf*

Vla.

*mf*

Vc.

*mf*

34

Fl.

*f*

Vln. 1

*f*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

36

Fl.

arco

*f*

gliss.

arco

*f*

gliss.

arco

*f*

gliss.

Vc.

*f*

38

Fl. *mp*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

pizz.

*mp* pizz.

40

Fl.

Vln. 1 arco *f* gliss.

Vln. 2 arco *f* gliss.

Vla. *f* gliss.

Vc. *f*

42

Fl.

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2

Vla. arco *p* *f*

Vc. arco *p* *f*



44

Fl. *mf*

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

46

Fl. *pp*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2 *pp*

Vla.

Vc. *gliss.*

49 10"

Fl. *f*

Vln. 1 *f* pizz.

Vln. 2 *f* pizz.

Vla. *f* pizz.

Vc. *f*

**Resigned**  
♩ = 60

50

Fl. *p*

Vln. 1 *p* arco

Vln. 2 *p* arco

Vla. *mp* arco

Vc. *mp*

55

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*

58

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*attacca*

## II. Admiralty

**Deliberately**

$\text{♩} = 36$

Flute *p espressivo*

Violin 1 *p espressivo*

Violin 2 *p espressivo*

Viola *p espressivo*

Violoncello *p espressivo*

7

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for the first system of 'II. Admiralty'. It features five staves: Flute, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Deliberately' with a quarter note equal to 36 beats. The dynamic is 'p espressivo'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4. The Flute part begins with a melodic line, while the strings provide harmonic support. A measure number '7' is indicated at the start of the second system.

12

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

*pp*

pizz.

*ppp*

pizz.

*ppp*

pizz.

*ppp*

pizz.

*ppp*

### III. Elephant

Mysteriously  
♩ = 60

Flute

*f* 7

\*start note non vibrato, then gradually increase speed to very fast vibrato

*ff* 9

Violin 1

pizz.

*f*

*ff*

Violin 2

pizz.

*f*

*ff*

Viola

pizz.

*f*

*ff*

Violoncello

pizz.

*f*

*ff*

4

Fl. *fff* *ll* *p*

Vln. 1 *fff*

Vln. 2 *fff*

Vla. *fff*

Vc. *fff*

6

Fl.

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

9

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

11

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

13

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

### Quasi Cadenza

♩ = 54

14

Fl.

*p*

ricochet, col legno  
repeat freely without synchronizing with other strings

Vln. 1

ricochet, col legno  
repeat freely without synchronizing with other strings

Vln. 2

ricochet, col legno  
repeat freely without synchronizing with other strings

Vla.

ricochet, col legno  
repeat freely without synchronizing with other strings

Vc.



16

Fl. *f*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

18

Fl. *p* *f sub.* *p sub.*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

20

Fl. *f* *ff*


Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

22 *ritardando poco a poco*

Fl. 

Vln. 1 

Vln. 2 

Vla. 

Vc. 

24

Fl. 

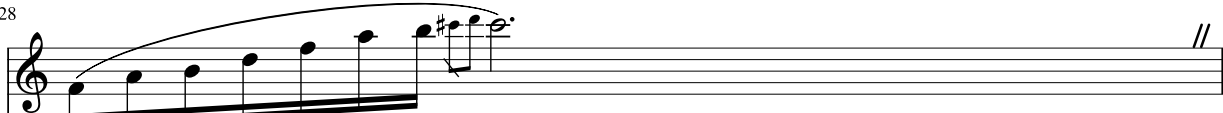
Vln. 1 


Vln. 2 

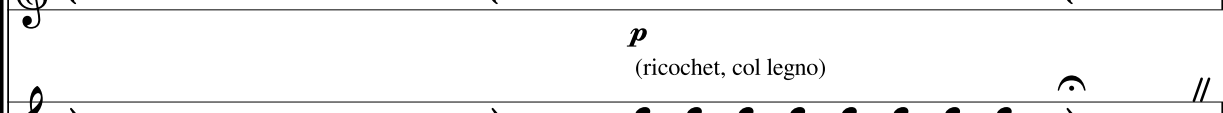
Vla. 


Vc. 

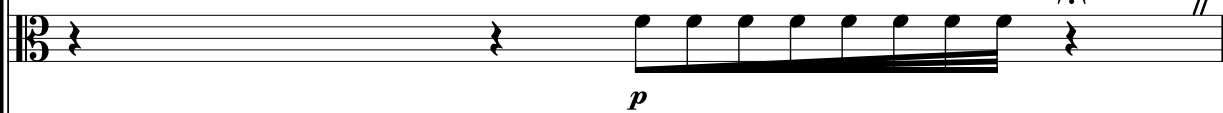
28

Fl. 

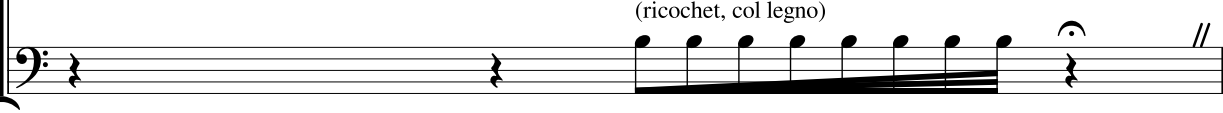
Vln. 1 

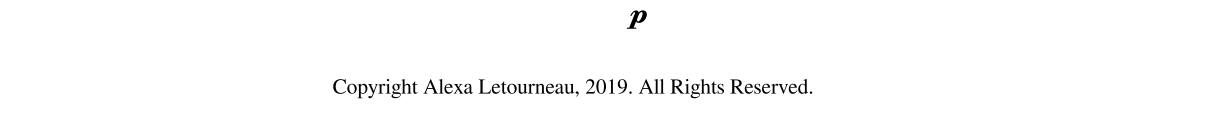
Vln. 2 


Vla. 

Vc. 

*(ricochet, col legno)*

*p* 

*p* 

*p* 

*p* 

29

Fl. *p* 9

Vln. 1 *pp*

Vln. 2 *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

30

Fl. *pp* 11

Vln. 1 *ppp*

Vln. 2 *ppp*

Vla. *ppp*

Vc. *ppp*