

In the Shape of a Home

For Vocal Sextet

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2025

In the Shape of a Home (2025)

Written In Memory of my Grandfather, Edward Simon Anisko

Instrumentation:

Soprano
Mezzo-Soprano
Counter-Tenor
Tenor
Baritone
Bass

Program Note:

We did not know it, but my grandfather was lying on his deathbed. He lived a life of wonder at mankind's creations, a life of hope for the future. We talked about music like we always had. I write this piece based around my thoughts from this time. In the hope that others may be as inspired as he was despite the pain of death, that the world we live in is capable of such beauty and love. Below is the poem he wished to be read at his funeral.

Kahlil Gibran "On Children"

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that
His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Notation Guide:

X Notehead - Speech or Dramatic Reading, based on text instructions, at a comfortable pitch for speech, In general, repeated text from other singers should be less upfront than the vocalist reciting text.

HEJI Accidentals - <https://plainsound.org/> is a great resource for those interested in more details about the Extended Helmholtz-Ellis Just Intonation system. More details are below.

Tuning Information:

Every note within the piece is derived from the resonances of my grandfather's voice in the rooms he lived in. The process is examined in greater detail within the connected analysis paper.

With regards to the notation, HEJI is used up to the 19th prime as written, but with some content simplified from higher primes. When working with more complex primes as it occurs in The Mystery, the notation is simplified to 72edo with corresponding cent deviations from ET. Though it will return to HEJI when the scale simplifies enough.

The first room (**Artifacts**) is a set scale with no modulations, with a D $\flat$ root.

The second room (**Porch**) is a modulating scale, with additional roots added in after the room resonances to give variety. It mainly works with D 13o u19 and A $\flat$ u7 11o as roots. Primarily switching between the 5th, 7 and 11th, and 13th primes.

The final room (**Ashes**) is the simplest, with only four differing notes. It is simple enough to learn by rote without much tuning knowledge.

Performance Requirements:

Due to the complexity of the tuning, it may be helpful to have the accompanying backing track played back during the performance. But if the group has access to a MIDI keyboard and Pianoteq, proper notes could be played during performance to get the group back on track.

In the Shape of a Home

Ethan Isaac

Lament ♩ = 60
non vib.

pp

S. a place of be - gin - nings and end - ings be - gin - nings

M-S. *pp*
a place of be - gin - nings and end - ings

Ct. *pp*
a place of be - gin - nings and

T. *mp* non vib.
In a room

Bar. *pp*
a place of be - gin - nings and

B. *pp* *mf*
a place of be - gin - nings and end - ings be - gin - nings

3 *mf* *ppp*

S. and end - ings be - gin - nings and end - ings

M-S.

Ct. *f* *sub. pp*
end - ings be - gin - nings and end - ings be - gin - nings

T.

Bar. *pp*
be - gin - nings and be - gin - nings and be - gin - nings and be - gin - nings and

B. *pp*
and end - ings be - gin - nings and end - ings

Room of Artifacts

4

S. *p* *f* *p* *f*
rooms full

M-S. *pp* *f*
rooms full

Ct. *sub. mf* *f*
end - ings

T. *mp* *sub. f* *ff* *sub. p*
and end - ings in a room full of

Bar. *f*
end - ings

B. *f*
teeth closed (nasal) after the initial 16th

7

S. *mp* *f*
of bot - tles *mp* hand - made hand - made e - lec - tron - ics e - lec - tron -

M-S. *f*
of pho - to - graphs His clothes His clothes

Ct. *f*
pho - to - graphs of pho - to - graphs

T. *f*
ob - jects just things just things ob - jects

Bar. *pp* *mf*
ar - ti - facts

B. *mf*
sim - ple ob - jects ob -

10

S. *p*
- ics com - put - ers and C - Ds of bot - tles full full full

M-S. *f* *p* *cresc.*
Her fuzz - y robe on top of his clothes left be - hind just things left

Ct. *f* *p*
of old pho - to - graphs and tools and buck - ets of paint

T. *f* *p*
left be - hind left be - hind left be - hind left be - hind locked a - way

Bar. *pp* *mf* *mf*
ar - ti - facts and piles of and piles of pho - to - graphs ar - ti - facts

B. *f* *mf*
- jects and piles of tools on top of bot - tles left be - hind locked

13

S. *f* *pp* *mf* *f*
be - hind doors be - hind doors full of

M-S. *p* *f*
locked be - hind doors full full of

Ct. *mp* *f*
locked a - way be - hind doors of

T. *pp* *mf*
there are rooms full

Bar. *pp* *mf*
there are rooms full

B. *sub. pp* *mf*
be - hind ob - jects be - hind doors rooms full

15 *p* *f* *p* *mp* *p* *f*

S. pho - to - graphs pho - to - graphs _____ rooms

M-S. *p* *f* *p* pho - to - graphs his clothes His clothes _____

Ct. *p* *f* *f* *p* pho - to - graphs sim - ple ob - jects

T. *f* *sub. ff* *mf* *ff* of ar - ti - facts from long _____ a - go _____

Bar. *f* *sub. ff* *mf* *ff* ar - ti - facts from long _____ a - go _____

B. *f* *sub. ff* *mf* *ff* of ar - ti - facts from long _____ a - go _____

18 *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

S. full to be, giv' - - en

M-S. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* His things to _____ giv' - - en

Ct. *mp* *f* His things to be _____ giv - - en a - way

T. _____

Bar. _____

B. _____

20

S. *ff* *sub. ff* *fff* *sub. mp* *p* *sub. f*
 though free - ly free - ly love'd free - ly love'd as free free free as the

M-S. *sub. ff* *sub. ff* *fff* *sub. mp* *p* *sub. f*
 though free - ly free - ly love'd free - ly love'd as free free free as the

Ct. *sub. ff* *sub. ff* *fff* *sub. mp* *p* *sub. f*
 though free - ly free - ly love'd free - ly love'd as free free free as the

T. *ff* *sub. fff* *sub. ff* *fff* *sub. f* *ff* *sub. pp*
 8 though free - ly free - ly love'd free - ly love'd as free - ly giv - en giv - en

Bar. *ff* *sub. fff* *sub. ff* *fff* *sub. f* *ff* *sub. pp*
 though free - ly free - ly love'd free - ly love'd as free - ly giv - en giv - en

B. *ff* *sub. fff* *sub. ff* *fff* *sub. f* *ff* *sub. pp*
 though free - ly free - ly free - ly as free - ly giv - en giv - en

23

S. ash - es ash - es the smoke from your burn - ing ash - shh...

M-S. ash - es ash - es the smoke from your burn - ing ash - shh...

Ct. ash - es ash - es the smoke from your burn - ing ash - shh...

T. *mp*
 8 giv - en giv - en a - way but,

Bar. *mp*
 giv - en giv - en a - way

B. *mp*
 giv - en giv - en a - way

26 *pp*

S. ah we chant ah

M-S. ah chant ah chant - ed ah

Ct. ah left ah

rhythms are approx. perform as speech

T. there is simp - ly too much left be - hind *pp* for an - y one of us to take ne - ver - the - less the pro - cess of

Bar. to take a - way

B. to take a - way

The Mystery

29 *f* *ppp* *sub. p* -15.6c non vib.

S. chant ah when we chant - ed as you burn'd a - way [ɪə] [ɪ]

M-S. when we chant - ed as you burn'd a - way [aʊ] [w'ɜ]

Ct. chant ah when we chant - ed as you burn'd a - way [ɪ] [ɪə]

T. re - move - al be - gins just as it had when we chant - ed as you burn'd a - way [gɪə] [n'əʊ]

Bar. to take as you burn'd a - way [t'əʊ] [aʊ]

B. to take as you burn'd a - way [aʊ] [eɪ]

f *ppp* *sub. p* +43.1c (F) non vib.

f *ppp* *sub. p* 17.5c -22.8c non vib.

f *ppp* *sub. p* -23.8c non vib.

f *ppp* *sub. p* -19.6c +47.4c non vib.

33

S. $-4.5c$ $+29.3c$ $0c$ $+29.3c$ $-11.7c$ $+19.4c$ $+29.3c$ $-11.7c$

M-S. $+43.1c$ $-13.6c$ $-13.6c$ $-13.6c$ $17.5c$ $+47.4c$ $-13.6c$ $17.5c$

Ct. $-13.7c$ $+11.7c$ $-19.6c$ $+11.7c$ $+43.1c$ $+47.7c$ $+11.7c$ $+43.1c$

T. $-4.5c$ $-13.6c$ (A) $-19.6c$ $-4.5c$ $+49.7c$ $-15.6c$ $-4.5c$

Bar. $-15.6c$ $+17.5c$ $-19.6c$ $-19.6c$ $17.5c$ $17.5c$ $-19.6c$ $17.5c$

B. $+11.7c$ $+45c$ $0c$ $+45c$ $+47.7c$ $+47.4c$ $+45c$ $+47.7c$

[f'ɔ] [t'eə] [w'ɜ] [gɪæ] [aə] [n'əʊ] [d/ə] [ɪə]

[ɪ] [ɪə] [aə] [d/ə] [t'ə] [n'əʊ] [ɪ] [t'ə]

[aə] [d/ə] [t'ə] [w'ɜ] [ɪ] [t'ə] [f'ɔ] [t'eə]

[ɪə] [w'ɜ] [aə] [f'ɔ] [ɪə] [n'əʊ] [w'ɜ] [gɪæ]

[t'ə] [f'ɔ] [ɪ] [gɪæ] [w'ɜ] [n'əʊ] [t'eə] [aə]

[ɪə] [gɪæ] [t'eə] [t'ə] [d/ə] [aə] [w'ɜ] [f'ɔ]

41

S. $+19.4c$ $+29.3c$ **Sitting on the Porch, next to Him** $\text{♩} = 100$ *pp*

M-S. $+47.4c$ $-13.6c$ (A)

Ct. $+47.7c$ $-19.6c$ *p*

T. $+49.7c$ $+11.7c$ *pp*

Bar. $+47.7c$ $-19.6c$ *pp*

B. $+47.7c$ $-19.6c$

[ɪə] [ɪ] the nights

[f'ɔ] [eɪ]

[gɪæ] [t'eə] There were so many nights

[aə] [w'ɜ] the

[w'ɜ] [ɪə] There were nights you

[n'əʊ] [ɪ]

50

S. *pp* like an - gels they were

M-S. *pp* non vib. *p* pe - pole like an - gels like an - like an - like an - like an - gels strange

Ct. *f* non vib. you spoke of pe - pole like they were an - - - gels these

T. *p* non vib. night an - - gels

Bar. *p* non vib. spoke like they were an - -

B. *ppp* non vib. spoke of an - - gels

54

S. like an - gels an - gels of strange kind folks of mys - tic of mys - tic

M-S. kind folks of strange kind folks beau - - ti - ful kind *mf*

Ct. strange, beau - - ti - ful kind folks of mys - tic

T. of mys - tic of

Bar. *sub. pp* *f* - gels beau - ti - ful kind folks beau - ti - ful

B. *ppp* *mp* *sub. pp* mm ah folks kind

58

S. _____ hap - pen stance of stars _____ of stars _____ of stars of

M-S. _____ of _____ stars _____ of stars of _____ stars _____ of

Ct. hap - pen - stance of stars _____

T. mys - - - tic of _____ stars _____ stars _____

Bar. folks of stars stars

B. folks of _____ stars of

mp *sub. pp* *sub. mp* *sub. pp* *3:7*

61

S. stars and plan - ets im - poss - - - i _____

M-S. stars and plan - ets stars and plan - ets of _____ stars im - poss - i - - im - poss - i - im - poss - i im

Ct. and plan - ets _____ with im - poss - i - ble im - poss

T. stars stars _____ stars _____ of im - - - poss - i _____

Bar. of plan - - - ets of plan - - - ets

B. plan - - - - - ets stars im - - - - - poss - i _____

mf-p *mf-p* *3:7* *3:7*

Slightly Relax Tempo ♩ = c. 92

[65]

S. *mf* won - der ah *p*

M-S. *mf* ah it seem so *p*

Ct. *f* i - ble won - der you made it seem *sub. mf*

T. *mf* ah so *f* *p*

Bar. *mf* won - der im - - poss - - i *f* *p* 3:7

B. *f* won - - - der oh you made

70

S. with - stand with - - stand with - stand

M-S. ea - sy so ea - sy to to with - stand with stand the

Ct. so eas - - - y to with - - - stand the

T. *f* ea - - sy ea - - - sy with - -

Bar. *p* ble won - - - - der so ea - 3:7

B. it seem so

73

S.

 M-S.

 Ct.

 T.

 Bar.

 B.

76

S.

 M-S.

 Ct.

 T.

 Bar.

 B.

80

S. _____ just like just _____ like you a - wake _____ a - wake a - wake

M-S. _____

Ct. _____ a - wake in the small ho - - urs _____

T. just like _____ you _____ just _____ like you_ a -

Bar. you a - - - - wake in the

B. _____ like _____ you in

83

S. _____ in the small _____ ho - urs ho - urs _____ of the night _____ of night of night

M-S. ah _____

Ct. _____ of the night *mp*

T. - - - wake_ in the small _____ ho - - urs of_ night

Bar. small ho - - urs of the night

B. the _____ small ho - - - - ours of _____ the _____

87

S. — of night of — night of night of — night of night — of — night of —

M-S. ah

mf nasal

Ct. like — your truck driv - ing it gave

T. —

Bar. 3:7 like truck driv - - - ing it gave

B. — night like — your — truck driv - - -

90

S. — night us space to — think to — think to think

M-S. ah

Ct. us — space to think —

T. us — space to — think — to

Bar. 3:7 space ah

B. - ing space — to think — to —

93

S. _____ to pond - er to _____ think to pond - - er the deep to _____

M-S. _____ ah _____

Ct. _____ to pond - - - er the deep - er

T. think to _____ pond - - - er _____ to think to _____

Bar. _____ ah _____

B. _____ think to pon - - - der _____

[95]

S. _____ pond - er the deep - er the quest - ions the quest - ions the quest -

M-S. _____ ah _____ ah _____

Ct. _____ quest - - - ions _____

T. _____ pond - - er the deep deep - - er quest -

Bar. _____ ah _____

B. to _____ pond - - er deep - - er quest - ions

99

S. - ions mid - night mid - night mid - night was yours was yours mid - night

M-S. but

Ct. 8 mid - night was your com - pan - ion

T. 8 - ions the deep mid - night mid - night

Bar. 3:7 ah

B. mid - night mid - night was yours

102

S. was yours was your com - pan - ion was your com - pan - ion can

M-S. how but how can I can I but how can I call her mine call her mine call

Ct. 8 (8) but how can I call her mine

T. 8 yours mid - night mid - night was yours

Bar. 3:7 ah

B. mid - night was yours can I

106

S. I call her mine mid - night mid - night was yours was

M-S. her mine ah ah

Ct. (8) mid - night was your com -

T. yours mid - - night was mid - - night

Bar. 3:7 ah 3:7

B. can I call her can

109

S. yours mid - night mid - night was yours now can I can call her mine

M-S. now can I call her call her

Ct. (8) - pan - ion now I can call her mine

T. was mid night now can I

Bar. 3:7 3:7

B. I can I now I can

The Mystery Pt. II ♩ = 60

113

sub. p *f*

S. [I] [I] [gɹæ] [t'eə] [t'ɔ] [d/ɔə]

sub. p *f*

M-S. [I] [I] [gɹæ] [t'eə] [t'ɔ]

f

Ct. [I] [I] [gɹæ] [t'eə] [t'ɔ]

mp *f*

T. [I] [I] [gɹæ] [t'eə] [t'ɔ]

sub. p *f*

Bar. [I] [I] [gɹæ] [t'eə] [t'ɔ]

sub. p *f*

B. [I] [I] [gɹæ] [t'eə] [t'ɔ] [d/ɔə]

118

S. [f'ɔ] [eɪ] [ɪə] [n'əʊ]

M-S. [d/ɔə] [f'ɔ] [eɪ] [ɪə]

Ct. [d/ɔə] [f'ɔ] [eɪ] [ɪə]

T. [d/ɔə] [f'ɔ] [eɪ] [ɪə]

Bar. [d/ɔə] [f'ɔ] [eɪ] [ɪə]

B. [f'ɔ] [eɪ] [ɪə] [w'ɜ]

Ponderous ♩ = 60
p 3

122

S. [w'ɜ] at last
non vib.

M-S. [n'əʊ] [w'ɜ] Dramatic Reading, Not speech like
f possible

Ct. [w'ɜ] [w'ɜ] At last your_watch
non vib.

T. [w'ɜ] [w'ɜ] *fp*
non vib.

Bar. [n'əʊ] [w'ɜ] at
fp non vib.

B. [w'ɜ] last

rit. ♩ = 42

128

S. at last your watch has end - ed your words live on
pp *f*

M-S. at last oh at last

Ct. has end - ed the yoke of suff - er - ing the mat - er - i - al that bound you here to us Your words live on
mf

T. has end - ed live

Bar. the watch ah mm
f *p* *f*

B. watch has end - ed oh ah mm
f *p* *f*

133

S. through me the bind - ing oh

M-S. on through me

Ct. through me in a haunt - ing - ly beau - ti - ful way the bind - ing es - sence of life

T. on through me

Bar. on through me

B. on through me

137

S. you spoke ah oo ah oo ah oo ah oo

M-S. you spoke with strength as death

Ct. you spoke with an un - be - lieve - a - ble strength as death loomed ov -

T. ah

Bar. you spoke mm ah ah

B. you spoke mm ah ah

139 *sim.* *mf* *pp*

S. *sim.* *mf* *pp*

M-S.

Ct. *loomed*
- er you love flowed through what eff - ort re - mained in your bones

T. *mf* *pp*
love flowed through what eff - - ort re - mained

Bar. *mf* *pp*
love flowed through what eff - - ort re - mained

B. *mf* *pp*
love flowed through what eff - - ort re - mained

accel. rit. a tempo

141 *hollow, wispy*

S. *hollow, wispy*
love flowed through what eff - ort re - mained in your bones re - mained in you stayed with you

M-S. *ord.*
love flowed through what eff - ort re - mained in your bones re - mained in you stayed with you

Ct. *ord.*
love flowed through you per - haps most of all you lived [I]

T. *ord.*
through your bones stayed [I]

Bar. *ord.*
lived you lived

B. *ord.*
you lived [I]

The Mystery: Revealed ♩ = 52

144

f non vib. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

S. [I] with [gɹæ] [t'eə] gra - ti - ude

f non vib. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

M-S. [I] with [gɹæ] [t'eə] gra - ti - ude

f non vib. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

Ct. [I] with [gɹæ] [t'eə] gra - ti - ude

f non vib. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

T. [I] with [gɹæ] [t'eə] gra - ti - ude

f non vib. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

Bar. with [gɹæ] [t'eə] gra - ti - ude

f non vib. *mp* *f* *p* *f*

B. [I] with [gɹæ] [t'eə] gra - ti - ude

149

mp *ff* *sub. p* *mf* *f*

S. with gra - ti - ude [f'ɔ] for [eɪ] ev - ry

mp *ff* *sub. p* *mf* *f*

M-S. with gra - ti - ude [f'ɔ] for [eɪ] ev - ry

mp *ff* *sub. p* *mf* *f*

Ct. with gra - ti - ude [f'ɔ] for [eɪ] ev - ry

mp *ff* *sub. p* *mf* *f*

T. with gra - ti - ude [f'ɔ] for [eɪ] ev - ry

mp non vib. *ff* *sub. p* *mf* *f*

Bar. with gra - ti - ude [f'ɔ] for [eɪ] ev - ry

mp *ff* *sub. p* *mf* *f*

B. with gra - ti - ude [f'ɔ] for [eɪ] ev - ry

153

S. *sub. p* *ff* *f* *p* *mf* *ff*
 ev - ry word ev - ry [n'əð] note

M-S. *sub. p* *ff* *f* *p* *mf* *ff*
 ev - ry word ev - ry [n'əð] note

Ct. *sub. p* *ff* *f* *p* *mf* *ff*
 ev - ry word ev - ry [n'əð] note

T. *sub. p* *ff* *f* *p* *mf* *ff*
 ev - ry word ev - ry [n'əð] note

Bar. *sub. p* *ff* *f* *p* *mf* *ff*
 ev - ry word ev - ry [n'əð] note

B. *sub. p* *ff* *f* *p* *mf* *ff* *gliss.*
 ev - ry word ev - ry [n'əð] note