

An Alchemy in the Bones  
SATB, flute, bass drum, harp, piano.

Timothy C. Takach

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# Timothy C. Takach

## An Alchemy in the Bones

for SATB choir, flute, percussion, harp, piano

This work was commissioned by the Rhodes College Endowment, made possible by a bequest from John Murry Springfield '51 that funds the annual Springfield Music Lectures.



## Text:

The first element is fire.  
The second, seed.  
The third, blood.  
The fourth, danger.  
The fifth, desire.

My bones have grown mouths,  
have grown paths,  
have grown rivers  
of lead transformed,

and I am coursed through  
with a better, killing blood,  
and my bones are singing  
their songs of lives lived in flames.

Teach me to wear fire.  
Teach me to transmute  
every stinging cell until  
I am covered in flowers.

- *William Reichard*  
- *Used with permission*

## From the composer:

There's a pretty easy trap to fall into as a composer, and it finds us writing a lot of slow pretty music. The reasons are many, and valid: choirs sound great singing slow and beautiful (as long as their vowels match!), one musical idea can stretch pretty far, conductors seem to be drawn to it, and also, in a 4-5 minute piece, it's a lot less notes to write!

I've been on a personal quest to try to avoid that trap, and find the chances to write faster, energetic, rhythmically driven music, and this is step along that journey. When you read the poem by William Reichard (you have, haven't you? Take a minute to do it, then come back), there's a lot of energy in his word choice. The close proximity of consonants, the images present and his main ideas all beg for forward momentum. Also, transmutation and alchemy are processes which turn one material into something else. Bill has written a poem about survival, about something ordinary being turned into something extraordinary. This takes energy.

At first glance the instrumentation has a softer feel to it, because of our bias about what these instruments usually play. And so in this piece I tried to take the ordinary and turn it into something extraordinary. The harp gives us a driving ostinato, the flute rarely gives us a legato line, the piano is more percussive than soothing, and the bass drum roots all this in the earth.

- *Timothy C. Takach, 2017*

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Score

# An Alchemy in the Bones

William Reichard

for SATB, flute, harp, piano, bass drum

Timothy C. Takach

**Freely**

Flute

*mp* *mf*

**Relentless** ♩ = 140

Fl.

*mp*

Harp

*f*

Pno.

*f*

B. Dr.

*mp* *mf* *mp*

Fl.

*f*

Harp

Pno.

B. Dr.

*mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

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A

Fl. *p*

S *mp*  
The first el - e - ment is The first el - e - ment is

A *mp*  
The first el - e - ment is The first The first el - e - ment is

T *mp*  
The first el - e - ment is The first el - e - ment is

B *mp*  
The first el - e - ment is The first is The first el - e - ment is

Hp. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

B. Dr. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

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2

18 flz. ord. *mf* *f*

S *mf* *f*

A *mf* *f*

T *mf* *f*

B *mf* *f*

fire. Is fire. The first is fire.

fire. Is fire. The first is fire.

fire. Is fire. The first is fire.

fire. Is fire. The first is fire.

18 *cresc.* *f*

Hp.

18 *mf* *f*

Pno.

18 *mf* *f* *dampen*

B. Dr.

**B**

Fl. *p* *mf*

S. 22 *mp* *mf*  
The sec-ond el - e-ment e - e-ment The sec-ond

A. *mp* *mf*  
The sec-ond el - e-ment The sec - ond

T. *mp* *f*  
sec-ond The sec-ond el - e-ment

B. *mp* *f*  
sec-ond The sec-ond el - e - ment el - e-ment

Hp. *mp*

Pno. *mp* *f*

B. Dr. 22 *mp* *mf*

FL. 26 *f* *ff*

S 26 The third is blood. Fire, seed, blood.

A *mf* *f* *ff*  
seed. The third is blood. Fire, seed, blood.

T *mf* *f* *ff*  
seed. The third is blood. Fire, seed, blood.

B *mf* *f* *ff*  
seed. The third is blood. Fire, seed, blood.

Hp. 26 *cresc.* *f*

Pno. 26 *mf* *ff*

B. Dr. 26 *ff* *mp*

31

Fl. *mp* 3 3 3 3

S *p* *mf* >

A *p* *mf* >

T *p* *mf* >

B *p* *mf*

Hp.

Pno. *p* *mf*

B. Dr. *f* *p* *mp* *mf*

The fourth el-e-ment is dan-ger. Fire, seed, blood, dan-ger.

The fourth el-e-ment is dan-ger. Fire, seed, dan-ger.

The fourth el-e-ment is dan-ger. Fire, blood,

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Transmute  $\text{♩} = 132$

*accel.*

*flz.*

ord.

Fl. *flz.*

S *f* *ff* *mp*  
The fifth, de - sire. My

A *f* *ff* *mp*  
The fifth, de - sire. My

T *f* *ff*  
The fifth, de - sire.

B *f* *ff*  
The fifth, de - sire.

Hp. *f* *mf*

Pno. *f* *ff* *f* *mf*

B. Dr. *mp*  
with mallet shaft on rim  
lower note played on side

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42

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

S bones \_\_\_\_\_ have grown mouths, have grown paths, My

A bones \_\_\_\_\_ have grown mouths, have grown paths, My

T

B

Hp. *p*

Pno.

B. Dr. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *p*

48

Fl. *p* *mp*

S *mp*  
bones have grown riv - ers riv - ers of lead trans -

A *mp*  
bones have grown riv - ers riv - ers of lead trans -

T

B

48 *mp*

Hp.

48

Pno.

48

B. Dr.

D

FL. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

S *mf* *f*  
formed, My bones have grown mouths,

A *mf* *f*  
formed, My bones have grown mouths,

T *f*  
Ah... Ah... Fire, seed, blood, danger.

B *f*  
Ah... Ah... Fire, seed, blood, danger.

Hp. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf*

B. Dr. *mf* *f*  
reg. felt beater

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Fl. *f* *mf* *f* *pp* *p*

S have grown paths. My bones have grown

A have grown paths. My bones have grown

T Blood, danger, de-sire. My bones have grown

B Blood, danger, de-sire.

Hp. *p*

Pno. *p*

B. Dr. *p*

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63

Fl. *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

S *mp* *f*  
riv - ers of lead trans - formed,

A *mp* *f*  
riv - ers of lead trans - formed,

T *mp* *f*  
riv - ers of lead trans - formed,

B *mp* *f*  
of lead trans - formed,

Hp. *f*

Pno. *mp* *f*

B. Dr. *cresc.*

E

Fl. 68 *f*

S

A

T

B

Hp. 68 *f* Glissando

Pno. 68 (8va) ---

B. Dr. 68  
superball mallet  
drag slowly across head

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73

Fl.

73

S

*mf*

and I am coursed through —

A

*mf*

and I am coursed through —

T

*p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Trans - formed Trans - formed Trans -

B

*p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Trans - formed Trans - formed Trans -

73

Hp.

*mf*

73

Pno.

*mp* *mf*

73

B. Dr.

(x) (x) (x)

*f*



78

Fl.

78

S

with a bet - ter, kill - ing blood, a bet - ter, kill - ing

A

with a bet - ter, kill - ing blood, a bet - ter, kill - ing

T

formed Trans - formed Trans -

B

formed Trans - formed Trans -

78

Hp.

78

Pno.

78

B. Dr.

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88

Fl. *flz.* *fp* *f* *ord.* **F**

S  
A  
T  
B  
and my bones are sing - ing their songs of

88

Hp. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *cresc.* *f*

B. Dr. *reg. felt beater* *with mallet shaft* *reg. felt beater* *mp*

Fl. 92 *mf*

S 92 *mf*  
lives lived in flames. sing-ing their songs Teach me \_\_\_ to wear

A *mf*  
lives lived in flames. Teach me Teach me \_\_\_ to wear

T *mf*  
lives lived in flames. Teach me to wear

B *mf*  
lives lived in flames. Teach me to wear

Hp. 92 *mp*  
8va

Pno. 92 *mf*

B. Dr. 92

96

Fl.

96

S

fire. sing - ing their songs

A

fire. Teach me to trans -

T

fire. sing - ing their songs Teach me to trans -

B

fire. Teach me to trans -

96

8<sup>va</sup>

Hp.

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96

Pno.

96

B. Dr.

*mf* *p*

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G

Fl. 100

S 100 *f*  
Teach me to trans - mute eye - ry sting - ing cell un -

A *mute*  
eve - ry sting - ing cell un -

T *mute*  
eve - ry sting - ing cell

B *mute*  
eve - ry sting - ing cell un -

Hp. 100 *8va*

Pno. 100 *f*  
3 3 3 3 3 3

B. Dr. 100  
*mf dampen*

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105

Fl.

S

A

T

B

Hp.

Pno.

B. Dr.

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til I am cov - ered in flow - ers.

til I am cov - ered in flow - ers.

til I am cov - ered in flow - ers.

til I am cov - ered in flow - ers.

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dampen

*mf*

*ff*

*mf*

*sfz p*

*sfz p sfz*

109  
Fl.

109  
S

A

T   
8

B   
8

109  
Hp.   
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109  
Pno.

109  
B. Dr.

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113

Fl. *f* *8va*

S  
in flow - ers. *f*

A  
in flow - ers. *f*

T  
de - sire. covered in flow - ers. *f*

B  
de - sire. covered in flow - ers. *f*

113

Hp.

113

Pno.

113

B. Dr. *sfz p* *sfz p* *sfz p* *sfz p* *f*

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Reviewed as “gorgeous” (Washington Post) and “stunning” (Lawrence Journal-World), the music of Timothy C. Takach has risen fast in the concert world. Applauded for his melodic lines and rich, intriguing harmonies, Takach has received commissions from the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Olaf Band, Cantus, Pavia Winds, Lorelei Ensemble, VocalEssence, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, The Rose Ensemble, and numerous other organizations. His compositions have been performed on A Prairie Home Companion, The Boston Pops holiday tour, multiple All-State and festival programs and at venues such as the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center and Royal Opera House Muscat. He is a co-creator of the theatrical production of All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914, by Peter Rothstein.

Takach studied music composition at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, and has frequent national work as a composer-in-residence, presenter, clinician and lecturer. He is a full-time composer and lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons.

## Selected vocal works by Timothy C. Takach:

### Mixed Voices

A Depth We Cannot Sound		SATB, vibraphone, marimba, large tom
A Worshipper and a Man		SATB a cappella
And I Saw		SATB div. a cappella
As the Sunflower Turns on Her God		SSAATBB div, Sop. solo, SSATB soli, a cappella
The Darkling Thrush	(earthsongs)	SATB, SAT soli, a cappella
Fragile		SATB, hand drum
Listen to the Apples		SATB div. a cappella
Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers	(Graphite Publishing)	SSATBB a cappella
Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius		SSATBB a cappella
One Boy Told Me		SATB, piano
Ragnarök		SATB div. a cappella
Su Rahva Koda (The House of Your Kindred)		SSAATTBB a cappella
This Alien Landscape		SATB, crotales, suspended cymbal, bass drum
This Amazing Life		SA(T)B, piano

### Treble Voices

And I Saw		SSAA div. a cappella
Bahihii Waaliidkay Dhaqay		2-part, piano
Cassiopeia		SSA a cappella
Queen of the Range	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano
Serenade	(Graphite Publishing)	SSAA a cappella
The Streets of Laredo (arr. American Folk Song)	(Graphite Publishing)	Unison, TTB, piano
There is No Rose	(Lorelei Ensemble)	SSAA, SS soli, a cappella
Torn Map	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano
Twenty Questions		2-part treble, piano

### Men's Voices

All Natures, Even Mine		TTTBB a cappella
Empty		TB (opt. div), piano, opt. djembe
Goodbye, Then		TBB choir, Bb clarinet, piano
I Will Howl		TBB choir, piano or cello
Kin		TB, piano
Luceat Eis		TTTBB a cappella
Mad		TB, piano
Original Harmony	(Colla Voce)	TTBB a cappella
Rough Beast		TTBB, percussion
Salve Regina	(Graphite Publishing)	TBB semi-chorus, TTBB a cappella
Things I Didn't Know I Loved	(Graphite Publishing)	TTBB a cappella

### Large Works

The Longest Nights (ca. 21')		SATB, piano or string quartet
True North (ca. 16')		SATB, chamber orchestra
We, the Unknown (ca. 40')		TTBB, soli, chamber orchestra
We Made a Grave For Him, And Her Smoke Rose Up Forever (ca. 10')		TTBB a cappella
Where Beauty Comes From (ca. 16')		TBB, 2-part, SSAA, SATB; piano