

The Heart of a Woman

for soprano and string quartet

poetry by Georgia Douglas Johnson (1918)
music by Frank S. Li (2016)

Text

The Heart of a Woman

The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn,
As a lone bird, soft winging, so restlessly on,
Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam
In the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.

The heart of a woman falls back with the night,
And enters some alien cage in its plight,
And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars
While it breaks, breaks, breaks against the sheltering bars.

– Georgia Douglas Johnson (1918)

Performances Notes

The soprano's notes range from C4 to B5.

All four string players will require both standard mutes and metal practice mutes. If the composer is involved with the performance and able to attend, he can provide one of each type (two total, one rubber and one metal) sized for a standard violin or viola.

Parallelogram notes in the string parts (first seen in measure 14) indicate brush sound. These are largely pitchless, brushy sounds produced by touching the string lightly (as if playing harmonics) with all four fingers at once. Played with light bow pressure, it creates the sound of a bow against the string without activating pitch – as if the bow has insufficient rosin.