

# Only Breath



For choir SSAATTBB

Eloise Nancie Gynn  
July 2014

Eloise Nancie Gynn  
**Only Breath**  
For choir SSAATTBB

My place is placeless, a trace  
of the traceless. Neither body or soul.

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two  
worlds as one and that one call to and know,

first, last, outer, inner, only that  
breath breathing human being.

Rumi.

Duration 8 minutes.

Layout

                  B      B  
          T                  T  
      A                          A  
S                  audience                  S

Choir starts spread out throughout hall, loosely arranged in semicircle. As cued in the score, during the piece, choir moves slowly closer together.

*Only breath* was commissioned by MusArc, under the Sound And Music Portfolio scheme 2013/14.  
Excerpt from *Only Breath* by Rumi, used with permission from Coleman Barks, translator.

# Only Breath

Rumi (translated by Coleman Barks)

Eloise Gynn

$\text{♩} = 60$

**Soprano R**  
*pp* *mm* *p < mf >* (ff) *pp* *mm*  
 suck air in

**Soprano L**  
*pp* *mm* *mm* *p < mf >* (ff) *pp* *mm*  
 suck air in

**Alto R**  
*pp* *mm* *pp* *mm*

**Alto L**  
*pp* *mm* *pp* *mm*

**Tenor R**  
*mf* (sigh - breathe out) (ha) (ff) (who) *f > p* outbreath

**Tenor L**  
*mf* (ha) (ff) (who) *f*

**Bass R**  
*mf* (sigh - breathe out) (ha) (ff) (who) *f > p* outbreath

**Bass L**  
*mf* (ha) (ff) (who) *f*

suck air in *p < mf >*

\*Choir spread apart throughout hall,  
loosely arranged in semicircle SATBBTAS

7

S. *p* My *gliss.*

S.

A. *p*

A. *p* My *gliss.* (whispered) *mp* 3 My place is

T. (whispered) *mf* My place *mp* 3 My place is place-less place-less repeat ad lib until A

T. (whispered) *p* *mf* My place *mp* 3 place-less My place is place-less

B. (whispered) *mf* My place *mp* 3 My place is place-less place-less repeat ad lib until A

B. *p* (whispered) *mf* *mp* 3 My place My place is place-less place-less repeat ad lib until A *accel.*.....

10

S. *whispered*  
*mf*  
place-less place-less

S. (whispered)  
*mp* 3  
My place is place-less place-less

A. (whispered)  
*mp* 3  
My place is place-less place-less

A. place-less place-less

T. *accel.* ..... *rit.* .....

T. *accel.* ..... *rit.* .....

B. *accel.* ..... *rit.* .....

B. *f*  
*rit.* .....

12 **A** A tempo

S. (who) (who)

S. *whisper* place-less place-less *f* (who) *p* < *mf* > (who) *p* mm

A. *f* (who) *p* < *mf* > (who)

A. *mp* place-less place-less *f* (who) *p* < *mf* > (who) *p* mm

T. *f* (who) suck air in *p* < *mf* > (who)

T. *f* (ha) (ha ha ha ha) *p* < *mf* > (who)

B. *f* (ha) (ha ha ha) *p* < *mf* > (who)

B. *f* (who) suck air in *p* < *mf* > (who)

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a 4-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 12/8 time, marked 'A tempo'. It consists of eight staves. The Soprano part has two staves. The Alto part has two staves. The Tenor part has two staves. The Bass part has two staves. The lyrics are: (who), (who), place-less, place-less, (who), (who), (who), (who), (ha), (ha ha ha ha), (ha), (ha ha ha), (who), (who). Performance instructions include dynamics (p, mp, f, mf), articulation (whisper, suck air in), and phrasing (p < mf >). There are also 'x' marks on notes in the Alto and Bass parts, and 'mm' at the end of the Soprano and Alto parts.

16

S. *mm* *gliss.* My *my\_place*

S. *gliss.* My *My\_place*

A. *mm* *gliss.* My *my\_place* *p* 3 My place is

A. *gliss.* My *My\_place* *p* 3 My place is

T. *mf* whisper *mf* tutti *p*  
 trace less place-less (ha) *mm*

T. *mf* whisper breathe out *mf*  
 trace less (ha)

B. *mf* whisper *mf* *p*  
 trace less (ha) *mm*

B. *mf* whisper breathe out *mf* *p*  
 trace less (ha) *mm*

21

*mf* whisper *p* *mp* *p*

S. place-less a trace of the trace - - - less

*mf* whisper (whispered in own time) *mp*

S. place-less trace of the trace-less place-less trace-less

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

A. place - less a trace of the trace - - - less

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

A. place - less a trace of the trace - - - less

T. 8

B. *mp* My

B. *mp* My



24

S. *mf* *mp* *mf*  
 SS SS SS SS SS Nei - bo - nor soul

S. (ss) *mp* *mf*  
 ther dy soul

A. *mp* *mf*  
 SS Nei - bo - nor soul

A. (ss) *mp* *mf*  
 ther dy soul

T. *mf*  
 SS soul

T. *mf*  
 SS soul

B. *mf*  
 SS soul

B. *mf*  
 SS SS SS SS soul

29

S. *p* *f*  
 trace less bo - dy nor soul (who) like the wind

A. *p* *f*  
 trace less bo - dy nor soul (who) like the wind

T. *p* *mp*  
 trace less bo - dy nor soul I am

B. *p*  
 trace less bo - dy soul

Choir starts to move closer into semicircle SATBBTAS

36

suck air in

S. *p* I am of the di-vine

A. suck air in (who) *mp* *p* I am di-vine

A. (who) *mp* (ha) *p* I am

T. *mp* I am *p* I am

T. *mp* I am *p* I am of the di-vine

B. *mp* I am *p* I am of the di-vine



41

S. *mp* *p* *mf* di-vine whole

S. *mp* *p* *mf* di-vine whole

A. *mp* *p* *mf* di-vine whole

A. *mp* *p* *mf* di-vine whole

T. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

**B**

46

S.

A.

T. 

B.



S. 

S. 

A. 

A. 

T. 

B.

Sing individually  
vary the length of pause to come in just after the singer before  
(echo effect)

Allow some silence after  
last singer stops  
before next phrase.

55 **C**

S. *mp*  
I belong I \_\_\_\_\_ belong \_\_\_\_\_

A. *mp*  
I be long I \_\_\_\_\_ belong \_\_\_\_\_

T. *mp*  
I belong I \_\_\_\_\_ belong \_\_\_\_\_

B. *ppp*



59 **D**

S. *mp*  
I be - long \_\_\_\_\_ to the belov - ed

A. *mp*  
I be long \_\_\_\_\_ to the belov - ed

T. *mp*  
I be long \_\_\_\_\_ to the belov - ed

B. *sfp*  
soul \_\_\_\_\_

B. *sfp*  
soul \_\_\_\_\_

**E**

63 *mf* 3  
 S. two worlds as one *mf* solo *mf* *mp* *tutti*  
 ah call

S. *mf* 3 *mp*  
 two worlds as one *mp*  
 one and one that

A. *mf* 3 *mp* *mf* *mp*  
 two worlds as one *mp* as one *mp* and

A. *mf* 3 *mp* *mf* *mp*  
 two worlds as one as one

T.  
 B.

Choir moves even closer together until F

68

S. — to and know —

S. call to and know know *p*

A. one that call to — know — *p*

A. and one that call to and know know — *p*

T. call to and know — know — *p* *pp*

T. call to and know know — *p* *pp*

B. call to and know — know — *p* *pp*

B. call to and know — know — *p* *pp*



73 **F** *f* **F** Choir close together (still in SATBBTAS formation)

S. first, last, out - er in - ner — *p*

A. first, last, out - er, in - ner — *p*

T. first last, out - er in - ner *p*

B. know — out - er in - ner — *p*

80 **G** *sempre p*

S. brea - thing breath - ing breath - ing



The fragments are to be repeated freely in any order for the specified time duration. Freely vary length of rests.

**1** Aleatoric

83 ♩ = 60

S. breath - ing

S. brea - thing brea - thing

8 - 10"



**2**

10 - 15"

A. ♩ = 72 *sempre p*

A. breath - ing

A. brea - thing brea - thing

T. ♩ = 84 *sempre p*

T. breath - ing

T. brea - thing brea - thing

14 3 6 - 8" 4 ♩ = 60  
(a tempo)

90  
S. 2 soli (L and R)  
S. tutti aa  
S. breath - ing  
A. breath - ing  
A. <sup>3</sup> breath-ing breath  
T. breath - ing  
T. <sup>3</sup> breath-ing breath  
B. *p*  
mm

Sopranos, Altos and Tenors:  
\*Sound to become more breathy and whispery with diminuendo.  
\*Slowly turn away from audience and begin to spread out again.  
\*Increase length of rests so texture becomes more sparse.

*ppp*

5

S. *ppp*  
A. *ppp*  
T. Stop  
B. *pp* *ppp*  
mm

Stop