

# The Precipice

a chamber-rock opera

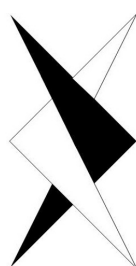
Created by KARL

From Music and Text by Grey Grant and Karl Ronneburg

Additional Orchestration by Grey Grant and Brian Morales

Commissioned by Contemporaneous

Full score (concert pitch score)



Copyright © 2022 by Karl.Allmusic Publishing  
- all rights reserved -

**The premiere performances presented by:**

Fifth Wall Performing Arts, April 29-30, 2023  
Riverside Arts Center Theatre  
76 N Huron St. Ypsilanti, MI

conducted by Daniel Johnson  
directed and designed by Corey Douglas Smith

Contemporaneous  
May, 2024  
New York, NY

conducted by David Bloom

**CAST OF THE PREMIERE PERFORMANCES**  
(in order of appearance)

Grey Voice Double .....Allison Prost  
Karl Voice Double ..... David Magumba  
Grey ..... Grey Grant  
Karl ..... Karl Ronneburg

**SYNOPSIS**

Weaving together text and music from journal entries, poems, previous pieces, and voice memos by Karl Ronneburg and Grey Grant, The Precipice is a 90-minute abstract chamber-rock opera that explores our relationship with moments of transition. The "precipice" itself represents irreversible change: growing up, leaving home, moving on from past places, relationships, and visions of self. The show asks: is making ourselves a tragic act, a leap from the precipice, a great wrenching? Who or what do we leave behind when we move on from a relationship or place? And finally, do we do this alone? Is the formation of self an individual act or a collective one?

to our friends

Co-commisioned by Contemporaneous and Fifth Wall Performing Arts.

Supported in part by the University of Michigan School of Music, Theater & Dance  
and  
the Eileen Weiser EXCEL Fund

**TIME and PLACE:** The Past, The Present, The Future - Ann Arbor, Michigan and Everywhere

**CAST**

(in order of appearance)

Grey Voice Double . . . . . Operatic Soprano, unstaged  
Karl Voice Double . . . . . Operatic Baritone/Tenor, unstaged  
Grey . . . . . Pop/Rock Tenor, staged  
Karl . . . . . Folky Tenor, staged

All players will be expected to sing briefly in the opening of Act IV

**CONTENTS**

<b>Act I</b>	<i>page</i>
Drones for the Late-Summer . . . . .	5
1.1 we did this to ourselves . . . . .	31
1.2 i just want to know how to make myself out of love . . . . .	55
1.3 love is so small, but it's still bigger than us . . . . .	77
<b>Act II</b>	
Drones for the Pre-Fall . . . . .	105
2.1 Myth and Fable no.1: and when sky breaks through sky, what's left . . . . .	111
2.2 this is how the world catches fire . . . . .	133
Drones for the Late-Winter . . . . .	157
- <i>intermission</i> -	
<b>Act III</b>	
3.1 Good Morning, My Dear Sweet Beginning . . . . .	167
3.2 popcorn dust and former lust . . . . .	179
3.3 when threads of memory fray at the seams too much . . . . .	187
3.4 Come back around . . . . .	201
Drones for the Pre-Spring . . . . .	233
<b>Act IV</b>	
4.1 this constant endless driving monotonous understanding of infinity . . . . .	243
4.2 Myth and Fable no.2: learn of their multitudes . . . . .	261
4.3 the origin of sound . . . . .	273
epilogue: Beings of Light and Air . . . . .	297

# INSTRUMENTATION

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Piano (doubling Toy Piano)  
Electric Guitar (with Volume, Delay, Chorus and Reverb Pedals)  
Electric Bass (calls for low D tuning)

Percussion\*

Violin  
Cello

**\*Percussion Instrumentation:**  
Drumkit (snare, kick, two toms,  
hi-hat, crash and ride cymbal),  
Big Shaker, two Woodblocks, B $\flat$   
Crotale, Glockenspiel,  
Vibraphone

# DURATION

Approximately 95 minutes, without intermission

Engraving by Brian Morales  
Additional Orchestration by Grey Grant and Brian Morales  
Additional Guitar Arrangements by Jeremy Esquer

for our friends

find a place to watch and look out,  
a cliff by the beach, an edge in the sunlight

chase that open empty,  
the feeling of turning a corner,  
the boundary of now and whenever

this is two parallel lives,  
this is in and out  
(and in and out)  
of love,  
this is leaving and jumping and getting lost  
and maybe moving on--

this is our precipice:

"roar, lion of the heart, and tear me open"  
- Jalal al-Din Rumi

The Precipice

From Music and Text by Grey Grant and Karl Ronneburg

Created by KARL

2.2 this is how the world catches fire

**Bitter** ♩ = 108

Clarinet in Bb

Grey

Grey's Voice Double

Karl

Piano

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

Violin

Violoncello

Say some - thing!\_

Notes of our being turn bitter.

This sadness is tucked away, stitched over, hidden under a blanket-- I almost relish the bitterness.

circular bowing

pp quietest part of the texture

circular bowing

919 920 921 922

A

(5+5+3) or (3+2+3+2+3)

(5+4+3) or (3+2+4+3)

Cl. in Bb

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

923

924

925

B

Cl. in Bb

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

926

927

928

Cl. in Bb

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

*f*

*sub. pp*

*sub. pp*

*sub. pp*

she was beautiful but  
she wasn't the meaning  
I needed.

929

930

931

Cl. in Bb

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

932 933 934

D

Cl. in Bb

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

sub.*f*

sub.*f*

sub.*f* ord.

sub.*f*

935

936



E [5x]

Cl. in Bb

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Play 5 times

G.P.

you know somewhere that this is an unconscious response to the weariness and pain,  
to the uncertainty and the neglect, to the overwhelming alone-ness and meaninglessness  
that the rain makes you feel, an attempt to deny the underlying suspicion that you're  
doing it wrong, missing something, are lost

sub.*pp*

sub.*pp*

sub.*pp*

sub.*pp*

ord.

937

938

939



F

Cl. in Bb

Grey

GVD

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

He told me not to speak this  
aloud but I need to.

Say some - - thing!

*pp* quietest part in the texture

*p*

*f*

940

941

942

G

H

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

she must have thought she looked so cool,

*f*

*sub. pp*

*sub. pp*

*ord.*

*sub. f*

*sub. pp*

943

944

945

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

standing there, smoking in the rain--  
but all I saw was a girl, scared.

946

947

948



I

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

sub. **f**

sub. **f**

sub. **f**

sub. **f**

949

950

**J**

**K**

Pesante ♩ = 80

Cl. in Bb

Grey

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Say some - thing!\_\_\_\_\_

I bought him PBR from the bodega.

I have such a jealous rage all the time simmering.

*p intense*

*p intense*

*p intense*

sul tasto

*ppp*

*p*

951

952

953

954



This musical score is for the song "I Wanted to Lock My Roommate Out and Pretend I Was Asleep, Just to Do It." It features a multi-staff arrangement with the following instruments and parts:

- Cl. in Bb**: Clarinet in B-flat, shown with whole rests in both measures.
- GVD**: Guitar, Violin, and Viola, shown with whole rests in both measures.
- Karl**: A character part, indicated by a double bar line and an 'X' in the first measure, and a single bar line in the second measure.
- Pno.**: Piano, featuring a complex melodic line in the right hand with sixteenth-note runs and accents, and whole rests in the left hand.
- E. Gtr.**: Electric Guitar, playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets and accents in the first measure, and a more melodic line in the second measure.
- Bass**: Bass guitar, shown with whole rests in both measures.
- Dr.**: Drums, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes, triplets, and accents in the first measure, and a more melodic line in the second measure.
- Vln.**: Violin, shown with whole rests in both measures.
- Vc.**: Violoncello, shown with whole rests in both measures.

The score is divided into two measures, with a page number '955' at the bottom left and '956' at the bottom right.

Cl. in Bb



GVD



Karl



Pno.



E. Gtr.



Bass



Dr.



Vln.



Vc.



957

959



Cl. in Bb



GVD



Karl



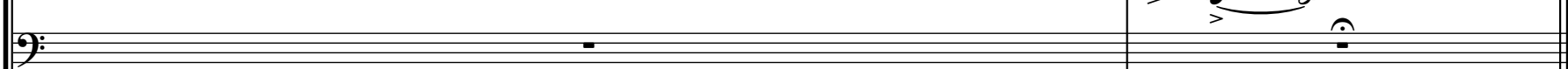
Pno.



E. Gtr.



Bass



Dr.



Vln.



Vc.



960

961

Cl. in Bb

Grey

GVD

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

He got me crossfaded, moved over to the couch.

Say some - thing!

**L**  $\text{♩} = 108$

**M**

962

963

964

Cl. in Bb

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

965

966

N

[4x]

Play 4 times

Cl. in Bb

Karl

(sing first time only) Karl

*p*

ev - - 'ry mo - ment

Karl (spoken):

is an opportunity-  
let THAT stress sink in.  
So which opportunity do I take?  
Dont miss it...  
But do what YOU want-  
these people aren't your friends.

(spoken over the rest of the repeats)

Pno.

*pp*

E. Gtr.

*pp*

Bass

*pp*

Dr.

*pp*

Vln.

Vc.

ord.

*pp*

967

968



O

G.P.

Cl. in Bb

This is the game everyone plays  
but not everyone knows.

*f*

Karl

Pno.

*pp*

*f*

E. Gtr.

*f*

Bass

*f*

Dr.

*f*

Vln.

*f*

Vc.

*f*

969

970

971

972

Cl. in Bb

Grey

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

**P**

**Q**

80

He was keeping secrets from his girlfriend.

Say some - thing!\_\_\_\_\_

I know my heart has darkness, a hidden pit, bigger than I let myself think about--

*p*

*p intense*

*p intense*

*pp intense*

*p intense*

*pp* quietest part in the texture

*p*

973

974

975

976

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

that crushing moment, that hunting moment,  
that moment separating presence from conscience-

977

978

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

isn't it best to keep this hidden? and the narrative sense--that feeling of possibility--

979

980



Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

where is the edge? where is my fall?

981

982



Cl. in Bb

Grey

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

**R**

**S**

*pp*

He became something more sinister.

Say some - thing!

I'm slowly coming to accept that everything is artifice.

*mf*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*pp* quietest part in the texture

983

984

985

986

Cl. in Bb

Grey

GVD

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

T

pp

f

fp

f

ppp

fp

987

988

989

990

He walked to his bedroom  
and returned in a contained  
frenzy.

Say some - thing!\_\_\_\_\_

U

Swung 16ths ♩ = 182

V

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

so, what if I did the worst things  
to amplify the suffering of others?

what if I took the opportunities I saw  
and learned how to act on them?

(solo)

*mp intense*

*f*

*mp intense*

*f*

*p*

*pizz.*

*mp intense*

*pizz.*

*mp intense*

991

992

993

994

W

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

what if I let my mind slip, just a little, just enough?

can I try it here?

(half open hi-hat)

*f*

*p*

*ord.*

*p*

*ord.*

*p*

995

996

997

X  
 Cl. in Bb  
 GVD  
 Karl  
 Pno.  
 E. Gtr.  
 Bass  
 Dr.  
 Vln.  
 Vc.  
 mp intense  
 998 999 1000

**Y Demented jazz**

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

I'll let this come to the surface: the feeling that I want to hurt these people,

see them suffer,  
see them look at me with  
betrayal and fear and anger  
and know that power,

(solo)

pizz.

ord.

*mp intense*

1001 1002 1003

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

1004

1005

1006

know that I caused them to feel,  
that I am creator and destroyer.

Cl. in Bb

GVD

Karl

KVD

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

1007

1008

1009

growl

Z

say som-

I'm inside the mind of the furnace,  
I push and I twist and I dance

(solo)

with VOL. PEDAL

ord.

pizz.

AA [6x]

**Play 6 times**

The musical score is arranged for the following instruments:

- Cl. in B♭**: Clarinet in B-flat, featuring melodic lines with dynamics like *p*.
- Karl**: A character part represented by a single note (X) on a staff.
- Pno.**: Piano, providing harmonic accompaniment with complex chordal textures.
- E. Gtr.**: Electric Guitar, playing sustained chords.
- Bass**: Bass guitar, playing sustained bass notes.
- Dr.**: Drums, featuring a steady rhythmic pattern.
- Vln.**: Violin, playing a melodic line with dynamics like *p*.
- Vc.**: Viola, playing a supporting melodic line.

The lyrics are as follows:

and I know I'm living in the moment,  
I know I'm living in the moment,  
I know I'm living in the moment,  
I know I'm living in the moment,  
I know I'm living in the moment,  
I know I'm living in the moment, etc.

just doing what needs to be done,  
calculating and watching and  
waiting but never reflecting,

The score includes performance instructions such as "Play 6 times" and various dynamic markings (*p*, *f*, *ord.*). The piece concludes with a final measure marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign.



## BB

Cl. in Bb

Karl

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

I'm moving thinking seeing doing and it doesn't matter

if it's right or wrong or awful,  
it's just what I need to understand--

*mp intense*

1013 1014 1015

CC

Cl. in Bb

Karl

Pno.

(solo)

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

maybe I can take these people and unravel them if I try--  
then I'll learn how the human mind really works--

1016

ord.  
mp intense

1017

1018



Cl. in Bb

Karl

Pno.

(solo)

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

don't you want to see that beauty?  
don't you want to own that betrayal?  
If I set the world alight, will I know my own flame?

Karl

Vib.

1019

1020

1021

1022

DD Slower, more somber, straight 16ths ♩ = 90

Cl. in B♭

mf Grey

mp

You speak no truth, no im - port - ance

p

B♭maj<sup>7</sup>/F

C<sup>7</sup>(omit3)/B♭ fr. 3

B♭maj<sup>13</sup><sub>sus<sup>4</sup></sub>/G fr. 3

p

E. Gtr.

Bass

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

1023

1024

1025

1026

mp

1027



Cl. in Bb

Grey

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

1028 *p*

1029

1030

1031

1032

1033

sweet no - things sung to an un - en - gaged aud - i - ence of peers, no:

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

G7<sup>sus</sup>2 fr. 3


C7(omit3)/G fr. 8

A<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>/G


G<sup>5</sup> fr. 8

EE

Freely

 = 45

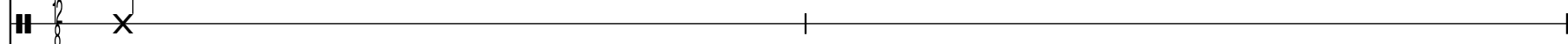
Cl. in Bb



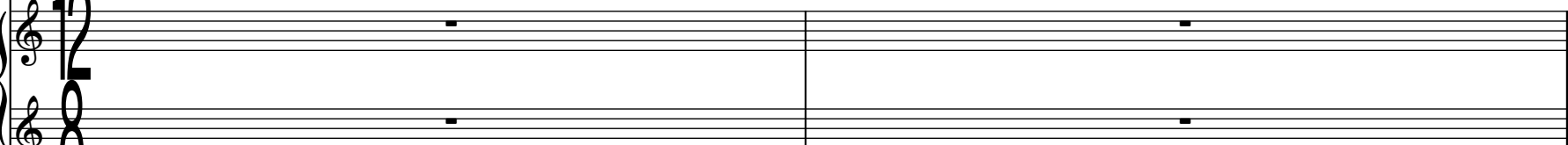
Grey VD (spoken):

He told me not to speak this aloud, but I must. Miles Davis was playing when he grabbed me, kissed me,

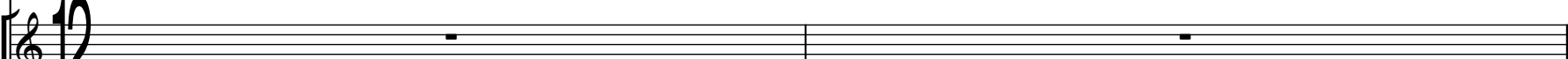
GVD



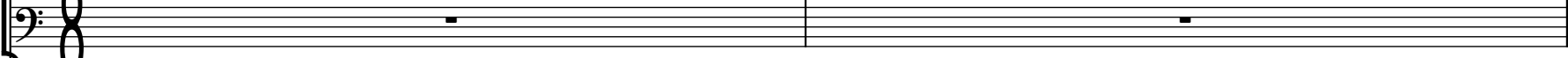
Pno.



E. Gtr.

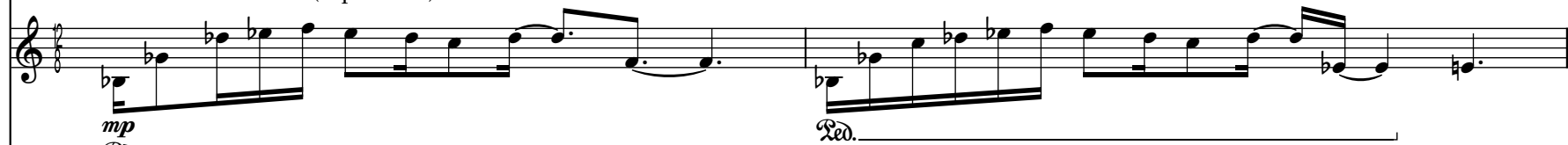


Bass




Vib.

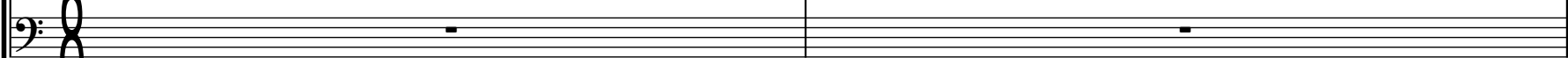
Vib. solo with motor (if possible)



Vln.



Vc.

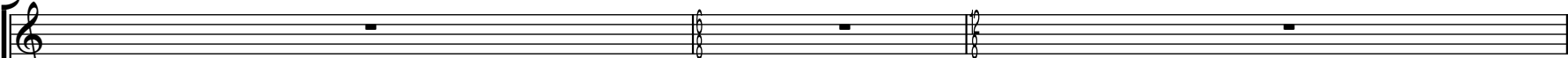


1034

1035

==

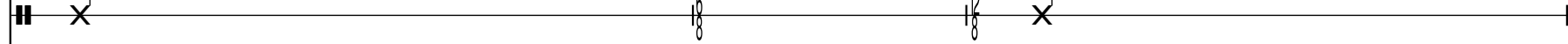
Cl. in Bb



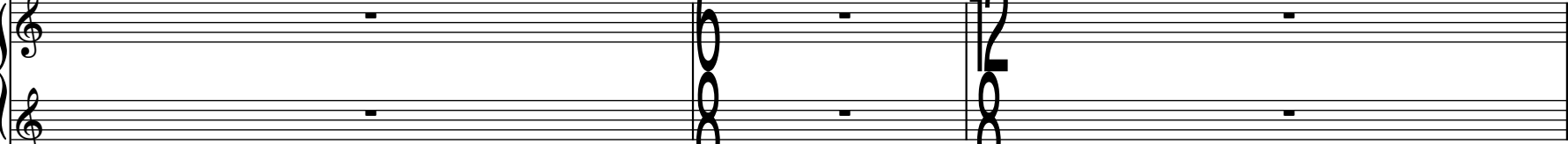
moved down the lips to the neck. I was cemented. I thought I was some folkloric Jezebel, a temptress.

He became hostile, our friendship dead. I almost forgot the violent shivering that took over my body, as if to say

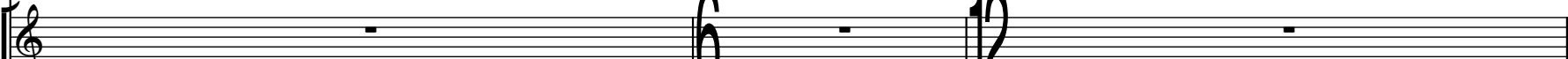
GVD



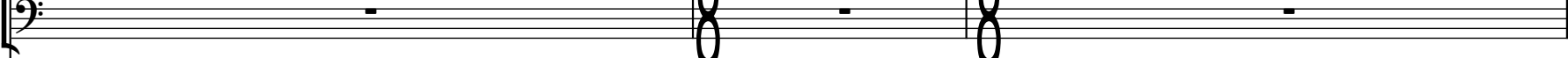
Pno.




E. Gtr.



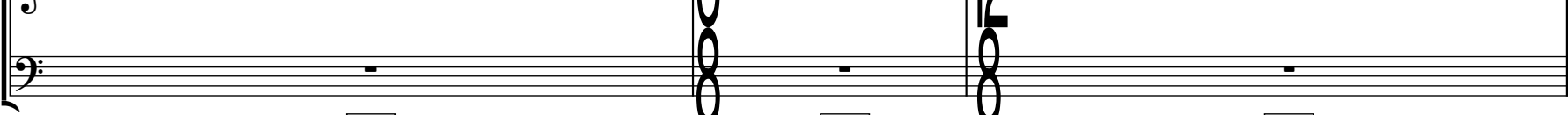
Bass



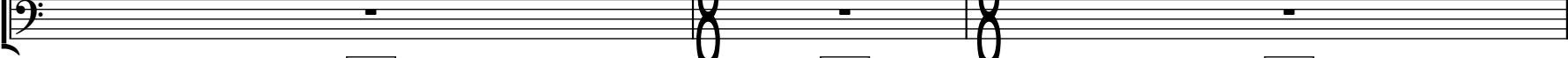
Vib.



Vln.



Vc.



1036

1037

1038



**CLARINET IN B♭**

**GVD**

**PNO.**

**E. GTR.**

**BASS**

**VIB.**

**Vln.**

**Vc.**

**GREY**

"you're hurting, this is cold, this is not love,  
this is not pleasure or health or soulful wealth".

Say some - thing!—

*p*

*p legato*

1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044

*p legato*



Cl. in Bb

mf

poco rit..... GG ♩ = 56

mf

p

mf

p

3

we\_\_\_\_\_ con - sume\_\_ our - - selves, eat - ing\_\_ til we're un - a - ble\_\_\_\_\_

Grey's Voice Double

p

3

eat - ing\_\_ til we're un - a - ble\_\_\_\_\_

mf

p

we\_\_\_\_\_ con - sume\_\_ our - - selves,\_\_\_\_\_

KVD

Then may - be\_\_ this\_\_ is

Pno.

3

4

E. Gtr.

3

4

Bass

mf

p

Vib.

p

Vln.

mf

p

pp

3

4

Vc.

1049

1050

1051

1052

Cl. in Bb

GVD

we can keep \_\_\_\_\_ our - selves:

Karl

with not just the cog - ni - zance of

KVD

how we can keep \_\_\_\_\_ our - selves:

Pno.

*pp*

Dm/A Bb7(5)  
fr. 11

E. Gtr.

Bass

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

Cl. in Bb

1053 1054 1055 1056

Grey

but the ac - tual con - scious - ness of it. Karl (spoken):  
I promise, we won't be lost.

Karl

change,

Pno.

*mp*

Cmaj7(omit3) Dm/A Bb Cmaj13  
fr. 8 fr. 8

E. Gtr.

*mp*

Bass

*mp*

Vib.

*mp*

Vln.

*mp*

Vc.

*mp*

1057 1058 1059 1060



- this page intentionally left blank -





















































- this page intentionally left blank -















































































































- this page intentionally left blank -



nu  
mb

{@flowtitle@}

()

()

()

()

()

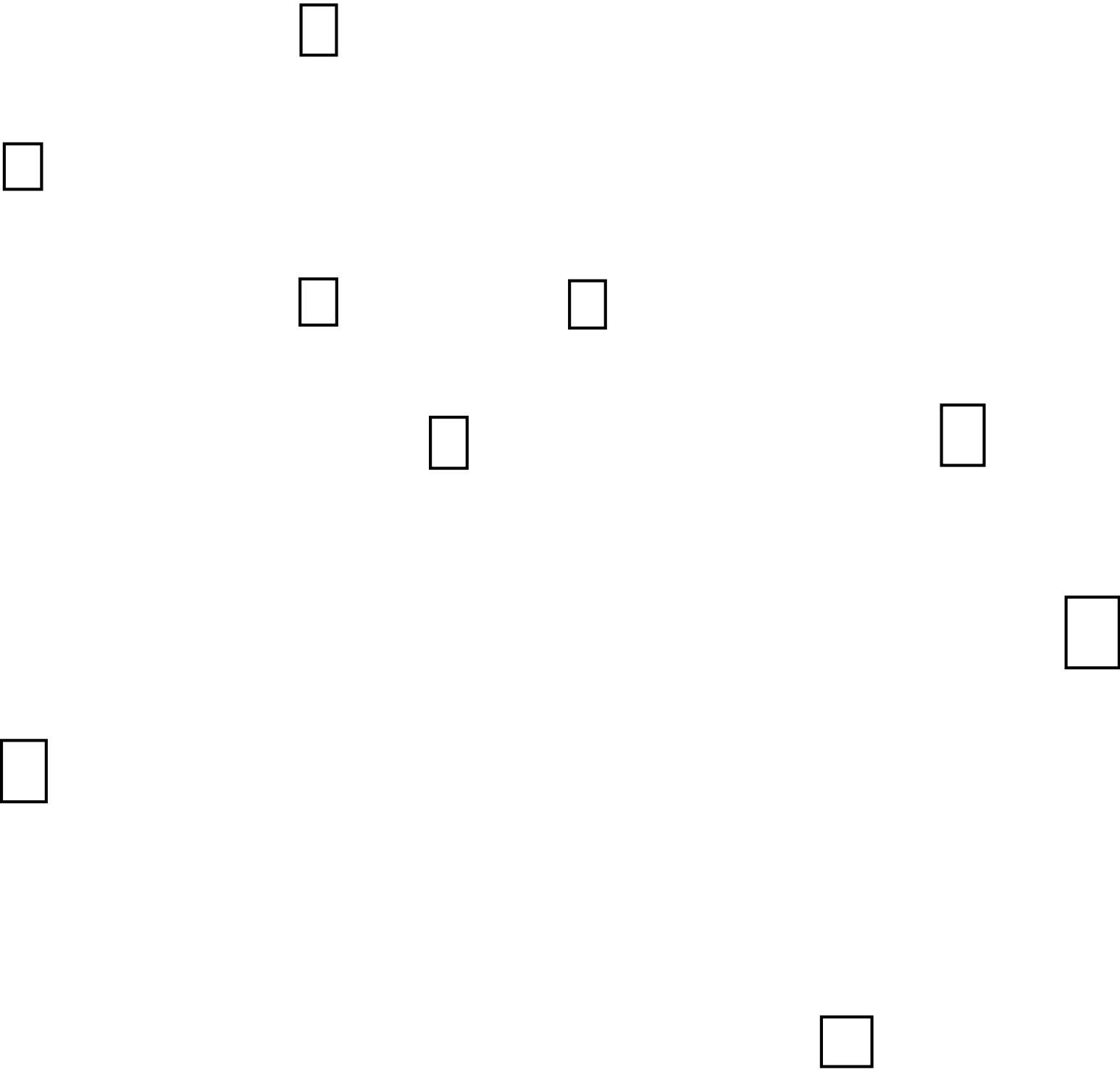
()

()

()

()









()

()

()



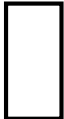
()



()



()



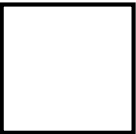
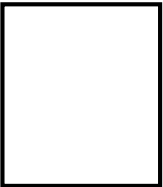
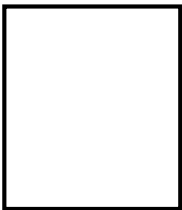
- this page intentionally left blank -



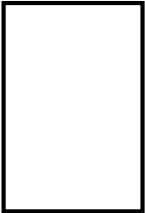
























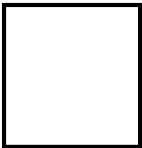


































































































- Intermission -











































































- this page intentionally left blank -

















































- this page intentionally left blank -















































































\* Grey says whatever day of the week it is.

























































































































- fin -