

Sacrifice

Reginald Unterseher

Commissioned for the 2010 Byron Gjerde Memorial Choir Festival, "Sacrifice" was inspired by the compelling and disturbing images of the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico and the Upper Big Branch mine disaster in West Virginia. These were 2010's most visible examples but certainly not the last in a long list of man-made disasters in pursuit of oil and coal. It is full of rage, grief, and despair, a reflection on modern society's dependence on power from fossil fuels and the cost in environmental destruction and the lives of miners and oil rig workers. It is about the power they give us, and the power we surrender to them and to the amazing machinery we have invented, machinery that is integral to modern society. "The ancient bodies, the ancient blood"—what is oil and coal, physically? We have tapped into that power, that enormous power, but at what cost? Do we have, as a species, the wisdom and ability to manage our destiny, or have we already gone too far? This lyric represents the darkest, most pessimistic view, our fears rather than our hopes. The music is intense, dark, with a heavy, driving rhythmic structure featuring a large percussion section.

**Merciless, relentless
digging drilling drilling digging
Ravenous, insatiable,
digging drilling drilling digging**

**We worship these gods we created
to bend all the world to our will
We sacrifice
the ancient bodies, the ancient blood
We sacrifice
the hands that dig, that drive the drill
We sacrifice
the future world, what might have been
We give them all to the flame**

**Birds drown, fish gasp on the shore,
ice melting, the sea takes the land
sky dark, air suffocates
The people multiply
The people divided
Greed without end.**

**We level the mountains, burn the sea,
behead the hills, choke the valleys
to draw earth's dark blood to worship these
gods we created to bend all the world to our will**

**We pour out our sacrifice
on the blazing pyre.**

**the bodies and the blood
the blood and the bodies**

---Sheila Dunlop & Reginald Unterseher

for the 201110 Byron Gjerde Festival

Sacrifice

SATB divisi, percussion (two snares, Bass drum, tom-toms, tam-tam, suspended cymbal, brake drums,

Reginald Unterseher
6 September 2010

♩. = 128

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Brake Drum

Suspended Cymbal

Tam-tam

Snare Drum 1

Snare Drum 2

Tom-toms

Bass Drum

p

p

4

6

S.

A.

T.

B.

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

8

9

S.

A.

T.
Mer-ci- less, re -

B.
Mer-ci- less, re -

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

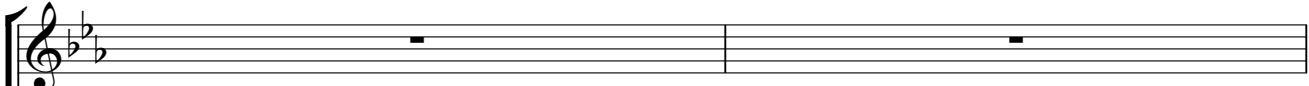
S. D. 1

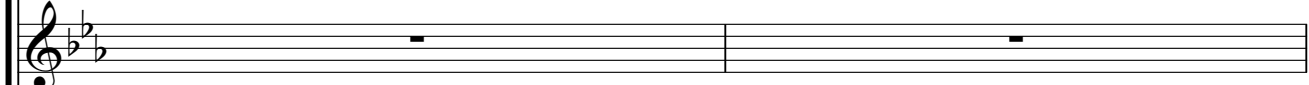
S. D. 2


Tom-t.


B. D.

14

S. 

A. 

T. 
8
lent - less, dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging,

B. 
lent - less, dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging,

removed for security
thanks for understanding
www.reginaldunterseher.com

16 *p* ————— *mf*

S. dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less,

A. dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less,

T. dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less

B. dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less,

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

16

19

S. *p*
dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging,

A. *p*
dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging,

T. *p*
dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging,

B. *p*
dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging, dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging,

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

20

B

21

S. *mf*
Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

A. *mf*
Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

T. *mf*
Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

B. *mf*
Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

B

Br.D. *ff*

S. Cym. *mallets*
p

T.-t.

S. D. 1 *ff*

S. D. 2 *ff*

Tom-t.

B. D.

24

S. *f*
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

A. *f*
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

T. *f*
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

B. *f*
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

Br.D. *f*

S. Cym. *f*

T.-t.

S. D. 1 *f*

S. D. 2 *f*

Tom-t. *f*

B. D. *f*

27

S. *legato* *marcato*
 bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

A.
 bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

T.
 bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

B.
 bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

mf

31

f legato

S. an - cient bod - ies, the an - cient blood, We sac - - ri -

A. an - cient bod - ies, the an - cient blood, We sac - - ri -

T. an - cient bod - ies, the an - cient blood, We sac - - ri -

B. an - cient bod - ies, the an - cient blood, We sac - - ri -

Br.D.

S. Cym. *drum stick*
p

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.
mf

B. D. *mp*
mf

34

marcato , *legato*

S. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

A. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

T. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

B. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

38

S. *mp*
 fice the fu - - ture world, what might_ have

A. *mp*
 fice the fu - - ture world, what might_ have

T. *mp*
 fice the fu - - ture world, what might_ have

B. *mp*
 fice the fu - - ture world, what might_ have

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1
p

S. D. 2
p

Tom-t.

B. D.
mp

42 *marcato f*

S. *f*
 been, We give them all to the flame

A. *f*
 been, We give them all to the flame

T. *f*
 been, We give them all to the flame

B. *f*
 been, We give them all to the flame

Br.D. *ff*

S. Cym. *p*

T.-t. *p*

S. D. 1 4

S. D. 2 4 *f*

Tom-t.

B. D. 4 *pp*

46

S.
A.
T.
B.

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

medium mallets

p mp mf f

ff fff

4

C

49

S.

Staff for Soprano (S.) showing a whole note chord in the final measure, marked *p*. The word "Birds" is written below the staff.

A.

Staff for Alto (A.) showing a whole note chord in the final measure, marked *p*. The word "Birds" is written below the staff.

T.

Staff for Tenor (T.) showing a whole note chord in the final measure, marked *p*. The word "Birds" is written below the staff.

B.

Staff for Bass (B.) showing a whole note chord in the final measure, marked *p*. The word "Birds" is written below the staff.

C

Br.D.

Staff for Brass Drum (Br.D.) showing a whole rest throughout the measure.

S. Cym.

Staff for Small Cymbal (S. Cym.) showing a single note with a *fff* dynamic marking and a fermata.

T.-t.

Staff for Tom-tom (T.-t.) showing a whole rest throughout the measure.

S. D. 1

Staff for Snare Drum 1 (S. D. 1) showing eighth notes, a *fff* dynamic marking, and a *p* dynamic marking with a 4-measure rest.

S. D. 2

Staff for Snare Drum 2 (S. D. 2) showing eighth notes, a *fff* dynamic marking, and a *p* dynamic marking with a 4-measure rest.

Tom-t.

Staff for Tom-tom (Tom-t.) showing eighth notes, a *fff* dynamic marking, and a *p* dynamic marking with a 4-measure rest.

B. D.

Staff for Bass Drum (B. D.) showing eighth notes, a *fff* dynamic marking, and a *p* dynamic marking with a 4-measure rest.

55

S. *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
drown, fish gasp on the shore, ice

A. *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
drown, fish gasp on the shore, ice

T. *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
drown, fish gasp on the shore, ice

B. *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
drown, fish gasp on the shore, ice

Br.D.

S. Cym. *drum stick* *p*

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

62

S. *mp* *pp*
 — melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

A. *mp* *pp*
 — melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

T. *mp* *pp*
 — melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

B. *mp* *pp*
 — melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

68

S. *mp* sky dark, air *mf* *mp*

A. *mp* sky dark, air *mf* *mp*

T. *mp* sky dark, air *mf* *mp*

B. *mp* sky dark, air *mf* *mp*

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

D

75

S.

mp
suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

A.

mp
suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

T.

mp
suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

B.

mp *mp*
suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

D

Br.D.

||

79

S. mul-ti - ply, The peo - ple di - vid - ed

A. mul-ti - ply, The peo - ple di - vid - ed

T. mul-ti - ply, The peo - ple di - vid - ed

B. mul-ti - ply, The peo - ple di - vid - ed

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

84

S. *mf*
Greed with - out end greed

A. *mf*
Greed with - out end greed

T. *mf*
Greed with - out end greed

B. *mf*
Greed with - out end greed

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

90

S. — with - out end. ah *f*

A. — with - out end. ah *f*

T. — with - out end. ah *f*

B. — with - out end. ah *f*

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

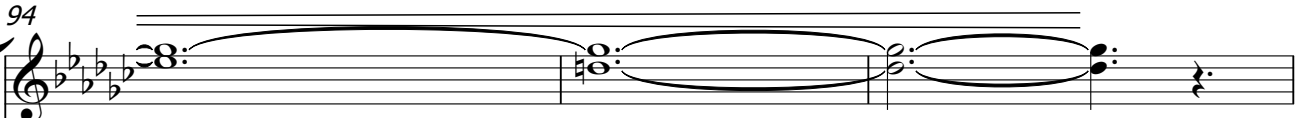
S. D. 1


S. D. 2

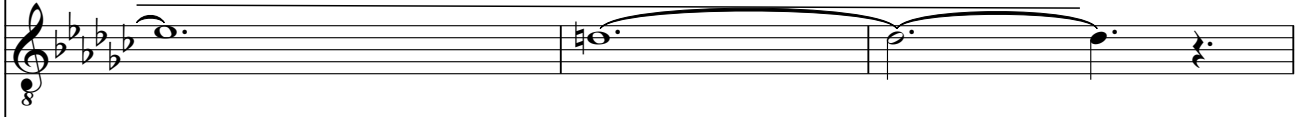
Tom-t.

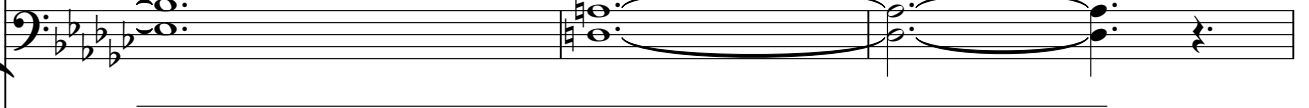
B. D.

94

S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

Br.D. 

S. Cym. 

T.-t. 

S. D. 1 

S. D. 2 

Tom-t. 

B. D. 

97 *molto marcato*

S. ah we

A. ah we

T. ah we

B. ah we

Br.D.

S. Cym. 24

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

101

E

S. lev-el the moun-tains, burn the sea, be-head the hills, choke the val-leys,

A. lev-el the moun-tains, burn the sea, be-head the hills, choke the val-leys,

T. lev-el the moun-tains, burn the sea, be-head the hills, choke the val-leys,

B. lev-el the moun-tains, burn the sea, be-head the hills, choke the val-leys,

E

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

105

S. to draw_ earth's dark_ blood,

A. to draw earth's dark blood,

T. to draw_ earth's dark_ blood,

B. to draw earth's dark blood,

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

112

S. *to*

A. *to*

T. *to*

B. *to*

Br.D.

S. Cym. *p* *fff*

T.-t. *ff* *fff*

S. D. 1 4 */*

S. D. 2 4 */*

Tom-t. *fff*

B. D. 4 */*

Detailed description: This musical score page, numbered 112, features a vocal quartet and a percussion ensemble. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in 8/8 time, with lyrics "to" appearing at the end of each line. The percussion parts include Brass Drum (Br.D.), Snare Drum (S. D. 1 and 2), Tom-tom (Tom-t.), and Bass Drum (B. D.). The Snare and Tom-tom parts feature dynamic markings of *p* and *fff*. The Snare and Bass Drum parts have a "4" above a slash, indicating a four-measure rest. The Tom-tom part has a *fff* marking and a slash in the final measure. The Snare and Bass Drum parts also have a slash in the final measure.

117

F

S. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

A. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

T. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

B. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

F

Br.D.

S. Cym. *mf*

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t. *ff*

B. D.

120

S. will We pour out our sac-ri- fice,

A. will We pour out our sac-ri- fice,

T. will We pour out our sac-ri- fice,

B. will We pour out our sac-ri- fice,

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

123

S. on the blaz-ing pyre

A. on the blaz-ing pyre

T. on the blaz-ing pyre

B. on the blaz-ing pyre

Br.D.

S. Cym. *p mp mf f ff*

T.-t. *ff*

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t. *ff*

B. D. *f*

S.

A.

T.

B.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

G

S.

A.

T.

in all parts, gradually becoming more and more whispered, until at the end, there is almost no audible pitch, but the words are still clear

p

the blood and the

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

G

p

S.

A.

T.

B. *p*

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

B. D.



S. *p*

A.

T.

B.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

B. D.

S. *2 2 2 2 2*
 bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the

A. *p*
 the blood and the bod ies the blood and the bod ies the blood and the

T. *p*
 the bod - ies and the

B. *p*
 blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies

S. D. 1 *H* */*

S. D. 2 *H* */*

B. D. *H* */*



S. *2 2 2 2 2*
 bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the

A. *p*
 bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the

T. *p*
 blood the bod - ies and the

B. *p*
 the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the

S. D. 1 *H* *20* */*

S. D. 2 *H* *pp* *20* */*

B. D. *H* *pp* *20* */*

half whispers

S. *2 2* bod - ies and the blood *2* the bod - ies and the blood *2* the

A. blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies

T. *8* blood the bod - ies and the

B. bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the

S. D. 1 *8* *2 2 2 2*

S. D. 2

B. D.



S. *2 2* bod - ies and the blood *2* the bod - ies and the blood *2* the

A. the blood and the bod ies the blood and the bod ies the blood and the

T. *8* blood the bod - ies and the

B. blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies

S. D. 2 *8* *2 2 2 2*

B. D. 24

150 *mostly whispers* 37

S. *2 2 2 2 2*
 bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the

A. *7 7 7 7 7*
 bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the

T. *8*
 blood the bod - ies and the

B. *7 7 7 7 7*
 the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the

T.-t. *pp*

B. D. *pp*

pp



152

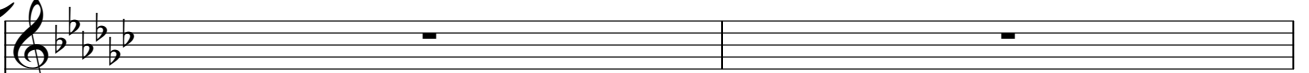
S. *2 2*
 bod - ies and the blood

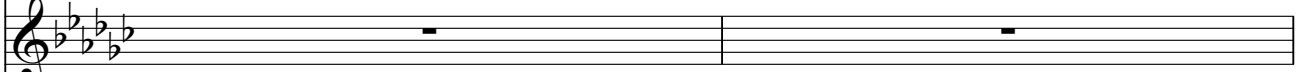
A. *7 7 7 7 7*
 blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies

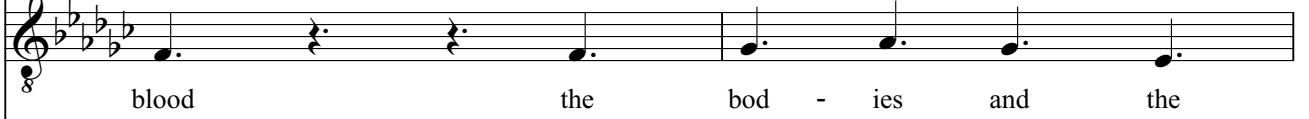
T. *8*
 blood the bod - ies and the

B. *7 7 7 7 7*
 bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the

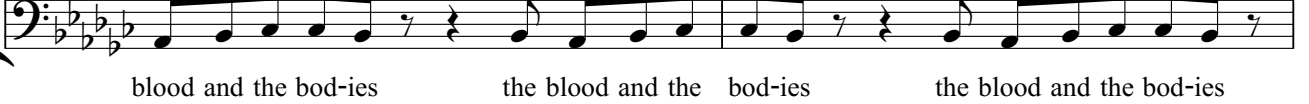
B. D.

S. 

A. 


T. 

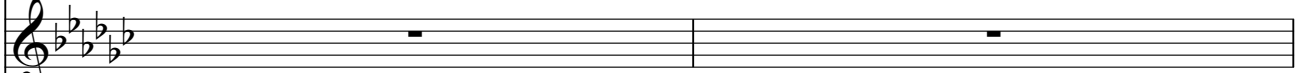
blood the bod - ies and the

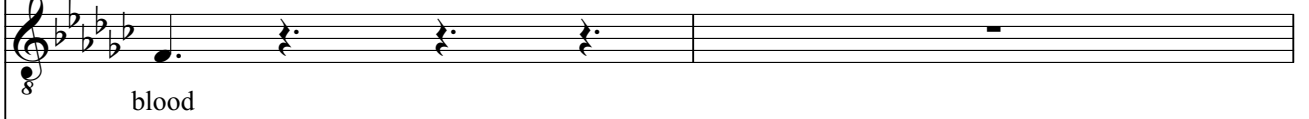
B. 

blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies




S. 

A. 

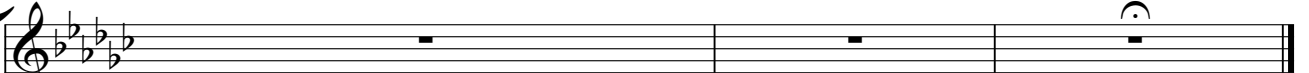
T. 

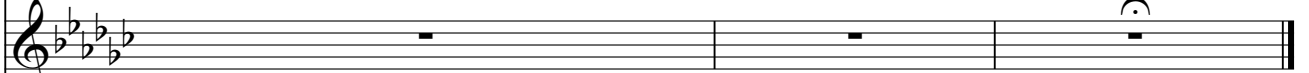
blood

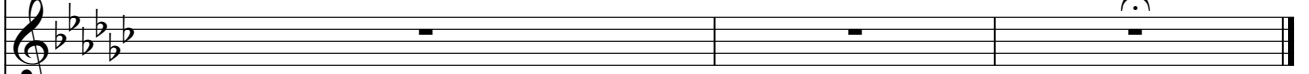
B. 


the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the



S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

bod - ies