

Lisa Bielawa

WWW.LISABIELAWA.NET

Note

Premiere: November 1, 1998, St. Boniface Church and Bang On A Can Festival, New York, May 3, 1999. Commissioned by the Tenderloin Opera Company, San Francisco.
Duration: 11'
Instrumentation: soprano & violin

Genesis Again was written in collaboration with violinist Carla Kihlstedt and was premiered at the Bang On A Can Festival in New York in 1999. Scored sections trade off with improvised sections, sometimes together, sometimes with violin alone. This project was a study for the last scene of a chamber opera entitled *Spooky Action at a Distance*, written in free response to Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. The opera centers on the shape and limits of compassion. In our story, a doctor loses three patients by various means beyond her control in rapid succession. How does she bear what she must? How does she begin again, after so many endings and so many beginnings? The landscape of this last reflection is austere - a single voice and a single violin explore vulnerable textures and shared improvisations.

The title of the opera refers to a principle in physics. A particle may be split, and its fractions separated by miles... and nonetheless, under certain conditions, the two halves may respond as one. This is "action at a distance" - which Einstein refused to accept, calling it "spooky." Again, a principle in progressive physics bodies a long-held poetic notion: that we are bound, we are one, in ways past comprehending.

– Lisa Bielawa

Publishing & Management: Daniel Brodney | 917.676.1858 | brodney@prodigy.net

Press Contact: Christina Jensen PR LLC | 646.536.7864 | christina@christinajensenpr.com

Text

by Erik Ehn

O the ease of Apocalypse
How we long for its release,
In this age of generation
God bends light to a shield against destruction
No, our end, Genesis again
This century. These many centuries
O perfect generation. O Genesis, again.

For superior exegesis
Read Bible backwards -

Our end in Genesis.

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