Job Pilgrim



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Dramatis Personae

The play takes place in a room in a private hospital

Job Pilgrim An historian/philosopher/academic

Hope Hart His wife

Sophia Wise A hospital visitor
Christof Orderly/doorkeeper

The Nay-sayers:

Dr Oliver Goodlife An epicurean
Dr Ada Fairway A humanist
Dr Ivor Brain A scientist

Doctor Death A doctor/patient Rev Luke Shaw A churchman

Martha Goodbody Nurse
Will Judge A student

Pilgrim Chorus Colourfully dressed motley group of gypsies, tradesmen,

priests and nuns of various religions, circus people,

tramps, hippies, hari krishna devotees, a whirling dervish

etc with ribbons, tambourines, rose petals etc

Job Pilgrim

(a dramatised oratorio in 2 Acts)

Libretto

ACT 1

Lights up on chorus

Prologue

#1 Prologue Sophia and chorus sing

Blackout

Lights up

<u>Scene 1:</u> A hospital room. Bed, bedside cabinet and small wardrobe/locker, two easy chairs, desk and upright chair.

Enter Job (carrying a jacket), Martha, Christof (with a suitcase) and Sophia (with a carpetbag)

Martha This is your room, Mr Pilgrim. You can unpack your things after we've done these

admission forms

Job (*mutters*) I can't believe I'm here!

Martha Oh I'd like a dollar for everyone who says that.. You'll soon get used to it. Now sit

yourself down there while we fill them in. Can I call you Job (mispronounced)

Job Job

Martha Job. These modern names!....

Job sits on the bed.

Martha I've got your personal details from your wife. I just need to ask a couple of questions.

First, Job, where are you?

Job Confused....Very unhappy...

Martha No. No. I mean physically. What's the name of this place?

Job Oh I see. It's Judge Mann Hospital....

Martha Close...

Job ...No . You're right. Judge is the name of the student who... who... This is the

Hugh Manne Hospital.

Martha That's it. The Hugh Mann Memorial Mental Hospital. And what's today's date?

Job l've no idea. All days are the same. I've lost count. Is it the 1st? Of April?

(mutters) It should be.

Martha Close enough. It's the 3rd.

Job (anxious) What happened to the 1st and 2nd?

Martha Short-term memory is unreliable when you're sick.

Job I can remember some things as if they just happened.

Martha That's the way of it.

Job The way of what?

Martha Mental illness

Job (receiving this with pain) How did this happen? (pulling himself together) What did you say the

date is?

Martha April 3rd

Job (keening) A month ago I was giving the Cardinal Mannix memorial lecture....

Martha (polite) Were you? It can seem to arrive in the blink of an eye, but when you look back, you

see it's been simmering for ages.

Job (confused) Sorry? What has?

Martha (patiently) Mental illness. Shall we get back to the questions?...Who is the Prime Minister?

Job Will Burnham Woods

Martha And your next of kin?

Job My wife, Hope Hart.

Martha Hart?

Job She kept her maiden name.

Martha Are her contact details the same as yours?

Job Whose?

Martha Your wife's

Job Yes.

Martha Good. Now you're all finished.

Job (automatically) Have finished

Martha Sorry?...

Job Now you have finished...

Martha (confused) Yes. As I said.

Job I'm not dead yet. Just pedantic.

Martha (still nonplussed) D'you have any razor blades?

Job What?

Martha Razor blades

Job (nonplussed) Probably. Hope threw some things in the bag. (mutters) Pandora's box. Perhaps

some Hope will still be in there...

Martha searches in the carpet bag and finds a packet of blades and a razor. She hands them to

Christof

Martha We'll have to take these. Christof will get you an electric one

Job (fretful) I never use electrics. I don't like them.

Martha Well we could give you the blade each morning and have a nurse sit with you while...

Job (tetchy) No! No! It's fine. I don't want to waste anyone's time.

Martha(patient) Let's see, shall we? Once your doctor's done her assessment, she may give

permission. I have to take your shoelaces...

Job Shoelaces?

Martha Just regulations. To comply with insurance conditions

Job (angrily) I'll be a shuffling unshaven derelict!

(Christof kneels to remove the laces from his shoes)

Martha In here, we accept people as they are.

Job Wrong. It's <u>not</u> who we are; it's what we've become.

Martha Perhaps. And I need all your drugs – prescribed and over-the-counter.

Job I can manage them myself.

Martha No doubt, but the policy of the hospital is that we administer all drugs - for your own

safety...

Job And no doubt to comply with legal requirements

Martha (ruefully) True

Job So first you remove my dignity and now my ability to cope with this... hell....

Oliver So you can leave...

JobWhenever I want

Ada (briskly) Get out now. Life's too short.

Oliver We can help Hope look after you....

Ada Of course

Oliver Only too pleased....

Job No! No. I need to be here – not just for her, for my soul's sake too

Ivor (disgusted) Oh for God's sake...

Job (becoming increasingly distressed) Yes. And for God's sake. For me, this is a spiritual thing, not

mental.

Ivor What do you think you mean by that?

Job Ideally, when I'm well, God is the web, the energy, the space, the light. God is in the

vast net of relationships that animates everything. Like quantum physics. That's

what I think.

Ivor That's totally unscientific! Where's the proof?

Job (collapsing after this effort) There's never any proof. But I did experience it...especially when I

was writing the book. Now I've lost it. I'm in absolute darkness...my soul....

He panics again and collapses onto the bed head in hands. The others crowd round, concerned.

Brown out to strobe. Slow strobe to a stop. Spot up on Sophia

Scene 5 - The same

#6 Chorus and Sophia sing

Spot fades. Lights up

Scene 6 - The same

Oliver (sitting by Job) Feeling better now? Shall I call the nurse?

Ivor (briskly) What's the medical diagnosis?

Ada Hope said anxiety depressive....something...

Ivor Has he had a second opinion?

Ada I don't know. Job, have you?

Job Not now....not now.

Ada (to the others) Best leave him be.

Ivor Suffice it to say... Job, I must just say this: maybe for your own good. You should try

to see it for what it is - mental illness.

Job For most people.....

Ivor All this spirituality stuff isn't helping...

Ada The medics can cure this. Put your trust in them.

Oliver Are you taking the medication?

Job (distracted) Yes...yes

Oliver Well then... You're in safe hands.

Ada They know what they're doing

Ivor Medical degrees and experience

(Job sits with his head in his hands. They mime to each other that they should go.)

Oliver So we'll be off now. But we'll drop in over the next few days.

Ada Is there anything we can bring?

(Job is beyond answering. Exeunt Oliver, Ada and Ivor)

Lights to 1/2. Spot on Job

Scene 8 - The same

#7 Job sings 'I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.

Brown out

#7 Segues to:

Scene 9 - The same

Lights up on choir/quartet

#8 quartet (or full choir) sings "If you want what visible reality can give you"

Lights dim

Scene 10

Lights up to ¾
Enter Dr Death

Dr Death Hello there.

Job Who are you?

DD Part of the establishment.

Job I'm not up to any more....

DD Oh I quite understand. New patients are always a bit overwhelmed. I just wanted to

say welcome and if there's anything you need, you only have to ask.

(Job is beyond speech)

DD You're in safe hands here. Some people have been here for months and see it as

home

Job I don't want...

DD That's what they all say. But it's really quite pleasant. You'll get used to the routines.

The nice little classes. Yesterday there was one on anxiety. Everyone described their symptoms and they were written down on a whiteboard. The psychologist is doing a PhD so he got his assistant to copy them down for his research. One lady got a bit distressed. She said writing them down made them more real and she was worried that some of the symptoms she hadn't experienced, might be catching. Rather silly of her don't you think? I mean we all know about the fears and phobias people experience here. That the food is poisoned. That your wife's out to play while you're away. That the diagnosis is wrong. That the medication is useless. That you'll have to have ECT. And even that won't work. That the doctors are just playing

with your mind....

Job Who are you?

DD (ignoring him) That you'd be better off dead...

Job Are you a doctor?

DD Would you be better off dead, Job?

Job Stop! I'll call the nurse!

DD She can't help you. None of them can.

Job (heading for the door) Martha! Christof!

DD There're ways, even without medication or shoe laces. Where there's a will....

(Enter Christof)

Christof Doctor Death! Please go back to your room.

(DD shrugs and leaves with a smile)

Job (confused) Doctor Death? He's a doctor?

Christof Yes. And a patient. Don't worry about him, Mr Pilgrim. He can be a nuisance but

he's ultimately harmless.

Job What did you call him? Doctor Death?

Christof He's not important.

Job (unconvinced) But is he a doctor or a patient?

Christof He's both. The medical profession isn't exempt you know.

Job What kind of a doctor?

Christof I don't discuss patients

Job Was he..is he a psychiatrist?

Christof Job, I don't know. We're here to help patients get better, not to write their

biographies. The only thing that's important is the present. Now. And right now I must get back to helping Martha with the medications. Sophia's here. I'll get her to

come and sit with you.

Exit Christof. Job sits on his bed with his head in his hand. He reaches for the Hopkins book and

reads

Job No, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;

Not untwist -- slack they may be -- these last strands of man

In me or, most weary, cry 'I can no more!'. I can;

Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be. (Hopkins)

During this Sophia enters . She stands looking at Job

Sophia Job, where are you?

Job Not that again! The Hugh Mann Memorial...

Sophia No! Job, where are you?

Job Desperate. I've lost...(chokes)

Sophia Yes?...

Job ... my way. I've lost my God

Sophia Your God?

Job Yes. My God

Sophia: Ah!. Ah. Your God

Job: What do you mean?

Sophia Now is the time to re-imagine.... who is your God?

Job What do you mean?

Prologue - The same

Choir enters dancing from various points, including through the audience. The basic dance is 2 steps forward and 1 step back. Where there are steeper steps some jump down and turn to assist others. Rose petals are scattered from baskets. Fruit is handed out. Banners and ribbons are waved. Meanwhile a core choir sings on stage and in the boxes.

#17 choir sings Wanderer, Worshipper

segue to

#18 Man never desired - Sophia sings

Sophia places a copy of The Four Quartets on the table

Scene 1

Exit Sophia and Christof passing Martha followed by Rev Shaw. Martha and Christof have a mimed conversation about Rev Shaw who lurks outside the doorway)

Martha Mr Pilgrim, you said you'd like to speak to the chaplain. He's here. Would you like to

see him?

Job What denomination is he?

Martha I haven't the slightest. Aren't they all supposed to be on the same tack?

Job I'm not so sure about that. And I can't handle fundamentalism just now

Martha This one's new. I haven't clapped eyes on him before. He isn't wearing a dress, if

that's any help.

Job (catching sight of Shaw who carries a copy of Why There is Almost Certainly A God)

Too late.

(Job indicates he should come into the room)

Shaw(hearty) Ah Mr Pilgrim, I'm Luke Shaw. Nurse tells me you'd like to see me

Martha I'll leave you to it

Exit Martha

Shaw Is now a good time?

Job Well perhaps...

Shaw (suddenly uncertain) Oh sorry. Whenever....

Job I have some visitors coming

Shaw By all means. I'll drop in next time

Shaw It's just a matter of time – like the discovery of electricity.

Ivor Oh come on! That's entirely different. There're endless numbers of experiments that

have clearly demonstrated the existence of electricity and its effects. The great thing about the scientific method is that its results are predicted and then tested. Which theologians are doing that? And didn't they spend years trying to weigh the soul - to

no avail whatsoever. Couldn't prove a thing.

Shaw Well perhaps I picked a bad example... Here's another I've just read (refers to book):

Richard Rohr. "One reason so many theologians are now interested in the Trinity is because they're finding both physics and cosmology are affirming and confirming our use of the old Trinitarian language - but with a whole new level of appreciation. Reality is at root relational, and all the power is in the relationships themselves! Not in the particles or the planets, but in the space in between the particles and planets. It

sounds a lot like what we called Holy Spirit."

Ivor (now rather taken aback) No true scientist would accept that comparison. They are totally different paradigms. .

Shaw (carrying on regardless) And no good Christians would have denied the Trinitarian Mystery, but until our generation none were prepared to see that the shape of God is the shape of the whole universe! You see the cosmos as a machine, dependent on certain principles. I see it more as an evolving work of art. A beauty and a joy of itself.

Ivor (dismissive) Different paradigms I tell you.

Shaw A paradigm is just a view point. It's not the view itself. We must remember that it's

only one world we're talking about.

Ivor Indeed and the burden of proof still pertains. We need the scientific method,

not some sloppy orientation

Shaw Well what about scientist-theologians like Pierre Taillard de Chardin?

Ivor Chardin was disregarded by theologians and scientists alike. Neither fish nor fowl.

Shaw (into his stride) And Jacob Boehm's principles? How they align with theoretical physics?

Ivor Chalk and cheese

Ada (reasonably) But you have to admit, Ivor, that particle physics has put the cat among the pigeons.

The theory on Nothing teeming with matter and anti-matter coming from Nothing and

returning to Nothing borders on the mystical

Ivor That's a red herring

Oliver (attempting to lighten the tone)

You're getting very culinary, Ivor.

Shaw (*reading from the book again*) "As you say, we once considered great science, the "enemy" of religion. But now it's helping us see that we're standing in the middle of awesome Mystery. For me the only response to that is immense humility. Funnily enough,

Job (wistfully) together?....

Hope Mmm..

JobWell at least both trust that somewhere in the silent nothingness, there's

something that speaks of values and possibility. Something much closer to us than

Michelangelo's picture of an old man God. God inside us

Hope For both our sakes I certainly hope so.

Job That's a prayer.

Hope Is it?

Job Thanks... for telling me all those thoughts.

Hope And here's something else, something I want to thank you for: Job, you never

objectify me like so many men do - to women in general. They dress them up in uniforms as goddesses or whores - to control them. You've always encouraged me

to dance in my underwear.

Job Have I?

Hope: Yes.

(pause)

Job (smiling) That was for my sake as well as yours! What now, Pandora?

Hope You haven't called me that in a while.

Job Something I've always liked - your constant hope

Hope (suddenly) D'you think we do know each other well?

Job What does knowing someone mean? We know what we admire, what annoys us,

and about intimate preferences - you like Vegemite and I like Promite sort of thing -,

and we share a history. But I don't know what it's like to be you.

Hope We can sympathise and empathise.

Job But our souls. Our core?

Hope Do we even know that in ourselves?

Job Sometimes we're forced to glimpse it.... in break-downs...

Hope Or in dreams...

Job But it's never shared, not essentially

Faith Re-found

A canata

by

Should any choir want to undertake this work without the accompanying play, this script is offered as an alternative.

Narrator: Just as Milton suggested in Pilgrim's Progress, in our personal pilgrimages, we

encounter doubt and despondency. When this happens we are prone to re-visit our faith - how was it conceived and born; if we lose it, how can we re-find it? And if we

do find it, will it be the same, or different?

#1 Wonders happen - choir

Narrator: The loss of faith is often experienced as a loss of meaning, a fear of death, which

leads to depression and suffering. Many poets, philosophers and artists have experienced this and written about it in their works. For instance Gerard Manly Hopkins wrote several sonnets about his acute depression, and the psalms and other passages in the Bible show it to be a common enough condition, though nonetheless

painful.

#3 Oh the mind has mountains - solo

#4 In my distress - choir

Narrator: To begin the pilgrim journey of re-discovery means to re-examine, re-assess, re-

imagine our faith, our image of God. Sometimes we cling to old concepts that need

radical re-appraisal.

#6 We must not portray You - choir

Narrator: This early work is cerebral. Our natural instinct is to try to think ourselves out of the

hole. To help us, the poet Rumi suggests remembering something fundamental

as a starting place.

"If you want what visible reality can give you, you're an employee; if you want the unseen world, you're not living your truth. Both wishes are foolish. but you'll be

forgiven for forgetting that what you really want is love's confusing joy."

#8 If you want what visible reality can give you - choir

Narrator: Yet this is merely a first step. Little relief is to be had by recognising that we are

looking for joy. We are only too aware that it is missing. We sense there is some

mystery around all this. As the poet Rilke says:

"And yet though we strain against the deadening grip of daily necessity I sense there is this mystery: all life is being lived. Who is it living it then?

Is it the things themselves or something playing inside them like an unplayed melody

on a flute? God are you the one who is living life?"

#9 And yet tho we strain - solo

#10 Is it the things themselves - choir

Narrator: With this glimpse of a new way of visioning God comes a frustration at the grinding

difficulty of largely continuing in the dark, as He remains elusive. As the psalmist

puts it: "How long O Lord, will you forget me forever?"

#11 How long oh Lord - choir and solo

Narrator: And, as the writer of Lamentations writes, we cry out again of the Abyss:

"Arise, cry out in the night." only to discover that no-one can hurry this process. It is a

matter of watching and waiting.

#15 Arise cry out in the night - solo

#16 Watch and Wait - choir

Narrator: It's also comforting to remember that you are one among many who have trudged

this journey, fallen by the wayside in despair only to struggle up and try again

#17 Wanderer, Worshipper - choir

#18 Man never desired anything so earnestly - solo and choir

Narrator: Sometimes the very people we would expect to understand, outwardly religious

people, appear to be pointing somewhere else:

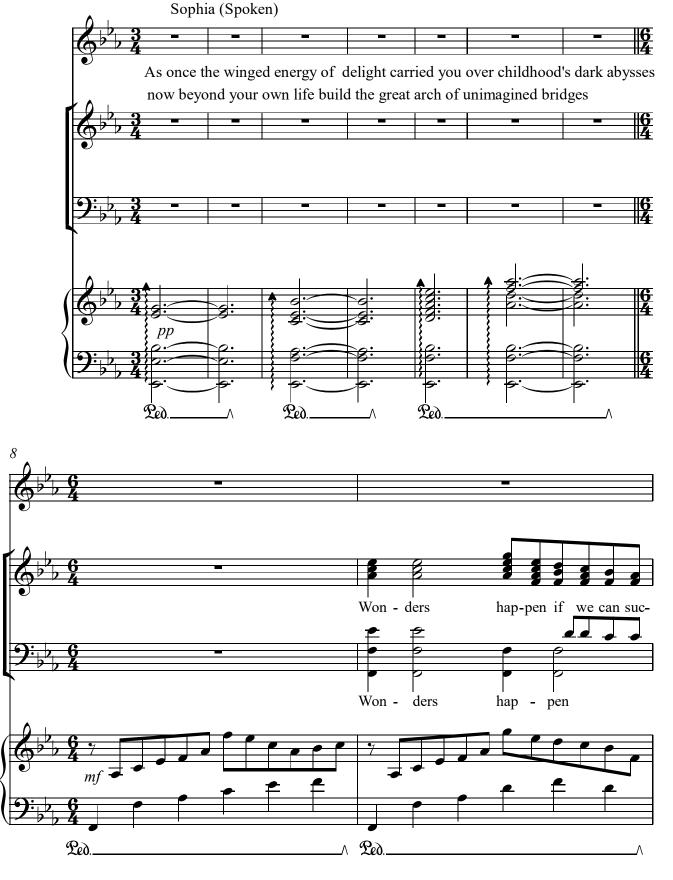
Rilke again:

"I have many brothers in the south who move, handsome in their vestments through cloistered gardens.... And I dream often of their Titians where God

becomes an ardent flame. But when I lean over the chasm of myself, it seems my God is dark and like a web...This is the firmament I grow out of.... deep silence"

#1 Prologue Act 1

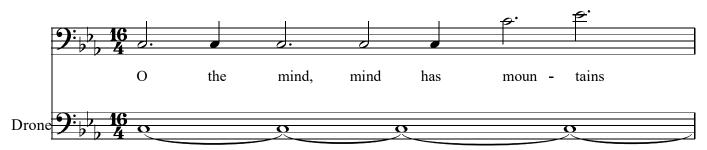
For Lindsay



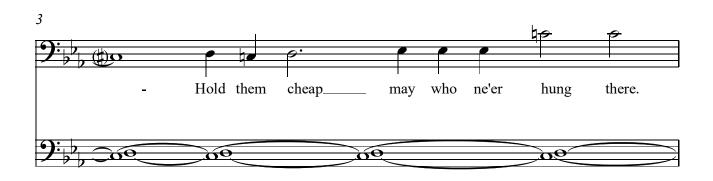
#3 O the mind has mountains

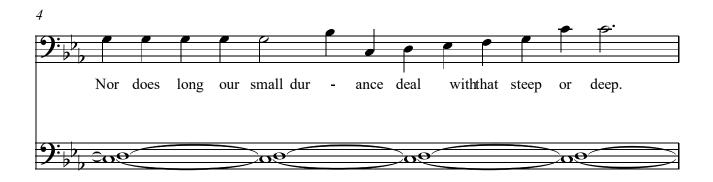
GM Hopkins

NB The drone commences earlier as Job recites 'No worse there is none'

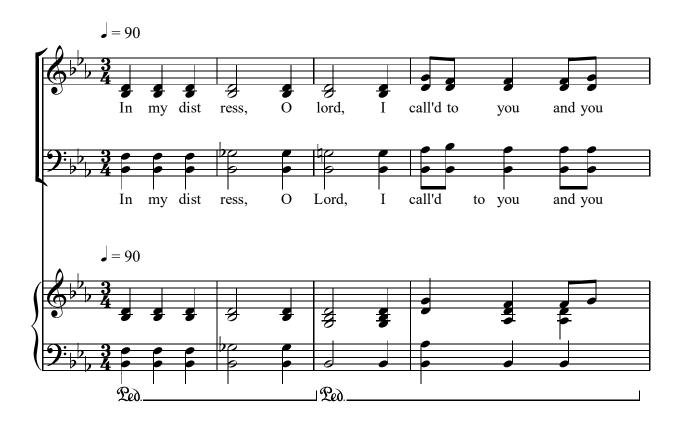


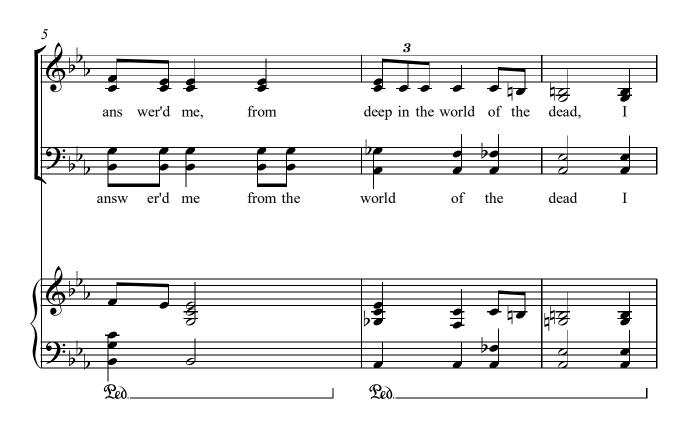




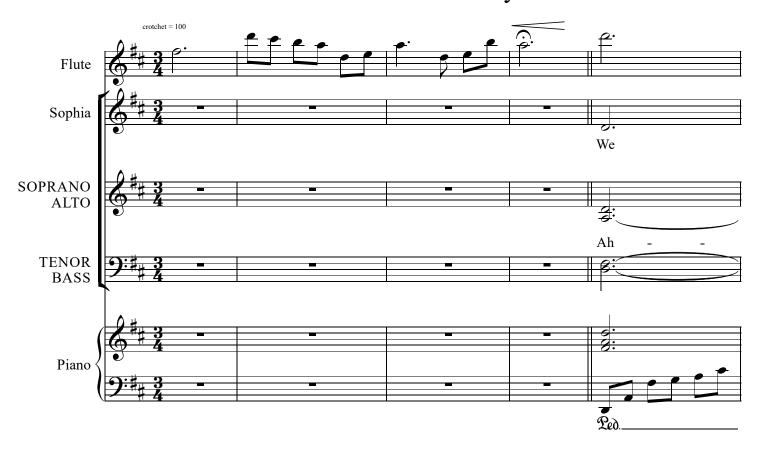


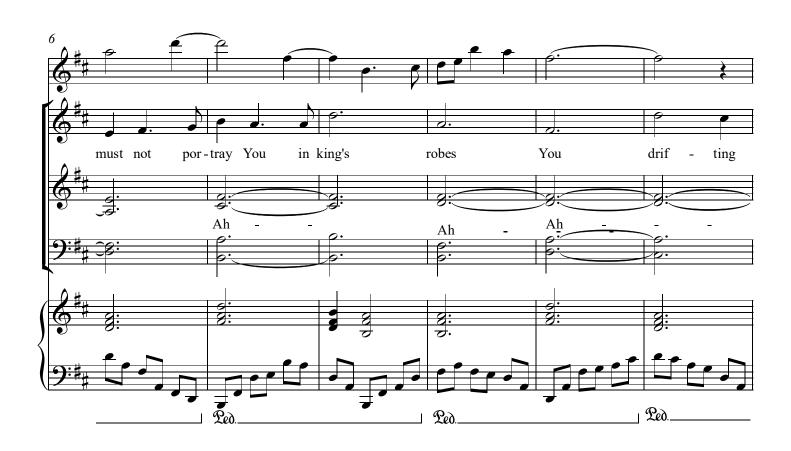
#4 In my distress





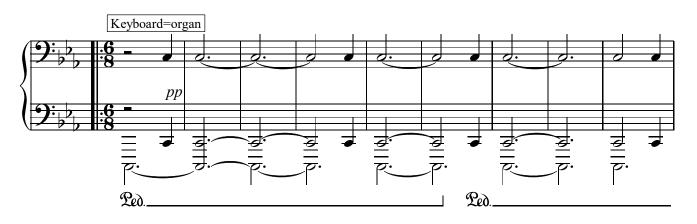
#6 We Must Not Portray

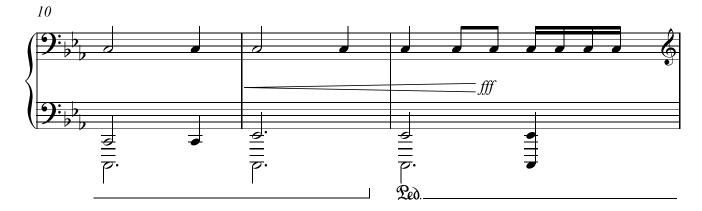


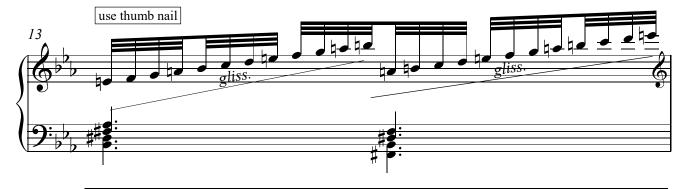


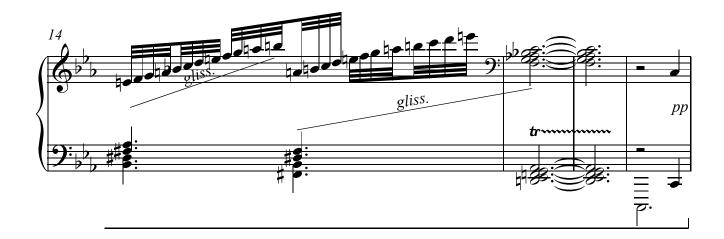
#13 Nightmare(piano) (and incidental throughout as needed)

Nb This is the basic score for the nightmare sequence but there may need to be additional (or less) bars of the sustained C chord before the glissandi bars (to fit in with the action on stage)









#34 Don't go back to sleep

Rumi

