

Dearly beloved! | Joshua Groffman
for soprano, cello, and live electronics

Dearly beloved! was written for Lucy Dhegrae and reflects our mutual interest in the idea of “spiritual ecology,” the exploration of the links between the world around us and the world within us. In the text set here, the mystic and poet Ibn ‘Arabi asks “Why do you not see me? Why do you not hear me?”—a question we read as an appeal from the Earth to its human inhabitants. In the soprano melismas and lushness of the electronic textures, I hope *Dearly beloved!* will resonate with the natural beauty of the world around us, while the violent energy of the cello delves into the ways humans alter, and sometimes harm, that beauty. The work is organized around a rising third, at first a declamation (the opening “Dearly beloved!”) and later an anguished wail (“Why can you not reach me?”). The end is a quiet enigma; the soprano’s final “Why?” fades into the electronics, our final relation to the world around us left an open-ended question.

Text

Dearly beloved!
I have called you so often and you have not heard me.
I have shown myself to you so often and you have not seen me.
I have made myself fragrance so often, and you have not smelled me,
Savourous food, and you have not tasted me.
Why can you not reach me through the object you touch
or breathe me through sweet perfumes?
Why do you not see me? Why do you not hear me?
Why? Why? Why?

Original poem by Ibn ‘Arabi appears in translation in *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi* by Henry Corbin. Used by permission of Princeton University Press.

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