

LUIS ESCAREÑO

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# BLUETS

a multimedia work based on the book by  
**MAGGIE NELSON**

SFNEWMUSIC PUBLISHING

**LUIS ESCAREÑO**

# **BLUETS**

**(INSTRUCTIONS AND SCORE)  
(NOT FOR SALE)**

a multimedia work  
for electric guitar, percussion, & laptop  
(live narrator and electronics optional)  
text by Maggie Nelson

**(2013)**

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**SFNEWMUSIC PUBLISHING  
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**Movement I: It Began Slowly**

1. Suppose I were to begin by saying that I had fallen in love with a color. Suppose I were to speak this as though it were a confession; suppose I shredded my napkin as we spoke. It began slowly. An appreciation, an affinity. Then one day, it became more serious. Then... it became somehow personal.

2. And so I fell in love with a color – in this case, the color blue as if falling under a spell, a spell I fought to stay under and get out from under, in turns.

36. Goethe describes blue as a lively color, but one devoid of gladness. "It may be said to disturb rather than enliven." Is to be in love with blue, then, to be in love with disturbance? Or is the love itself the disturbance? And what kind of madness is it anyway, to be in love with something constitutionally incapable of loving you back?

**Movement II: The Photograph**

18. A warm afternoon in early spring, New York City. We went to the Chelsea Hotel to fuck. Afterward from the window of our room, I watched a blue tarp on a roof across the way flap in the wind. You slept, so it was my secret. It was a smear of the quotidian, a bright blue flake amidst all the dank providence. It was the only time I came. It was essentially our lives. It was Shaking.

16. One of the last times you came to see me, you were wearing a pale blue button-down shirt, short-sleeved. I wore this for you, you said. We fucked for six hours straight that afternoon, which does not seem precisely possible but that is what the clock said. We killed the time. You were on your way to a seaside town, a town of much blue, where you would be spending a week with the other woman you were in love with, the woman you are with now. I'm in love with both of you in completely different ways, you said. It seems unwise to contemplate this statement any further.

17. "How clearly I have seen my condition, yet how childishly I have acted," says Goethe's sorrowful young Werther. "How clearly I still see it, and yet show no signs of improvement."

18. Not long after that afternoon I came across the a photograph of you with this woman. You were wearing the shirt. I went over to the house of my injured friend and told her the story as I moved her legs in and out of inflatable, thigh-high boots she wears to compress her legs while lying down so as to inhibit the formation of blood clots. How ghastly, she said.

**Movement III: Blue Light**

47. Is there a good kind of hustler? I wonder, as I steer my car through the forest of gargantuan billboards, ghostly palm trees, and light-flattened boulevards that have become my life.

48. Imagine, for example, someone who fucks like a whore. Someone who seems good at it, professional. Someone you can still see fucking you, in the mirror, always in the mirror, crazy fucking about three feet away, in an apartment lit by blue light, never lit by daylight, this person is always fucking you from behind in blue light and you both always seem good at it, dedicated and lost unto it, as if there is no other activity on God's given earth your bodies know how to do except fuck and be fucked like this, in this dim blue light, in this mirror. What do you call someone who fucks this way?

49. There is a color inside of fucking, but it is not blue.

**Movement IV: Blue-eye archaic**

90. Last night I wept in a way I haven't wept for some time. I wept until I aged myself. I watched it happen in the mirror. I watched the lines arrive around my eyes like engraved sunbursts; it was like watching flowers open in time-lapse on a windowsill. The tears not only aged my face, they also changed its texture, turned the skin of my cheeks into putty. I recognized this as a rite of decadence, but I did not know how to stop it.

91. Blue-eye, archaic: "a blueness or dark circle around the eye, from weeping or other cause."

92. Eventually I confess to a friend some details about my weeping – It's intensity, its frequency. She says (kindly) that she thinks we sometimes weep in front of a mirror not to inflame self-pity, but because we want to feel witnessed in our despair. (Can a reflection be a witness? Can one pass oneself the sponge wet with vinegar from a reed?)

**Movement V: The memory of whiteness**

203. I remember, in the eighties, when crack first hit the scene, hearing all kinds of horror stories about how if you smoked it even once, the memory of its unbelievable high would live on in your system forever, and you would thus never again be able to be content without it. I have no idea if this is true, but I will admit that it scared me off the drug. In the years since, I have sometimes found myself wondering if the same principle applies in other realms – if seeing a particularly astonishing shade of blue, for example, or letting a particularly potent person inside of you could alter you irrevocably, just to have seen or felt it. In which case, how does one know when, or how, to refuse? How to recover?

197. I suppose it is possible that one day we will meet again and it will feel as if nothing ever happened between us. This seems unimaginable, but the fact is that it happens all the time. "No whiteness (lost) is so white as the memory / of whiteness," wrote Williams. But one can lose the memory of whiteness, too.

199. For to wish to forget how much you loved someone and then, to actually forget – can feel, at times, like the slaughter of a beautiful bird who chose, by nothing short of grace, to make a habitat of your heart. I have heard that this pain can be converted, as it were, by accepting "the fundamental impermanence of all things." This acceptance bewilders me: sometimes it seems an act of will; at others of surrender. Often I feel myself to be rocking between them (seasickness.)

**Movement VI: Love is not a consolation**

238. I want you to know, if you ever read this, there was a time when I would rather have had you by my side than any one of these words; I would rather have had you by my side than all the blue in the world.

239. But now you are talking as if love were a consolation. Simone Weil warned otherwise. "Love is not a consolation," she wrote. "It is light."

240. All right then, let me rephrase. When I was alive, I aimed to be a student not of longing, but of light.

(2003 - 2006)

written for the Living Earth Show

# BLUETS

For Electric Guitar, Percussion & Laptop

## Mvt I. It Began Slowly...

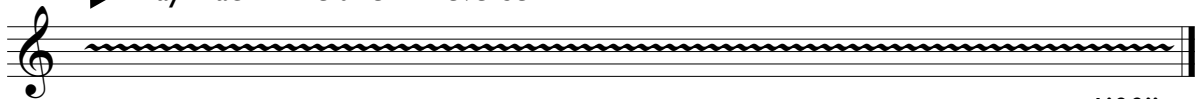
Text by  
**MAGGIE NELSON**

Music & Sound Design By  
**LUIS ESCAREÑO**

Guitar & Percussion Tacet

▶ Play Track - Prelude in Reverse

Laptop



1'00"

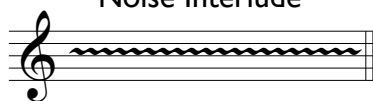
Projected Text:

1. Suppose I were to begin by saying that I had fallen in love with a color. Suppose I were to speak this as though it were a confession; suppose I shredded my napkin as we spoke. It began slowly. An appreciation, an affinity. Then one day, it became more serious. Then (looking into an empty teacup, its bottom stained with thin brown excrement coiled into the shape of a sea horse) it became somehow personal.

2. And so I fell in love with a color – in this case, the color blue – as if falling under a spell, a spell I fought to stay under and get out from under, in turns.

Noise Interlude

Laptop

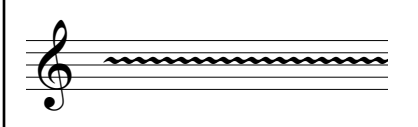


5"

# Mvt II. The Photograph

▶ Play Track: The Photograph

Laptop

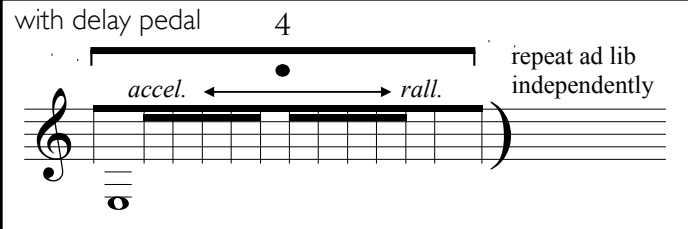


“A warm afternoon in early spring...”

→

Guitar

with delay pedal 4



repeat ad lib independently

→

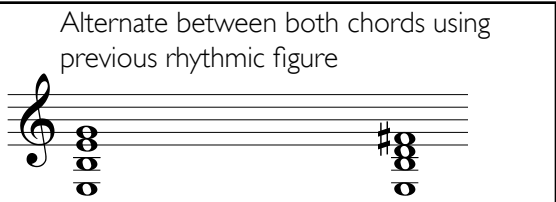
“You slept so it was my secret...”

L. (continued)

→

G.

Alternate between both chords using previous rhythmic figure

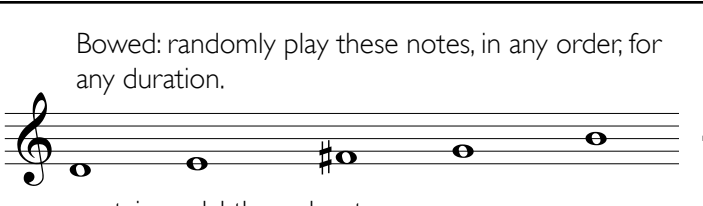


Randomly Arpeggiate (create a rumble)

→

V.

Bowed: randomly play these notes, in any order, for any duration.



sustain pedal throughout

→

Mvt. II. The Photograph

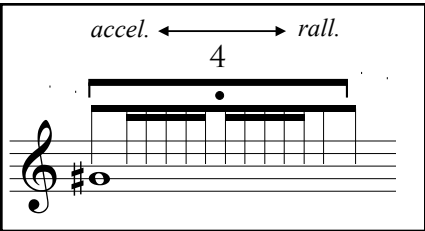
“It seems unwise to contemplate this statement any further...”

(continued)

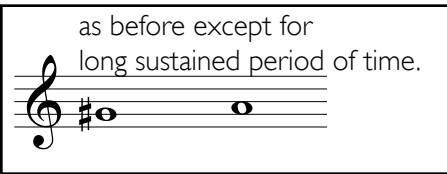
L. 

Projected Text:

“How clearly I have seen my condition, yet how childishly I have acted, how clearly I still see it, and yet show no signs of improvement.” (Goethe’s The Sorrow’s of Young Werther)

G. 

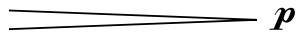
Sparingly interpolate this figure between previous chord changes

V. 

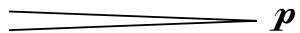
as before except for long sustained period of time.

V. 

L. (continued)  “How ghastly she said.”

 *p*

G. (continued) 

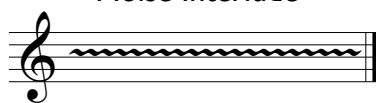
 *p*

Z (continued) 

 *p*

Noise Interlude

Laptop



5"



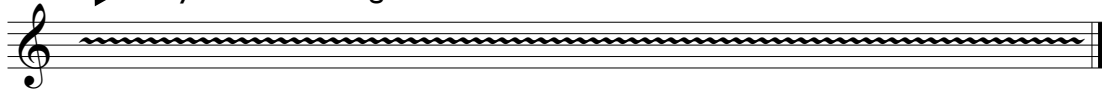
### Mvt. III: Blue Light

Guitar & Percussion Tacet

▶ Play Track: Blue Light

“Is there a good kind of hustler?”

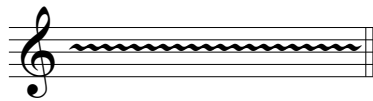
Laptop



1'50"

Noise Interlude

Laptop

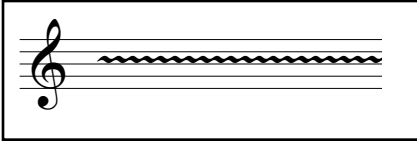


5"

Blank Page

# Mvt. IV: Blue-Eye

▶ Play Track: Blue-Eye

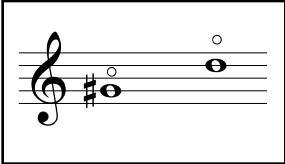
Laptop  "Last night..." →

"...but I did not know how to stop it."

L. (continued) (silence) →

Projected Text:

Blue-Eye *n.* (archaic): a blueness or dark circle around the eye, from weeping or other cause.

G.  alternate between notes at long random intervals of time →

P. Bowed cymbal throughout silence →

"Eventually I confess..."

L. (continued) →

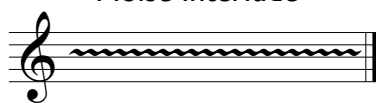
G. →

P. Stop bowing Cymbal but allow to ring. →



Noise Interlude

Laptop



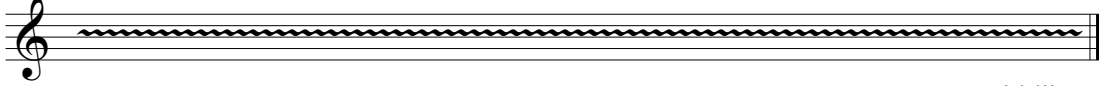
5"

## Mvt.V: Memory

Guitar & Percussion Tacet

▶ Play Track: Blue Light

Laptop



1'44"

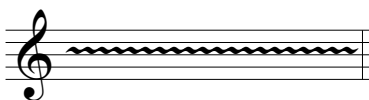
Projected Text (57"):

“Not whiteness (lost) is so white as the memory / of whiteness”

-William Carlos Williams

Noise Interlude

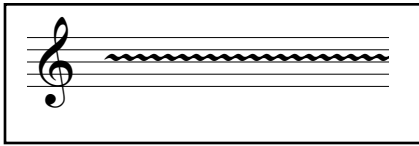
Laptop



# Mvt. VI: ... It is Light

▶ Play Track: Love is not a consolation

Laptop

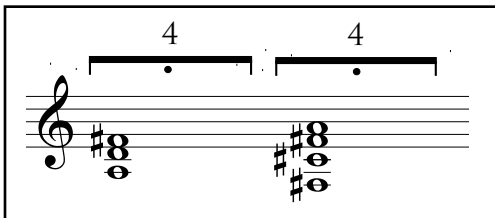


(silence)

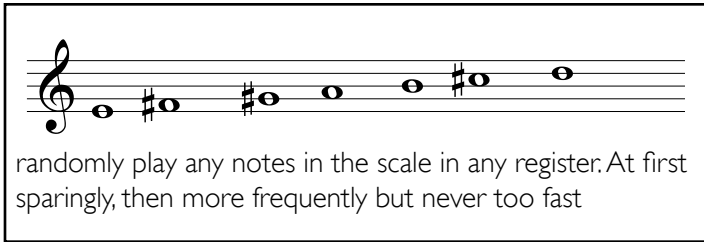
Projected Text:

I want you to know, if you ever read this, there was a time when I would rather have had you by my side than any one of these words; I would rather have had you by my side than all the blue in the world.

Guitar



Vibraphone



avoid creating melodic patterns, play as if every note were a burst of light and color

“But now you are talking...”

(continued)

L.



(continued)

G.



(continued)

V.

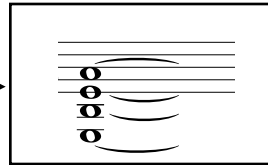


Mvt. VI: ... It is Light

"... but of light."  
(continued)



approx. 12" after "...but of light."



play and allow to ring until the end.

(continued)



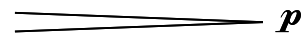
L. (continued)



G. (continued)



*rall.* the frequency of the notes



1'20"

## **LUIS ESCAREÑO**

Mexican born composer Luis Escareño (b.1989) began his formal music studies on Viola. His compositional writing reflects much of the world music he studied under percussionist Randy Gloss, with a particular musical emphasis on timbre, rhythm, pulse and elements of improvisation. In the spring of 2010 the Glendale Philharmonic String Quartet premiered his work, "Reflections of Lost Plains." The piece was featured as part of the Glendale Philharmonic concert series, "Positive Motions."

Luis has written and arranged for various ensembles and artists including Ruslan Biryukov, Nonsemble 6, and Bunnies and Kitties. In 2013 Luis collaborated with the Bay Area guitar and percussion duo, The Living Earth Show (Travis Andrews, Andrew Meyerson), as well as Los Angeles based artist Christopher Mesa, to bring to life a multi-media work based on the book *Bluets* by Maggie Nelson. Currently he is working on a work for the Los Angeles Cello Quartet, as well as an orchestral work for John Marshall High School's annual Bach Rock and Shakespeare festival (Greek Theater in Los Angeles)

Luis is a founding members of the bay area concert promoter SFNewMusic, where he serves as Artistic Director of their Sounds of the America's concert series. He has also served as president of the LACC Composers Club, an organization which helps inner city youth acquire recordings of their compositions. Luis has performed in the Los Angeles area with folk artists such as Bunnies and Kitties, and Homesick Elephant. He has studied composition with Dr. David Conte, Dr. Kevin Kelly, Dr. Daniel Wanner and Dr. Matthew McGaughey, and Chamber Music with Christine Park. Viola with Keith Barry, and Alexander Kalman. Currently he resides in the Bay Area, studying composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Conrad Susa.



Other Works By  
**LUIS ESCAREÑO**

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**I was born on August 7th 1989 (2013)**

for two iPads (synthesizers) and narrator(s)

**Kyrie Eleison (2013)**

for SATB choir

**T & V on a M.F.T. (2013)**

for contrabassoon

**Choose Your Arsenal (2013)**

6 pieces for interchangeable percussion

**Among the Trees that Shake the Earth (2012)**

for string orchestra with percussion

**Across the Blue Ridge (2011)**

for two violas, banjo & double bass

**Creation Growth and Decay (2011)**

for flute, clarinet, violin, cello & piano

**Voices in Abandoned Rooms (2010)**

for guitar duo

**Intersections (2010)**

for clarinet and cello

**Reflections of Lost Plains (2010)**

for string quartet

**On the Plains that Have Since Flooded (2009)**

for solo viola

**The Fountain (2009)**

for mezzo-soprano & piano  
text by Federico García Lorca