

# **The Sea Hold**

Music by Katie Kring

Text by Carl Sandberg

## ABOUT THIS PIECE

Carl Sandburg's 1918 poem "The Sea Hold" is a mesmerizing text, blending mundane details of life on the Chesapeake – fish fries, tar-paper shacks, clam boats, oyster beds – with a vast looming sense of the boundless expanse of the sea. I can only hope to have done it justice. -- KK

THE SEA is large.

The sea hold on a leg of land in the Chesapeake hugs an early sunset and a last morning star over the oyster beds and the late clam boats of lonely men. Five white houses on a half-mile strip of land ... five white dice rolled from a tube.

Not so long ago ... the sea was large...  
And to-day the sea has lost nothing ... it keeps all.

I am a loon about the sea.  
I make so many sea songs, I cry so many sea cries, I forget so many sea songs and sea cries.

I am a loon about the sea.  
So are five men I had a fish fry with once in a tar-paper shack trembling in a sand storm.

The sea knows more about them than they know themselves.  
They know only how the sea hugs and will not let go.

The sea is large.  
The sea must know more than any of us.

-- Carl Sandburg, "The Sea Hold" from *Cornhuskers*, 1918

# The Sea Hold

Poem by Carl Sandburg  
Music by Katie Krings

Flowing, haunting ♩ = 100

Soprano *mp* The sea is large. —

Alto *mp* The sea is large. —

Tenor *mp* The sea is large. —

Bass *mp* The sea is large. —

Piano *mp* *mp* *sim. sim.*

6 The sea is large. —

The sea is large. —

The sea is large. —

The sea is large. —

The sea is large. —

# The Sea Hold

12 *mp* *mf*

The sea - hold on a leg of land in the Ches-a-peake The sea - hold on a

*mp* *mf*

The sea - hold on a leg of land in the Ches-a-peake The sea - hold on a

*mp* *mf*

The sea - hold on a leg of land in the Ches-a-peake The sea - hold on a

*mf*

The sea is large

18 *mp*

leg of land in the Ches-a-peake hugs an ear - ly sun - set and a last morn - ing star ov - er the

*mp*

leg of land in the Ches-a-peake hugs an ear - ly sun - set and a last morn - ing star ov - er the

*mp*

leg of land in the Ches-a-peake hugs an ear - ly sun - set and a last morn - ing star ov - er the

*mp*

hugs an ear - ly sun - set and a last morn - ing star ov - er the

*p*

# The Sea Hold

25

*p*

oy - ster beds and the late clam boats of lone-ly men Five white

oy - ster beds and the late clam boats of lone-ly men Five white

oy - ster beds and the late clam boats of lone-ly men Five white

oy - ster beds and the late clam boats of lone-ly men

*mf*

32

hou - ses Five white dice rolled from a tube.

hou - ses on a half-mile strip of land... five white dice rolled from a tube.

hou - ses on a half-mile strip of land... five white dice rolled from a tube.

Five white hou - ses rolled from a tube.

*mp*

# The Sea Hold

38

*mp*

Not so long a-go... the sea was large so long a-go...

*mp*

*R.H.* *L.H.*

44

long a-go the sea was large and to-day the sea has lost noth-ing... it keeps

the sea was large and to-day the sea has lost noth-ing... it keeps

the sea was large and to-day the sea has lost noth-ing... it keeps

long a-go the sea was large and to-day the sea has lost noth-ing... it keeps

*p*

# The Sea Hold

♩ = 112

5

57

all I am a loon a - bout the sea. I am a  
all I am a loon a - bout the sea. I am a  
all I am a loon a - bout the sea. I am a  
all I am a loon a - bout the sea. I am a

The musical score for measures 57-60 consists of four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in unison, with lyrics: "all I am a loon a - bout the sea. I am a". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

58

loon a - bout the sea I make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries,  
loon a - bout the sea I make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries,  
loon a - bout the sea I make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries, I  
loon a - bout the sea I make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries, I

The musical score for measures 61-64 continues with the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "loon a - bout the sea I make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries, I". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *fz* (forzando).

65 *p* *mp*

Ah I cry so ma-ny sea cries I for - get so ma-ny

Ah I cry so ma-ny sea cries I for - get so ma-ny

8 make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries I for - get so ma-ny

make so ma-ny sea songs, I cry so ma-ny sea cries I for - get so ma-ny

72 *p*

sea songs and sea cries I am a loon a - bout the sea.

sea songs and sea cries I am a loon a - bout the sea.

sea songs and sea cries I am a loon a - bout the sea.

sea songs and sea cries I am a loon a - bout the sea.



# The Sea Hold

78

*p*

*mp*

So were five men I had a

*mp*

82

*mf*

I am a loon a - bout the sea \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

fish - fry with once, in a tar - pap - er shack trem - bling in a sand - storm So were five men I had a

*mf*

So were five men I had a

*mf*

# The Sea Hold

86 *f*

I am a loon a - bout the sea

fish - fry with once, in a tar - pap - er shack trem - bling in a sand - storm So were five men I had a

So were five men

fish - fry with once, in a tar - pap - er shack trem - bling in a sand - storm So were five men I had a

90 *Freely* *ppp*

The sea knows

fish - fry with once, in a tar - pap - er shack trem - bling in a sand - storm The sea knows

fish fry, fish fry tar - pap - er shack trem - bling in a sand storm The sea knows

fish - fry with once, in a tar - pap - er shack trem - bling in a sand - storm The sea knows

# The Sea Hold

94

*rit.*

more a-bout them than they know them-selves they know on-ly how the sea hugs and will not let

more a-bout them than they know them-selves they know on-ly how the sea hugs and will not let

8 more a-bout them than they know them-selves they know on-ly how the sea hugs and will not let

more a-bout them than they know them-selves they know on-ly how the sea hugs and will not let

100

**Freely**

$\text{♩} = 100$

go. The sea is large

go.

go.

go.

go. The sea is large

# The Sea Hold

105

The sea is large

*mf* The sea is large The sea is large

*mf* The sea is large The sea is large

The sea is large

110

*p rit.*

*p* The sea must know more than an - y of us

*p* The sea must know more than an - y of us

*p* The sea must know more than an - y of us

*p* The sea must know more than an - y of us

The sea must know more than an - y of us