

Program Notes for An Empty Place

(taken from the program notes for *Transformations of Darkness and Light*)

Transformations of Darkness and Light was commissioned by the National Kidney Foundation to commemorate fifty years of organ transplantation, and premiered on July 29, 2004, as part of the 2004 Transplant Games. The piece has four movements, each with a literary text relating to the varied emotional experiences of those whose lives have been affected by this lifesaving process. The word *Transformation* refers to the many personal changes in individual lives as well as the development of medical and surgical techniques over the last fifty years. The composition was conceived in the spirit of inspiration and hope. Composer Linda Tutas Haugen states: "My goal was to write an artistically excellent and meaningful piece of music that would be performed for many years to come. I hope this work will touch people's hearts through music, as well as raise awareness about transplantation, and the need for organ donors."

II. An Empty Place

In desperate hope I go and search for her in all the
corners of my room; I find her not.
My house is small and what once has gone from it
can never be regained.
But infinite is thy mansion, my lord, and seeking her
I have come to thy door.
I stand under the golden canopy of thine evening sky
and I lift my eager eyes to thy face.
I have come to the brink of eternity from which
nothing can vanish--no hope, no happiness, no vision
of a face seen through tears.
Oh, dip my emptied life into the ocean, plunge it
into the deepest fullness. Let me for once feel that lost
sweet touch in the allness of the universe.

Rabindranath Tagore, from *Gitanjali*, LXXXVII

The second movement reflects the losses involved in transplantation. The sudden deaths of donors, as well of the deaths of those who received transplants and died, their respective family experiences, and the losses endured by the surgeons and nurses, are honored in this movement. The musical material, like the Tagore text, reflects a deep grief, but also contains a significant sense of hope. This movement is set for strings only.