

Aubade Below the Bronze Horseman

After Alexandre Benois' "Bronze Horseman"

and Aleksandr Scriabin's Piano Concerto in

F# minor, Op. 60

I. Allegro

Allegro means of the music, brisk
like a late evening trot
under mist – simple taps
that reach above to the castle gate
– on cobblestone, taut ramparts
and filled gaps
and it's as if
the constable has come
with gravitas and weight
in his own drowning
orchestra.

Heavy come the strings
weighed down by drawbridge
chains and they part
for the imperial taps –
the church rings –
sounds out the regal frost
and caves in the heart.

He reigns and then reins
and stands there,
Equestrian, Grandiose and –
the church rings –
sounds out Tsar
in the cold of stone
echoes down
to bone and
forces a swell
from inside
the concert hall and
from inside the chest:
breath before the crescendo.

II. Andante

Outside a man runs out from beneath a shadow,
Clutches his hat with the whites of his teeth showing
And although he is running hard and fast
It is to his mother and there is light under his shoe and the
Last words he said to her were
Подожди меня (“Wait for me”) and tonight
He bursts forth from his heel, springing forward at the knee
Leaping almost... horizontally.

But alas it is night and albeit the fact that he is running,
There is mud in his shoe and shoes in the mud and when he pulls out from
The pop of the earth, he inches
Closer and closer to his awaiting blood—
о, мама, ты не спасешь его? (“Oh, mother, won’t you save him?”)

The dark beckons
And the piano plays a reckoning, percussive
And forewarning, each note a step further
And further down,
The dark beckons
And the violins cry—
The Tsar awaits.

He stands there,
Equestrian, Grandiose and –
The church rings –
Bell tolls at the end of Scriabin’s adagio,
Harsh and resounding.

– and there is light under his shoe.

III. Allegro Moderato

In Alexandre Benois' painting,
one cannot help but peek back
at the moon, half in the cloud
white on black and
simply gorgeous.

The cloud's edges are taken
by its luminescence, lunar lush
smeared by brush onto richly
somber canvas.

Below, the Bronze Horseman,
stiller than the cloud,
perpetually above,
silently loud –
I can hear the charger, the cold spittle
from out the mare's maw,
the climax of the orchestra as the Tsar
digs into its flanks
the roar of paint and horns
and the rise of the castle within
the horse
and the horseman and his arm:
straight and flattening.

Below the Bronze Horseman,
a man runs out from beneath a shadow
and into his own,
Great jaded night sky and romantic moon,
And
Below, the Bronze Horseman.