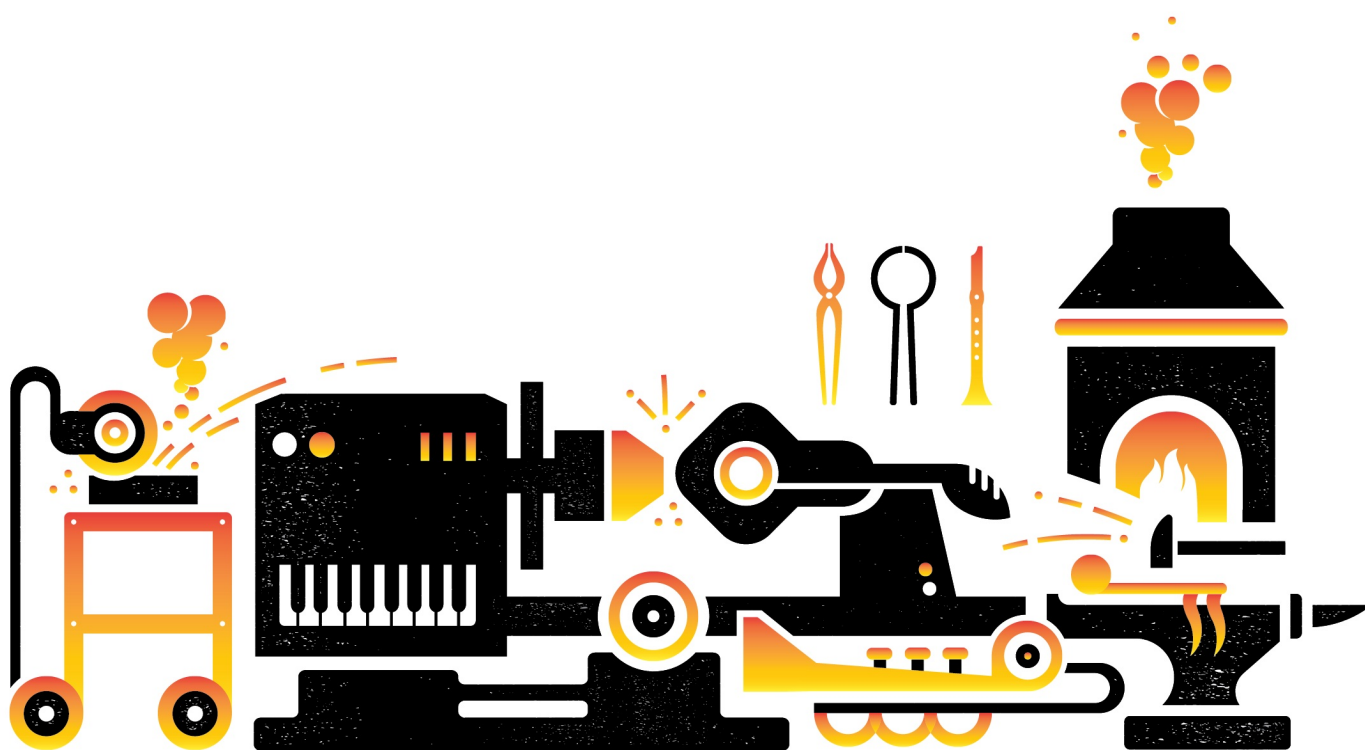




KYLE VANDERBURG

SMOKE IN A NORTH WIND

Voice and Piano





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Program Note:

I love setting American poetry, and I regret not discovering Carl Sandburg's wonderfully industrial and thought-provoking poetry sooner. *Smoke in a North Wind* sets several poems from Sandburg's *Cornhuskers* and *Smoke and Steel* that explore man's relationship to technology.

This song cycle was composed in collaboration with fellow composer Doug Harbin, who set the same six texts in the opposite order. At the premiere, Harbin's settings formed the first half of a mirror work, with mine forming the second. Each cycle may also be programmed independently.

Contents

I	I. Smoke
3	II. Manual System
6	III. Under a Telephone Pole
9	IV. Hats
11	V. Prayers of Steel
14	VI. Smoke

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Duration: 9'30"

This work was engraved by NoteForge in Fargo. The music is set in Norfolk, provided by NYC Music Services. The text is set in Vollkorn, designed by Friedrich Althausen. The title font is Sonder Sans by Andrew Herndon. The cover was designed by Jamie Trosen Design + Creative.

noteforge.com

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I. Smoke

I sit in a chair and read the newspapers.

Millions of men go to war, acres of them are
buried, guns and ships broken, cities burned,
villages sent up in smoke, and children where
cows are killed off amid hoarse barbecues vanish
like finger-rings of smoke in a north wind.

I sit in a chair and read the newspapers.

II. Manual System

Mary has a thingamajig clamped on her ears
And sits all day taking plugs out and sticking
plugs in.
Flashes and flashes—voices and voices
calling for ears to pour words in
Faces at the ends of wires asking for other faces
at the ends of other wires:
All day taking plugs out and sticking plugs in,
Mary has a thingamajig clamped on her ears

III. Under a Telephone Pole

I am a copper wire slung in the air,
Slim against the sun I make not even a clear line
of shadow.
Night and day I keep singing—humming and
thrumming:
It is love and war and money; it is the fighting
and the
tears, the work and want,
Death and laughter of men and women passing
through
me, carrier of your speech,
In the rain and the wet dripping, in the dawn and
the
shine drying,
A copper wire.

IV. Hats

Hats, where do you belong?
what is under you?

On the rim of a skyscraper's forehead
I looked down and saw: hats: fifty
thousand hats:
Swarming with a noise of bees and sheep,
cattle and waterfalls,
Stopping with a silence of sea grass, a
silence of prairie corn.
Hats: tell me your high hopes.

V. Prayers of Steel

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a
skyscraper together.

Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the
central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a
skyscraper through blue nights into white
stars.

VI. Grass

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and
Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask
the conductor:

What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.



for Mara Campbell, again

SMOKE IN A NORTH WIND

Carl Sandburg

I. Smoke

Kyle Vanderburg
(2026)

Unaffected, indifferent ($\text{♩} = 72$)

Soprano

Piano

f *mf*

I sit in a chair_ and read the

news-pa - pers

spoken, ad lib.

mf

Mill-ions of men go to war a-cres of

them are bur-ied, guns and ships bro-ken

cit-ies_ burned vil-a-ges sent up in smoke, and

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II

child-ren where cows are killed off a-mid hoarse bar-be-cues van-ish like fin-ger-rings of smoke in a

This system contains measures 11 through 14. The vocal line features a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of whole rests in both the right and left hands.

15

north wind. I

This system contains measures 15 through 17. The vocal line has a whole rest in measure 15, followed by a half note in measure 16, and a quarter note in measure 17. The piano accompaniment features a melody starting in measure 15, with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking in measure 16. A large watermark "PERUSAL SCORE" and "NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PERFORMANCE" is visible across the page.

18

sit in a chair and read the news-pa - pers

This system contains measures 18 and 19. The vocal line includes triplet markings over the words "chair" and "news-pa - pers". The piano accompaniment features a melody with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in measure 18 and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic in measure 19. A large watermark "PERUSAL SCORE" and "NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PERFORMANCE" is visible across the page.

II. Manual System

3

Carl Sandburg

Kyle Vanderburg
(2026)

Garrulous (♩ = 120)

S. *mf* Mar-y has a thing-a-ma-jig —

Pno. *f* *mp* *mf*

5 clamped on her ears and sits all day tak-ing plugs out and stick-ing plugs in

10 flash-es and flash - es voi-ces and voi-ces call-ing for ears to pour

f

14

mf

words in fa-ces at the end of wi-res.

19

f

ask-ing for oth-er fa-ces at the end of oth-er wi-res all

p *mf*

24

p

day tak-ing plugs out and stick-ing plugs in

p

28

f

Mar-y has a thing-a-ma-jig_____ clamped on her

f

3

3

3

32

ears

3

3

3

3

III. Under a Telephone Pole

Carl Sandburg

Kyle Vanderburg
(2026)

Seemingly Trivial (♩ = 92)

S. *mp*
I am a cop-per wi-re_

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp*

7
slung in the air, slim a-against the sun I make not ev-en

12
a clear line of line of sha-dow. Night_and day_____ I keep

17 **molto accel.** **Serious** ($\text{♩} = 135$) ***f***

sing - ing _____ It is love and war and mo-ney; it is

mf

22

fight-ing and the tears the work and the want it is death and it's laugh-ter of men and of wo-men

3 3 3

26 **A Tempo Plus** ($\text{♩} = 100$)

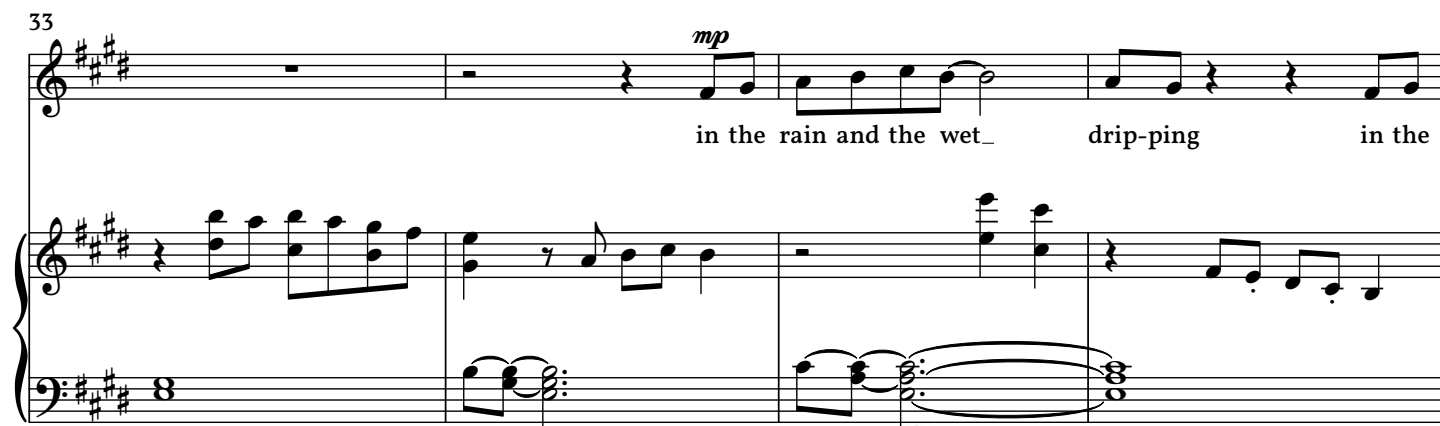
pass-ing through me through me car-ri-er of your speech

3 3

mp

33 *mp*

in the rain and the wet_ drip-ping in the



37 *molto rit.* *mf*

dawn and the shine dry ing a cop per wi - re.



IV. Hats

9

Carl Sandburg

Kyle Vanderburg
(2026)

Swing (♩ = 112)

S. *f* Hats, where do you be

Pno. *f* *mf*

6 long? — what is un-der you? On the rim of a sky-scraper's fore-head

10 *mf* *f* *gliss.* I looked down and saw hats: fif-ty thou-sand hats:

f *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

16

Swarm-ing with a noise of bees and sheep of cat-tle and wat-er - falls, —

mf *tr* *p* *mp* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

20

stop-ing with a si-lence of sea grass, a si-lence of prai-rie corn

mp *p*

25

Hats: tell me your high — hopes.

mf *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *fff* 3

V. Prayers of Steel

Carl Sandburg

Kyle Vanderburg
(2026)

Devotedly (♩ = 80) *mp sempre*

S. Lay me on an an-vil, O God.

Pno. *mp sempre*

6 Beat me and ham-mer me in-to a crow-bar. Let me pry loose old walls

II let me lift and loo-sen old foun-da-tions. Lay me on an an-vil, O God.

16

Beat me and ham-mer me in-to a steel spike. Drive me in-to the gir-ders that

This system contains measures 16 through 20. The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Beat me and ham-mer me in-to a steel spike. Drive me in-to the gir-ders that". The piano accompaniment consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The right hand plays chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line.

21

hold a sky-scraper to-get-her. Take red hot riv-ets and fast-en me in-to the cent-ral gird-ers.

This system contains measures 21 through 24. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "hold a sky-scraper to-get-her. Take red hot riv-ets and fast-en me in-to the cent-ral gird-ers." The piano accompaniment features triplets in both hands in measures 23 and 24. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes, and the left hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *mf* is present above the vocal line in measure 23.

25

Let me be the great nail hold-ing a sky-scraper

This system contains measures 25 through 28. The vocal line begins with the lyrics: "Let me be the great nail hold-ing a sky-scraper". The piano accompaniment includes triplets in measures 25 and 26. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes, and the left hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The dynamic markings *ff* and *mf* are present in measures 25 and 26 respectively.

29

mp rit.

through blue nights in-to white stars.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 29-32) features a vocal line with lyrics 'through blue nights in-to white stars.' and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 33-34) continues the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'mp' (moderato) and the dynamics include 'rit.' (ritardando).

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VI. Grass

Carl Sandburg

Kyle Vanderburg

(2026)

Solemn (♩ = 66)

S. *p* *mp*

Pi-le the bo-dies high at Aus-ter-litz and

Pno. *p*

9 *p* *mp*

Wa-ter-loo. Sho-vel them un-der and let me work I am the grass;

16 *p* *mp*

I cov-er all. And pi-le them high at Get-tys-burg And

24

pi-le them high at Y-pres and Ver-dun. Sho-vel them un-der and let me work.

31

Two years, ten years, and pass-en-gers ask the con-duct-or_

40

What place is this? Where are we now? I am the grass. Let me work.

mp *p* *pp*

mp *p*

August 26, 2026
 Fargo, North Dakota
 Duration: 9'40"