I. A Primer for Those Who Have Dealings with the Gods

Andante flessibile (♩ = 52)

first the cat is stretching in the sun, kneading her paws. The

low sun streaks the table, gilds the loom, the room where work is done. Tell

plainly what you see, the stable household. These things are the

sunlight’s altars, unaltered and specific,

splendid flecks of constancy. For the gods all

this is neither here nor there. They prefer

rhetoric, the breath of force. They take nothing on faith. Ah.

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Here are the slim margins they reserve for us. Ah,

We are the stage-set for their play of metapho-sis. They are all nerve, the sway of branches in your yard.

When they approach, a slipping knot of cunning,

Of - fer what you can least af-ford, a shard, some loved thing.

Show what can’t be un-done.

II. Arachne’s Boast

Allegretto semplice (\( \frac{1}{4} = 56 \))

I was a girl when I took to this craft of thread en-twined with thread,

A-the-ne’s gift. She taught my weft to fol-low the shut-tle’s lead. I

learned too well, too well for her. More deft, ah, sur-er in skill and
speed, I no longer weave to her design, ah, no longer weave the

landscape where power re-sides, our shim-m’ring coast where the di-vine

ruth-less-ness, like a tide, floods, floods

a tempo

like a tide, floods and floods. Why waste my fine

talent to praise, praise, praise a

lie? I’ve learned to grasp the mo-ment when the gods’ de-ceits are made

plain, when Zeus’ eagle, bull, and swan are gone. See what re-

mains: some tang-led girl, like a thread that turns at the sel-vage,

turns, turns again. Ah.
III. Athene’s Song

Con fuoco (\( \dot{=} 80 \))

Listen, Arachne, my old apprentice who would reject me, bold, so impatient to be the master that you have shirked the simplest tasks, ah, back, ah,

back to work. Arachne, In Circe’s house my loom is busy, perked ears, broad snouts on the crew of Dysseus. Ah, ah, Perseus hoists Medusa’s head above the feast as my shuttle speeds, and see, those gluttons sit stone-still,