

THE BOOK OF RICHARD

A short collection of text pieces for a dear friend

Conceived and compiled by Katherine Ryan Ayres

Foreword

In the five years I have lived in Denton, TX, I have made some truly amazing friends. This book is dedicated to one of them.

To Richard:

Thank you for every day you put up with me. Thank you for listening to me stress out about making bassoon reeds when I was a freshman at UNT; thank you for braving the elements with me to get food when my pantry was empty during the Great Icepocalypse of 2014; thank you for putting up with me playing Philip Glass' *Agua da Amazonia* on your piano for literally hours at a time, and for possibly developing a mild case of Stockholm Syndrome to Glass' work as a result; thank you for writing the wonderful pieces you do, and by so doing, challenging me to push my own art into new territory; thank you for all the late-night food runs; thank you for introducing me to *Sailorwave*, the album that has singlehandedly hijacked the trajectory of my artistic output and made me the composer and artist I am today. Thank you for a lot of things. This short book is for you.

To the prospective performer:

The collection of pieces in this book is broken up into nine sections. Any piece from any of the first eight sections may be realized on its own without the context of the others in the section. The final section, "Transience Piece," must be realized in sequence, without interruption.

Some of the pieces are more musically technical than others. If the instructions of any piece are unclear, do the requisite research before performance. For the third piece of the section "Using Others' Materials," I recommend YouTube as a primary resource.

The goal of the pieces in this collection is not to create the most groundbreaking set of conceptual works known to man. It is merely a creative response and expression of gratitude to one of the most influential people in my life for the past five years. Don't read too much into the likeness of the pieces to the work of other conceptual artists (or lack thereof).

- Katherine Ryan Ayres, July 2017

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Katherine Ryan Ayres (2017, rev. 2026)

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Slow Change of State

1. Begin completely calm, relaxed, and stable. Scream until it hurts. Make yourself angry.
2. Slow your breathing down over a long time while lying on your back in a dark room. Do not close your eyes.



Static Pieces

1. Think only one thought for 30 minutes.
2. Think the same thought for 30 minutes.
3. Think a lot of things in 30 minutes.
4. Don't think at all for 30 minutes.



Revealing Pieces

1. Break down in front of somebody. Don't let them leave until it's over.
2. Watch somebody break down. Don't leave until it's over.



Familiar and Unfamiliar Pieces

1. Be home in an unfamiliar place for a day.
2. Act a guest at home for a day.



Pieces for Thoughts Only

1. Fly to the farthest possible place you can. Take nothing with you. Stay for 2 weeks.
2. Carry everything you own for a distance of 50 feet. Enlist no help.
3. Walk to the place you drive most often instead of driving there.
4. Break your most monetarily valuable thing.



Imagination and the Inner Ear

1. Sit cross-legged in the center of a room with your eyes close. Imagine you are falling.
2. Outside, jump vertically with as much force as you can. Imagine that instead of landing, the ground does not meet your feet and you continue to fall.
3. Lie face-first on a steeply inclined plexiglass or other reasonably clear surface ($>60^\circ$) with your head tilted away from the ground. Imagine it disappearing from in front of you.
4. Lie face-first on a moderately inclined plexiglass or other reasonably clear surface (between 24° and 36°) elevated at least one foot off the ground at its lowest point, with your head at the lower end. Imagine the surface disappearing from under you.
5. Climb into a very small space. Imagine it begins to shrink.
6. Go to a very open space (a park, open field, desert, etc.). Fixate your vision on a specific landmark on the horizon. Take time to feel comfortable with that landmark's distance from you. Imagine it is now three times farther away.



Using Other's Materials

1. Perform the first 7 measures of a short piece of standard repertoire Classical music (arrangements are permissible). Repeat the 7 measures 45 times.
2. Realize the harmonic progression ii-V-I on a monophonic instrument over and over again, one note per chord, gradually adding each chord's tertian and chromatic extensions until any note can precede or follow any other.
3. Perform "the lick" in the vein of John Cage's *ASLSP* (1985). Harmonization is allowed but not necessary.
4. Perform or otherwise present through any acoustic or acousmatic means any early 12-tone piece by Arnold Schoenberg. For every note in each presentation of the melodic row, add a liner enclosure. Additions may be diatonic, modal, or chromatic, to taste.



Simple Pieces at Any Tempo

1. Play the best possible note.
2. Play the best possible sequence of two notes.
3. Play the best possible sequence of three notes.
4. Play the best possible sequence of four notes.
- N. To perform any subsequent arbitrarily numbered piece “N,” play the best possible sequence of N notes.



Transience Piece

A suite in eight parts, one piece per day

1. Create the best piece of art you can today.
2. Improve the piece.
3. Improve the piece.
4. Improve the piece.
5. Improve the piece.
6. Improve the piece.
7. Show the piece to one person.
8. Destroy the piece.

