

HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS WHEN WAKING  
(aria for Baritone)

from

THE GOLDEN GATE

opera in two acts

music by  
CONRAD CUMMINGS

libretto from the novel-in-verse by  
VIKRAM SETH  
adapted by the composer





## **Composer's Note**

Vikram Seth's best-selling novel-in-verse about love and loss in San Francisco in the 1980's, "The Golden Gate," touches on all the nostalgia I feel for my home town and reminds me acutely of the adventures of my younger life. Boys with girls, boys with boys, it's all there, along with the exhilaration and the heartbreak. Seth's verse makes these experiences sing; I've tried to capture in music their unique mixture of pathos and humor.

## **Feel Free to Contact Me**

Singers and pianists should feel free to contact me at [conrad@conradcumplings.com](mailto:conrad@conradcumplings.com) with any questions, reactions, or thoughts. I am always open to suggestions about customizing the vocal line to best suit your voice.

## **Synopsis**

Five twenty-somethings experience love, life, and loss in the magical and innocent San Francisco of the early 1980's. JOHN BROWN (baritone), handsome and successful, will discover too late the price of his emotional detachment. He meets LIZ DORATI (soprano) through a personals ad placed by his former college girlfriend JANET HAYAKAWA (mezzo), a sculptor and punk rock drummer. Meanwhile, John's best friend from college PHILIP WEISS (bass), reeling from a divorce which has left him the single parent of six-year-old PAUL WEISS (spoken role), begins a passionate relationship with ED DORATI (tenor), Liz's younger brother. Couples come apart; new couples form, families are created, friendships are severed. A tragic death leads John, always the outsider, to the promise of a deeper connection and a warmer life.

## **Where the Aria Comes in the Opera**

John wakes to a peaceful morning beside sleeping Liz. Light streams in from the bay windows of the San Francisco flat they have just moved into together. He remembers their love making of the night before.



JOHN:

How beautiful it is, when waking,  
To find one's lover at one's side;  
The delicate slow light is breaking  
Irresolutely through the wide  
Bay windows of the bedroom, falling  
On Liz's hair, and I'm recalling  
How last night she untied it, how  
It flowed between my hands; but now  
She lies asleep, unswiftly breathing;  
Her thoughts are not with me, her dreams  
Traverse the solitary streams  
Of inward lands, yet her hair, wreathing  
The pillow in a mesh of light,  
Returns to me the fugitive night.

— from Vikram Seth's novel-in-verse "The Golden Gate," Chapter 6, Verse 1



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## (aria for Baritone)

version 6/28/15

music by CONRAD CUMMINGS

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$\text{♩} = 42$

John (Baritone)

*p*

how beau-ti-ful it is, when wak-ing to find one's

Piano

*pp*

5

John

*mf* *p*

lov-er at one's side. The del-i-cate slow light is break-ing ir-res-o-lute-ly through the

Pno.

*p*

8 *mf* *p*

John

wide bay win-dows of the bed-room. fall-ing on Liz - 's hair, and I'm re -

Pno. *mf* *p*

11 *Piu mosso*  
♩ = 52  
*poco*

John

cal-ling how last night she un - tied it, how it flowed be-tween my hands. But now she lies a-

Pno.

14 *poco rallent* ----- *a tempo*  
♩ = 52

John

sleep, un-swift-ly breath-ing. Her thoughts are not with me. Her

Pno. *p* *mf* *p*



*poco accel* ----- 3

*cresc* -----

18

John

dreams tra-verse the sol - i - tar - y streams of in-ward lands, yet her hair, wreath ing the

Pno.

----- ♩ = 58 rit. ----- ♩ = 48 tempo primo  
↓  
♩ = 42

John

pil-low in a mesh of light re - turns to me the fu - gi - tive night, re-

Pno.

25

John

turns to me the fu - gi - tive night, re-

Pno.

*p*  
*piu mosso*  
♩ = 52  
↓  
*molto espressivo*

29

John

*f* *p* *rall.*

turns to me the fu - gi - tive night,

Pno.

31

John

*f* *p* *pp* *the faintest echo*

night.

Pno.

32

John

*poco* *ppp*

Pno.

*poco* *pp*