

# ONE THREE ONE

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In the beginning there was texture so we could get a grip.

First several seconds first violin plays twelve notes. Each takes time. Each one burrows in, lays a level surface as it goes, lets go, go of, and rolls away like wake as and as it proceeds. Some lull one or were lulled out past the breakers. Swim parallel to the coastline, as if it were physically possible to do so, until resistance eases up. Continue to repeat and the second one then.

Then the second one then starts in on the same twelve notes while the first violin goes on to others. The viola plays the same twelve the first and second played, underneath and steady there. The second violin meanwhile continues to play the notes the first violin has gone on to play and the viola plays those then. You get the idea. The cello starts in then with the twelve and plays those then. You get the idea. They'll start to fall into place or they're falling. An elongation engineered from inside the thing thins so evenly into existence, continuous, that what precedes and follows are always equidistant from it. It was the first time but was it.

Not always. Almost always. Unwind. Begin.

Fugue is the setting out of inventory and acquaintance. One need not arrive but. Each discovers each other's essence and at the last possible moment is almost something else but.

But begin. Nothing but a memory of what they started out as remains, but that's enough to impel them to. There's a tiny motor inside each moment. The next one's discharged from inside the preceding one. In the process the preceding dissipates, has dissipated, integral but gone and gone. And gone and. And gone. Next then becomes the previous next one and so on. Each one is gone but. You get the gone and go on. Each clears by entering the space the duplication will have lengthened into when it gets to there and withdraws. Continuity is laid out plain as can be, packeted and increasingly so. The motored moment seemed suspended. In what but. In time but. As if time were

what in which suspension occurs to us in.

The first time I heard it was the third time I heard it, when the space in which it was happening was cleared so starkly that I slept. From opposite ends, the way shading indicates empty space by partially filling it, the first violin and the cello disclosed the texture of the texture. One drifts but drifts on what and so on. The listener wasn't nothing enough to admit it, admit to it.

And then it began to begin to become apparent, manifold in what it moved about in. Cleared so starkly that I slept because what else is there to do in a uniformity like that. In the auditorium where uniformity was I saw me seated next to whom, and hearing the most beautiful sounds I knew of that I'd heard, and so I woke myself to see them. To lessen the pressure of the pure freedom of them but there just wasn't time. The sounds sounded familiar which is what scared me, how one wakes oneself, creation from nothing except that one's already there and the waiting. There in the air some something honed to just this side of what glints, disappears, stays for just a little while. Of course it wasn't the first time but I didn't know that then, how could I, though it seemed like it was. Trying to keep track is one form of facing and fleeing from, toward, and away and stop. There are others.

The first first time I heard Beethoven's String Quartet in C-sharp minor, opus 131, was a Wednesday in nineteen seventy-nine. Since then seven that I know of, four Wednesdays, March, August, December, November, a Friday, a Saturday, a Sunday, February, December, May, the Emerson, Orion, Wakeforest, Guarneri, Shanghai, Sequoia, and Juilliard quartets. One violinist said he lost his place because he started listening instead of counting. Beethoven said from the focal point of enthusiasm I must disperse melody in all directions. He's not the only one. All documentation remains on file. What? Information keeps me company until company comes. What? Oh. Outside one auditorium the crowd eddied around free-standing signage that said there will be no late seating. Outside one auditorium were acres of parking lots, and past the parking lots hills until desert, ocean going the other way if you went that way. Either way. Infold and unpack it. Carry it by walking and leave it behind when the time comes. Then intermission and

begin again, and afterward an ambiguous but not uncertain embrace. Not everything is apparent at the time it appears it appears. So-and-so said it's sad and then it's funny and I don't know what I'm supposed to feel. I touched her hair. Each one becomes another one or does one. One approximates oneself at first and then time starts.

Outside the sounds we heard trees outside, is that possible, a parking lot graded down into another lot and so on. Ahead of time it was impossible to see what would be built there and therefore necessary to do so. There were woods before the service roads were cut. The continuity emerges into it like an on- or off-ramp does. Resonance frequency's reached and the whole kaboodle gets to shaking. It's more of a shimmy or shimmer than a shake. They, who, exactly, lose and rediscover each other in long arcs, dense and sparse at the same. They sketch periphery around a serenity indistinguishable from silence save for, except for, for, for the gleaming. Afterward it's what was more real than anything because it's so close to nothing, to being nothing without being what it is in itself, which it usually is but not always. That was the first first time.

The second time was in Orange County, just off the 405. The third was just northeast of Herald Square, admission free but reservations required. The fourth was the Guarneri with a violinist who said when it's finished he wants to bark like a dog, but he didn't. The fifth was my uncle, mother's sister's husband, and three others at their house, aunt and uncle's house, on Wakeforest, inside six ten. Six ten is Houston's freeway perimeter, also known as the loop. It's all in the inner voices, he said, which helped me to hear. The sixth was from a second balcony. The seventh scared me because there was too much to take in. Of course there always had been but I hadn't been able to see it and still can't.

The first first time, the Wednesday, the Juilliard was at Sprague Hall in New Haven. The unsigned program note on the beige flyer in a manila file folder says, "The work is divided into seven sections, rather than separate movements, each to follow its predecessor without pause....The first section is a free fugue which appears to come to a full stop, but this final chord resolves directly into the second section, a free fantasy with fragments of its theme developed between

each statement.” It says smoking in the street floor lobby only. The lobby opens onto College Street. At the rounded corner College meets Grove where the stone lintel of the cemetery entrance says the dead shall be raised. A grave is a groove.

One question is did everything start and if so how.

In one story there’s a gap between a flame and the wick feeding it from the reservoir it feeds it from. The gap is the joining, the before and after something from nothing, or uncreated to anything at all, and the uptake and re-branching. What links the two and is it something that’s neither something nor nothing. She fed me for a while and was gone, circle out, one first her, diminished and am in it or her: I, that is, and all I am. Or not I. There’s no first sound around and then there always was, just was, was one, or almost always was. Something had moved inside the loop.

The fugue is linear and looped. The feeder road of reinforced concrete pavement with six-inch-minimum stabilized subgrade thickness becomes an entrance ramp. Your motion in or on it is a secondary thing more or less the way consciousness is and it loops. Steel supports inside even out the channels of distress. It will start to come apart but this will take place inside a larger not-coming apart. It’s said to have been foreseen. Plans are submitted but there are epiphenomena to consider. They’re secondary but they count, two, three. Laid out, inventoried, the having-begun begun. No way to be sure no one will ever be able to know what it was like before there was anything, or even if there ever was or not. On the other hand, if there was no creation then the ongoingness might be ongoing, always was, either way.

When the first note begins it’s as if it’s been there, had to have, or has been all along. Loop six ten is the freeway perimeter there.

So-and-so and I sat in the last or first two seats of the last row of the balcony. Sound found us up there, which meant something had moved.

When the four players played sequential pizzicato, the plucking was one continuous gesture through them, marquee bulbs along the

perimeter, a continuity one can't not see or say hear. That's the idea. From the outside it's what's expected but from the inside isn't so easy to execute is what the Wakeforest violist said. I'm paraphrasing. They interrupted themselves to recalibrate down behind the distributor where you have to go by feel. Said or someone else said there wasn't time to adjust for tone, to make each compatible with each other each, or the push-pull of pluck or micro-speed of release uniform across the four. The plucking's passed along from one to the next and three. Players stopped and counted and replayed it and re-did so. Listen, count, relent, go on. This helped one outside slip behind the impenetrability of the thing. In between each anything is another in-between thing. But sometimes there isn't time for the gap in which the shapes have the option to change, if the possible is a possibility.

One question is where the mechanism by which something can come into being from nothing came from or comes. Waves wave through wood and are wood or are they. Out-of-sync vibrato piles up on the surface of the lake but they go on. Collision, refraction, dispersal, back-action. Readiness potential of ion in thalamus means an orbital shell'll be ready to take an electron when one becomes available. Readiness is ready before awareness of it knows it. Elbow lifts, taut horsehair lands, gut or metal or nylon, pulled, pulls back, holds, releases. Vibratory jiggle ricochets from the cellulose honeycomb back into the air around it, the sine wave of it moving ear-cup-funnel-toward. Nothing, startled, starts, but then there's no going back or is there.

I watched the viola player's back in the living room inside the loop. Then there he was from the front in the mirror behind the second violinist. Farther back in the mirror the cellist was partly obscured by a streetlamp through the reflected window to the street behind me on the sofa facing it. Feel your nothingness, Beethoven said, and perfect yourself. Take Holcombe, which becomes Bellaire, to 610 West northbound. Turn right at the light and get all the way over to your left. The entrance ramp is coincident with the street before the rising. Just when the voices can get no farther apart they're in soft unison and cradling. Nobody's perfect and what's invisible's been right there all along. Finger the fabric. Each of us consists of various we's but not

only these or even all of these. Sometimes I get the feeling it'll all fall into place and is doing so. Sometimes I'm certain it will take down and break me. If I could remember everything, even just everything to me, would I be able to start, start what, exactly, not now. One question is how it became multiform. Invisible lines pass from one next to the next one. Her voice was sound starting and it all's just a lullaby.

After the initial fugue and vapor trail of it, the taper and dissolve, coalesce and begin again.

It echoes back unsaid and states the sadness now. Don't be afraid. Not me gone swell thick and wait. Wait back. Sing it gone, as if it's gone, because it is. It's gone. Gone now. Back to back, no not at all or gone.

Push. Sing down the swirl. Knock knock. The underpinning's underneath and waiting for the say. Here where the end began was started from that end began was started from the flee the end of and. Each and back now or never wanted you to end it or it ended. Ending starts where we began to stop. Get now out now, stop now, where it stopped or stop. Not now. The quiet's seeping in. Now get out now stop it now. Don't stop, stop now, go on. All say it stopped. Kept saying so and so it stopped it, stopped.

Acoustical daylight is white noise like what the sea makes or water reflecting off the shine. Slotsuck, strain, and stream, in through and out from. Line in the men's room after the last time, nothing unusual. Pricks, dicks, cocks, joints, cut, uncut, across fingers and under thumbs. Zip, unzip, drip, firehose wash, lawn-sprinkler spray, trickle, spasm, squirt. American Standards at point-five gpf, which is gallons per flush. Polyhedral foamers slid down and through and interlocked with splatter guards. There was pause and the shake and frothy sup, and realignment and repacking. Over the shoulder aerated washbasin faucet stream, hot-air powershoot, brown-paper scrape, the wad, glance, replace, repeat, and meanwhile:

meanwhile audio speakers inset in ceiling-slots filtered auditorium dispersal sounds into the men's room, mics left live. There was mumbletongue and a less pressurized aeration in the aisles, toward the exits, blocked or blurred

but taking shape or shapes, colloidal, suspended in an ether of what, exactly, each voice or volume-spike pushed itself up from or off of the uniform surface to cohere, or down below it, to individuate or, say, say something separate to someone, to someone separate. Outside someone was waiting for some form of one.