

**ceremony (2010)** for my father

Robert W. Pound (b. 1970)

- i. the brutal accession –gut-punch chords alternating with mysterious, distant ones, all comprising the functioning harmonic progression for the entire work. This is the drawing of the magic circle, the defining of the sacred space in which the ritual will be enacted, the hunt for another way. Wind and trills turn the narrative backwards into memories of the hunt.
- ii. ritual hunt for might have been – the pursuit of the beast. Compound meter and horn-call figures here reference musical hunt tropes of the past.
- iii. meditation on absence – the moment at which the hunter sites the beast and aims. Time slows almost to a standstill. Disbelief, inapprehension, infinitely approaching resolution.
- iv. litany of memories – dissolution, melancholy, a loosening from resistance.
- v. dismissal of prophecies—a return to the present, the invocation hymn now a salutation to the ancestor spirit. Rest in peace. Until we meet again. What remains, what the grieving have left. A mourner’s grief as libation to the departed. Relinquishing of anticipation.

The work is not intended so much as a reflection on death as a hunt for the completion of a life, the struggle with many untidy, loose ends, the many unanswered questions; a slaying of these beasts with form, unity, and answers. Death, a seal against solution, harshly initiates the hunt which circles back on itself. The quarry and hunter are the same. –Robert Pound (April 16, 2015/4vii2020)