

Kory Reeder

# Codex Legere

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for Orchestra  
(2025)



## **Preliminary Considerations**

The piece is a field recording of a mind.

### **Louise Glück in *American Originality* on non sequitur and nonsense**

[paraphrased by the composer]

*Non sequitur is harder than the unfinished: more various/lively*

*1) non-relation, or 2) "more dramatic or psychological use makes it a code and the poem a diagram of systematic evasion.*

*Delight in mobility*

*Contingent for easy emotions*

*"the eternal has ceased to exist except as an analog to human memory"*

*A modest replica of life*

*The case for nonsense is not the same as the case against meaning*

*Animated not by an objection of meaning, but by a refusal of the restriction of meaning*

*For tools of reason, it substitutes the resources of magic; against the rigidity of the absolute, it suggests the hypnotic power of the evanescent; for narrative, it offers collage or prism; for conclusion, hypothesis.*

## For the Percussion

An assortment of granular and textured sounds. This list is neither exhaustive nor obligatory, but a wide assortment of sounds is preferred.

- **Dried leaves** – crumpled slowly, or dragged across drumheads.
- **Sand or fine gravel** – sifted onto surfaces or rotated inside a resonant container.
- **Pinecones** – gently scraped across textured surfaces.
- **Bark pieces** – rubbed or tapped against metal or skin.
- **Twigs** – snapped slowly or used to scratch/scrape resonant objects.
- **Stone slabs** – rubbed against each other for a grinding, organic granularity.
- **Seed pods** – shaken or rolled to produce soft, irregular rattles.
- **Torn paper** – slowly ripped, creating controlled crackling.
- **Aluminum foil** – softly crumpled or stroked; emits crisp, shimmering crackle.
- **Sandpaper** – rubbed gently on wood or drumheads for dry rasp.
- **Plastic wrap** – stretched or wrinkled to create brittle, airy textures.
- **Wire brushes** – dragged across rough surfaces or mesh or cymbals or gongs
- **Textured glass or ceramic tiles** – rubbed or tapped together; brittle, crystalline textures.
- **Ball bearings inside a tin can** – rolled gently for erratic, metallic grain.
- **Dragging** – slow movement across textured surfaces (e.g., rock on drum skin).
- **Rubbing** – continuous friction with varying pressure and direction.
- **Tapping** – irregular, soft taps with fingers or small objects.
- **Crumpling** – manipulating thin, fragile materials with fingertips.
- **Shifting** – subtle movement of objects in a container (e.g., gravel in a metal bowl).
- **Breaking/snapping** – intentionally breaking twigs, shells, or paper in slow motion.

Also: at least 1 vibraphone (more pitched resonant metals welcome), at least 1 bass drum

Mallets though crate soft, rounded, sounds. Perhaps a timpani mallet on the vibraphone?

## For the Electronics

Sinewaves on a midi piano (slow attack, long decay)

Pink noise

Field recordings (provided)

## **For Everyone**

Time is not precise: feel it out. Still, the piece is about 40 minutes long. Time pieces or a synched clock such as [chronograph.io](http://chronograph.io) are useful, but there are no instances where something happens at a precise time. For example, Part III begins about 20 minutes into the piece, but not *at 20 minutes*.

For convenience, sections begin at the following approximate times:

Opening	0:00
Part I	at about 3 minutes
Part II	at about 8 minutes
Part III	at about 20 minutes
Part IV	at about 25 minutes
Part V	at about 30 minutes
Part VI	at about 37 minutes

The piece is divided into continuous sections with different musical cues signaling the transitions and actions of each. Be aware of these transitions: some of them are subtle. However, other than the opening, repeated gesture, vertical moments of precise alignment do not occur. Rather, gradual transitions and “organic” development are paramount: the piece should unfold like a soundscape collage with sections (large and small) dovetailing.

Not always tutti – give each other space

Dynamics are generally quiet, but there is room to play. There are no overtly loud sections, but the range should still be wide: from very soft to a warm, full *mf*. When playing a tone in the ordinary way, the sound should not be a timid sound, but a clear, full bodied (yet soft) sound.



## Opening – cued by the concertmaster (about 3 minutes)

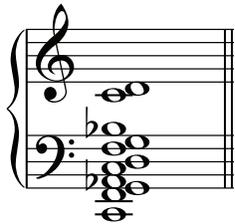
### Tutti chords (rather soft)

An utterance – together. Then – independently – fizzle, granular texture into silence

Each different in size

Always different

With resonance



The lowest tones are the longest

A tone becomes a grainy texture

The afterglow

The smoldering embers

The grain of debris on a tin roof

*Jeté; a rustling; tenuto; grace note; concrete crackle; tape hiss; ashen; a sigh*

Then: silence.

Tense, anticipatory

Repeat 7 times (each 30")

After the third time: a sinewave. A single pitch holds the silence (a drone).

### Percussion (all unpitched)

*Distant thunder and the breeze*

*The leaves running on the pavement*

*A summer rain*

*The door ajar*

*Thus passes the world*

*The apocalypse is both*

*Slower*

*And more boring*

*Than I had expected*

## **Tutti**

The last time: the granular sounds continue, gradually transforming into Part I

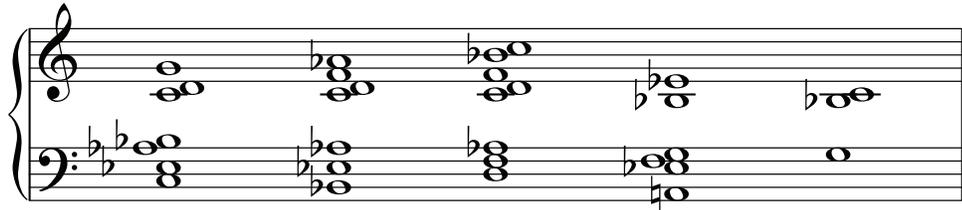
Become Rain

Listen for the percussion cue (vibraphone)

## Part I – cued by the vibraphone (about 5 minutes)

Rain: the deluge began with a single raindrop  
Deluge: when water and wind sound the same

Each chord about 75 seconds



Stay on the final chord until the viola cues Part II  
Diminuendo but become [very] long [very] quiet tones

Occasionally in the final chord:



Granular sounds continue throughout, but in general a bit pitchy  
here and there, shorter sounds: tones like a sigh  
Per chord: occasionally: only once or twice: a [very] long, quiet tone

Yet, I heard the faintest sounds of an orchestra  
As if I heard a memory cut through the rain

...that sounds pretentious...

As if all my music were just a field recording of my mind  
*But I heard it in the world – true*

*Taps on the body of my instrument*  
*Granular sound of the bow drawing a string*  
*Breath through bores*  
*A faint tone: a moment of actualization in the [soft] noise*

It ebbs and flows

## **Percussion**

*I heard the occasional low rumble  
Of thunder*

*The constant breeze*

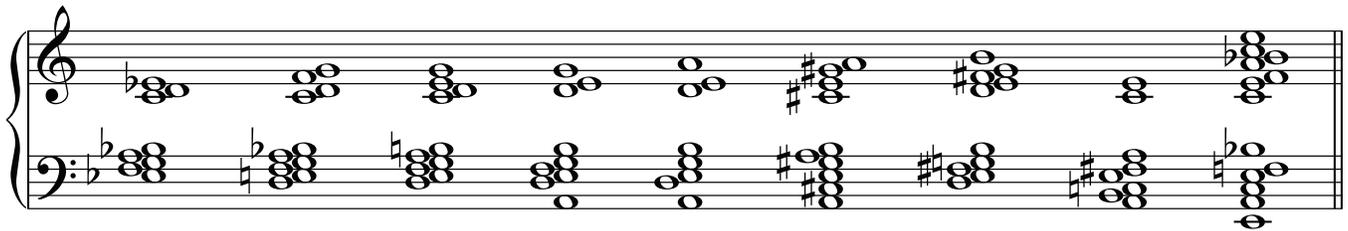
*The small drops of rain  
Both resonating on metal  
And [gently] dropping on the earth and my skin and my hat  
A light tone floating here and there*

*My neighbor's many wind chimes  
On each: a single tone sounding at a time*

**Part II – cued by the viola (about 10 minutes)**



Start slowly: become oceans, tides, wind, plains



*The great plains and the coasts sound much more similar than you'd think  
The Wind and the tide are constants, ever-present in the soundscape  
Visually too: the Flint Hills, the Sandhills, the Colorado Piedmont  
gentle waves in a vast ocean*

*“There are people that think the prairie is boring, and it's hard not to pity them”  
- Candace Savage*

*The beauty in both is in their vastness*

*“Plains so vast that I did not find their limit anywhere. [...] With no more landmarks than  
if we had been swallowed up by the sea”  
- Coronado, 1541*

What I mean is: a sea, a plain of sound  
long tones  
cascading around each other (let it build)

Pick a tone, swell – rather full bodied  
One or two full bows (a full breath)  
Octave transpositions are rare, choice moments.

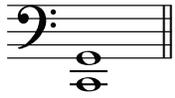
Moving slowly from chord to chord  
About a minute each (move at your own time, pay attention to your voice leading)

This movement is never silent

**Transition (about 2 minutes)**

The last chord fades very slowly

Underneath it, sinewaves in 5ths will emerge



When the sine waves are alone, we are in the transition, but take some time before the next sound comes in.

*I love sine waves. Can we just listen to them (and this space) for a minute?*

### **Part III – cued by field recordings (about 5 minutes)**

Field recordings come in

Gradually, the percussionists emulate their own (imagined) field recordings  
with their instruments and objects

Everyone: imitating the percussion – very quiet

Rather slowly throughout, with much discretion

Nature objects and textures from the instruments

C diatonic collection (just in case you accidentally play a pitch)

Sine wave continues

Drones, textures, breath

Molto lento, with discretion – leave room

*ppp to mp*, mostly whisper-quiet

#### **Percussion**

Dried leaves, sticks, seed pods

Brushes on paper, wood, metal

Rubbing stones, soft tapping of shells

Shaking soil/sand in small containers

Quiet rubbing/scraping of textures (wood, skin, metal)

#### **Winds and Brass**

Breath sounds: slow inhalation/exhalation through instrument

Multiphonics (soft, unstable)

Overblown harmonics (barely audible)

Whisper tones or air-only

Imitate percussion: dry, rustling, short bursts

#### **Strings**

Sul ponticello tremolo (ghostlike textures)

Col legno tratto (quiet brushing)

Natural harmonics (especially on open C and G)

Bow behind bridge

Scratching or tapping body with fingers

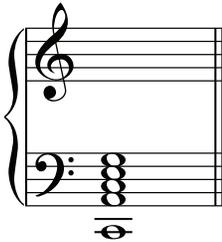
Mimic breath/dust/rustling

After some time...

#### **Part IV – Small Sounds and Orchestra (about 5 minutes)**

Slow, perhaps 1 at a time, strings begin this chord.  
Sustained drone: choose a pitch and stay on it  
For a long time before changing  
Longer than you think

Very soft



#### **Winds**

As soft as plausible  
An aura  
A cloud

#### **Percussion, guitar, etc. - gradually transition from Part III to this**

After some time, single tones, (in any order)  
Resonant tones  
Regular, but at your own [very] slow tempo (think in seconds, not beats)  
Leave room

... after several minutes...

**Part V – to a hymn (about 5 minutes)**

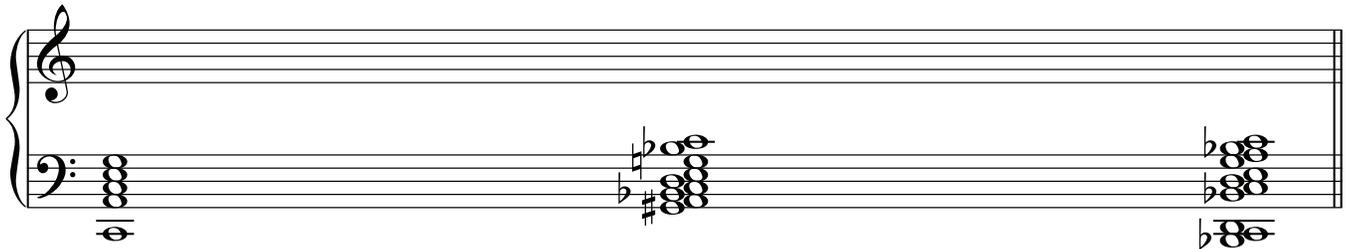
... viola:



This audio cue begins a slow transition:

From this

to this

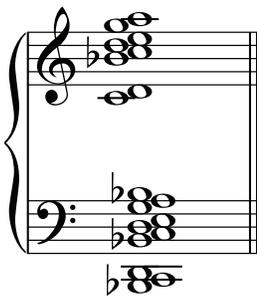


Throughout

Strings begin to mimic the gesture at the top of this page

Carefully

Building to this chord (tutti)



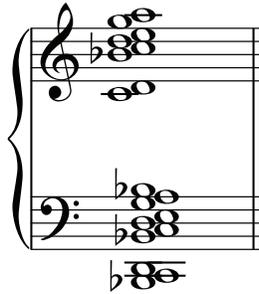
**Here: hymn (for a few minutes)**

Together:

Whole/Half notes, quarter notes, occasional gesture: mimic the earlier gesture

Don't stand out too much

A web of sound



**Winds and Brass**

Occasionally

Like a slow kaleidoscope

A [rather] long tone

Surfacing out of the sounds of the strings

Then becoming subsumed back into it

**For everyone**

This goes on for a while

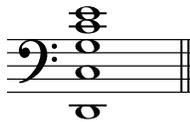
then decays to longer and longer tones

becoming grains

into silence

As the hymn fades

This sine wave chord comes in until the end



## **Part VI – Ending**

When only the sine wave chord remains  
Give it some time

Then: wind, leaves, trees  
Like Part III  
But without pitches

Again, and again  
[someone] begins a solo breeze  
The breeze becomes a tutti wind  
Then fades a solo breeze  
Then silence (not too long)  
Again, and again

After at least 7 times  
Sine waves fade to end.