



## Text and Translation

### grip (v.)" by Levi Todd (They/Them)

*Old English grippan "to grip, seize, obtain " (class I strong verb; past tense grap, past participle gripen), from West Germanic \*gripanan (source also of Old High German gripfen "to rob," Old English gripan "to seize;" see gripe (v.)).*

knowing that this is likely the one time ever  
that me and a new strange man who I do not wish to befriend  
or beloved will touch I feel a certain guilt when the inevitable failure  
happens the potential intimacy dropped and floundering  
on the floor like a gilled thing i rack my brain for the index  
of handshakes tattered and fading my fingers  
slipping through holes this unspoken treaty requires  
we both read each other estimate what kind of men  
we are if at all whether to extend hands and tersely shake  
distance kept or rather to clasp palms wound  
against the thumbs and slip into fingertips or perhaps  
just clap and bump knuckles i'm telling you  
they want to know whether i am one of them  
and what kind which ranks i march with whose allegiance  
i pledge and i have no answer the proof is in the fumble  
still i would like to give this moment the chance  
it deserves we could make it work i think  
i think we could but there are so many options  
and knowing which one to pick like the rosiest apple  
from the bushel would require me to get to know them  
Enough to do this a second time

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## From the Composer

The first time I read "i'm telling you // they want // to know // whether i am one of them // and what kind" I felt the urge to look over my shoulder. Handshakes have always felt loaded to me. They are a brief moment of physical contact with a stranger, often a means for people (particularly men) to size each other up, and a microcosm of how we relate to each other. Levi Todd encapsulates this loadedness perfectly in grip (v.), outlining the pressure of a first impression, feelings of trepidation and guardedness, wondering how your expression of self will be received by another, what assumptions they will make about you, the safety implications of such assumptions, and of course: the desire to connect. I knew immediately that this needed to be a piece for tenor-bass chorus.

The drum line is entirely optional, but increases the piece's impact, running like an anxious heartbeat through the performance. The line was written with a large symphonic bass drum in mind, but any low, unpitched drum will work. Cantus used [type of drum] in the premiere.

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## Biography

Scott Senko (b. 1992) is a composer and vocalist based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has received commissions from The Esoterics, the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, the Source Song Festival, Constellation Men's Ensemble, The Singers - MCA, and One Voice Chorus of Charlotte as well as performances of his music from Cantus, Choral Arts Initiative, MPLS (imPulse), the choir at the Cathedral of Saint Paul, and Vox Nova Chorale. He also served as Composer-In-Residence with Magnum Chorum 2016-2017.

Scott is a 2015 graduate of Luther College where studied composition with Brooke Joyce and Steve Smith. He has had composition lessons with Daniel Kallman, Libby Larsen, Jocelyn Hagen, Jake Runestad, Dale Trumbore, Dominick DiOrio, and received extensive mentorship from Edie Hill.

As a tenor, Scott has sung with a number of vocal ensembles in the Twin Cities. Currently, he sings with The Singers, MPLS (imPulse), and the Cathedral of Saint Paul Schola Cantorum.

CANTUS-011

# grip

for TTBB chorus and optional drum

Levi Todd

Scott Senko

**Cautious, calculated** ♩ = 112

Low Drum (optional) *p*

Tenor 1 *mp*  
know - ing that this is like - ly\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is

Tenor 2 *mp*  
that this is like - ly\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is

Piano *for rehearsal only*

Dr. 4

T. 1  
like - ly\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is like - ly\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is

T. 2  
like - ly\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is like - ly\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is

Bar. *p*  
know - - - ing

B. *p*  
know - - -

Pno.

grip

8

Dr. *mp*

T. 1 *p*  
like - ly\_\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time

T. 2 *p*  
like - ly\_\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time

Bar. *mp*  
that me and\_\_\_ a new strange man\_\_\_

B. *mp*  
- - ing

Pno.

---

11

Dr. *mp*

T. 1 *mp*  
e - ver that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is

T. 2 *mp*  
know - ing that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is

Bar. *mp*  
that me and\_\_\_ a

B. *mp*  
that me and\_\_\_ a new strange man\_\_\_

Pno.

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Cantus VOCAL ENSEMBLE

grip

14

Dr.

T. 1  
like - ly — the one time e - ver that this is like - ly — the one time

T. 2  
like - ly — the one time know - ing that this is like - ly — the one time

Bar.  
new strange man that me and a new strange man —

B.  
that me and a new strange man — that me and a

Pno.

17

Dr.

T. 1  
*mf* who i

T. 2  
e - ver *mf* who i

Bar.  
that me and a new strange man that me and a new strange man

B.  
new strange man that me and a new strange man that me and a

Pno.

grip

21

Dr.

T. 1  
do not\_ wish\_ to be - friend or\_ be - love who i do not\_ wish\_ to be -

T. 2  
do not\_ wish\_ to be - friend or\_ be - love who i do not\_ wish\_ to be -

Bar.  
that me and\_ a new strange man\_ that me and\_ a

B.  
new strange man\_ that me and\_ a new strange man\_

Pno.

24

Dr.

T. 1  
- friend or\_ be - love will touch\_ *p* round and hollow, like water glasses  
i feel a cer - tain

T. 2  
- friend or\_ be - love will touch\_ *p* round and hollow, like water glasses  
i feel\_

Bar.  
new strange man will touch\_ *p* round and hollow, like water glasses  
i feel a cer - tain

B.  
that me and\_ will touch\_ *p* round and hollow, like water glasses  
i feel\_

Pno.

grip

30

Dr. *p mp p*

T. 1  
nn guilt i feel a cer - tain guilt

T. 2  
a cer - tain nn guilt i feel a cer - tain guilt

Bar.  
nn guilt i feel a cer - tain guilt

B. *mp* legato  
a cer - tain nn guilt i feel a cer - tain guilt when - nn the in -

Pno.

34

Dr.

T. 1 *mf*  
the po -

T. 2 *mp* legato  
when - nn the in - e - vi - ta - ble fail - ure hap - pen - (nn)s

Bar. *mp* legato *p*  
when - nn the in - e - vi - ta - ble fail - ure hap - pen - (nn)s i

B. *p*  
- e - vi - ta - ble fail - ure hap - pen - (nn)s i feel a

Pno.

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**Cantus**  
VOCAL ENSEMBLE

grip

37

Dr.

T. 1 *mp*  
- ten - tial in - ti - ma - cy dropped and floun - d'ring like a gilled thing

T. 2 *p*  
i feel a cer - tain guilt

Bar. *mp*  
feel a cer - tain nn guilt and floun - d'ring

B. *mp*  
cer - tain nn guilt dropped on the floor

Pno.

41

Dr. *mp*

T. 1

T. 2

Bar. *mp* *mf*  
i rack my brain for the in - dex of hand - shakes tat - tered and fa - ding the

B. *mp* *mf*  
the in - dex of hand - shakes i rack my brain for the

Pno.

grip

44

Dr.

T. 1 *mf*  
my fing - ers slip - ping through holes\_

T. 2 *mf*  
my fing - ers slip - ping through holes\_

Bar. *mp*  
in - dex\_ of hand - shakes i rack my brain for the in - dex\_ of hand - shakes

B. *mp*  
in - dex\_ of hand - shakes tat - tered and fa - ding the in - dex\_ of hand - shakes

Pno.

47

Dr.

T. 1 *mp*  
my fing - ers slip - ping\_ through holes my fing - ers slip - ping

T. 2 *mp*  
my fing - ers slip - ping\_ through holes

Bar. *mp*  
tat - tered and fa - ding the in dex\_ of hand - shakes i rack my brain for the

B. *mp*  
i rack my brain for the in - dex\_ of hand - shakes tat - tered and fa - ding the

Pno.

grip

50

Dr.

T. 1 through holes my fing - ers slip - ping through holes

T. 2 my fing - ers slip - ping through holes my fing - ers slip - ping

Bar. in - dex of hand - shakes tat - tered and fa - ding the in - dex of hand - shakes

B. in - dex of hand - shakes i rack my brain for the in - dex of hand - shakes

Pno.



53

Dr.

T. 1 my fing - ers slip - ping through holes my fing - ers slip - ping

T. 2 through holes my fing - ers slip - ping through holes

Bar.

B.

Pno.

grip

56

Dr.

T. 1 through holes my fing - ers slip - ping through holes

T. 2 my fing - ers slip - ping through holes my fing - ers slip - ping

Bar. *mf* this un - spo - ken trea - ty re - quires we read one a - no - ther

B. *mf* this un - spo - ken trea - ty re - quires we read one a - no - ther

Pno.

59

Dr.

T. 1 *f* my fing - ers slip - ping through holes es - ti - mate what kind of

T. 2 *f* through holes my fing - ers slip - ping what kind of

Bar. *f* es - ti - mate what kind of men we are es - ti - mate what kind of

B. *f* es - ti - mate what kind of men we are es - ti - mate what kind of

Pno.

62

grip  
Moving forward ♩ = 108-112

Dr.

T. 1 *mf* *p*  
men we\_ are\_ if at all whe - ther to ex - tend hands and terse - ly shake mm

T. 2 *p*  
men we\_ are\_ if at all

Bar. *mf*  
men we\_ are\_ if at all dis - tance kept

B. *mf*  
men we\_ are\_ if at all or ra - ther

Pno.

65

Dr.

T. 1 *mf* *p*  
and slip in - to fin - ger - tips mm

T. 2 *mf* *p* *mf*  
to clasp palms mm just clap

Bar. *p* *mf* *p*  
mm or per - haps mm

B. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*  
wound a - gainst the thumbs mm and

Pno.

grip

69

rit.

a tempo

Dr.

T. 1   
i'm tel - ling you i'm tel - ling you

T. 2   
mm. i'm tel - ling you i'm tel - ling you

Bar.   
i'm tel - ling you i'm tel - ling you

B.   
bump knu - ckles i'm tel - ling you i'm tel - ling you

Pno.

74

Dr.

T. 1   
they want to know whe - ther i am one of them and what kind

T. 2   
they want to know whe - ther i am one of them and what kind

Bar.   
they want to know whe - ther i am one of them

B.   
they want to know whe - ther i am one of them

Pno.

grip

79

Dr. *mf* *f* *mp*

T. 1 *mf* *f*  
whose al - le - giance i pledge

T. 2 *mf* *f*  
whose al - le - giance i pledge

Bar. *mf* *f* *mp* legato  
which ranks i march with whose al - le - giance i pledge and

B. *mf* *f*  
which ranks i march with whose al - le - giance i pledge

Pno.

84

Dr.

T. 1 *p* falsetto *legato*  
and i have no an - swer

T. 2 *mp* legato *pp*  
and i have no an - swer (i think

Bar. *pp*  
i have no an - swer (i think we could)

B. *mp* legato  
and i have

Pno.

grip

88

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

T. 1 *mp*  
the proof is in the

T. 2 *mp* *pp*  
we could) i have no answer (i think

Bar. *mp* *pp*  
i have no answer still sill

B. *pp* *mp*  
no answer (i think we could) the

Pno.

92

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

T. 1 *pp*  
fumble still still i would like to give this moment

T. 2 *pp*  
we could) still still still i would like to give this

Bar. *pp*  
still still still i would like to give this moment

B. *pp*  
proof is in the fumble still i would like to give this

Pno.

grip

98

*mp*

Dr.

T. 1

T. 2

Bar.

B.

Pno.

the chance it de - serves we it we could

mo - ment the chance it de - serves we make we could

the chance it de - serves we could we could

mo - ment the chance it de - serves we work we could

*p mp p mp*

*p mp p mp*

*p mp p mp*

*p mp p mp*

103

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Dr.

T. 1

T. 2

Bar.

B.

Pno.

make it work i think i think we could but

make it work i think i think we could but

make it work i think i think we could

make it work i think we could

*f p sub. mf mp p*

*f p sub. mf mp p*

*f p sub. mf mp*

*f p sub. mf mp*

grip

108

Dr.

T. 1 there are so ma - ny op - tions and

T. 2 there are so ma - ny op - tions and

Bar. but there are so ma - ny op - tions and

B. but there are so ma - ny op - tions and

Pno.

113 Tempo I with better understanding ♩ = 120

Dr.

T. 1 know - ing that this is like - ly the one time e - ver that this is

T. 2 that this is like - ly the one time know - ing that this is

Bar. know - ing know - ing which one

B. know - ing know - ing which one

Pno.

grip

116

Dr.

T. 1  
like - ly\_\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time

T. 2  
like - ly\_\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time

Bar.  
to\_\_\_ pick\_\_\_ like the

B.  
to\_\_\_ pick\_\_\_ like the

Pno.

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119

Dr.

T. 1  
e - ver that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time know - ing that this is

T. 2  
know - ing that this is like - ly\_\_\_ the one time e - ver that this is

Bar.  
ro - si - est ap - ple from the bu - shel

B.  
ro - si - est ap - ple from the\_\_\_ bu - shel

Pno.

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grip

122

Dr.

T. 1  
like - ly\_ the one time e - ver that this is like - ly\_ the one time know - ing that this is

T. 2  
like - ly\_ the one time know - ing that this is like - ly\_ the one time e - ver that this is

Bar.  
would re - quire me to\_ get\_ to know them

B.  
would re - quire me to\_ get\_ to know them

Pno.

126

Dr.

T. 1  
like - ly\_ the one time e - ver that this is like - ly\_ the one time know - ing

T. 2  
like - ly\_ the one time know - ing that this is like - ly\_ the one time e - ver

Bar.  
e - nough to do this a se - cond\_ time

B.  
e - nough to do this\_ a se - cond\_ time

Pno.



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