

Charlie Waterman

Song from a ghost town

for mezzo-soprano and piano

2026

TEXT:

Sometimes I'm tired of roaming. Sometimes the skyline is what I breathe in and not marshlands. Sometimes I write poems set in nightclubs instead of cathedrals. How I imagine myself in kaleidoscopic bars line-dancing at 1 AM.

Sometimes I don't miss the vegetation; sometimes I pretend it's turf soft as if I'm in the middle of a football field. Answer: do you hear all the ghosts in the nocturne? Answer: can you feel my hunger?

Jaiden Geolingo
Ghost Town, Georgia

PROGRAM NOTES:

I first came across Jaiden Geolingo's work on the app TikTok; it's unsurprising in the modern world that algorithms have and will give way to great artistic inspiration and collaboration. My comments on posts of his poetry turned into lengthy discussions about music and literature, in turn giving way to friendship and a shared ideal of collaboration. That belief in collaboration would be realized in this setting of his *Ghost Town, Georgia* in my *Song from a ghost town* while studying at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. It's my only wish that this piece marks the beginning of a long collaboration/friendship based on nothing less than utter mutual respect and inspiration.

-Charlie Waterman, composer

"*Ghost Town, Georgia* was written during a transitory period of my life. As someone who immigrated from a third-world country, I held onto a structural vision of what I imagined my time in America to be like. I pictured this scene: infinity-like skyscrapers, the reverb of a taxi engine, the shivering snow. In return, there's only the standard American town somewhere in rural Georgia. In a world where being perceived as having the 'perfect life' is in demand, sometimes that vision is insular at best. There's always going to be a little boy dreaming of the snow in the heatwave. There's always going to be 'what-ifs' in the settlement houses. There's always going to be 'ghosts in the nocturne' while living in the light."

-Jaiden Geolingo, poet

Song from a ghost town

text by
Jaiden Geolingo

Charlie Waterman
(2026)

Slow, but not overly (♩ = 48)

Mezzo-soprano

freely
p

sometimes i'm tired of roaming—

Piano

p

sub.mf

5

p *mf* (loud, noticable breath)

sometimes the sky-line is what i breathe—

p *f* *p*

Con moto *rit.*

8

p *f*

in and not marsh - lands!—

Tempo primo

Con moto

mf

10

rit. ———

some-times i write po-ems set

12

in — night - clubs — in - stead of ca - the - drals —

15

Bright, dream-like (♩ = 66)

introspective, take time

how i i-mag-ine my-self in ka-lei-do-scop-ic bars

repeat figure ad lib.

f ——— *pp*

Red. ———

18 *mf* *rit.* ----- *a tempo*

line - danc - ing at 1 A-M! line

arps. twice as fast *slow down and fade out*

p *f*

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

A piacere

21 *quasi-cadenza, cantabile!* *p*

-danc - ing. at 1 A - M.

p *slow down and fade out*

p *p*

Red. *Red.*

Slow, somewhat tired (♩ = 48)

25 *p*

some - times i don't miss the veg - e - ta - tion

p *pp*

pedal ad lib.

27 *p* *f* *rit.* *sub.p*

sometimes i pre-tend it's turf-soft as if i'm in the middle of a

30 *a tempo* *pp* *(pp)* *Even slower (♩ = 40)*

foot - ball field an - swer:

32 *airy* *p* *ord.* *p*

do you hear all the ghosts in the noc-turne? an - swer

35

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 35-36) features a vocal line in 4/4 time. Measure 35 has a half rest followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4, with the lyrics "an - swer:". Measure 36 begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5, with the lyrics "do you feel my hun - ger?". A fermata is placed over the C5. A piano accompaniment is shown below. In measure 35, the right hand plays a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4, while the left hand plays a half note G3, a half note F3, and a half note E3. In measure 36, the right hand plays a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4, while the left hand plays a half note G3, a half note F3, and a half note E3. A piano (*pp*) dynamic is marked in measure 35, and a pianissimo (*ppp*) dynamic is marked in measure 36. The second system (measures 37-38) continues the vocal line. Measure 37 has a half rest followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Measure 38 has a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4, with a fermata over the B4. The piano accompaniment continues with the same chords as in the first system.

an - swer: do you feel my hun - ger?

pp *ppp*