

NERUDA SONG NO.4  
**FABLE OF THE MERMAID AND THE DRUNKS**

Poem by Pablo Neruda  
 translated by Alastair Reid

ALICE SHIELDS

98 **Moderato** ♩ = 80 *mp*

Voice: All these gen - - tle - - men were there in - - side, when she

Cello: *mp*

101 *mp*

Voice: en - - tered ut - ter - ly na - - - ked. They had been drink - - ing,

Cello: *p* *mp*

*ritenuto e quasi legato*

104 *p*

Voice: and be - gan to spit at her. Re - cent - ly come from the ri - - - - ver,

Cello: *p*

*piu mosso, e molto legato*

106 *mp*

Voice: she un - der - stood no - - thing. She was a mer - - - - maid who had lost her

Cello: *mp*

108

Voice

way, — the taunts flowed o - - ver her gli - stening flesh. — Ob - sce - ni - ties

Cello

2

Voice

drenched her gold - en breasts, — a stran - - - ger to tears, she did not weep. —

Cello

*mf*

5

Voice

— A stran - - - - ger to clothes, she did not dress. — They

Cello

7

Voice

pocked her with ci - ga - rette ends and with burnt corks, — and rolled —

Cello

*mp* *mf* *mp*

10

Voice

on the ta - vern floor with laugh - - - - ter. She did not speak, — since

Cello

*molto legato* *p*

13 *mp*

Voice: speech was un-known to her. Her eyes were the co - lor of far - -

Cello: *mp*

16 *mf*

Voice: - - - a - way love, her arms were match - - - - - ing to - - - - - pa - - - - -

Cello: *mf*

19 *mp*

Voice: zes. Her lips moved sound-less - ly in co - - - - - ral light, and

Cello: *mp*

21 *p*

Voice: ul - - ti - mate - ly she left by that door.

Cello: *p*

24 *molto legato* *p*

Voice: Scarce - - - - ly had she en - - - - - tered the ri - ver than she was cleansed,

Cello: *p*