

*On the Lightness of the Moon* was written for the Left Coast Ensemble. The title has several meanings. It refers to many evening walks along the seaside, and the purification that the beauty of the natural world offers as a respite from the strains of modern life. It refers also to William Carlos Williams' poetry, where the "jasmine lightness of the moon" is an exaltation of the perfection of nature, as against the "oppressive weight" of man-made edifices. The music itself is built of rising motifs of various kinds. The evocative harmonies of the opening shift continually in chromatic upward breaths. Alternating ascending figures in the piano and clarinet gradually converge on one another until the music bursts into a faster tempo. The climactic high point at the center of the piece is unmistakable, and leaves the violin and viola suddenly suspended in a slow-moving contrapuntal descent to the surface. The music of the opening tries to reestablish itself, but is continually interrupted by the fast music which, after winning out, brings the piece to a flourishing conclusion.