



Penetrating chest — here now

Dissonance screams!
The Devil's chord! The flatted fifth!

Sleep shatters — awake!
Anger
Guilt
Fear
Focus
To arms!

The theater rests uneasy —
Static, in suspense.
Instruments lie ready
As raised hands
Anticipate the upstroke.
A gurney strikes the threshold.

Ictus!

Silence crescendos to orchestrated
chaos!

Prelude
A frozen face stares serene.
Disquieting chills ripple from its still
form
Polarized against the anarchy.

We conduct the alphabet once, twice,
thrice...

Unable to keep the time,
The metronome fails —

Allegro con moto

Steel flashes!

A delicate crimson arc
Sketched on the cool lifeless canvas,
Precise and unwavering.

Delivery of the hollow human soul.
The beat struck again by eager hands,
Orchestrating the final cadence:
A monotonic syllable —

Subito grave

Concerned, fearful, stares
As the false meter beats on.
A rhythm from without,
No tempo left within.
We await the ritual
That we may let this signature cease.
The clock ticking no more.
Time of death: fin.

The tide turns to ebb.
Urgency fades to stillness,
And I am left alone
To undo what cannot be undone,
To close an empty vessel.
The murderous silence contrasted
against the deafening beat
of my own vital heart.

Dissonance! A familiar tritone!

Anger
Guilt
Fear
Focus
To arms!

No time for rest.
No time for tears.

—Sean Stokes, MD