

1987

## Summer Day, Alaska Range, 1986

Alan Schmitz

David Cornberg

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Summer Day,  
Alaska Range, 1986

Text by  
David Cornberg

Music by  
Alan Schmitz  
(1987)

# Elec. Guitar Theme & Motives for Summer Day, Alaska Range (Cornberg)

Alan Schmitz  
1987

1. Intro. (Improvise) Correlate music with written text as indicated by letters, numbers, and instructions. normal and/or as harmonics (one octave higher)

**A**

p (delicately)

**1a** 8va harmonics

p

**2** 2. **3** 3. 8va harmonics

f-ff mp

**4** 4. 8va harmonics

p

**B**

etc. mf-f accel. etc. mf-f accel.

distortion on, use metal pick or nail clipper (fingernail clipper is struck against 15th fret to activate string; left hand is not used)

played as ⑤, but on 2nd string

**C**

These configurations to be played in other positions also.

① C. V

② IX - also play on III, I, + 0

**D**



A short story by David Cornberg

*softly*

Normal + with octave harmon  
2x 2x

improvise  
on ①

# ① Intro leads into reading

On a flat rock  
swords of tiny bones  
yellowbrown bits of flesh  
stuck, the rock  
my dinner plate /  
now  
a squadron of dark flies  
works the remains...  
contrasts fade, the rock plated  
washed with pale whitegold  
up to the ridge  
the falling into eye of blue sky  
abrupt, commanding the world above  
enormous floating clouds --  
a centaur, rearing back  
throwing its weight to the restless air  
driven north, repelled south  
gaining north and growing  
two fronts locking the horns of their wind  
hanging explosions of cumulus  
no haze, no stratus or cirrus  
crystal-bubble growths in water sky

stop music

NO music

But the weather

changes so suddenly here

② med. loud stop

What to do?

③ harmonics *loud*  
stop

Perhaps head back tonight

eat alot of grayling

and head back --

I got a feeling

my luck's gonna change

and not to push it

NO music

normal, (pick)  
stop

But that's not it

I've been moving alot

curving into the country's

roads, creeks, and rocks

①

Improvise on idea 1, increasing  
speed and volume.

(using normal + harmonics)

restless to find the fit  
 of my body to a bit of land  
 here...there...it's time to sit  
 let the scene roll by;  
 I've caught enough fish  
 some holes today  
 first cast #1 gold mops  
 hooked on a grayling  
 much bigger than pansize;  
 I like to roast them  
 on a willow fork  
 over a hot spruce fire  
 peel off the skin  
 and eat the flesh

with my fingers  
 I get a charge of force  
 from grayling  
 fresh, like the river's  
 going into me another way

The wind  
 running the compass  
 rain  
 gusts to gale force  
 now, twelve hours later  
 the wind backed south

A towering thunderhead  
 smoke-slate gray  
 parting -- the growth of sunlight  
 sharpening the shadow of my hand  
 the pencil on the paper;  
 another one, far off  
 a figure bulging with strain  
 rising from its casings at the top  
 the clouds all around  
 muscular  
 other versions of its own,  
 the match between figure and ground  
 like a single image kaleidoscope  
 expanding in three dimensions --  
 if, there's gonna be lightning  
 better stay off the ridges  
 carrying a gun like a rod...

① distortion on

② forte (distortion)

④ (distortion, but so)

stop

wait (4 bars)

last night (5) mod. soft  
 the shrill alarm of a shore-bird  
 from the far side of the creek  
 got me out of bed  
 in time to see two fox  
 one redorange, rich browns  
 a warm black, touch of white  
 a strange yowling

from something out of sight,  
 the red one bending its face  
 back, mouth working on the wind  
 then through my fieldglasses  
 a fox twice as big  
 coat black with bluegray sheen  
 trimmed at the ruff and the tail  
 in yellowgold, long hair  
 and then the red one was gone  
 up the bank and into the heavy brush --  
 scented me, I'm sure,  
 the bigger one loping back now  
 the way it came

its tail out behind stiff, huge  
 bigger than any I'd seen  
 on a rich boy's car antenna

wait: (4 beats)  
 the first grumble of thunder  
 far off...

I need a less exposed place  
 out of the tentwhipping wind;  
 there's a patch of tundra, flat  
 more or less  
 in a gap between  
 tall outcroppings of stone  
 two of many from which I've  
 named this "Outcrop Creek"

But the wind is dying  
 turning fitful  
 the thunderhead stabilized  
 into a dense gray ceiling;  
 I leave the tent where it is  
 suddenly alert  
 the change of pressure palpable  
 the gray turning like a blotter  
 soaking from above...

New material  
 distortion on

No music

No music

very softly

(2) distortion on

soft volume

stop

No music

turn distortion off

(4) softly  
 mellow

stop

No music

dist. on

(2) mod. volume stop

another roll of rocks, rumbling in the earth No music  
each one a new voice  
high up in the clouds  
no rain yet -- but there!  
back up over the ridge  
the floor of a cloud has crumbled  
the rain roaring out  
in long gray streamers  
stretching to the west --

(2) l.v.  
and there, on the other side of the sky  
a floating mountain  
steel bottom broken like a splintered door (2) l.v. med. loud  
exploding below in enormous black rags  
a funnel spreading, churning, falling (2) l.v.  
a tornado big enough to take the whole creek (2) - (2) l.v.  
down into the sky above the peaks  
dissolving, high above the ground

all the bottoms falling, darkening  
the pull of earth too great

like the bottom gone

I cling to the earth  
tremble like a leaf

about to be whipped  
past the edges of peaks; (2) l.v.

I listen to it roll  
almost hard enough to crack

tapering to a whisper

then a great pause

3 bars (2) l.v.

the petals of silence surround

a gentle pulsing of sound

dense black stamen (9) mm

electric, metallic

with losts of space around it

The first drops, now

licking in the tundra --

to go in? to stay out?

is everything safe?

I get my slicker

stay out until the drops

have gone from dime to nickel...

improvise on **R** material  
short, staccato  
high treble setting

stop

Inside, relaxing in a six-sided tent  
a stain of bright at the peak  
bowling balls and hard ninepins  
for sure  
team night  
the bowling addicts  
the air crashing with hits  
and laughter

no music

But I came in too soon  
fled the first silver anointing  
before I could tell the growing drops -

Sometimes I hear another  
song of the creek

the voice whole, rising, blooming above

And now above, stomping down

But then a voice high, round  
a chorus ringing the tongue of the creek  
branching, veining, tripling  
running in harmony

blurred (then falling off - softening  
to the white noise of swift water)

The holes I found today!  
What a place!  
Don't bother asking --  
I've changed all the names  
to protect the innocent

The rain ratchetting across the tent  
Could it break?

another long white streak  
the voice after  
heading high up  
in a cataract of clouds  
breaking down white foam  
a flare widening, hardening  
the faces fighting like great rocks  
caught in giant seas

no music

⑦ 3 times

⑦ 2X

alternate (pauses + playing)

⑦ 2X

3 Times

high X(8)

⑦

background

distinct

(7+8)

⑥ softly

③

②

I.V.

dist. on X(8)

Stop, count  
to 4



No Music

I'll go out awhile  
 the confinement too much  
 the unbroken wet outside too much  
 back inside, the sides soaking through  
 I use a dirty undershirt  
 to wipe the cold sweat

Remember what I said?

so hard to sit still

the country calling me  
 into its own flesh;

"A good place to die"

I said to a salty old-timer

short, stout woman

walking with a cane

standing beside me some weeks before

at the mouth of Troublesome Creek --

she looked at me

"That's an unusual thing to say  
 for someone your age."

5 softly

(dist. on)  
 (3 beat pause)

stop

No music

loudly - pick.

A brilliant silver flash

branding half the tent

the crack placing huge blocks

one upon the other

tunnels open, expand

built of gray chunks of stone

fitted, curving away

to a focus already dying

an echo closing with itself.

2 2 2 l.v.

stop

I will wait

No music

I will stop

I will listen

an enormous

three-spoke wheel of light

lasting and throbbing in the roof of the tent

thunder cued to the last intensity

tearing at the roots of my ears

roaring its darkest face

up the creek from bank to bank

then swells rolling, shuddering

up the steps to barren rock

beats hard against the weather

Loudly to

2 - l.v.

D

Stop

Dis...  
 several, building in  
 intensity (harsh)  
 (different feet positions)

7  
brows stripped to gravel  
the wind a tyrant  
violent, exuberant, demanding  
the rain harder now than  
any I've felt, even at sea  
the speed, size, and number of drops  
stepping up from shelf to shelf  
three, four, five times more and harder  
until I lose count  
unzip the door and leap out  
stumble around the tent shaking its poles  
to stop the soaking inside  
shaking off the white fire of drops  
drops as thick as my thumb  
as long as my longest finger  
my pants sopping  
the drops cracking like shot on the tent  
until I stop, throw up my arms  
and cry

"You are rain!"

I know you are rain!"

No Music

6 count pause, then music starts

mus 2  
A break, open up and dry  
in a frisky breeze  
a voice, female on long high notes  
calls above the creek...  
it is fresh, cool, one pair of pants  
soaked but the tent inside  
dry enough, the door open  
no insects on hand;  
I glance across the creek  
my eyes a focussing path  
through the live and dead-standing spruce  
crowding up the slope  
from the far bank  
I find the nest  
a white, beaked head  
still above the rim  
of sticks some thicker than my wrists  
the bigger eagle sitting  
protecting

calm, serene

Softly

4 harmonies

STOP

No

music

I saw it come down  
on a seagull  
while I fished, the wide  
thick body falling like a  
force, arms bent, the seagull's  
path, bent suddenly up

No Music

Turn on  
Distortion

Very  
softly (as on  
p. 3)

②  
⑥

Thunder continues to roll  
the rain light, a patter  
more sky to the west  
the breeze gusty

This day  
faces without end  
the turns  
of for and against  
ease and adversity  
a tale of change sailing

No music

I remember fishing  
before the storm  
the strike and power of grayling:  
they seem to know  
when I'm going to  
remove the hook:

⑥ - softly

stop

they look in my eyes  
and hang ⑤ - mod. loud  
then go crazy ⑤ when they realize  
I'm going to kill them --  
some of them come to death

stop

No Music

quietly  
others thrash, utter a guttural croak  
shiver and still; ⑤ → ⑥  
that falling eagle  
was running the seagull off  
from a bunch of heads  
I left on a rock

No  
Music

middle of the creek  
the two birds  
whirled, climbed, and dove  
the picture a thousand brushstrokes  
or a few  
wrists of space

⑤

the skill of their wings  
an adjective  
left in the place of pure perception

No Music dist. off

I'd like to get out  
roast grayling and make  
something hot to drink...

holding off

not trusting the break to hold  
waiting

waiting the summer day, evening  
cooling now, slowing the rising cells

thinning the rain .

drops again, waiting

to cook grayling

and make something hot

to drink

① normal

① with  
harmonics

attempt to slow down  
and end (cadence) together

Elements:

Early or late  
1 . . . . .