

# The Page Turner by John Morris

The Page-Turner

is understood to be invisible,

perched beyond the lowest octave,  
poised, a tense handmaiden, eyes  
faithful to the score, ready to release  
the hands clenched

## The Page-Turner

By John Morris

The Page-Turner

is understood to be invisible,

perched beyond the lowest octave,  
poised, a tense handmaiden, eyes  
faithful to the score, ready to release  
the hands clenched

prayerfully in her lap. Pizzicato  
cello-strings quiver. Violin-  
and viola-bows leap up, a trio of shuttles  
warp-weaving,

the pianist's fingers threading the weft.  
Now the notes are running out of room,  
she leans, then she thrusts

a bare arm out

into the loom's fabric, her fingers  
seize the recto corner and freeze.  
Perilous moment! We are not meant to notice  
her, the rapt gaze

fastened on her maestro's face,  
waiting for that cue, impersonal –  
curt nod, lofted eyebrow, even a deeper  
breath – that gives

permission to the page-turner, that says  
Now I need you!, and she performs  
so swiftly, all elegance and clarity  
in the turning,

accomplished. Then tacet once more,  
waiting, returned beyond the lowest  
possibility of sound, to listen,  
to watch. As we watch

what is woven yet can't be seen,  
the beauty calling the quintet  
and us to gather – all unseen.  
We go home,

make our customary mistakes, confuse  
visible signs with invisible grace.  
But as sleep deranges us, perhaps  
we hear the tapestry

and glimpse a silent turning of the page.