APPENDIX FOUR

SEQUENCE OF POEMS IN SECOND ISAIAH AND TONAL DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH

Isaiah 40:1–31  The divine voice opens this brief poem which is the initiation of the comfort tonal stream and which opens up the sequence’s intractable problem. Markers of the comfort stream are allusions to the marriage metaphor and explicit expressions of the intention to comfort. A series of anonymous voices continue this poem and alternate among exultation, despair, comfort, and indignation. The voices interact about the relative frailty of humanity and the incomparability of Yhwh. The voices progress to a strident and indicting tonality faulting the implied audience for its lack of understanding. The divine voice picks up where the anonymous voices of the preceding poem left off. The poem is thus closely linked with what precedes and is distinguished only by the shift in speaker. The indictment tonality in the divine voice is produced by rhetorical questions which echo those of the preceding poem and by direct citation of Jacob/Israel’s speech which is refuted. The closing image of provision moves the end of the poem into the comfort stream.

Isaiah 41:1–7  This poem is distinguished from the preceding poem by its shift in addressee from Jacob/Israel to the coastlands. The poem is entirely within the indictment tonal stream as indicated by its use of rhetorical questions, commands to fear, and violent and military images. The end of the poem is marked by a shift in addressee, subject matter, and tonality.

Isaiah 41:8–20  The poem is spoken in the divine voice to Jacob/Israel. As a whole the poem participates strongly in the comfort tonality. Particular indicators of the
comfort tonality in this poem include the recurrence of exhortations not to fear, imagery of bountiful provision, and claims about the relationship between Yhwh and the implied audience based on a long history. The poem redeployed the violence of the previous poem to create a tonality of security reinforced by might. Thus some hallmarks of the indictment tonality appear here including lawsuit language and violent imagery. However these reinforce Yhwh’s claim to be a strong protector and even these are muted into the bountiful provider image towards the end of the poem. The poem is marked off from what precedes by the shift in tonality reinforced by the redeployment of the preceding poem’s images, as well as by a shift in addressee. The end of the poem is marked by a shift in addressee, subject matter, and tonality.

Isaiah 41:21–29  This strongly indicting poem in the divine voice is addressed to the ‘gods’ and is marked off from the surrounding poems by this distinctive addressee. The end of the poem turns its attention towards Zion and expresses disappointment. Condemnatory language, legal imagery, and violent imagery mark the tonality of this poem.

Isaiah 42:1–4  This short poem in the divine voice is addressed apparently to the implied audience but with no direct address. Here the deity seems to be speaking to whomever will listen, or to no one in particular, and the tonality is one of excitement or anticipation. However, the tonality is not sharp throughout and is largely descriptive. The poem is marked off from what precedes by a change of focus from the ‘gods’ to the servant. The poem is marked off from what follows by the shift to a much more present addressee and a more clearly confident tonality.