GWYNETH WALKER And Death Shall Have No Dominion

for SATB Chorus and Piano

(Led.)

Commissioned by the Phillips Academy Chorus, Christopher Walter, Music Director Premiered on October 31, 2010 – Andover, Massachusetts

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

for SATB Chorus and Piano

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

* And death shall have no dominion.

Dead men naked they shall be one

with the man in the wind and the west moon;

When their bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone,

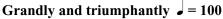
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;

Though they go mad they shall be sane,

Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;

Though lovers be lost love shall not;

And death shall have no dominion.





^{*} It is suggested that the first stanza of the poem be read aloud by members of the chorus before singing the song. Words by Dylan Thomas used by permission of Harold Ober Associates.

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poco rit.

Slightly slower

pp

pp

^{*}Perhaps just a few voices.







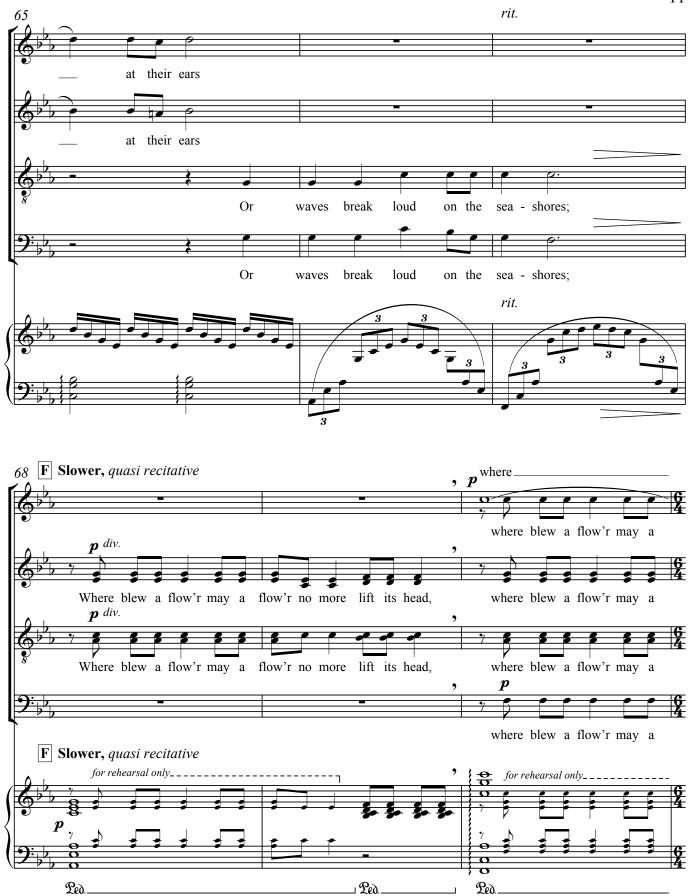




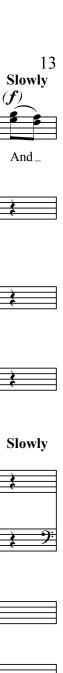








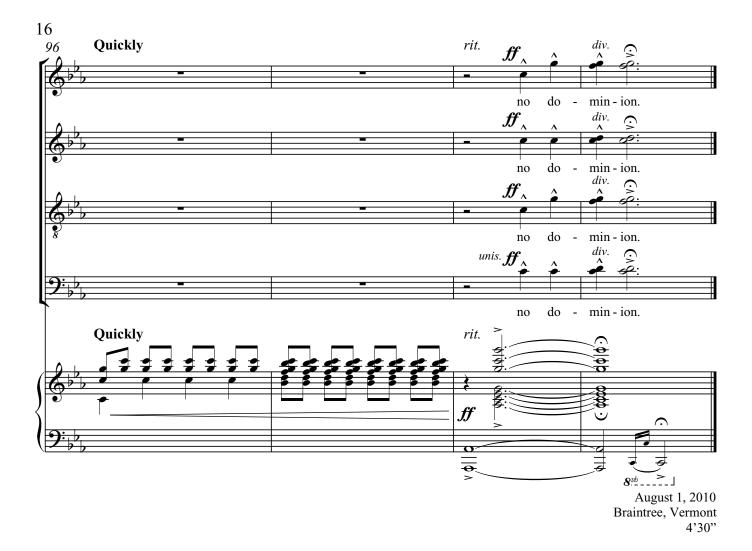












Program Notes

This musical setting of the well-known Dylan Thomas poem focuses on the strength and certainty of the message — though death may claim the mortal life, the spirit of humanity endures. Thus, the piano introduction and the first entrance by the chorus are marked "grandly and triumphantly." The musical language is often loud and forceful. Harmonies are bold — either spare (open fourths and fifths) or blunt (added seconds). The softening sonorities of thirds are rarely heard, especially in the opening verse. However, richer and gentler chords are chosen to express the life-affirming sentences:

Though they sink through the sea, they shall rise again... Break in the sun till the sun breaks down...

The poetic text primarily portrays the darkness and decay of death. And yet, with these few gloriously transcendent lines, the enduring spirit is celebrated. Thus, the final "no dominion" is victorious.

—Gwyneth Walker

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit her Web site. http://www.gwynethwalker.com



