

A decorative blue border with ornate floral and scrollwork patterns in each corner, framing the text.

Gwyneth Walker

*Emily!*

(from New England)

musical settings of the poems of Emily Dickinson

for Soprano, Clarinet (A, B $\flat$ ),  
optional B $\flat$  Bass Clarinet, and Piano

# *Emily!* (from New England)

*duration: 14 minutes*

## The Poems

### 1. My Letter to the World

This is my letter to the World  
That never wrote to Me –  
The simple News that Nature told –  
With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed  
To Hands I cannot see –  
For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –  
Judge tenderly – of Me

### 2. The Moon and the Sea

The Moon is distant from the Sea –  
And yet, with Amber Hands –  
She leads Him – docile as a Boy –  
Along appointed Sands –

He never misses a Degree –  
Obedient to Her eye –  
He comes just so far – toward the Town –  
Just so far – goes away –

Oh, Signor, Thine, the Amber Hand –  
And mine – the distant Sea –  
Obedient to the least command  
Thine eye impose on me –

### 3. The Frog in the Bog

I'm Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you – Nobody – Too?  
Then there's a pair of us!  
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!  
How public – like a Frog –  
To tell one's name – the livelong June –  
To an admiring Bog!

### 4. Hope (with Feathers)

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –  
That perches in the soul –  
And sings the tune without the words –  
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –  
And sore must be the storm –  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –  
And on the strangest Sea –  
Yet – never – in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb – of me.

### 5. Passion

Wild Nights – Wild Nights!  
Were I with thee  
Wild Nights should be  
Our luxury!

Futile – the Winds –  
To a Heart in port –  
Done with the Compass –  
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –  
Ah, but the Sea!  
Might I but moor – Tonight –  
In Thee!

## 6. Joy

’Tis so much joy! ’Tis so much joy!  
If I should fail, what poverty!  
And yet, as poor as I,  
Have ventured all upon a throw!  
Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so –  
This side the Victory!

Life is but Life! And Death, but Death!  
Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath!  
And if indeed I fail,  
At least, to know the worst, is sweet!  
Defeat means nothing but Defeat,  
No drearier, can befall!

And if I gain! Oh Gun at Sea!  
Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be!  
At first, repeat it slow!  
For Heaven is a different thing,  
Conjectured, and waked sudden in –  
And might extinguish me!

## 7. All I Have to Bring

It’s all I have to bring today–  
This, and my heart beside–  
This, and my heart, and all the fields–  
And all the meadows wide–  
Be sure you count – should I forget  
Someone the sum could tell –  
This, and my heart, and all the Bees  
Which in the Clover dwell

## The Composer

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b.1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982, in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. She now divides her time between her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut and the musical community of Randolph, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of New England. She was the recipient of the 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council and the 2018 “Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award” from Choral Arts New England. In 2020, her alma mater, the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, presented her with the Hartt Alumni Award.

A composer since age two, Gwyneth Walker has always placed great value on active collaboration with musicians. Over the decades, she has traveled to many states to work with instrumental and choral ensembles, soloists, and educational institutions as they rehearse and perform her music. A number of these visits have developed into ongoing relationships. In 2018, Walker was named Composer-in-Residence for the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra in Petoskey, Michigan.

Walker’s catalog includes over 350 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, and solo voice. A special interest has been dramatic works that combine music with readings, acting, and movement. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer (choral/vocal/instrumental music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral/instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at:

[www.gwynethwalker.com](http://www.gwynethwalker.com)

# Program Notes

The poetry of Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) is especially appealing due to the wide range of topics, diversity of mood and peculiar imagination of the poet. The writings are reflective, passionate, witty, sensuous, observant, and ridiculously humorous. Her heart soars. Her mind pokes fun!

Emily was truly a New Englander. Her poems are understated and compact. Her love of Nature focuses on small things – birds, bees, meadows, and a pond.

In creating the musical settings, the composer (herself a New Englander) endeavored to capture the spirit of the poetry, and of the poet, with songs diverse in style, and concise in form. Everything from romance to frogs is explored, briefly.

Great delight is taken in creating musical translations of the colorful imagery: the letters floating off on the breeze (“My Letter to the World”); the shimmering moonlight (“The Moon and the Sea”); a frog croaking in a bog (“The Frog in the Bog”); *hopeful* birds hopping about (“Hope” with Feathers); the *boat of passion* riding the waves and then settling into its mooring (“Passion”); the ship’s cannon firing in celebration (“Joy”); and the tiniest, lightest gifts of Nature (“All I Have to Bring”).

These are the poet’s *Letters to the World*. She lived as a recluse, yet her words took flight – traveling the universe as messengers of the soul.



During the summer of 2020, the **Emily!** songs were revisited with the goal of creating enhanced accompaniment for chamber ensembles. A version for string quartet and clarinet was composed, as was an “off-shoot” for piano and clarinet.

The initial question concerned the *role* of clarinet (a featured solo) in each song. The soprano speaks (sings) with the subjective voice of the poet. What then for clarinet?

The answer was for the clarinet to assume an objective role in each song, portraying the imagery or characters described in the poetry. For example, in “My Letter to the World,” the clarinet’s phrases are light, as sheets of paper (poems) flying off the poet’s desk. In “The Moon and the Sea,” the clarinet becomes the Moon/Lover, often playing in close harmony (3rds) with the Soprano/Poet.

For the subsequent songs, clarinet portrays the “Frog in the Bog” (using the lowest/darkest part of the instrument’s range), a hopping bird, the tumultuous sea of passion, the victory of gambling on love (“O Gun at Sea!”) and a final leaf of paper, as the last poem flies off from the poet’s desk. The clarinet was chosen as the solo instrument in these songs due to its versatility –a wide range in pitches, dynamics, articulation, and personality. Many facets were put to use!

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# Emily! (from New England)

\*for Soprano Solo, Clarinet (A, B $\flat$ ), optional B $\flat$  Bass Clarinet, and Piano

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Gwyneth Walker

G. Walker, alt.

## 1. My Letter to the World

Singer pretends to write a letter (a poem).

**Gently flowing** ♩ = 92  
*as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze*

Clarinet in A  
(B $\flat$  Clarinet,  
B $\flat$  Bass Clarinet  
[optional])

Piano

3

Cl.

with pedal

6

Cl.

*mf*

*rit.*

*mf*

*rit.*

*p*

*ped.*

\*For performances with Soprano and Piano (but without Clarinet), use the published version of Emily! [ECS #8137]. A transposition for Mezzo-Soprano is also available [ECS #8460]. An additional version for Soprano, Clarinet and String Quartet is available from the composer.

9 *a tempo*

Cl. 

S *(mf) flowing, cantabile* *mf cantabile*

This is my let-ter to the

*a tempo*

*mf* 

12

Cl. 

S World that nev-er wrote to Me. The



*simile*

15

Cl. 

S sim-ple news that Na-ture told- with ten-der Maj-es-ty.



32

Cl. *sfp* *f*

S *with intensity* *f* *p*

love of Her - Sweet - coun - try - men - judge ten - der - ly of

*f* *p*

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_

36 *a tempo* (♩ = 92) *rit.*

Cl. *p delicately*

S Me. \_\_\_\_\_

*a tempo* (♩ = 92) *rit.* *qua-*

*p delicately*

Singer tosses one last page (her poem) out on the breeze.

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_

1'50"

# 2. The Moon and the Sea

Start slowly *accel. poco a poco* (Cl. in A) *gently, as moonlight*

Cl. *p*

Start slowly *accel. poco a poco* *shimmering tremoli*

*pp* *gently, as moonlight*

with pedal

4 *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

Cl. *p*

S The Moon is dis - tant from the Sea \_\_\_\_\_ and

*a tempo* (♩ = 112)

(Ped.)

8 *rit.* **Slightly slower**

Cl. *mf*

S yet, with Am - ber Hands, She leads Him, do - cile as a

*rit.* **Slightly slower**

*mf*

(Ped.)



44

Cl.

S Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

47

Cl.

S Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

50 *ritard. to end*

Cl. *take B $\flat$  Clarinet [opt. Bass Clarinet]*

S Sig - nor! \_\_\_\_\_ *as shimmering moonlight*

*ritard. to end* *sensuous arpeggios* *p*

*ped.*

# 3. The Frog in the Bog

With energy ♩ = 112

*playfully*  
*p*  
*no pedal*

S  
*p* *mf*  
*rit.*  
I'm no-bod - y! Who are you? — Are you no-bod - y -

Cl. *Slower* *B♭ Clarinet (opt. B♭ Bass Clarinet)\** (answering Soprano) *fluttertongue*  
*mf* *p*  
S *Looking at Clarinet* *p* *mf*  
Too! Then there's a pair of us!

*Slower*

\*Bass Clarinet might bring extra "comic depth" to the Bog!

9 *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

Cl.

S *finger to lips – “hushed”* *p*  
 Don't tell, they'd ad-ver-tise, you

*a tempo* (♩ = 112)  
*p*

13 *as if sinking into a bog* *rit.*

Cl. *p*

S know!

*rit.*

16 *a tempo* (♩ = 112), *as a tango*  
 [play low D♭ (transposed) on Bass Cl. if available]

Cl. *f*

S *p* *drearily*  
 How

*a tempo* (♩ = 112), *as a tango*  
*as a dreary bog*  
*f* *gruffly*

(8vb)-----

29 *rit.*

Cl.

S *f* *f* *(as if sinking into a bog) with disgust*

live - long June - to an ad - mir - ing Bog!

*rit.* *f* *(with voice)*

(8<sup>vb</sup>)

32 *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

Cl. *p* Clarinetist turns away from audience as if avoiding "public admiration" Turn front Turn away

S a dismissive hand gesture (as if avoiding "public admiration")

*a tempo* (♩ = 112) *p*

*loco*

36 *ritard. to end* Turn front Turn away *take Cl. in A* A very deep and dreary bog - look down

Cl. *ritard. to end*

S dismissive gesture The Singer covers her face with her hands, like a mask of anonymity, holding the pose through the fermata.

# 4. Hope (with Feathers)

Joyful tempo ♩ = 126

*p* lightly, birdlike

S

Hope is the thing with

*p* light and feathery

Rec.

[portraying the bird]

4 Clarinet in A

feath - ers - that perch - es in the soul - and

*p*

(Rec.)

7

sings the tune with - out the words - and nev - er stops at

Rec. Rec. Rec.

10

Cl. *mf* with exuberance

S all. *mf* with exuberance

Ho - ho - ho - ho - hope,

*mf*

*And.*

13

Cl. *rit.*

S *(mf)*

ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope. And

*rit.*

16

Cl. *Relaxed tempo*

*p* *mf* *p* *mf*

S *Relaxed tempo*

sweet-est in the Gale is heard, and sore — must be the storm, that

*Relaxed tempo*

37

Cl.

S

hope, ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope,

[black-note clusters]

40

Cl.

*f*

S

*f* even more exuberantly

ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope, ho - ho - ho - ho,

*f*

43

Cl.

*no ritard.*

take B $\flat$  Cl.

S

ho - ho - ho - ho, ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope.

*no ritard.*

*sva*

## 5. Passion

With motion ♩ = 112

B♭ Clarinet

*f* with passion

*f* with passion

5

Cl.

S

with passion

*f*

Wild\_

9

Cl.

S

nights! Wild nights! Wild

*Red.*

\*Clarinet: optional G# to A trill if it is more comfortable



44

Cl. *rit.*

S *ff* Wild!

*ff*

*rit.* *8va*

*ff*

*rit.*

48 Slower

Cl. *p*

S *mf peacefully* Might I but moor - To - night - in *p*

*Slower*

*8va*

*p*

51 *rit. to end* as a boat settling into its mooring

Cl. *(p)* *pp*

S Thee! *rit. to end* as a boat settling into its mooring *pp*

# 6. Joy

With a joyful bounce ♩ = 108

Measures 1-3 of the piano introduction. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The right hand features a joyful, bouncy melody with eighth-note patterns. The left hand provides a simple accompaniment. Dynamics include *p* and *cresc.*. A *slight pedal* instruction is at the bottom right.

Measures 4-6 of the piano introduction. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a more active accompaniment. Dynamics include *(cresc.)* and *f*. A *more pedal* instruction is at the bottom.

Measures 7-10. Clarinet (B♭ Clarinet) part starts with a *f* dynamic and a *rit.* marking. The piano accompaniment features a wavy, tremolo-like texture in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. A *pedal stays through break* instruction is at the bottom right.

Measures 11-13. Clarinet part starts with *p* and *mf* dynamics, then *f ecstatic*. The vocal part (Soprano) enters with the lyrics: "'Tis so much joy!". Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. Instruction: *Start slowly and accel.*

Measures 14-16. The piano accompaniment features a wavy, tremolo-like texture in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. Instruction: *Start slowly and accel. accelerate into an unmeasured blur of sound*. A *8vb* marking is at the bottom.

14

Cl. *mf* *f* *rit.* *mf* *f*

S 'Tis so much joy! If

*f* *rit.*

(*Rec.*)

17 **Slower, as a recitative**

Cl.

S I should fail, what pov - er - ty! And yet, as poor as I, have ven - tured all up - on a throw! Have

*p* *> mf* *p*

**Slower, as a recitative**

*loco* *mf*

20

Cl.

S gained! - Yes! - Hes - i - ta - ted so. This side the vic - tor -

*p* *3* *3* *3* *3*

(*Rec.*)

41 *celebratory (as a cannon fired from a ship at sea)*

Cl.

S *f triumphantly*  
 And if I gain — Oh, gun at sea! —

*\*celebratory* *mf* *cresc.*

44

Cl.

S  
 Oh, bells that in the stee - ples be! —

*f*

47

Cl.

S  
 at first re - peat it slow! For

\*As cannons fired from a ship at sea

50 *rit. poco a poco*

Cl.

S *dim.*  
 hea - ven is a dif - ferent thing, con - jec - tured and waked  
*rit. poco a poco*

53 *Slowly* *rit.*

Cl. *p*

S *(dim.)* , *p*  
 sud - den in, and might ex - tin - guish me! \_\_\_\_\_

*Slowly* *rit.*

57 *(rit.)* *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

Cl. *pp* *p peacefully* *p enraptured*

S *a tempo* (♩ = 120)  
 'Tis so \_\_\_\_\_ much

*(rit.)*

60 *rit. to end* \*

Cl. *rit. to end*

S joy! 'Tis so much joy, *rit. to end*

63 *(rit.)*

Cl. *f*

S joy!

*(rit.)*

*f* *cresc.* *gliss. to end of keyboard* *(as a broad expanse of joy!)*

*3* *And.*

2'45"

# 7. All I Have to Bring

Singer pretends to write another letter, as in Song #1.

Lightly ♩ = 108, with moderate energy

Cl. in A as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

Cl. *p* delicately

Piano *p* delicately

with pedal

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of the piece. The top staff is for Clarinet in A, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The bottom staff is for Piano, also in treble and bass clefs with the same key signature and time signature. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a few notes, and includes a 'with pedal' instruction.

Cl. *p*

S *p* gently, meekly

It's all I have to bring to - day -

Piano *pp* barely audible background

Detailed description: This system contains the third, fourth, and fifth staves. The Clarinet staff (top) has a measure rest followed by a note marked *p*. The Singer staff (middle) has a measure rest followed by the lyrics 'It's all I have to bring to - day -' with a long note. The Piano staff (bottom) features a wavy line representing a 'barely audible background'.

Cl.

S this, and my heart be - side.

Piano

Detailed description: This system contains the sixth, seventh, and eighth staves. The Clarinet staff (top) has a measure rest followed by a note. The Singer staff (middle) has a measure rest followed by the lyrics 'this, and my heart be - side.' with a long note. The Piano staff (bottom) continues with the wavy background line and some rhythmic patterns.

29 *rit. to end*

Cl. *f* *p*

S *p*  
bring to - day,

*rit. to end*

*p* (p)

Leo. \_\_\_\_\_

33 *(rit.)*

Cl. *(p)* *pp*

S  
to - day.

Singer raises hand skyward, in appreciation of Nature's gentle gifts.

*(rit.)* *p*

(Leo.) \_\_\_\_\_

1'30"  
Total: 14 minutes  
This version completed: July 21, 2020  
New Canaan, Connecticut