



Gwyneth Walker

Emily!

(from New England)

musical settings of the poems of Emily Dickinson

for Soprano and Piano

CONTENTS

1. My Letter to the World	4
2. The Moon and the Sea	8
3. The Frog in the Bog	12
4. Hope (with Feathers)	15
5. Passion	19
6. Joy	23
7. All I Have to Bring	29

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.

Duration: 14 minutes

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 communities of Sarasota, Florida and Randolph, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker has been a proud resident of Vermont for many years. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council as well as the 2008 “Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities” from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum. In 2012, she was elected as a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Walker’s catalog includes over 300 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 and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at: www.gwynethwalker.com

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.

dedicated to Mary Annarella, soprano, and David Kidwell, pianist
 dear friends and colleagues (Holyoke, Massachusetts)

Emily! (from New England)

for Soprano 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

Piano

p delicately

with pedal

3

6

mf

rit.

p

mf cantabile

9

a tempo

a tempo

mf

This is my let - ter to the

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions

12

World that nev - er wrote to Me. The

Ped. *simile*

15

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

18

Her Mes - sage is com - mit - ted to Hands I can - not see. For

rit. *Slower (mf)* *p*

21 *p*

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

mf *p*

23 *a tempo* (♩ = 92)

Me. _____

a tempo (♩ = 92)

(*p*) *cresc. poco a poco*

with pedal

26 *mf* *rit.* *f*

Her mes - sage is com - mit - ted to Hands I can - not

mf *rit.*

2. The Moon and the Sea

Start slowly

accel. poco a poco

shimmering tremoli

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs, while the left hand provides a bass line with triplets and slurs. The tempo is marked 'Start slowly' and 'accel. poco a poco'. The dynamic is *pp* with the instruction 'gently, as moonlight'. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The piece concludes with 'shimmering tremoli' in the right hand and 'Ped.' markings in the left hand.

a tempo (♩ = 112)

The first vocal line begins at measure 4. The tempo is marked *a tempo* (♩ = 112) and the dynamic is *p*. The lyrics are: 'The Moon is dis - tant from the Sea _____ and'.

a tempo (♩ = 112)

The piano accompaniment for the first vocal line features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is *a tempo* (♩ = 112). The piece concludes with 'Ped.' markings in the left hand.

8

rit.
mf

Slightly slower

The second vocal line begins at measure 8. The tempo is marked *rit.* and *Slightly slower*. The dynamic is *mf*. The lyrics are: 'yet, with Am - ber Hands, She leads Him, do - cile as a'.

rit.

Slightly slower

The piano accompaniment for the second vocal line features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is *rit.* and *Slightly slower*. The dynamic is *mf*. The piece concludes with 'Ped.' markings in the left hand.

12

a tempo (♩ = 112)

The third vocal line begins at measure 12. The tempo is marked *a tempo* (♩ = 112) and the dynamic is *p*. The lyrics are: 'Boy, a - long ap - point - ed Sands.'.

a tempo (♩ = 112)

The piano accompaniment for the third vocal line features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is *a tempo* (♩ = 112) and the dynamic is *p*. The piece concludes with 'Ped.' markings in the left hand.

16 *(p)*

He nev - er miss - es a De - gree, o - be - dient to Her

Ped. _____

20 *mf*

eye. He comes just so far - to - ward the

Ped. _____

24 *poco rit.* **Slightly slower** *rit. p (as a waning moon)*

Town - just _____ so far, goes a - way.

poco rit. **Slightly slower** *rit. p*

Ped. _____

28 *(rit.)* *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

(rit.) *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

(p)

(Ped.) _____ *with pedal*

31

mf espr.

Oh, Sig - nor, Thine, the Am - ber

34

Hand, and mine, the dis - tant Sea - o -

37

rit.

a tempo (♩ = 112)

p

be - dient to the least com - mand Thine eye im - pose on me.

41

f impassioned

f impassioned

simile

Oh, Si - gnor,

3. The Frog in the Bog

With energy ♩ = 112

playfully

Piano introduction in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

no pedal

3 *p* *mf* *rit.*

I'm no-bod - y! Who are you? — Are you no-bod - y -

Vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff) for the first vocal line. The vocal line includes a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics range from piano (*p*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*) with a ritardando (*rit.*) marking.

6 *p* *mf* *Slower* Looking at pianist

Too! Then there's a pair of us!

Slower (for rehearsal only) *mf* *answering the voice*

Vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff) for the second vocal line. The tempo is marked *Slower*. The piano accompaniment includes a section marked *(mf)* and *answering the voice*.

9 *a tempo* (♩ = 112) finger to lips – “hushed” *p*

Don't tell, they'd ad - ver - tise, you

a tempo (♩ = 112) *p*

Vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff) for the third vocal line. The tempo is marked *a tempo* (♩ = 112). The piano accompaniment features a series of chords in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

13 *rit.*

know!

p

8vb

16 *a tempo* (♩ = 112), *as a tango* *p* drearily

How

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

f gruffly

8vb

20

drear - y, — drear - y, drear - y, drear - y, drear - y, —

p

8vb

23

— to be some - bod - y! How pub - lic like a

8vb

4. Hope (with Feathers)

Joyful tempo ♩ = 126 *p* lightly, birdlike

Hope is the thing with

4

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

(*Red.*)

7

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

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

10 *mf* with exuberance

all. Ho - ho - ho - ho - hope,

mf

And.

13 *rit.* (*mf*)

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

rit.

16 Relaxed tempo

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

Relaxed tempo

20 *rit.* Slowly *p* *a tempo* (♩ = 126)

could a - bash the lit - tle Bird that kept so man - y warm.

rit. Slowly *a tempo* (♩ = 126)

p

22

mf with exuberance

Ho - ho - ho - ho - hope,

mf

25

rit.

Slower

, (*mf*)

ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope. I've

rit. Slower , (*mf*)

28

heard it in the chill - est land, and on the strang - est Sea, yet -

32

rit.

p

nev - er - in Ex - trem - i - ty, it asked a crumb of me.

rit. *p* (answering voice)

5. Passion

With motion ♩ = 112

f with passion

Ped.

with passion

f

Wild_

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

nights! Wild nights! Wild

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

rit.

Slower

nights! Were I with thee,

rit.

pva

Slower

Ped.

Ped.

17 *rit.* *p*

wild nights should be our lux - ur - y, our lux - ur - y.

mf *rit.* *p* (*p*)

(*Red.*)

20 *a tempo* (♩ = 112) *mf espr.*

a tempo (♩ = 112) Fu - tile, the Winds, to a

(p) *as tumultuous waves of romance* *mf*

simile

23

Heart in port. Done with the Com - pass,

26

done with the Chart!

28

Row - ing in E - den, ah! but the Sea!

Slower *a tempo* (♩ = 112)
(mf) peacefully, tenderly

31

rit. Might I but moor - To - night - in Thee!

rit. **Slower** *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

34

with passion
f Wild

37

nights! Wild nights! Wild!

6. Joy

With a joyful bounce ♩ = 108

slight pedal

more pedal

(pedal stays through break)

Start slowly and accel.

with excitement ♩ = 120

Start slowly and accel.

accelerate into an unmeasured blur of sound

with excitement ♩ = 120

(Ped.) Ped.

8vb

14 *rit.*

'Tis so much joy! _____ If

f

rit.

(*Loc.*)

17 *Slower, as a recitative* *mf* *p*

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

Slower, as a recitative

loco

mf

20

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

p

Loc.

23 *accel.* *f* *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

yl. _____

accel. *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

f

Loc. *Loc.* *simile*

Slightly slower ♩ = 108
p reflectively

26

poco rit.

Life is but life, and

Slightly slower ♩ = 108

29

cresc. poco a poco

death but death! Bliss is but bliss, and breath but breath! And

32

(cresc.)

rit.

Slower, as a recitative

f

, mf

if, in-deed I fail, At least to know the worst is sweet. De-

35

feat means noth - ing but de - feat, no drear - ier can be - fall. *p*

38

a tempo (♩ = 120)

41

f triumphantly

And if I gain - Oh, gun at sea!

44

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

*As cannons fired from a ship at sea

47

at first re - peat it slow! For

50

rit. poco a poco

dim.

hea - ven is a dif - ferent thing, con - jec - tured and waked

rit. poco a poco

dim.

53

(dim.)

, p

Slowly

rit.

sud - den in, and might ex - tin - guish me! _____

Slowly

(dim.) *p*

(p)

rit.

Red.

*As cannons fired from a ship at sea

7. All I Have to Bring

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

Lightly ♩ = 108, with moderate energy
as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a delicate, flowing melody of eighth notes, while the left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The dynamic is marked *p* (piano) and the instruction is *delicately*. The piece ends with a wavy line indicating a pedal effect.

with pedal

3 *p* gently, meekly

Measures 3-5 of the song. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "It's all I have to". The piano accompaniment continues with a wavy line, marked *pp* (pianissimo) as a "barely audible background".

6

Measures 6-8 of the song. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "bring to - day - this, and my heart be -". The piano accompaniment features a more active eighth-note pattern in the right hand, while the left hand remains simple.

9 with more strength
cresc.

Measures 9-11 of the song. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics "side. This, and my heart, and". The piano accompaniment becomes more rhythmic and dynamic, marked *cresc.* (crescendo).

30

12 *(cresc.)* *mf*

all the fields, and all the meadows wide.

Strict tempo (as if counting time)

15 *(mf)*

Be sure you count, should I forget, some

Strict tempo (as if counting time)

(with pedal)

18 *cresc.*

one the sum could tell. This, and my heart, and

22

(cresc.) *f* *ecstatic* *rit.*

all the Bees which in the clover dwell.

(“all of nature” scale)

cresc. *f* *ecstatic arpeggios* *rit.*

with pedal

