

GWYNETH WALKER

I've Known Rivers

for Baritone Solo and Piano

1. My Soul has Grown Deep
2. Troubled Water
3. Jump Right In!
4. In Time of Silver Rain

I've Known Rivers

duration: 12 minutes

adapted from the Choral version commissioned and premiered by the Holland (MI) Chorale in 2008

I've Known Rivers is a set of four songs based on the poetry of Langston Hughes (1902-67), an African-American poet who lived much of his life in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. However, Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, birthplace also of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). And, like Twain, he held a fascination for the Mississippi River and rivers in general. The theme of water is present in many of his writings.

My Soul has Grown Deep reflects upon rivers of historic and geographical importance – the Euphrates, the Nile and the Mississippi. As the rivers have endured over time, so has the human soul. The waters – the blood – runs deep.

In contrast to the universal message of the first song, *Troubled Water* is contemporary and personal. Water becomes an image of the unsettled and uncertain nature of love. The journey of love is a journey of troubled water. There is no resolution.

Undaunted by the elusive nature of love, the poet (Baritone) turns flippant, displaying a persevering and humorous outlook in *Jump Right In!* (to the river). Romantic misadventures will not conquer the spirit. “I could’ve died for love, but for livin’ I was born.”

In Time of Silver Rain is a song of healing. “In time of silver rain, the earth puts forth new life again.” And with the regeneration of Spring, the poet marvels at the wonder of life.

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

I've Known Rivers

for Baritone Solo and Piano

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Gwyneth Walker

1. My Soul has Grown Deep

Gently flowing ♩ = 108

Piano

mf *p* *mf*

Ped. Ped.

mf *p* *mf* *p*

(Ped.) Ped.

mf *p*

Ped. Ped.

10

A *p* evoking the magic and mystery of rivers

I've known riv - ers:

Ped. Ped. Ped.

13

I've known

mf *p*

Ped. Ped.

16

riv - - ers:

mf *p*

Ped. Ped.

19 **B**

I've known riv - ers an - cient as the world and old - er than the flow of hu - man

poco rit.

p *poco rit.*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

22

blood in hu - man veins. My soul has grown deep like the

Slower

p *Slower*

Ped.

26 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

riv - ers. _____ Ah, _____

The vocal line consists of a single melodic phrase in bass clef, starting with a half note 'riv' and a dotted half note 'ers'. It is followed by a rest and then a half note 'Ah'.

a tempo (♩ = 108)

The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note triplet pattern in the right hand, with a descending line. The left hand plays a simple bass line with eighth notes. The tempo is marked 'a tempo' with a quarter note equal to 108 beats per minute.

29

mf **C**

I bathed in the Eu - phra - tes when dawns were young. _____

The vocal line starts in bass clef and then changes to treble clef. It contains the lyrics 'I bathed in the Eu - phra - tes when dawns were young.' with a long final note.

The piano accompaniment continues with triplet patterns. Measure 29 has a 'cresc.' marking. Measure 30 has an 'mf' marking. Measure 31 has a 'simile' marking. The left hand has a steady eighth-note triplet pattern.

32

I built my hut near the Con - go and it

The vocal line is in treble clef and contains the lyrics 'I built my hut near the Con - go and it'.

The piano accompaniment continues with triplet patterns in both hands, maintaining the eighth-note triplet texture.

35

D

lulled me to sleep. _____ I looked up - on the Nile _____

The vocal line is in treble clef and contains the lyrics 'lulled me to sleep. I looked up - on the Nile'.

The piano accompaniment features a 'LH' marking above the right hand. It continues with triplet patterns. The left hand has a steady eighth-note triplet pattern. The tempo remains 'a tempo'.

63 *f espr.* **G Slower**

My soul has grown deep, my soul has grown

(cresc.) 3 3 3 3 **G Slower** *f*

(Ped.)

67 *mf* **H a tempo (♩ = 108)**

deep, my soul has grown deep like the riv - ers,

H a tempo (♩ = 108) *mf*

loco *(Ped.)*

71 *p*

like the

p *mf* *p*

(Ped.) *(Ped.)*

74 *rit.*

riv - ers.

(p) *rit.*

(Ped.) *(Ped.)*

2. Troubled Water

Flowing ♩ = 120

p gently (p) Ped.

6 A *mf cantabile*

Be - tween us, al - ways,

A

simile Ped.

11

loved one, there lies this trou - bled wa - ter.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

16 B *mf cantabile*

You are my sky, my

B

mf (Ped.) with pedal

21

shi - ning sun O - ver trou - bled wa - - - - - ter. *p*

26

C *mf*

— You are my sky, my shin - ing sun o - ver

C *mf*

ped.

32

trou - bled wa - - - - - ter. *p* *rit.* *mf* I

rit.

p

ped.

37

D Slower *quasi recitativo* *p* (as a commentary) *mf*

jour - ney far to touch your hand. The trip is trou - bled wa - ter. We

D Slower *quasi recitativo* *mf* *p*

76 *f* *accel.* **H** *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

this - This sea of trou - bled wa - - - ter,

ped.

82 *p* *rit.*

This sea of trou - bled wa - ter. ter.

rit.

p *pp* *pp*

(*ped.*)

88 *pp* *accel.*

pp *accel.*

p *cresc.*

* Use ENDING 1 if this song is to be performed individually. Use ENDING 2 if continuing on to *Jump Right In*.

3. Jump Right In!

With energy ♩ = 120

4 *f* boisterously

I went down to the ri-ver, I set down on the bank. I

A

7 [loud hand clap]

tried to think but could-n't, so I jumped up and sank. I came up once and hol-lered! I

x

10

came up twice and cried! If that wa-ter had-n't a-been so * cold I

Red.

*Ossia if needed

13 (Opt.) B

might-'ve sunk and died. _____ But it was cold in that wa - ter!

gliss.

16 (Opt.) humorous falsetto

It was cold! _____

19 [Finger snaps] *sing f* C

ch ch ch ch ch I took the el - e - va - tor six - teen

[opt. vocal sounds]

22

floors a - bove the ground. I thought a - bout my ba - by and I thought I would jump down. _____ I

25 [Clap] \times

stood there and I hol-lered! I stood there and I cried! If it had - n't a-been so

28 (Opt.)

* high I might-'ve jumped and died. But it was

gliss.

31 **D** *Red.*

high up there! It was high!

D

34 [Finger snaps]

ch ch ch ch ch ch

[opt. vocal sounds]

*Ossia if needed

62

Fine as wine! Life is

65

fine, life is fine, life is fine,

Red.

68

life is fine.

p sub. *cresc.* *rit.* *ff*

Red.

4. In Time of Silver Rain

At a peaceful tempo ♩ = 92
 blurred and shimmering, as silver rain

The piano introduction consists of two measures in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a series of chords moving up the scale, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *Ped.* (pedal) marking. The tempo is marked as *simile*.

3 *p* peacefully

In

The first line of the vocal melody begins with the word "In". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the introduction, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

5 **A**

time of sil - ver rain,

A

The second line of the vocal melody continues with "time of sil - ver rain,". The piano accompaniment remains consistent, providing a harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the vocal line.

7

in time of sil - ver rain,

The third line of the vocal melody concludes with "in time of sil - ver rain,". The piano accompaniment continues to support the vocal line with its characteristic rhythmic accompaniment.

9

the earth puts forth new

11

life a - gain,

13

green gras - ses grow and

15

flow - ers lift their heads, and o-ver all the plain the

rit. **Slower**

rit. **Slower**

18 *cresc.* *accel.*

won-der spreads, the won-der spreads of life, of life, of life, of

mf cresc. *accel.*

Red.

22 *f* *a tempo* (♩ = 92)

life!

f *a tempo* (♩ = 92)

8va

Red.

25 *mf*

In time of sil - ver rain

8va

p

(*Red.*)

27 *mf*

the but - ter - flies lift silk - en wings

8va

(*Red.*)

50 *p*

flow - ers lift their heads _____ and ov - er all the plain, and

53 *cresc.*

o - ver all the plain the won - der spreads of _ life, of life, of

56 *(cresc.)* **G** *f* *rit. to end*

life, of life, _____ the

60 *(rit.)* *rit.* *f*

won - der, won - der of life!