

GWYNETH WALKER

No Ordinary Woman!

*Songs for Soprano and Piano*

*based on the poetry of Lucille Clifton*

**ECS**PUBLISHING

E. C. Schirmer Music Company • Ione Press • Galaxy Music Corporation • Highgate Press

[ecspublishing.com](http://ecspublishing.com)



## Contents

I. Bones, Be Good	1
II. Turning	10
III. Homage to My Hips	15
IV. Homage to My Hair	22
V. The Thirty-eighth Year	25

Total Duration: 14 minutes

## Notes

These songs might have been subtitled “Songs of Self Reflection,” for they present the poet musing about her own life, and specifically her physical appearance. One imagines the poet looking in the mirror with amusement, horror and a strong sense of her own history. Thus, the songs range from an energetic first impression (“Bones, Be Good!”) to philosophical reflection (“Turning”) to humor and pride in the body itself (“Homage to my Hips/Hair”) to a more serious summation (“The Thirty-Eighth Year”). A strong and colorful woman emerges.

**No Ordinary Woman!** was commissioned by soprano, Denise Walker, and pianist, Estrid Eklof, for premiere at Brown University, Providence, RI in December 1997. The songs were composed at the composer’s home in Vermont during the summer of 1997.

## About the Composer and Poet

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).

**Lucille Clifton** (poet) was born in 1936 in Depew, New York and educated at Howard University and the State University of New York at Fredonia. Formerly the Poet Laureate of the State of Maryland, she has taught at Goucher College and the American University in Washington, DC.

Catalog No. 5728

Commissioned by Denise Walker (Soprano) and Estrid Eklof (Pianist)  
Premiered at Brown University, Providence RI, December 5, 1997

# No Ordinary Woman!

for Soprano and Piano

Lucille Clifton

Gwyneth Walker

## I. Bones, Be Good!

$\text{♩} = 88$   
*snap fingers*

Soprano

Piano

5 **A**

**A**

*mf* swing eighths

9

*p* *mf*

**A**

2

13

**B**

*mf*

I beg my bones to— be good— but

**B**

*p*

17

they just keep click-in' mu - sic,

*mf*

21

*p*

*mf*

click, click. click, click, click - in'— mu - sic.

*p*

*mf*

25

**C**

*p*

*mf*

Bones, be good!

**C**

*p*

*mf*

29 *p* ————— *mf* *p* —————

Bones, ——— be good! ——— Bones be good, be good, be good.

33 *mf*

They just keep click-in' mu - - - - sic. ———

37 **D** *rit.* **more freely**  
(*mf*)

yeah! I more freely

41

spin ——— in the cen - ter of my - self, ——— a

45

fool - ish, fright - ful wo - - - man.

49 **E**

Mov - in' my skin a - gainst the wind, and

**E**

53

tap tap tap tap danc - in', dan - cin' for my

*f* *p*

*a tempo*

white-note gliss.

*f*

Ped.

57 **F**

life, for my life.

**F**

*p*



61 *percussive sound (mostly air)*

ta ta ta ta ta

*mf*

*dec.* *sim.*

65

ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta

69 *mf*

tap tap tap dan - cin', tap tap tap dan - cin',

**G**

73

tap tap tap dan - cin', tap tap tap tap dan - cin',

6  
77 **H** *p* — *mf* *p* — *mf*

Bones, be good! — Bones, — be good! —

81 *p* — *mf*

Bones be good, be good, — be good! They just keep

84

click - in' mu - - - - sic. —

87 **I** *f* *scat singing ad lib. with Piano*

ba ya ba ya ba ba ba ya — ba ba ba ba

91

95

J

*mf*

*p*

mov - in' my skin a - gainst the wind, and

J

*mf*

*ped.*

99

tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap

*p*

*ped.*

103

*cresc.*

*rit.*

optional Ah

*f*

tap a tap a tap a tap a dan - cin',

*rit.*

*cresc.*

*ped.*

8

107 **K**

*a tempo*  
*p*

dan - cin' for my life, for my

*p*

111

*mf*

life. Mov - in' my skin a - gainst the

115

*mf*

wind, click click click-in' mu -

*mf* *p*

119

**L**

sic, a fool - ish, fright - ful wo - man, just a

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

## II. Turning

Gently flowing ♩ = 80

Musical score for the first system of 'Turning'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a whole rest in each of the four measures. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a treble clef. It contains a melodic line with triplets of eighth notes in the first two measures, followed by a wavy line indicating a 'blur' in the last two measures. The bottom staff is a grand staff with a bass clef, containing whole rests in all four measures. Performance markings include 'pdelicato' and 'una corda'.

Gently flowing ♩ = 80

*pdelicato*

*una corda*

*start slowly and accel. into a blur*

5

Musical score for the second system of 'Turning'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a whole rest in each of the four measures. The middle staff is a grand staff with a treble clef, containing a wavy line with a flat symbol in the first measure, followed by wavy lines in the other three measures. The bottom staff is a grand staff with a bass clef, containing block chords in the first two measures and a single note in the last two measures. A '(Ped.)' marking is present at the beginning of the system.

(Ped.)

9 **A**

Musical score for the third system of 'Turning'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a slur over the first two measures. The lyrics 'Turn - - - ing, turn - - - ing,' are written below the notes. The middle staff is a grand staff with a treble clef, containing a wavy line with a flat symbol in the first measure, followed by a wavy line in the second measure, and a wavy line in the last two measures. The bottom staff is a grand staff with a bass clef, containing block chords in the first two measures and a single note in the last two measures. Performance markings include '(Ped.)' and 'simile'.

*p*

Turn - - - ing, turn - - - ing,

**A**

(Ped.) *simile*

13

in - to my own self at last.

17 **B**

Turn - - - - ing, turn - - - - - ing,

21

in - to my own self at last.

*mf*

*Red. tre corde*

25 **C**

Turn - ing out of the white cage, turn - ing out of the

*(mf)* *p* *mf*

28

*delicato*

*rit.*

*p*

*a tempo*

*mf*

la - dy, la - dy, la - dy cage,

turn - ing at last.

*rit.*

*a tempo*

31 **D**

*p*

The white cage,

34

*rit.*

*p*

*a tempo*

the la - dy, la - dy, la - dy cage,

turn - ing at

*rit.*

*a tempo*

36 **E**

last.

*Ad.* *simile*

40

Mm

44 **F**

Turn - - - ing, turn - - -

**F**

*mf*

*Red.*

48

- - ing, in - to my own self at last.

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*Red.*

52 **G**

*mf* *poco rit.* *p* *mf*

Turn - ing on a stem like a black fruit in my own sea - son at last.

**G**

*poco rit.*

*mf*

*p*

*mf*



### III. Homage to my Hips

At a gently swaying tango tempo  $\text{♩} = 80$

At a gently swaying tango tempo  $\text{♩} = 80$

*mf*

*poco  $\text{♩}$  ad lib.*

The piano introduction consists of three measures in 2/2 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth-note patterns, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment with a triplet in the second measure.

4

**A** *mf*

These hips are

**A**

The vocal line begins at measure 4 with the lyrics "These hips are". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the introduction, including triplet figures in the bass line.

7

big hips. They need— space—

The vocal line continues at measure 7 with the lyrics "big hips. They need— space—". The piano accompaniment remains consistent, providing a rhythmic foundation for the vocal melody.

16

10

to move a - round in.

13

**B**

They don't fit

16

in - to lit - tle pet - ty pla - ces.

19

These hips are free

*cresc.*

22

Musical score for measures 22-24. The vocal line consists of a long melisma. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords.

25 *p* as an after thought

hips.

Musical score for measures 25-27. The vocal line has a melisma. The piano accompaniment has dynamic markings *mf*, *p*, and *mf*.

28

**C** (*p*)

These hips

**C**

Musical score for measures 28-30. The vocal line has lyrics "These hips". The piano accompaniment has dynamic markings *p* and *mf*, and a triplet.

31

These hips these hips,

Musical score for measures 31-33. The vocal line has lyrics "These hips these hips,". The piano accompaniment has dynamic markings *p* and *mf*.

34

these hips, \_\_\_\_\_ they

*mf* *p* *f* white-note gliss.

Reo.

37 **D**

go where they want to go, \_\_\_\_\_ and do what they want to

**D** *f* Reo. Reo.

41 *dim.*

do do do do do do do do do do do do do do do

*(play only to support voice)*

*dim.* *p*

(Reo.)

44

These hips \_\_\_\_\_ are free \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* **E** *p* *cresc.* **E**

47

50 *f* *p*

hips.

53

56 **F** *col Piano ad lib.* *(p)* *mf* *p*

la la la la la la la la la la la la la

**F** *mf* *p*

20

59

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

*mf* *p* *mf*

**G**

62

ah They go where they want to go

*p* *rit.* *f* *Slower, more freely*

*rit.* *Slower, more freely*

*white-note gliss.*

**G**

66

and do what they want to do do do do do do do do do do do do

*dim.* *rit.* *f* *dim.*

*(play only to support voice)*

**G**

70

do do do do These hips are might-y hips. These hips are mag-ic hips.

*p* *H* *mf* *p*

*rit.* *H*

**G**

# IV. Homage to My Hair

**Freely, as an introduction** *f*

Soprano

When I feel her jump and dance,—

**Freely, as an introduction** *f* *8va*

4

When I feel her jump up and dance,

*loco* *f* *8va*

7

When I feel her jump up and dance,— I hear the

*p sub.* *f* *8va*

10

mu - sic, my God!

**A** Lively ♩ = 112

*p*

13 [spoken (in a lively manner)]

I'm talking about my hair, my

16

nappy, nappy, hair. She's a chal-lenge to your

19

hand, my man,- she's as tas - ty on your tongue as good, good greens.

22

She can touch your mind- with her e - lec - tric fin - gers.



# V. The Thirty-eighth Year

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 80

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 80

*p reflectively*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

5 *poco accel.* *rit.* *a tempo* ***p***

The

*poco accel.* *rit.* *a tempo*

*mf* ***p***

9 **A** *reflectively* *quasi recitative, free tempo*

thir-ty-eighth year of my life, plain as bread, as round as a cake an

**A** *quasi recitative, free tempo*

*quasi recitative, free tempo*

*rit.*

ord - in - ar - y wo - man, an ord - in - ar - y wo - man

*rit.*

*Ped.*

16 **B** *a tempo*

*rit.*

*mf quasi recitative*

I had ex - pect - ed to be

*mf*

*rit.*

*Ped.*

18

small - er than this, more beau - ti - ful, — wi - ser in Af - ri - can

*p*

*Ped.*

21

ways, more con - fi - dent, more con - fi - dent, I had ex - pect - ed

*Ped.*

25

start slowly and accel.

C ♩ = 92

more ————— than this.

start slowly and accel.

C ♩ = 92

reflectively

28

rit.

mf freely

p

I will be for - ty soon. My moth - er once was for - ty.—

rit.

31

rit.

D With motion ♩ = 112

rit.

D With motion ♩ = 112

*cresc.*

*mf* ————— *p*

34

mp

I have dreamed dreams for you

ma - ma, more than once. I have

wrapped me in your skin, and made you live a -

gain, more than once, more than once, I have

tak - en the bones you hard - ened and built daugh - ters.

45

And they blos - som and prom - ise

47

fruit like Af - - - ri - can trees.

50

I am a wom - an now, an ord - in - ar - y

53

wom - an. In the

*rit.* **F** ♩ = 92 *(f)*



69 *p*

If in the mid - dle of my life I am

*Red.*

72 *cresc.*

turn - ing the fi - nal turn in - to the shin - ing dark,

*Red.*

75 (*cresc.*) **H** *f*

let me come to it whole and ho - ly. Let me

*Red.*

78

come to it un - a - fraid, out of my moth - er's

*Red.*

81 *accel.*

life, out of my moth - er's

*accel.*

83 *(accel.)* *cresc.*

life, in - - - to my

*(accel.)* *cresc.*

I ♩ = 132

85 *ff* *rit.*

own.

I ♩ = 132 *ff* *rit.*











**ECS**PUBLISHING

\$25.20

