GWYNETH WALKER Tell the Earth to Shake

for TTBB Chorus and Piano

SATB version commissioned by the Clearview Regional High School Vocal Ensemble, Mullica Hill, New Jersey
Jack Hill, Music Director
Completed August 11, 2004 in Braintree, Vermont; Duration: 4'15"
Premiere performance: February 2, 2005
at the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association,

Los Angeles, California

TTBB version created for the Boston Gay Men's Chorus, Reuben Reynolds, Music Director.

Premiere performance: March 27, 2010, Jordan Hall, Boston, Massachusetts.

Program Notes

The poem *Earthquake*, by the Trappist Monk Thomas Merton (1915–1968), presents the powerful voice of God: "Tell the earth to shake... for a new world is born, and all my people shall be one." This is an insistent poem, with repetitions of stanzas and only slight variations. Through forceful restatement, the poem grows into the closing lines:

There shall be no more hate

And no more oppression

The old wrongs are done

My people shall be one.

The musical setting adopts the form of the poem. As the lyrics are structured into verse "pairings" ("tell the earth to shake..." "the old wrongs are over..."), so the voices are paired and answer one another. The alternation continues several times, with the tonal center shifting up a step with each section.

The modulations, intended to increase the strength and intensity of the song, are effected through sections of "pacem" (peace). This word has been inserted by the composer to form bridges between the verses. For, as the earth will shake "with marching feet of messengers of peace..." so peace becomes the means of bringing the people together as one.

—Gwyneth Walker

Earthquake

Go tell the earth to shake And tell the thunder To wake the sky And tear the clouds apart Tell my people to come out And wonder

Where the old world is gone For a new world is born And all my people Shall be one.

So tell the earth to shake With marching feet
Of messengers of peace
Proclaim my law of love
To every nation
Every race.

For the old wrongs are over The old days are gone A new world is rising Where my people shall be one.

So tell the earth to shake
With marching feet
Of messengers of peace
Proclaim my law of love
To every nation
Every race.

And say
The old wrongs are over
The old ways are done
There shall be no more hate
And no more war
My people shall be one.

So tell the earth to shake With marching feet
Of messengers of peace
Proclaim my law of love
To every nation
Every race.

For the old world is ended The old sky is torn apart A new day is born They hate no more They do not go to war My people shall be one. So tell the earth to shake With marching feet Of messengers of peace Proclaim my law of love To every nation Every race.

There shall be no more hate And no more oppression The old wrongs are done My people shall be one.

—Thomas Merton

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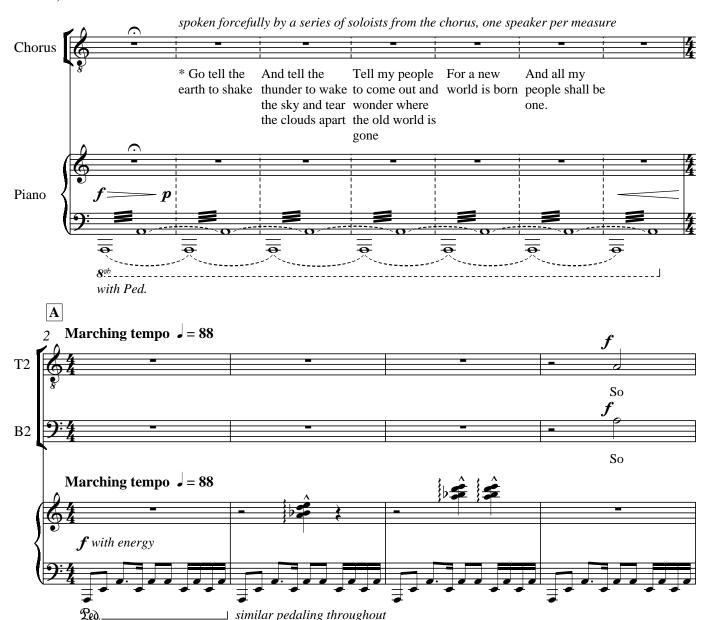
Tell the Earth to Shake

for TTBB Chorus (divisi) and Chamber Orchestra or Piano

Earthquake Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

Gwyneth Walker

G. W., alt.

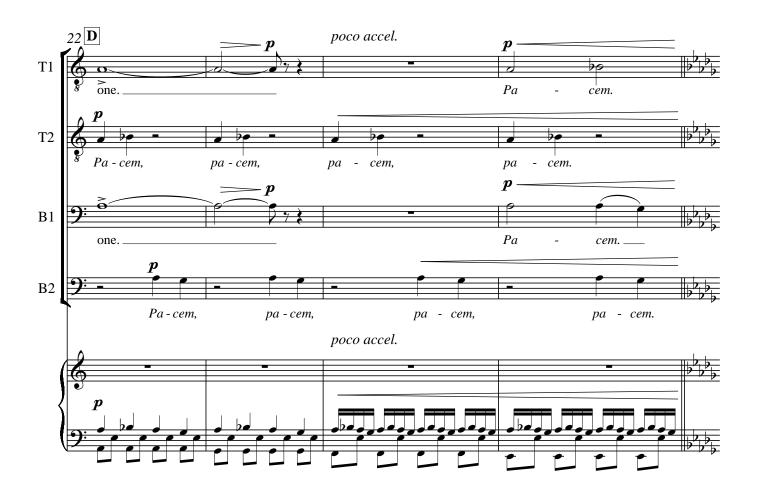


^{*} The capitalization of the opening ten lines of the poem has been altered to accomodate the spacing of the spoken lyrics.

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Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

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



