

GWYNETH WALKER

The Dying of the Light

*Musical Settings of the Poetry of Dylan Thomas
for Tenor Solo and String Quartet or Piano,
or Baritone Solo and String Orchestra or Piano*

The Hand that Signed the Paper
And Death Shall Have No Dominion
Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night

→ Piano/Vocal Score (Tenor Version)	No. 8329
Full Score (String Quartet and Tenor Version)	No. 8330
Parts (String Quartet and Tenor Version)	No. 8331
Piano/Vocal Score (Baritone Version)	No. 8332
Full Score (String Orchestra and Baritone Version)	No. 8333
Parts (String Orchestra and Baritone Version [4-4-3-2-1])	No. 8334

ECSPUBLISHING
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The Dying of the Light

Duration 10'10"

The poetry of Dylan Thomas (1914–1953) is characteristically Welsh and dark. Death is a common topic in his writings. Yet despite the somber imagery, there is often a strength and resilience. The journey of death is described, but not taken. Death is the adversary, not the ruler.

The Hand that Signed the Paper speaks of the often cruel and deadly power of a signed document—a document of taxation, of treaty or of counting casualties. The five fingers mark the dead, but do not soothe. “Hands have no tears to flow.” *And Death Shall Have No Dominion* expresses the triumph of the human spirit over death. “Though lovers be lost love shall not.” *Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night* represents the fight against death. “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

The musical expression of these poems places the voice in the low (dark) range. Tempi are slow, and minor keys are prevalent. Only occasionally are major tonalities presented. These passages combine with particularly uplifting phrases such as “Though they sink through the sea, they shall rise again” and “Wild men, who caught and sang the sun in flight...”

Near the end of the last song, the poet addresses his deceased father: “And you, my father, there on the sad height...” The voice stays on a constant pitch while the harmony lifts beneath (to the heights), in the Lydian (raised) mode. [One might hear the voice as “perched atop” the rising chords.] This is one of the most personal lines of Dylan Thomas’ poetry. As the poet speaks to his father, the climax of the song comes with the rising phrases of “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” The final chords are dissonant, marked “with determination and triumph.”

The Hand that Signed the Paper

The hand that signed the paper felled a city;
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;
These five kings did a king to death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,
The finger joints are cramped with chalk;
A goose’s quill has put an end to murder
That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,
And famine grew, and locusts came;
Great is the hand that holds dominion over
Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but do not soften
The crusted wound nor stroke the brow;
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven;
Hands have no tears to flow.

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
with the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean, and the
clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall
rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan’t crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails;
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced
in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with
blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears,
I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

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The Dying of the Light

for Tenor Solo and Piano

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

Moderately slowly ♩ = 80

Piano

Reo.

4

mf

The hand that signed the pa-per felled a cit-y;—

(Reo.) Reo.

7

Five sov-ereign fin-gers taxed the breath, Dou-bled the globe of dead and halved a

Reo.

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4
10

8 coun - try; These five kings did a king to death.

8vo

8vo

13

(mf)

8 The might-y hand leads to a slop-ing shoul - - - der, The

8^{va} (RH only)

mf

(8vo)

16

8 fin-ger joints are cramped with chalk; A goo-se's quill has put an end to

(8^{va})

8vo

8vo

19

f

8 mur - der That put an end to talk. The

8vo

8vo

23

8 hand that signed the trea - ty bred a fe - - - ver, And

f

Red. _____ Red. _____

Detailed description: This system contains measures 23 and 24. The vocal line (treble clef) has a melody with a slur over the final two notes. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *f* is present. The rehearsal mark 'Red.' is underlined at the beginning and end of the system.

25

8 fam - ine grew, and lo - custs came;

Red. _____ Red. _____

Detailed description: This system contains measures 25 and 26. The vocal line (treble clef) continues the melody. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) maintains the rhythmic pattern, with a melodic line in the bass clef starting in measure 26. A dynamic marking of *f* is present. The rehearsal mark 'Red.' is underlined at the beginning and end of the system.

27

8 Great is the hand that holds do - min - ion o - ver Man _____ by a scrib - bled

p *f*

Red. _____

Detailed description: This system contains measures 27 and 28. The vocal line (treble clef) has a long note in measure 27 followed by a phrase in measure 28. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a complex texture with multiple voices in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. Dynamic markings of *p* and *f* are present. The rehearsal mark 'Red.' is underlined at the beginning of the system.

30

name. *(f)* The five kings count the

p *f* *8^{va} (RH only)*

Red. *8^{vb}*

33

dead but do not soft-en The crust-ed wound nor stroke the brow; A

(8^{va}) *loco*

8^{vb} *Red.*

36

hand rules pit-y as a hand rules heav-en; Hands have no tears_ to

p

Red. *Red.*

Transition to No. 2. *And Death Shall Have No Dominion*

[Omit if performing No. 2 separately]

$\text{♩} = 100$

p

rit.

with pedal

2. *And Death Shall Have No Dominion*At a stately tempo $\text{♩} = 100$

f

with pedal

4

f

And death shall have no do - min - ion.

p

f

Ped.

8

Dead men na - ked they shall be one _____ with the man in the wind and the

p

f

p

Ped.

12 *smoothly*

west moon; _____ no do-min-ion, no do-min-ion,

15 *p* *mf*

no do-min-ion, no do-min-ion. _____ When their

18

bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, _____ They shall have

21 *f*

stars at el-bow and foot; Though they go mad they shall be

10

24

sane, Though they sink through the sea they shall rise a - gain;

27

Though lov - ers be lost love shall not; And

poco rit. *a tempo*

loco *poco rit.* *a tempo*

(*Reo.*)

30

death shall have no do - min - ion.

Reo. *Reo.*

34

poco accel. *mf* Slightly faster ♩ = 108

And death shall have no do - min - ion.

poco accel. Slightly faster ♩ = 108

dim. *mf*

Reo. *Reo.*

37

Un - der the wind - ings of the sea They ly - ing long shall not die

Ped.

40

wind - i - ly; Twist - ing on racks when

p throbbing

(Ped.) with pedal

43

sin - ews give way, Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;

f

46

Faith in their hands shall snap in two, And the u - ni - corn e - vils run them through;

50

poco rit. *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Split all ends up they shan't crack; And death shall have no do -

poco rit. *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

8vb - - - -

loco 3

53

Same tempo (♩ = 108)

min - ion. And death shall have no do -

Same tempo (♩ = 108)

(f)

8vb - - - -

56

min - ion. No more may gulls cry at their ears

8vb - - - -

59

Or waves break loud on the sea - shores;

(Ped.)

62

More freely, recitative style
p

Where blew a flower may a flower no more Lift its head,

More freely, recitative style
gently pulsing

p

(Ped.)

65

Where blew a flower may a flower no more Lift its head to the blows of the rain;—

68 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Though they be mad and dead as nails;

a tempo (♩ = 108)

71 *cresc. poco a poco*

Heads of the char-ac-ters ham-mer through dai - sies;

cresc. poco a poco

74 *(cresc.)* *rit.* *f grandly* *Slower*

Break in the sun till the sun breaks down, And

(cresc.) *rit.* *f grandly* *Slower*

3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Solemn ♩ = 88
but with motion

8vb

p *f*

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

6 *mf*

Do not go gen-tle in - to that good night,

8va

p *mf*

(Reo.) Reo.

10

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

p *mf*

8va

Reo. Reo.

13 *f* *p* *mf*

Rage, rage a-against the dy-ing of the light.

f *mf* *p*

Reo.

16 *(mf)*
Though wise men at their end know dark is

mf *p*

(Ped.)

19
right, Be-cause their words had forked no light - ning they

mf *p* *mf*

(Ped.)

21
Do not go gen - tle in - to that good night.

mf *p*

(Ped.)

24 *mf*
Good men, the last wave by, cry - ing how

mf *p*

(Ped.)

18

26

lightly

Rec.

29

Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light. Wild

32

Faster ♩ = 100

men who caught and sang the sun in

34

flight, And learn, too late, they

37

grieved it on its way, Do not go gen - tle,

40

do not go gen - tle in - to that good night.

p *rit.*

43

mf

Grave men, near death, who see with blind - ing sight

mf *pp* (barely audible)

mf *pp* (barely audible)

45

Blind eyes could blaze like me - teors and be gay,

accel.

accel.

20

Faster ♩ = 100

48

f

Rage, rage a- gainst the dy - ing, —

Faster ♩ = 100

f

Ped.

51

non dim.

p

rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light. —

non dim.

p

(Ped.) Ped.

54

p

cresc. poco a poco

p

cresc. poco a poco

Ped.

57

accel.

Quickly ♩ = 108

mf

And

accel.

Quickly ♩ = 108

mf

And

f

Ped.

60

you, my fath - er, there on the sad height, ___

p

62

Curse, bless, me now with your

8va

loco

64

fierce tears, I pray.

5

66

Do not go gen - tle, ___ do not go gen - tle in - to that good

f

79 *poco rit.*

rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the

(8va) *poco rit.* *loco*

81 *rit. mf* *Slower*

light, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the

rit. mf *Slower* *f* *p*

rit. *Slower*

84 *a tempo* (*p*) *ossia* *f*

light. *with determination and triumph*

a tempo (*p*) *ossia* *f*

4'00''
 Total: 10'10''
 July 6, 2011
 Braintree, Vermont

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit her Web site.
<<http://www.gwynethwalker.com>>

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