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

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	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



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

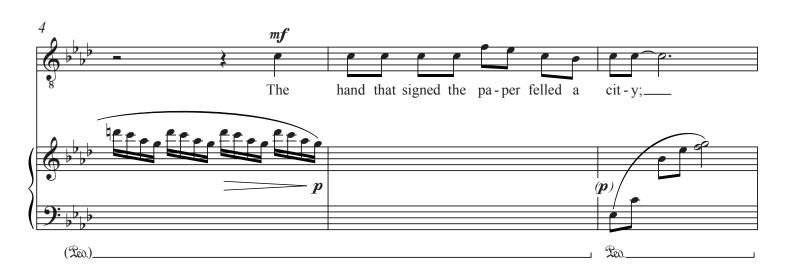
for Tenor Solo and Piano

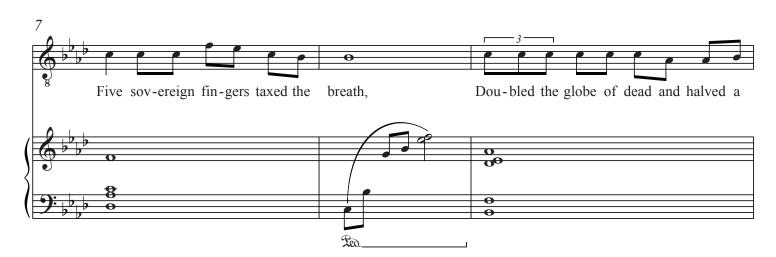
Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

1. The Hand That Signed the Paper



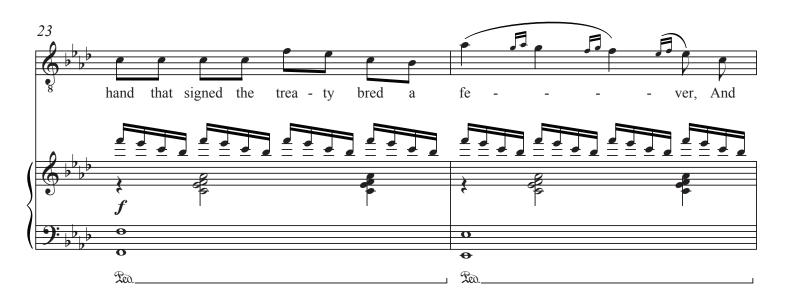


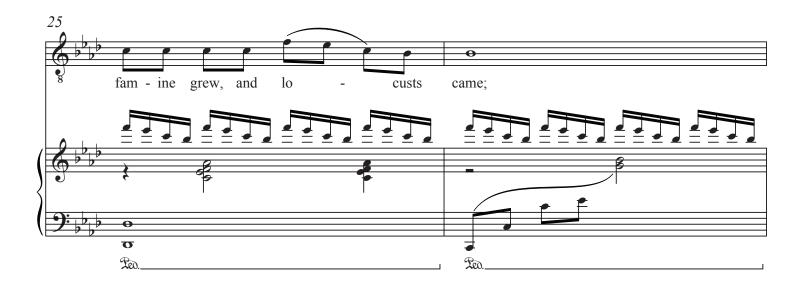


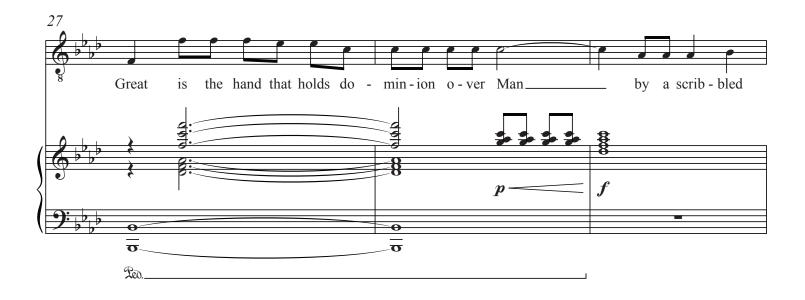
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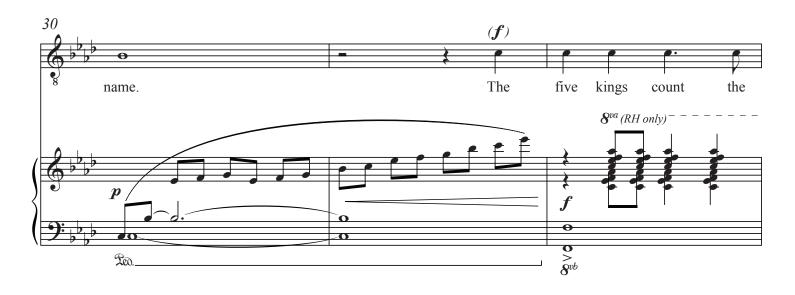
Walker | *The Dying of the Light* | 1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

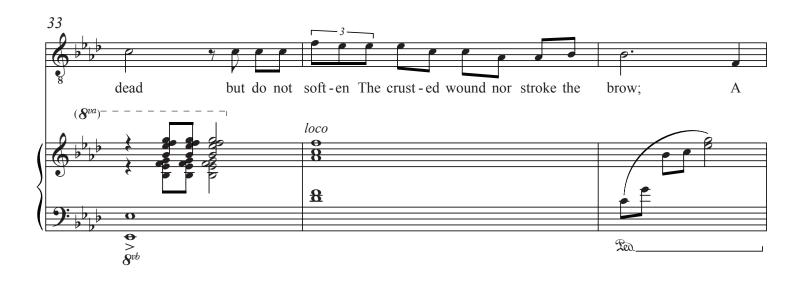


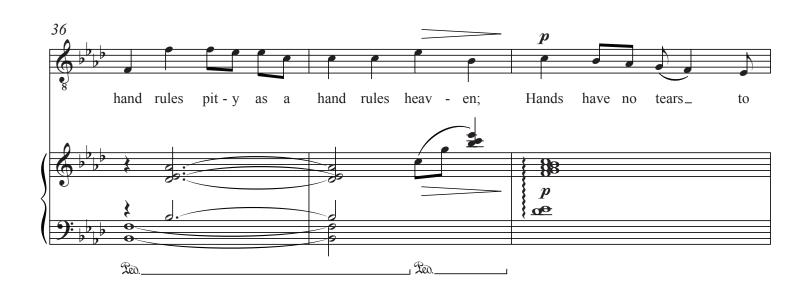




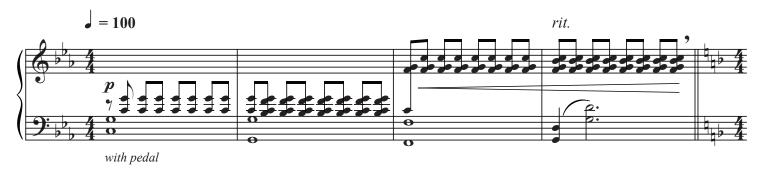
Walker | *The Dying of the Light* | 1. The Hand That Signed the Paper







Transition to *No. 2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion* [Omit if performing No. 2 separately]



2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion



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Walker | The Dying of the Light | 2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion



Walker | The Dying of the Light | 2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion

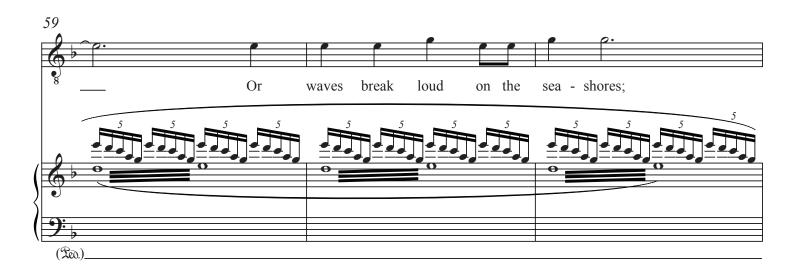


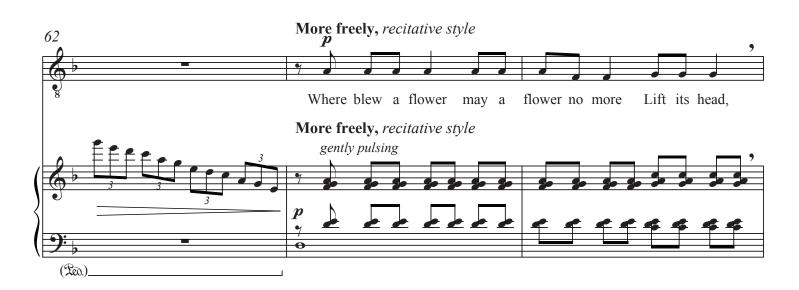
Walker | The Dying of the Light | 2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion

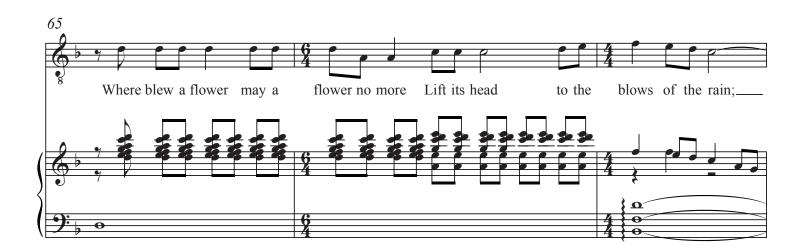


Ted.

Ted.









Ted.

Walker | The Dying of the Light | 2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion

3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night



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Walker | The Dying of the Light | 3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night





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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



