

The Passing of the Year
(*Song cycle for double chorus and piano*)

[1] Invocation

William Blake (1757-1827)

O Earth, O Earth, return!

[2] The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun

William Blake (1757-1827)

The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hang round the brows of morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest eve,
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.

The spirits of the air live on the smells
Of fruit; and joy, with pinions light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees.

[3] Answer July

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Answer July –
Where is the Bee –
Where is the Blush –
Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July –
Where is the Seed –
Where is the Bud –
Where is the May –
Answer Thee – Me –

Nay – said the May –
Show me the Snow –
Show me the Bells –
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay –
Where be the Maize –
Where be the Haze –
Where be the Bur?
Here – said the Year –

[4] Hot sun, cool fire

George Peele (1556-1596)

Hot sun, cool fire, temper'd with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair:
Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease me;
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me:
Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,
Make not my glad cause, cause of [my] mourning.

Let not my beauty's fire
Enflame unstaïd desire,
Nor pierce any bright eye
That wand'reth lightly.

[5] Ah, Sun-flower!

William Blake (1757-1827)

Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done:

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

[6] Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!

Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)

Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is:
Fond are life's lustful joys,
Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly:
I am sick, I must die –
Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made;
The plague full swift goes by:
I am sick, I must die –
Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour:

Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair
Dust hath closed Helen's eye:
I am sick, I must die –
Lord, have mercy on us!

[7] Ring out, wild bells

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

O Earth, O Earth, return!

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the time;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

**[8] In Beauty May I Walk
(For unaccompanied choir)***Anon., from the Navajo**Trans. Jerome K. Rothenberg**Reproduced by kind permission of Peters Edition Ltd.*

In beauty may I walk,
 All day long may I walk,
 Through the returning seasons may I walk.
 Beautifully will I possess again
 Beautifully joyful birds.

On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.
 With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk.
 With dew about my feet may I walk.
 With beauty before me
 With beauty behind me
 With beauty above me
 With beauty all around me.
 It is finished in beauty.

**[9] My love Is mine
(For solo mezzo-soprano)***Text from the 'Song of Songs'**Song of Solomon 2:10-17**Trans. Miles Coverdale**Reproduced by kind permission of Peters Edition Ltd.*

O stand up, my love, my dove, my beautiful and come.
 Winter is past, and the rain is away and gone.
 The flowers are come up in the field,
 the twisting time is come,
 the vines bear blossoms, and have a sweet scent.

Up thou north wind, come thou south wind,
 blow upon my garden, that the smell thereof
 may be carried on every side.
 Yea, that my beloved may come into my garden
 and eat of the fruits and apples that grow therein.

My love is mine and I am his,
 which feedeth among the lilies
 until the day break and the shadows be gone.

O stand up, my love, my dove my beautiful, and come.
 Out of the caverns of the rocks,
 out of the holes of the wall:

O let me see thy countenance and hear thy voice,
 For sweet is thy voice and fair thy face.

My love is mine and I am his,
 which feedeth among the lilies
 until the day break and the shadows be gone.

**[10] Who killed Cock Robin?
(A fable for unaccompanied choir)***Traditional*

Robin... Cock Robin...
 Who killed Cock Robin? I, said the Sparrow,
 With my bow and arrow, I killed Cock Robin.
 Who saw him die? I, said the Fly,
 With my little eye, I saw him die.
 Who caught his blood? I, said the Fish,
 With my little dish, I caught his blood.
 Who'll make the shroud? I, said the Beetle,
 With my thread and needle, I'll make the shroud.
 Who'll dig his grave? I, said the Owl,
 With my pick and shovel, I'll dig his grave.
 Who'll be the parson? I, said the Rook,

With my little book, I'll be the parson.
 Who'll be the clerk? I, said the Lark,
 If it's not in the dark, I'll be the clerk.
 Who'll carry the link? I, said the Linnet,
 I'll fetch it in a minute, I'll carry the link.
 Who'll be chief mourner? I, said the Dove,
 I mourn for my love.
 Who'll carry the coffin? I, said the Kite,
 If it's not through the night, I'll carry the coffin.
 Who'll bear the pall? We, said the Wren,
 Both the cock and the hen, we'll bear the pall.
 Who'll sing a psalm? I, said the Thrush,
 As she sat on a bush, I'll sing a psalm.
 Who'll toll the bell? I, said the bull,
 Because I can pull, I'll toll the bell.
 All the birds of the air fell a-sighing and a-sobbing,
 When they heard the bell toll for poor Cock Robin.

**It sounded as if the streets were running
(Three songs for upper voice choir on poems by Emily Dickinson)
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)****[11] It sounded as if the streets were running**

It sounded as if the Streets were running
 And then – the Streets stood still –
 Eclipse – was all we could see at the Window
 And Awe – was all we could feel.
 By and by – the boldest stole out of his Covert
 To see if Time was there –
 Nature was in an Opal Apron,
 Mixing fresher Air.

[12] I saw no way

I saw no Way – the Heavens were stitched –
 I felt the Columns close –
 The Earth reversed her Hemispheres –
 I touched the Universe –

And back it slid – and I alone –
 A Speck upon a Ball –
 Went out upon the Circumference –
 Beyond the Dip of Bell –

[13] How happy is the little Stone

How happy is the little Stone
 That rambles in the Road alone,
 And doesn't care about Careers
 And Exigencies never fears –
 Whose Coat of Elemental Brown
 A passing Universe put on,
 And independent as the Sun
 Associates or glows alone,
 Fulfilling absolute Decree
 In casual simplicity –

**[14] I am the day
(For unaccompanied choir)***The Legend of St Christopher
Revelation 22: 16, 13*

I am the day soon to be born,
 I am alpha and o, and omega!
 Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel,
 O come, O come Emmanuel.
 Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee.
 I am the sprig from the root of David and the bright star of the morning.
 I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

[15] Wellcome, all Wonders in one sight!
(Words from 'An Hymne of the Nativity, sung as by the
shepherds')
Richard Crashaw (1612-1649)

Wellcome, all wonders in one sight!
Eternitie shut in a span,
Summer in winter, day in night,
Heaven in Earth and God in man;
Great little one whose all embracing birth
Lifts earth to heav'n,
Stoops heav'n to earth.

We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
Bright dawn of our eternall day;
We saw thine eyes breake from their East,
And chase the trembling shades away,
We saw thee and we blest the sight,
We saw thee, by thine own sweet light.

To thee, meeke majestie! soft King
Of simple graces and sweet loves,
Each of us his Lamb will bring
Each his paire of silver doves,
Till burnt at last in fire of thy faire eyes,
Our selves become our owne best sacrifice.

[16] The Three Kings
(Carol for unaccompanied choir)
Dorothy L Sayers (1893-1957)
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The first king was very young,
With doleful ballads on his tongue,
He came bearing a branch of myrrh
Than which no gall is bitterer,

O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The second king was a man in prime,
The solemn priest of a solemn time,
With eyes downcast and reverent feet
He brought his incense sad and sweet,

O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The third king was very old,
Both his hands were full of gold,
Many a gaud and glittering toy,
Baubles brave for a baby boy,

O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.
O balow, balow la lay.