

*Gwyneth Walker*

***Footsteps of Spring***

*a walk in the woods with  
Henry David Thoreau*

*for Violin, Cello, Piano and Narrator*

*Duration: 20 minutes*

*commissioned by Woods House Conservatory in Wenatchee, Washington  
for the Cascades Trio:  
Alex Russell – Violin, Kara Hunnicutt – Cello and Duane Funderburk – Piano*

*Premiered by the Cascades Trio  
May 26, 2005 Wenatchee, Washington*

***Footsteps of Spring** is a musical and literary journey into the world of New England naturalist, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1872). The intent is to bring the beauty and imagination of Thoreau's words to life on the stage through readings and through musical portraits of the words and images.*

*The readings are taken from two sources: Walden and the Journals. Selections from Walden open and close the narrative. At the beginning, the writer explains why he undertook his journey into the woods. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life..." At the end, he reflects upon the transcendent beauty which he has seen. "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in... Its thin currents slide away, but eternity remains."*

*The middle sections of the work draw upon entries in Thoreau's Journals. Here, he observes the natural world around him. There is the rumbling of thunder and the whispering of wind. There are the silent footsteps of spring. Mornings bubble with energy. The hazy, June weather is oppressive. There are berries falling to the ground. There is dew on the cobwebs – everywhere! [The cobwebs are dropped by the fairies.] Throughout, the Observer has an insatiable thirst for acquaintance with his surroundings. "I wish to know an entire heaven and an entire earth!"*

*On each step of the narrative journey the music is there for correlative expression. This may take the form of texture (perhaps the opening sparse sonorities represent the peacefulness of the woods), rhythm (the repeated eighth-notes in the strings might be the footsteps on the journey), a "walking" theme (played by the Violin near the beginning) or chord clusters in the piano for the heaviness of summer. The listener might hear thunder, the rippling of the stream or the dance of the fairies. At the ending, perhaps the sky is "pebbly with stars." An active listener imagination is encouraged!*

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*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. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.*

*Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published E.C. Schirmer of Boston (choral/vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral/instrumental music).*

# Footsteps of Spring

## 1. Prologue

Gwyneth Walker

**Violin** *Slowly* ♩ = 72 *gently, with reverence for the beauty of nature*

**Violoncello** *pp* *barely audible*

**Piano** *p*

(The Narrator is either off-stage or at the side of the stage, not in prominent view.)

*con sord.*

8 *as footsteps* *p*

**Vln.**

**Vc.** *as footsteps* *p*

8

**Pno.**

14 *ritard.* **A1** *Quickly* ♩ = 144 *with energy, as if setting out on a journey*

*remove mute* *senza sord.* *mf*

*remove mute* *pp*

14 *ritard.* **A1** *Quickly* ♩ = 144 *with energy, as if setting out on a journey*

*mischievously* *mf*

*p*

20

Vln. *senza sord.* *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

Vc. *pizz.*

20

Pno. *mf*

24

Vln. *pizz.* *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

Vc. *arco* *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

24

Pno. *mf*

28

Vln. *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*

Vc. *p*  $\leftarrow$  *mf* *pizz.*

A2

28

Pno. *mf*

A2

32

Vln. *p*  $\triangleleft$  *mf* *p*  $\triangleleft$  *mf*

Vc. *arco* *p*  $\triangleleft$  *mf*

Pno.

36

Vln. *on the string*

Vc. *on the string*

Pno.

*ped.*

**A3** (Narrator walks on stage, dressed in hiking clothes, carrying a walking stick.)  
40 **same tempo**

Nar. I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,  
to front only the essential facts of life,  
and see if I could not learn what it had to teach,  
and not, when I came to die,  
discover that I had not lived.

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

**A3** *p* **same tempo**  
40 *p*  $\triangleleft$  *pp* as an unobtrusive background to the reading

*with Ped.* *add soft Ped.*

41 Nar. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear;  
nor did I wish to practice resignation,

Pno.

I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life,  
to live sturdily and Spartan-like as to put rout all that was not life,  
to cut a broad swath and shave close,  
to drive life into a corner,  
and reduce it to its lowest terms,  
and if it proved to be mean,  
why then to get the whole genuine meanness of it,  
and publish its meanness to the world;

42 Nar.

Pno.

or if it were sublime,  
to know it by experience,  
and be able to give a true account of it  
in my next excursion.

43 Nar.

Pno.

44

Vln. *p*

Vc.

Pno. *p*

Soft Ped. off

48 **A4**

Vln. *f* *mf* *f* pizz. arco

Vc. *f* *p < f* *mf* pizz.

Pno. *f*

53

Vln. *p < f*

Vc. *p < f* *mf* pizz. arco

Pno. 53

57 **ritard.**  
on the string

Vln.

Vc. **on the string**

Pno. **ritard.**

57

*Red.*

## 2. Remember Thy Creator

**B**

Nar.

Remember Thy Creator in the days of thy youth.  
Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures.  
Let the noon find thee by other lakes,  
and the night overtake thee everywhere at home.

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

**B** *8va*

Pno. *(hold chord during reading)*

*(Red.)*

62

Nar.

Grow wild according to thy nature.  
Let the thunder rumble.  
Take shelter under the cloud.

*8va* *(stop during reading)*

Pno. *p cresc.* *f* *p*

*Red.*



Nar.: Enjoy the land,  
but own it not.

63 **B1** ♩ = 96

Vln. *mf cantabile*

Vc. *p* *mf cantabile*

Pno. *mf*

Red. 3

67

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

70 **B2**

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

74 **ritard.** **Slower** *emphatically*

Vln. *p* *f*

Vc. *p* *f* *emphatically*

Pno. *f*

78

Vln.

Vc. *f*

Pno. *mf*

Red. *8vb*

**B3** Nar.: Enjoy the land, (played at same tempo as the previous reading, as a response)  
 81 but own it not. En- joy the land, place mute **ritard.**

Vln.

Vc. (played at same tempo as the previous reading, as a response)  
 but own it not

**B3** **ritard.**

Pno.

# 3. I Seek Acquaintance with Nature

(narration approximately synchronizes with music)



Gently flowing ♩. = 104

Nar.: I want to go soon and

Vln.

Vc. place mute



Gently flowing ♩. = 104

Pno. *p*

with Ped.

live a - way by the pond,

where I shall

91 Vln. con sord. *pp* *p*

Vc. con sord. *pp* *p*

91 Pno.

hear only the wind whispering a - mong the reeds.

97 Vln.

Vc.

97 Pno.

103 **C1** It will be suc - cess if I shall leave myself be - hind.

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. **C1** 

109 I seek ac - quaintance with Nature,

Vln. *ritard.* 

Vc. *ritard.* 

Pno. *mf* *ritard.* *a tempo* 

115 to know her moods and her manners.

Vln. *mf* *p* 

Vc. *pizz.* *p* 

Pno. 

*Red.*

I wish to know an entire  
heaven and an entire earth!

Quickly ♩ = 120

121 **C2**

Vln. *mf* 2 2 2 2

Vc. arco (cut off when reading starts) *mf* *p*

Quickly ♩ = 120

121 **C2**

Pno. black-note gliss. to end of keyboard *mf* *p*

**C3** a tempo ♩ = 104

124 ritard. *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 2 2 2

Vc. *mf*

**C3** a tempo ♩ = 104

124 ritard. *mf*

Pno. (Red.)

130 *mf* *p*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *p*

130

Pno.

136

Vln. *p*

Vc. *mf* (*non dim.*)

Pno.

142 **C4**

Vln. *mf* 2

Vc. *p* *mf* 2 2

Pno. **C4** 142

I seek ac - quaintance with Nature,  
a tempo

147 *ritard.* *a tempo*

Vln. *p* *mf*

Vc. *p* *pizz.*

Pno. *ritard.* *a tempo* *p*

153 to know her moods and her manners.

Vln. *p* *mf* *p*

Vc. (pizz.) *p*

Pno.

153

*ritard.*

158 **C5** I wish to know an entire heaven and an entire earth! **a tempo**

Vln. *mf* *p* *mf*

Vc. arco (cut off when reading starts) *mf*

158 **C5** **a tempo**

Pno. black-note gliss. to end of keyboard *mf*

*ritard.*

161 **ritard.**

Vln. *p* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp*

161 **ritard.**

Pno. *ritard.*

# 8. The First Star is Lit

**I** same tempo ♩ = 144

Nar.: Every day a new picture is painted and framed, held up for half an hour, in such lights as the Great Artist chooses, and then withdrawn, and the curtain falls.

Nar.

Pno.

And then the sun goes down, and the long afterglow gives light.

Nar.

Pno.

And then the damask curtains glow along the western window.

Nar.

Pno.

And now the first star is lit, and I go home.

Nar.

Pno.



325 **I1** a tempo ♩ = 144

Vln. *p*

Vc. a tempo ♩ = 144 *p*

Pno. **I1** a tempo ♩ = 144

ritard. *8va* *p* *8vb*

330

Vln. *f* *p*

Vc. *f* *p*

Pno. *f with energy* *p* *f*

335 **I2**

Vln. **I2**

Vc. *f* *p*

Pno. **I2**

339

Vln. *(p)* *cresc.*

Vc. *cresc.*

339

Pno. *cresc.*

343

Vln. *(cresc.)* *f* **I3**

Vc. *(cresc.)* *f*

343

Pno. *(cresc.)* *f* **I3**

347

Vln.

Vc.

347

Pno.

352

Vln.

Vc.

352

Pno.

355 **I4**

Vln.

on the string

dim.

Vc.

on the string

dim.

355 **I4**

Pno.

dim.

*Red.*

359

Vln.

(dim.)

p

Vc.

(dim.)

p

359

Pno.

(dim.)

*Red.*

# 9. Epilogue

**J**

[Narrator comes to center, front stage]

Nar.: Time is but the stream  
I go a-fishing in.

I drink at it; but while I drink I

Nar.

*pp* (Piano changes patterns in approximate synchronization with Narrator.)

(*Red.*) + soft Ped. *Red.*

see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is.

Its thin currents slide away,  
but eternity remains.

363

Nar.

*Red.* *Red.*

I would drink deeper;

fish in the sky, whose bottom  
is pebbly with stars.

364

Nar.

*Red.* *Red.*

[from now until the end of the music, the Narrator wanders away from center stage, perhaps up and down the aisles of the hall, or in front of the stage, admiring the evening stars.]

**J1** same tempo ♩ = 144

365

Vln. *p* *mf*

Vc.

**J1** same tempo ♩ = 144

365

Pno. *(Ped.)*

368

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p* *mf* 3 3 3

Pno. *p* *(Ped.)* lift soft Ped. 3 3 3 *(Ped.)*

371

Vln.

Vc.

371

Pno. *mf* *p* *(Ped.)*

374

Vln. *p* *mf* 3 3 3 3

Vc. *p*

Pno. *Red.* *Red.*

377 **J2**

Vln. *p* *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *p* *cresc.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

380

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *(cresc.)* *f* *sim.*

383 ritard. **J3** a tempo, peacefully ritard. a tempo

Vln. *sub.p*

Vc. *sub.p*

Pno. 383 ritard. **J3** a tempo, peacefully ritard. a tempo *cresc.*

*sub.p*

*ped.* with *Ped.*

388 ritard. a tempo molto ritard. **J4** a tempo

Vln. *place mute* *mf*

Vc. *place mute*

Pno. 388 ritard. a tempo molto ritard. **J4** a tempo *f*

*(cresc.)*

392

Vln. *mf*


Vc. *mf*

Pno. 392 *mf* *8va* *ped.* *sim.*

dim. and ritard. . . . .

395

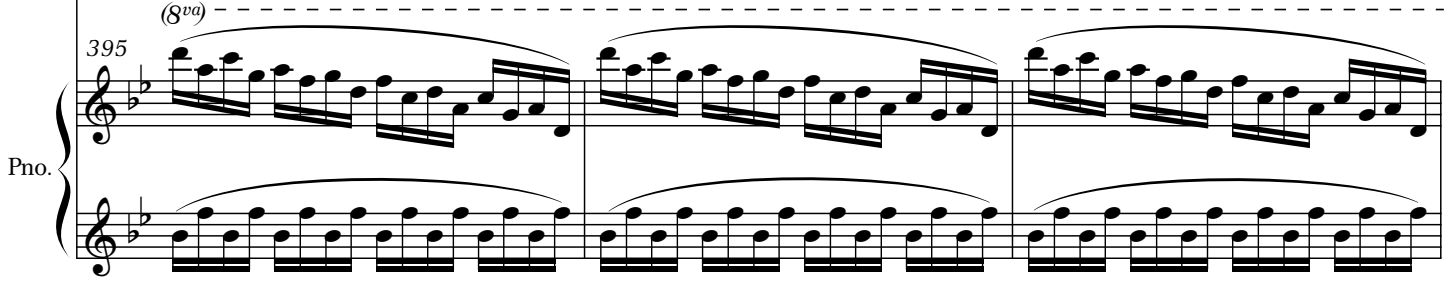
Vln. 

Vc. 

dim. and ritard. . . . .


(8<sup>va</sup>)


395

Pno. 

(dim. and ritard.) . . . . .

398

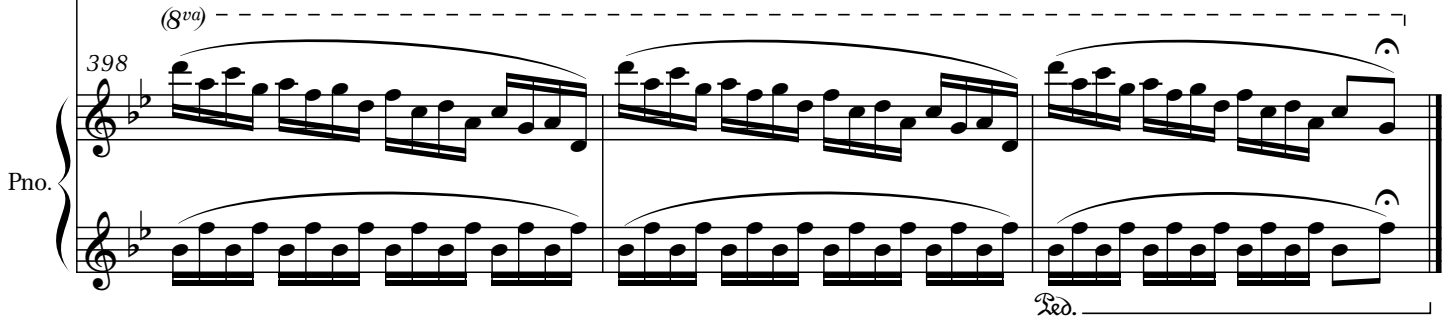
Vln. 

Vc. 

(dim. and ritard.) . . . . .

(8<sup>va</sup>)

398

Pno. 

*Red.*

Duration: approx. 20 minutes November 20, 2004 Braintree, Vermont