Gwyneth Walker

From the Depths of the Soul

songs for Contralto and Viola

“Go Down, Moses”
“Deep River”
Interlude: “Time for Reflection”
“Down to the River to Pray”
“Every Night, When the Sun Goes Down”
The Contralto voice and Viola are characterized by depth of sonority. Similar in range, they speak with a deep, rich tone. Thus, From the Depths of the Soul was created to explore this powerful combination of low voices. Each of the songs in this set contains the words deep or down in the title. These are dark songs – traditional American spirituals which are rooted in sorrow and suffering.

“Go Down, Moses” is placed in the key of C Minor, with the Contralto often singing in the low range around G below middle C. The message is one of oppression. Starting quietly and sadly, the music grows in strength with emphatic statements of Let my people go! Accented chords in viola underline the conviction/command of the song.

“Deep River” features a flowing, arpeggiated viola accompaniment, as a river. Contrasting sections stop the flow briefly, rising to a higher range with thoughts of the Promised Land. There is some anxiety about the river travel (tremolo viola patterns), but with the Lord’s blessing, the journey is taken in safety.

The tempo quickens for a swing rhythm version of “Down to the River to Pray.” The trip is joyous, with a crescendo ending of “Lord, show me the way!” In the last measure, the viola slides down into the river (musically, with a glissando!).

This arrangement of the traditional Appalachian song, “Every Night, When the Sun Goes Down,” focuses on the transcendence of faith over sorrow and of peace (through death) over suffering and pain:

True love, don’t weep or mourn for me. The Lord has come to set me free.

A new verse is added at the end:

And when I rise up in the sky, if you look up quickly,  
You will see me passing by. On wings of silver, I will fly.

During this verse, the listener might hear a fluttering of wings (gently repeated notes) in the viola accompaniment. This is to symbolize the spirit of a bird hovering close by.
VERSE 1

Slowly, with the weight of sorrow and oppression

When Israel was in Egypt Land, Let my people go!

Op-pressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go!

REFRAIN

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt Land.

Tell old Phar-aoeh to let me people go!

Slower poco accel. With some motion $\downarrow = 108$

* A separate Viola part is available.
** Cue-sized notes are an ossia for higher voices

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VERSE 2

(mf) Same tempo

The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let my
rolled pizz.

people go! To lead the children of Israel through,
Let my
rolled pizz.

REFRAIN

people, let my people go down, Moses, way down in

rit. Slower poco accel.

Egypt Land. Tell old Pharao to let my people

INTERLUDE

With some motion $\frac{3}{4} = 108$

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 1. Go Down, Moses
VERS 3

Thus assertively, with anger

spoke the Lord,” bold Moses said.

If not I’ll smite your first-born dead.”

Your foes shall not before you stand.”
lead you to the Promised Land.” Oh, __

REFRAIN

go down, Moses, way down in Egypt Land.

Slower

Tell old Pharaoh to let my people, let my people,

Freely

(with voice)

accel.

let my people go, go!

a tempo \( (\text{q} = 108) \)

f with anger and determination

Dur. 3:00
2. Deep River

Gently flowing \( \frac{4}{4} = 100 \) (or slower)

\( \begin{align*}
\text{mf cantabile} \\
\text{con sord.} \\
\text{smoothly, as a river}
\end{align*} \)

REFRAIN

Deep river, my home lies over Jordan.

\( \begin{align*}
\text{mf cantabile} \\
\text{rolled pizz.} \\
\text{arco}
\end{align*} \)

VERSE 1

Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into camp-ground.

Oh, don’t you want to go to that gospel feast, that promised land where all is

* Cue-sized notes are an ossia for lower voices.

** The Viola should play whichever notes the Contralto does NOT sing, to harmonize with the voice.

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
REFRAIN

Deep river, my home lies over Jordan.

VERSE 2

I'll go on up to heaven, and take my seat, and cast my crown at Jesus', Jesus', Jesus' feet.

* Cue-sized notes are an ossia for lower voices.
** The Viola should play whichever notes the Contralto does NOT sing, to harmonize with the voice.

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
REFRAIN

Deep river, my home lies over Jordan.

Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into camp-ground.

INTERLUDE

lightly separate

p with anxiety

Never been so

growing into (mild) anxiety of the river travel

VERSE 3

far from home...

rivar, rivar, rivar, rivar.
REFRAIN

Deep...

Deep...

Deep...

p

sul pont.
delicately, shimmering

Lord, bless this

versed pizz.
rolled pizz.
with entire hand, in a gesture of a blessing

campground.

VERSE 4

Slowly, freely

p

impassioned

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
boat I ride, bless it safely on the water. Bring it home at
gentle tremolo

Even tide to shelter in your harbor, Lord, to shelter in your
rolled pizz.

a tempo (\( \text{\textbf{} } \equiv 108 \))

Jordans Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over, I
rolled pizz.

want to cross over, I want to cross over into camp ground.

connect directly to “A Time for Reflection” without break)
A Time for Reflection
(as a bridge between songs 2 and 3)

Slowly \( \frac{\text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ }
3. Down to the River to Pray

With energy $\frac{\text{b}}{\text{j}} = 120$

swing eighths ($\frac{\text{b}}{\text{j}} = \frac{3}{4}$)

(gently tap hands)

As I went

REFRAIN

down to the river to pray,

who shall wear the starry crown!

Good Lord, show me the

way.

VERSE 1

O, my sisters, let's go down,

let's go down, come on down.

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 3. Down to the River to Pray
O, my sisters, let’s go down, down to the river, go-in’

REFRAIN

down to the river to pray. As I went down to the river to pray,

studying about the good old way. And who shall wear the starry crown?

Good Lord, show me, show me, show me the way.

VERSE 2

O, my brothers, let’s go
down, down, down, come on down, come on down. O, my brothers, let's go

REFRAIN
pray. As I went down to the river to pray, studying about the
good old way. And who shall wear the starry crown? Good

Lord, show me, show me, show me the way.
With much energy and joy (and extra swing!)

Interlude

Down to the river, down to the river, down to the river to pray, go-in'

Verse 3

Slower, straight eighths

Start slowly and accel.
REFRAIN

With energy $\frac{\text{j} = 120}{\text{f}}$

has ten on the good old way. As I went down to the river to

pray, studying about the good old way. And who shall wear the

starry crown?

Good Lord, show me, show me, show me,

Lord, show me, show me, Lord, show me, show me, show me the

way, Lord, show me, show me the way!
VERSE 1

Slowly, freely

Ev’ry night when the sun goes down,
Ev’ry night when the sun goes down,
I hang my head and mournful

REFRAIN

a tempo \( \frac{\text{j} = 60}{x} \)

True love don’t weep,
true love don’t mourn.
True love, don’t

rolled pizz.

weep, true love don’t mourn.
True love, don’t weep or mourn for

Slightly faster \( \frac{j = 66}{x} \)

me.
The Lord has come to set me free.
And ev’ry
INTERLUDE

night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night,

VERSE 2

Slightly faster \( \dot{q} = 72 \)

night, and ev’ry night, I pray the Lord____ my train would come.____ I pray the Lord____ my train would come.

Slightly faster \( \dot{q} = 80 \)

come____ to take me back____ where I come from.____ True love don’t

REFRAIN

weep,____ true love don’t____ mourn.____ True love don’t weep,____ true love don’t
mourn. True love don’t weep or mourn for me. The Lord has

INTERLUDE

come to set me free. And ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry

rit. Slower

night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry

accel. a tempo \( \dot{=} 80 \)

night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, And when I rise up in the

pp barely audible mf

sky, and when I rise up in the sky, if you look up
quickly you will see me passing by, on wings of silver I will fly.

If you look up quickly, you will see me passing.

passing, passing, passing, passing by, on wings of silver, on wings of silver, on wings of silver, on wings of silver.

Faster as a bird in flight

fly, I will fly.

Dur. 3:30 | Total: 14:30
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