

GWYNETH WALKER

# Let Us Break Bread Together

*for String Orchestra or String Quartet*

with optional readings from the song  
*Let Us Break Bread Together*  
and the poem *The New Colossus*

# Let Us Break Bread Together

*duration: 3-4 minutes*

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States (1776-2026), we remind ourselves that our land strives to be a compassionate land. We welcome the stranger. *Give me your tired, your poor...* We break bread together.

## Let us Break Bread Together

African-American spiritual

*may be read aloud by one, or several, readers in alternation*

*before the start of the playing*

Let us break bread together, on our knees.

Let us break bread together, on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us love one another, on our knees.

Let us love one another, on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us rise up together, all as one.

Let us rise up together, all as one.

When I rise from my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy,

O Lord, have mercy on me –

And bring us peace.

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. 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. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont before returning to live in her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut.

# Let Us Break Bread Together

for String Orchestra or String Quartet

African-American Spiritual

arr. by Gwyneth Walker

Moderate tempo (♩ = 108)

as falling tears

\*"Lord, have mer - cy

Violin 1 *p gently*

Violin 2 *as falling tears*  
*p gently*

Viola slowly rolled pizz.  
*p*

Violoncello slowly rolled pizz.  
*p*

(opt.) Contrabass pizz.  
*p*

*sost.*

*sost. arco*

*(p) sost.*

*arco*

*(p) sost.*

*arco*

*(p) sost.*

6 on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us." A

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf cantabile*

Vlc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

\*"Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees."

\*Song lyrics are provided for thematic identification only and are not to be sung.

**B***light tremolo,  
at the tip*

12

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*pp*  
*light tremolo,  
at the tip*

*(mf)*

*(mf)*

*(mf)*

18

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

ord.  
*mf*

ord.  
*mf*

**C**

23 "Lord, have mer - cy on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us." rolled pizz.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*p*

*p*

*p*

*(p) gentle accomp.*

"Let us love one a -

*mf cantabile*

*mf cantabile*

28

Vln. 1 *arco*  
*mf cantabile*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. noth-er on our knees.”  
*(p) gentle accomp.*  
*rolled pizz.*  
*p*

Cb. *pizz.*  
*p*

**D** rolled pizz.

33

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla.

Vlc. *arco*  
*mf arco*  
*mf*

Cb. *mf*

38

Vln. 1 *arco*  
*mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla.

Vlc. rolled pizz.  
*p* pizz.  
*p*

Cb. *p*

*(p)*

Optional section: repeat as needed to provide a quiet background for the adjacent reading  
which may be read by one or several readers.

43

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*p*

*pizz.*

Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless tempest-tost to me.  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

– from *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus, 1883

45

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

(arco)

Triumphantly **E**

“Let us rise up to - geth - er all as one.”

50

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

(arco)

**F** light tremolo,  
at the tip

55

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*pp*  
light tremolo,  
at the tip

*pp*  
light tremolo,  
at the tip

*pp*  
light tremolo,  
at the tip

*p*

*p*

60

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

"O Lord, have mer - cy . . ."

*f* with intensity

*f* with intensity

*f* with intensity

*f*

*f*

65

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

*p* sub.

*f*

*p* sub.

*f*

*p* sub.

*f*

*p* sub.

*f*

(rit.)      Slowly, peacefully      rit. to end

74

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

“...and bring us peace.”

*p*

*p*

*div.*

*p*

*p*

(arco) pizz.

(arco) pizz.

(arco) pizz.

*unis.* (arco) pizz.

(arco) pizz.

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