

Gwyneth Walker

Songs of Home

a celebration of *home*, and of building a home –
dedicated to *Habitat for Humanity*
for SATB Chorus and Piano

“A Home Song”

“Take This Hammer (Tools of the Trade)”

“A House of Love and Light”

“I’m Buildin’ Me a Home”

Duration: 11:30

Dedicated to *Habitat for Humanity*
and the many volunteers who give so generously of their time
to providing homes for their neighbors in need

Songs of Home is a set of four choral songs with texts on topics of *home*. The expressions range from reverent (“A Home Song” and “A House of Love and Light”) to a working song (“Take this Hammer”) to a celebratory spiritual in swing rhythm (“I’m Buildin’ Me a Home”).

Home is considered a place *where the soul breathes free, where the heart is at rest, where the peace of the Lord shall enter*. And for the builders, home is a place of hammers, saws and drills. [!]

Home is both physical and spiritual. *This earthly house gonna soon decay. My soul’s gotta have somewhere to stay.*

Home is both a goal (a place to live) and a beginning (a place of welcome, an opening of the heart). There are many causes for gratitude and celebration. Perhaps these **Songs of Home** might serve to acknowledge the valuable work of *Habitat for Humanity*.

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These four songs were created with piano accompaniment in early 2019. It is envisioned that chamber orchestration will be included by 2020.

1. A Home Song

poem by Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933)

published 1909

adapted by Gwyneth Walker

I read within a poet's book
some words that marked the page:
"Stone walls do not a prison make,
nor iron bars a cage!"

Yes, that is true; and something more
you'll find, where'er you roam,
that marble floors and gilded walls
can never make a home.

Yes, marble floors and guided walls
are not a home to me.
For I must live where my mind can roam,
and where my soul breathes free.

But every house where Love abides,
And Friendship is a guest,
Is surely home, a cherished home,
For there the heart can rest.

2. Take This Hammer
traditional work song
adapted by Gwyneth Walker

Take this hammer,
Take it to the foreman.
Take this hammer,
take it to the foreman.
Take this hammer,
take it to the foreman,
tell him (her) that I'm workin', workin', workin' hard today.

Take this hammer and saw,
take them to the foreman,
tell him (her) that I'm workin', workin', workin' hard today.

Take this hammer and saw and plane,
take them to the foreman,
tell him (her) that I'm workin', workin', workin' hard today.

Take this hammer and saw and plane and drill,
take them to the foreman,
tell him (her) that I'm workin' hard, workin' hard,
workin' hard, workin' hard today!

3. A House of Love and Light

based on the poem *Build Me a House*
by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)
adapted by Gwyneth Walker

"Build me a house," said the Master,
"But not on the shifting sand,
Mid the wreck and roar of tempests,
A house that will firmly stand.

"I will bring thee windows of color,
And gates of jewels bright,
And thy fairest courts and portals
Shall be filled with love and light.

"Thou shalt build with fadeless rubies,
All fashioned around the throne,
A house that shall last forever,
With faith as the cornerstone.

"It shall be a royal mansion,
A fair and beautiful thing,
It will be the presence-chamber
Wherein my heart shall sing.

"Thou shalt be free in this mansion
From sorrow and pain of heart,
For the peace of the Lord shall enter,
And never again depart."

4. I'm Buildin' Me a Home
traditional song
lyrics adapted by Gwyneth Walker

I'm buildin' me a home.
I'm buildin' me a home.
This earthly house gonna soon decay.
My soul's gotta have somewhere to stay.

When I hear The Word,
I'm buildin' me a home.
When I hear The Word,
I'm buildin' me a home.
This earthly house gonna soon decay.
My soul's gotta have somewhere to stay.

When I rise up singing (I rise in song),
I'm buildin' me a home.
When I rise up singing (I rise in song),
I'm buildin' me a home.
This earthly house gonna soon decay.
My soul's gotta have somewhere to stay.