



# *The Heart of the Tree*

What does he plant who plants a tree?  
 He plants a friend of sun and sky;  
 He plants the flag of breezes free;  
 The shaft of beauty, towering high;  
 He plants a home to heaven anigh;  
 For song and mother-croon of bird  
 In hushed and happy twilight heard—  
 The treble of heaven's harmony—  
 These things he plants who plants a tree.

What does she plant who plants a tree?  
 She plants cool shade and tender rain,  
 And seed and bud of days to be,  
 And years that fade and flush again;  
 She plants the glory of the plain;  
 And plants the forest's heritage;  
 The harvest of a coming age;  
 The joy that unborn eyes shall see—  
 These things she plants who plants a tree.

What do we plant who plant a tree?  
 We plant, in sap and leaf and wood,  
 In love of home and loyalty  
 And far-cast thought of civic good—  
 Our blessings on the neighborhood,  
 Who in the hollow of His hand  
 Holds all the growth of all our land—  
 A nation's growth from sea to sea  
 Stirs in our heart when we plant a tree.

*Henry Cutler Bunner (1855-1895)*  
 adapted by Gwyneth Walker

*It is suggested that this poem be read aloud to the audience  
 by members of the chorus before singing the song.  
 (Readers may alternate between various lines of poetry.)*

dedicated to Petoskey, Michigan – The City of Trees

# The Heart of the Tree

for SATB Chorus and Piano

Henry Cutler Bunner (1855 - 1895)

Gwyneth Walker

G. W. alt.

*The Heart of the Tree* is based upon the poem (of the same title) by Henry Cutler Bunner (1855-1895). Although the text dates back to an earlier era, the sentiments described are timeless – love, respect and reverence for trees. Our “grounded friends” rise to the sky as a bridge between our rooted, earthly existence and heaven above.

The musical setting juxtaposes choral singing of the three stanzas of the poem with ascending melodic phrases in the accompaniment. These piano interludes are inspired by the image of the tree branches reaching upward – “a shaft of beauty towering high.”

**Slowly** ♩ = 100  
*gently, suggesting a tree reaching up to the sky*

Piano

*p*

*with pedal*

4 *lightly*

8 **A** *p tenderly*

S  
A

What does he plant who plants a tree? He plants a friend of

*p tenderly*

T  
B

What does he plant who plants a tree? He plants a friend of

**A** [play cue-sized notes only as needed to support chorus]

12 *poco cresc.*

S  
A  
T  
B

sun and sky; He plants the flag of breez - es free; The shaft of beau - ty,

*poco cresc.*

sun and sky; He plants the flag of breez - es free; The shaft of beau - ty,

16 *(cresc.) mf*

S  
A  
T  
B

tow - ering high; He plants a home to heaven a - nigh;

*(cresc.) p mf*

tow - ering high; Hmm For song and moth - er -

*Play*

20 *p* **B** *cresc.*

S  
A  
T  
B

in hushed and hap - py twi - light heard - the tre - ble of hea - ven's

*p cresc.*

croon of bird in hushed and hap - py twi - light heard - the tre - ble of hea - ven's

**B** *cresc.*

24 *(cresc.)* *f with strength*

S  
A har - mo - ny— These things he plants who plants a

T  
B *(cresc.)* *f with strength*

har - mo - ny— These things he plants who plants a

*(cresc.)* *f*

27 *p* C

S  
A tree. —————

T  
B *p* tree. —————

*p* C "Tree patterns" *mf cantabile*

31 *tr*

34

37 **D**

S

A *p*  
She plants cool shade and

T *p*  
She plants cool shade and

B *p*  
What does she plant who plants a tree? She plants cool shade and

**D** "Seeds"

40 *p cresc.*

S  
And seed and bud of days to be, And

A *cresc.*  
ten - der rain, And seed and bud of days to be, And

T *cresc.*  
ten - der rain, And seed and bud of days to be, And

B *cresc.*  
ten - der rain, And seed and bud of days to be, And

"Seeds" *cresc.* "Seeds"

43 *(cresc.)* *mf*

S A  
years that fade and flush a - gain; She plants the glo - ry of the plain;

T B  
*(cresc.)* *mf* *p* *mf*  
years that fade and flush a - gain; Hmm And

*(cresc.)* *mf*

47 *p* **E**

S A  
The har - vest of a com - ing age; the

T B  
*p*  
plants the for - est's her - i - tage; The har - vest of a com - ing age; the

**E** *p*

51 *cresc.* *f*

S A  
joy that un - born eyes shall see — These things she plants who

T B  
*cresc.* *f*  
joy that un - born eyes shall see — These things she plants who

*cresc.* *f*

54 *p*

S  
A  
plants a tree.

T  
B  
plants a tree.

57 **F** "Tree patterns" *mf cantabile*

61

65 **G** *p*

S  
A  
What do we plant who plant a tree? We plant, in sap and

T  
B  
What do we plant who plant a tree? We plant, in sap and

**G** *mf* *p*

Red.

69

S  
A  
T  
B

leaf and wood, In love of home and loy - al - ty

leaf and wood, In love of home and loy - al - ty

*mf* *p* *mf*

*ped.* *ped.*

73 *poco cresc.*

S  
A  
T  
B

And far - cast thought of civ - ic good

And far - cast thought of civ - ic good

*poco cresc.*

*p*

(*ped.*) *ped.*

76 (*cresc.*) *mf*

S  
A  
T  
B

Our bless - ings on the neigh - bor - hood,

Our

*(cresc.)* *p* *mf*

Hmm Our

*cresc.* *mf*

(*ped.*)



79 H *p*

S Who in the hol - low of His hand holds

A Who in the hol - low of His hand holds

T *p* bless - ings on the neigh - bor - hood, Who in the hol - low of His hand holds

B *p* bless - ings on the neigh - bor - hood, Who in the hol - low of His hand holds

H *p*

83 *poco cresc.*

S all the growth of all our land— A na - tion's growth from

A *poco cresc.* all the growth of all our land— A na - tion's growth from

T *poco cresc.* all the growth of all our land— A na - tion's growth from

B *poco cresc.* all the growth of all our land— A na - tion's growth from

*poco cresc.*

86 *f* *p*

S sea to sea stirs in the heart who plant a tree.

A sea to sea stirs in the heart who plant a tree.

T sea to sea stirs in the heart who plant a tree.

B sea to sea stirs in the heart who plant a tree.

90 **I** (*p*)

S Who in the hol - low of His hand holds all the growth of

A Who in the hol - low of His hand holds all the growth of

T Who in the hol - low of His hand holds all the growth of

B Who in the hol - low of His hand holds all the growth of

**I** (*p*)

94 *poco cresc.*

S all our land— A na-tion's growth from sea to sea, the tre-ble of hea-ven's

A all our land— A na-tion's growth from sea to sea, the tre-ble of hea-ven's

T all our land— A na-tion's growth from sea to sea, the tre-ble of hea-ven's

B all our land— A na-tion's growth from sea to sea, the tre-ble of hea-ven's

*poco cresc.*

98 *(cresc.)* *f* *rit.*

S har - mo - ny, the joy that un - born eyes shall see—

A *(cresc.)* *f* har - mo - ny, the joy that un - born eyes shall see—

T *(cresc.)* *f* har - mo - ny, the joy that un - born eyes shall see—

B *(cresc.)* *f* har - mo - ny, the joy that un - born eyes shall see—

*(cresc.)* *f* *rit.*

12

**J** Slower

101 *(f)* *a tempo* *p*

S These things we plant when we plant a tree.

A These things we plant when we plant a tree.

T These things we plant when we plant a tree.

B These things we plant when we plant a tree.

**J** Slower *a tempo*

“Tree patterns” *mf*

105 *rit.* *pp* *Hmm*

S *pp* *Hmm*

A *pp* *Hmm*

T *pp* *Hmm*

B *pp* *Hmm*

*rit.* *pp* *8va*