



Gwyneth Walker

Emily!

(from New England)

musical settings of the poems of Emily Dickinson

for Soprano, Clarinet (A, B \flat),
optional B \flat Bass Clarinet, and String Quartet

Emily! (from New England)

duration: 14 minutes

The Poems

1. My Letter to the World

This is my letter to the World
That never wrote to Me –
The simple News that Nature told –
With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed
To Hands I cannot see –
For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –
Judge tenderly – of Me

2. The Moon and the Sea

The Moon is distant from the Sea –
And yet, with Amber Hands –
She leads Him – docile as a Boy –
Along appointed Sands –

He never misses a Degree –
Obedient to Her eye –
He comes just so far – toward the Town –
Just so far – goes away –

Oh, Signor, Thine, the Amber Hand –
And mine – the distant Sea –
Obedient to the least command
Thine eye impose on me –

3. The Frog in the Bog

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

4. Hope (with Feathers)

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

5. Passion

Wild Nights – Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile – the Winds –
To a Heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –
Ah, but the Sea!
Might I but moor – Tonight –
In Thee!

6. Joy

’Tis so much joy! ’Tis so much joy!
If I should fail, what poverty!
And yet, as poor as I,
Have ventured all upon a throw!
Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so –
This side the Victory!

Life is but Life! And Death, but Death!
Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath!
And if indeed I fail,
At least, to know the worst, is sweet!
Defeat means nothing but Defeat,
No drearier, can befall!

And if I gain! Oh Gun at Sea!
Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be!
At first, repeat it slow!
For Heaven is a different thing,
Conjectured, and waked sudden in –
And might extinguish me!

7. All I Have to Bring

It’s all I have to bring today–
This, and my heart beside–
This, and my heart, and all the fields–
And all the meadows wide–
Be sure you count – should I forget
Someone the sum could tell –
This, and my heart, and all the Bees
Which in the Clover dwell

The Composer

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. She now divides her time between her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut and the musical community of Randolph, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of New England. She was the recipient of the 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council and the 2018 “Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award” from Choral Arts New England. In 2020, her alma mater, the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, presented her with the Hartt Alumni Award.

A composer since age two, Gwyneth Walker has always placed great value on active collaboration with musicians. Over the decades, she has traveled to many states to work with instrumental and choral ensembles, soloists, and educational institutions as they rehearse and perform her music. A number of these visits have developed into ongoing relationships. In 2018, Walker was named Composer-in-Residence for the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra in Petoskey, Michigan.

Walker’s catalog includes over 350 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, and solo voice. A special interest has been dramatic works that combine music with readings, acting, and movement. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer (choral/vocal/instrumental music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral/instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at:

www.gwynethwalker.com

Program Notes

The poetry of Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) is especially appealing due to the wide range of topics, diversity of mood and peculiar imagination of the poet. The writings are reflective, passionate, witty, sensuous, observant, and ridiculously humorous. Her heart soars. Her mind pokes fun!

Emily was truly a New Englander. Her poems are understated and compact. Her love of Nature focuses on small things – birds, bees, meadows, and a pond.

In creating the musical settings, the composer (herself a New Englander) endeavored to capture the spirit of the poetry, and of the poet, with songs diverse in style, and concise in form. Everything from romance to frogs is explored, briefly.

Great delight is taken in creating musical translations of the colorful imagery: the letters floating off on the breeze (“My Letter to the World”); the shimmering moonlight (“The Moon and the Sea”); a frog croaking in a bog (“The Frog in the Bog”); *hopeful* birds hopping about (“Hope” with Feathers); the *boat of passion* riding the waves and then settling into its mooring (“Passion”); the ship’s cannon firing in celebration (“Joy”); and the tiniest, lightest gifts of Nature (“All I Have to Bring”).

These are the poet’s *Letters to the World*. She lived as a recluse, yet her words took flight – traveling the universe as messengers of the soul.



During the summer of 2020, the **Emily!** songs were revisited with the goal of creating enhanced accompaniment for chamber ensembles. A version for string quartet and clarinet was composed, as was an “off-shoot” for piano and clarinet.

The initial question concerned the *role* of clarinet (a featured solo) in each song. The soprano speaks (sings) with the subjective voice of the poet. What then for clarinet?

The answer was for the clarinet to assume an objective role in each song, portraying the imagery or characters described in the poetry. For example, in “My Letter to the World,” the clarinet’s phrases are light, as sheets of paper (poems) flying off the poet’s desk. In “The Moon and the Sea,” the clarinet becomes the Moon/Lover, often playing in close harmony (3rds) with the Soprano/Poet.

For the subsequent songs, clarinet portrays the “Frog in the Bog” (using the lowest/darkest part of the instrument’s range), a hopping bird, the tumultuous sea of passion, the victory of gambling on love (“O Gun at Sea!”) and a final leaf of paper, as the last poem flies off from the poet’s desk. The clarinet was chosen as the solo instrument in these songs due to its versatility – a wide range in pitches, dynamics, articulation, and personality. Many facets were put to use!

The original, 2016 version of the songs was scored for soprano and piano. Now, expanding the accompaniment to string quartet allows for coloristic exploration –feathery touches of leaves, shimmering *tremolo* for the moonlight at sea, passionate *arpeggio* waves. Tone color options abound in use of mutes, *pizzicati* and gentle *sul tasto* passages.

The combination of Soprano voice, clarinet and strings seems well-suited to Emily Dickinson poetry, which is both delicate and forceful, restrained, and passionate.

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Emily! (from New England)

*for Soprano Solo, Clarinet (A, B \flat), optional B \flat Bass Clarinet, and String Quartet

Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1836)
G. Walker, alt.

Gwyneth Walker

1. My Letter to the World

Gently flowing ♩ = 92
Clarinet in A
as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

Clarinet in A
(B \flat Clarinet,
B \flat Bass Clarinet
[optional])

p

Soprano

Singer pretends to write a letter (a poem).

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

p

p

Cl. (A)

4

mf

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

mf

mf

p

mf

p

mf

*For performances with Soprano and Piano (but without Clarinet), use the published version of Emily! [ECS #8137].

A transposition for Mezzo-Soprano is also available [ECS #8460].

An additional version for Soprano, Clarinet and Piano is available from the composer.

Clarinet and string parts are also available from the composer.

30

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

cresc. poco a poco *with intensity*

love of her, for love of her, for love of her, for love of her, for love of Her - Sweet - coun - try - -

p *mf* *f*

34

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

a tempo (♩ = 92)

men - judge ten - der - ly of Me.

sfp *f* *p* *p delicately*

p *f* *p* *pizz.*

37

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

rit.

arco *(p) delicately*

arco *(p) delicately*

arco *(p) delicately*

arco *(p) delicately*

(p) delicately

Singer tosses one last page (her poem) out on the breeze.

2. The Moon and the Sea

Start slowly *accel. poco a poco* *gently, as moonlight* a tempo (♩ = 112)

Cl. (A) (Cl. in A) *p*

S *p*
The Moon is dis - tant from the Sea _____

Vln. 1 *pp* *gently, as moonlight*

Vln. 2 *pp* *gently, as moonlight*

Vla. *pp* *gently, as moonlight*

Vlc. *pp* *gently, as moonlight*

7 *rit.* Slightly slower

Cl. (A) *mf*

S *mf*
_____ and yet, with Am - ber Hands, She leads Him, do - cile as a Boy, a -

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf* *rolled pizz.* *arco*

3. The Frog in the Bog

With energy ♩ = 112

B♭ Clarinet (opt. B♭ Bass Clarinet)*

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

con sord.
p playfully
con sord.
p playfully
con sord.
p playfully

I'm no-bod-y! Who are you? —

5 *rit.* **Slower** (answering Soprano) *fluttertongue* **a tempo** (♩ = 112)

B♭ Cl. (Bass)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

mf *p* *mf* *mf* *p*

Looking at Clarinet

Are you no-bod-y — Too! Then there's a pair of us! finger to lips — "hushed"

10 *as if sinking into a bog*

B♭ Cl. (Bass)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

p *p*

Don't tell, they'd ad-ver-tise, you know!

*Bass Clarinet might bring extra "comic depth" to the Bog!

4. Hope (with Feathers)

Joyful ♩ = 126

[portraying the bird]

Cl. (A) Clarinet in A *p*

S *p* lightly, birdlike
Hope is the thing with feath - ers - that perch - es in the

Vln. 1 *p* light and feathery

Vln. 2 *p* light and feathery

Vla. *p* light and feathery

Vlc. *p* light and feathery

6

Cl. (A)

S soul - and sings the tune with - out the words - and nev - er stops at all.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

37

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

hope, ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - - hope, - ho - ho - ho - ho -

f

f even more exuberantly

f

f

f

f



41

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

no ritard.

take B \flat Clarinet

ho - hope, ho - ho - ho - ho, ho - ho - ho - ho, ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope.

f

5. Passion

With motion ♩ = 112

B♭ Clarinet

f with passion

S

Vln. 1

f with passion

Vln. 2

f with passion

Vla.

f with passion

Vlc.

f with passion

6

B♭ Cl.

f with passion

S

Wild _____ nights! _____ Wild _____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

11

B♭ Cl.

rit.

S

_____ nights! _____ Wild _____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

*Clarinet: optional G# to A trill if it is more comfortable
 Walker | Emily! | 5. Passion

41

with passion and abandon

Bb Cl. *3 3 3 3*

S *3 3 3 3* Wild! Wild! *ff*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

45

rit. *Slower*

Bb Cl. *ff* *3 3* *p*

S *3 3* *mf peacefully* Might I but moor - To -

Vln. 1 *ff* *p*

Vln. 2 *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p*

Vlc. *ff* *3 3 3 3* *p*

50

rit. to end *as a boat settling into its mooring*

Bb Cl. *(p)* *pp*

S *p* night - in Thee!

Vln. 1 *pizz.* *arco, sul tasto* *(p) very gently* *pp* *as a boat settling into its mooring*

Vln. 2 *pizz.* *arco, sul tasto* *(p) very gently* *pp*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco, sul tasto* *(p) very gently* *pp*

Vlc. *rolled pizz.* *(p)* *pp*

6. Joy

With a joyful bounce ♩ = 108

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.

p *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.* *mf cresc.*

5 (B♭ Clarinet)
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.

f *rit.* *f* *p* *p* *p* *p*

11 Start slowly and accel. with excitement ♩ = 120 rit.
B♭ Cl. *p* *mf* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*
S *f*ecstatic
'Tis so much joy! If
Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *mf* *f*
Vln. 2 *mf* *f* *mf* *f*
Vla. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*
Vlc. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

7. All I Have to Bring

Lightly ♩ = 108, with moderate energy

Cl. in A as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

Cl. (A) *p* delicately
Singer pretends to write another letter, as in Song #1.

Vln. 1 *p*
Vln. 2 *p*
Vla. *simile*
Vcl. *p* *simile*

4

Cl. (A) *(p)*
S *p* gently, meekly
It's all I have to bring to - day -

Vln. 1 *pp* a barely audible background
Vln. 2 *pp* a barely audible background
Vla. *pp* a barely audible background
Vcl. *pp* a barely audible background

8

Cl. (A) *cresc.*
S *cresc.* with more strength *cresc.*
this, and my heart be - side. This, and my heart, and

Vln. 1 *cresc.*
Vln. 2 *cresc.*
Vla. *cresc.*
Vcl. *cresc.*

26 Slightly slower, earnestly

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

(f) *p*

It's all I have to bring, it's all I have to bring, it's all I have to bring to - day,

rit. to end

Cl. (A)

S

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

(p) *pp*

Singer raises hand skyward, in appreciation of Nature's gentle gifts.

to - - - day.

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

1:30
 Total duration: 14 minutes
 This version completed July 19, 2020
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