

Commissioned by the Walla Walla Choral Society in memory of Bill McCaw

God's World

for SATB Chorus and Piano

Edna St. Vincent Millay
(1892–1950)

Gwyneth Walker

With slight motion ♩ = 100
tenderly, as a love of the earth *as a bird call*



Piano
mf *gentle accent* *p* *mf*

Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____

5 *as bird calls* **Triumphantly**
in celebration *rit.*



p *f*

Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____

9 **A**
a tempo (♩ = 100) *p tenderly*

S
A
O world, I can-not hold thee close e-nough!

T
B
unis. p tenderly
O world, I can-not hold thee close e-nough!



a tempo (♩ = 100) **A**
mf *p*

Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions.

13

S A *mp* Thy winds, thy wide grey skies! *mf* Thy mists that roll and

T B *mp* Thy winds, thy wide grey skies! *mf* Thy mists that roll and

(Ped.) _____ with pedal

17

S A *f* rise! _____ *p* Thy woods, this au - tumn day, that ache and sag and

T B *f* rise! _____ *p* Thy woods, this au - tumn day, that ache and sag and

21

S A *f* all but cry with col - our! **B** *p sub.* That gaunt crag to

T B *f* all but cry with col - - our! **B** *p sub.* That gaunt crag to

Ped. _____ *8va* _____ Ped. _____

25 *poco mp* *f impassioned*

S A
crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff! World, World, I

T B
crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff! World, World, I

mf *for rehearsal only*

Ped.

29 *poco accel.*

S A
can-not get thee close e - nough!

T B
can-not get thee close e - nough!

f *poco accel.*

Play

Ped. *Ped.*

32 **C** Slightly faster ♩ = 108

S A

T B
mf cantabile
Long have I known a glo - ry in it

C Slightly faster ♩ = 108

mf *with pedal*

Ped. *Ped.*

35 *mf cantabile*

S Here such a pas-sion is as

A *mf cantabile* but nev - er knew I this; Here such a pas-sion is as

T all, but nev - er knew I this; Here... _____

B all, Here such a pas-sion is as

38 *poco rit.* **D** Grandly ♩=100 *rit.*

S *div.* stretch-eth me a - part, *f* Lord, I do fear thou hast made the world too *unis.*

A stretch-eth me a - part, *f* Lord, I do fear thou hast made the world too

T a - part, *f* Lord, I do fear thou hast made the world too

B *div.* stretch-eth me a - part, *f* Lord, I do fear thou hast made the world too *unis.*

poco rit. **D** Grandly ♩=100 *rit.*

Ped. _____

(rit.) **Slowly** *p*

S
A
beau-ti - ful this year; let fall no burn-ing leaf;

T
B
beau-ti - ful this year; my soul is all but out of me -

(rit.) **Slowly** *pp* *barely audible*

LH RH

Ped.

44 *delicately* *rit.*

S
A
prith-ee, let no bird call.

T
B
prith-ee, let no bird call.

mf *p*

rit.

Ped.

47 **With motion** ♩ = 108

S
A
Hum: *p*
Mm

T
B
Hum: *p*
Mm

With motion ♩ = 108

mf *3* *5* *3*

with pedal

poco rit.

E Relaxed tempo

Solo mf espr.

50 High Voice

I will be the glad-dest thing un-der the sun! I will

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) staves with rests.

Tenor (T) and Bass (B) staves with rests.

poco rit.

E Relaxed tempo

53 High Voice

touch a hun-dred flow'rs and not pick one. I _____ will look at cliffs and

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) staves. Soprano part has a long note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *(p)*. Lyrics: 'Ah'.

Tenor (T) and Bass (B) staves. Tenor part has a long note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *(p)*. Lyrics: 'Ah'.

Bass (B) staff. Bass part has a long note with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *(p)*. Lyrics: 'Ah'.

56

High Voice

clouds with qui - et eyes, watch the wind bow down the

S

A

T

B

mm

mm

58

High Voice

grass and the grass rise.

S

A

T

B

mm

Ah

Ah

Ah

60 F *gradual rit.*

High Voice

And when lights be - gin to show up from the

S
A

T

B

F *gradual rit.*

cresc. 5 5 5 5 *mf* 3 3 3

(b) 3

62 *(rit.)* *Slowly*

High Voice

town, I will mark which must be mine, and then start

S
A

T
B

mm

(rit.) 5 5 5 *(let ring)* 3 *Slowly*

3 *Ped.*

65 **G** Original tempo ♩ = 100

High Voice

down! *p*

S A

p

Mm

T B

Mm

G Original tempo ♩ = 100

p trembling

Ped. *simile*

68 *p with growing excitement*

S A

O world, I can-not hold thee close e-nough! O

T B

I can-not hold thee close e - nough! *(p)*

71

S A

world, I can-not hold thee close e-nough! God's world,

T B

I can-not hold thee close e - nough! God's

80 *rit. to end* *ff div.*

S *ff* *div.* God's

A *ff* God's

T *ff* God's

B *ff div.* God's

world, world, world,

rit. to end

Ped.

83 *(rit.)*

S world!

A world!

T world!

B world!

(rit.) *ff*

rapidly, blurred (for 3 beats) *8va* *let ring to cut-off*

Ped.

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God's World

God's World combines two texts by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950), the first, expressing a group sentiment and the second, a personal/individual sentiment. Both poems praise the Earth.

The opening section is based on the poem *God's World* (“O world, I cannot hold thee close enough”). The chorus and piano perform close harmonies, as if “embracing” the beauty of the earth. Repeated notes may be heard as gentle touches of this beauty. Arpeggiated chords in the accompaniment are marked “as bird calls.”

The music rises to the expression of “Lord, I do fear, thou hast made the world too beautiful this year.” And then the poem and music subside to the delicate phrase, “prithee, let no bird call.”

A solo voice enters with a musical setting of the poem *Afternoon on a Hill* (“I will be the gladdest thing under the sun...”). These phrases are filled with the pronoun “I.” The singer is the individual wanderer who has climbed a hill to admire the view. “I will look at cliffs and clouds with quiet eyes.” As daylight fades, she descends to the town.

The opening section of the music returns, but with only the first phrase (“O world, I cannot hold thee close enough”). The song concludes with joyous expressions of the title, “God's World.” For indeed, this is God's world—not of **our** making.

—Gwyneth Walker

God's World

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists, that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour!
That gaunt crag To crush!
To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!
Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart,—Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year;
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Afternoon on a Hill

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.
I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.
And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

—Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950)
These poems are in the Public Domain.

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information visit:
www.gwynethwalker.com