

Commissioned in 2003 in celebration of the 30th anniversary season of the Salisbury Singers of Worcester, Massachusetts.
Michelle Graveline, Music Director

The Road to Freedom

based on the traditional song "Follow the Drinking Gourd"

Gwyneth Walker

Traditional
adapted by Composer

♩ = 116 at a steady tempo, swing rhythm throughout, as if walking on a long journey

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

♩ = 116 at a steady tempo, swing rhythm throughout, as if walking on a long journey

Piano

p

with Ped.

5

S. *p* Mm, _____

A. *p* Mm, _____

T. *p* Mm, _____

B. *p* Mm, _____

5

Explanation for execution of symbols in mm. 28–33, 75–87

- ■ = footsteps, Left, Right
- × = hand clap
- ~ = Shooting star motive: hands held high, fingers trembling, hands lowered slightly and out to the side, in an arching motion

Performance suggestion:

- 1st Refrain—just footsteps
- 2nd Refrain—footsteps and hand claps
- 3rd Refrain—footsteps, hand claps and “shooting stars”

A

S. *mf*
Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd.

A. *mf*
Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd.

T. *mf*
Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd.

B. *mf*
Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd.

A

mf

S. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol-low the road — to free - dom. —

A. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol-low the road — to free - dom. —

T. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol-low the road to free - dom. —

B. Fol - low — the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol-low the road to free - dom. —

17 *div.*
p

S. *Mm,* *Mm,*

A. *Mm,* *Mm,*

T. *p* *mf*

B. *p* *mf*

1. When the

17 *p*

3

20 **B-D-F**

S. *p*
Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd.

A. *p*
Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd.

T. *(mf)*
sun comes up and the first quail calls, the
2. ri - ver bank makes a might - y fine road. —
3. ri - ver ends be - tween two hills. —

B. *(mf)*
sun comes up and the first quail calls, the
2. ri - ver bank makes a might - y fine road. —
3. ri - ver ends be - tween two hills. —

20 **B-D-F**

mf *3* *p*

24

S. *unis.*
Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

A.
Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

T.
8 old man is a - wait - in' for to car - ry you to free - dom.
Left foot, peg foot, tra - vel - in' on. _____
There's a - noth - er ri - ver on the oth - er side. _____

B.
old man is a - wait - in' for to car - ry you to free - dom.
Left foot, peg foot, tra - vel - in' on. _____
There's a - noth - er ri - ver on the oth - er side. _____

24

mf *p*

C-E-G

28

S. *mf*
Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

A. *mf*
Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

T. *mf*
8 Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

B. *mf*
Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

28

C-E-G

mf

32 ■ ■ × ~~~~~ 1. 2.

S. Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the road to free - dom.

A. Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the road to free - dom.

T. Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the road to free - dom.

B. Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd. Fol - low the road to free - dom.

36 *div. p* *p* *p* *p* 3. *unis.*

S. Mm, Mm, free - dom

A. Mm, Mm, free - dom

T. free - dom

B. free - dom

2. The
3. The free - dom

36 3 3 3.

40 *p* **H**

S. *Mm,* *Mm,*

A. *Mm,* *Mm,*

T. *(p)* *Mm,* *Mm,*

B. *(p)* *Mm,* *Mm,*

40 *p* **H**

45 *p* *Mm,* *Mm,*

A. *p* *Mm,* *Mm,*

T. *Mm,* *Mm,*

B. *Mm,* *Mm,*

45

49 *f* (Women point to the sky)

S. Mm, Ah, I can see the light in the

A. Mm, Ah, I can see the light in the

T. Mm, Ah,

B. Mm, Ah,

49 *f*

cresc.

f

52 (point again) *f*

S. North-ern sky. My steps are wear - y, but my

A. North-ern sky. My steps are wear - y, but my

T. *p* Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd.

B. *p* Fol - low — the Drink - in' Gourd.

52 *p* *f*

J

56 *gliss.*

S. spi-rits are high!

A. spi-rits are high!

T. *p* Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd. *f* The road to free-dom is

B. *p* Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd. *f* The road to free-dom is

(Men move hand across in front of body, depicting a long road to travel)

J

56 *p* *cresc.* *f*

60 *p*

S. Fol - - - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

A. Fol - - - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

T. dark and long. *p* But ev - eryl step I

B. dark and long. *p* But ev - eryl step I

60 *p* (*p*)

64 K

S. *f* in the land of free,

A. *f* in the land of free,

T. *cresc.* take brings me clos-er to the place where I be-long, *f* in the land of free,

B. *cresc.* take brings me clos-er to the place where I be-long, *f* in the land of free,

64 K

cresc. *f*

68

S. free-dom! free, free-dom! free - - - -

A. free-dom! free, free-dom! free - - - -

T. free-dom! free, free-dom! free - - - -

B. free-dom! free, free-dom! free - - - -

68

72

S. dom!— Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

A. dom!— Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

T. dom!— Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

B. dom!— Fol - low the Drink - in' Gourd.

75 **L**

S. Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd— Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd,

A. Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd— Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd,

T. Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd.

B. *div.* Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd. Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd.

75 **L** *8va* ----- 1 *8va* ----- 1

79

S. *the Drink-in' Gourd.*

A. *the Drink-in' Gourd.* *p* *Fol-low the road to,*

T. *Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd.* *p* *Fol-low the road to, fol-low the*

B. *Fol - low the Drink-in' Gourd.* *p* *Fol-low the road to free, dom,*

79 *loco*

83 *mf* *rit.* *cresc.* *div.* *ff* *tutti*

S. *Fol-low the road to free, free-dom!*

A. *fol-low the road to free, free-dom!* *cresc.* *div.* *ff*

T. *road to free - dom, free, free, free, free-dom!* *cresc.* *div.* *ff*

B. *free, dom, free, free, free, free-dom!* *cresc.* *ff*

83 *mf* *rit.* *ff*

*Commissioned in 2003 in celebration of the 30th anniversary season of the
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Worcester, Massachusetts*

Program Notes

***The Road to Freedom** is based on the traditional song, "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Dating back to the time of the Underground Railroad, this African-American song provided a map to the runaway slaves. By heading toward the Big Dipper (the "Drinking Gourd"), the fugitives would head north, toward Canada and freedom.*

The intent of the new choral setting is to highlight some of the characteristics of the original song. The theme of walking is reflected in the tempo marking of "at a steady tempo, as if walking on a long journey." The piano accompaniment is often very regular, within the spirit of even-paced walking. Occasional staccato chords may be heard as light footsteps.

The chorus portrays the Northern journey most prominently during the refrains. Footsteps, hand-claps (for joy) and "shooting stars" appear. The travelers are heading north, keeping their eyes on the sky. Near the end of the song, new verses are added to express their excitement:

*I can see the light in the Northern sky.
My steps are weary, but my spirits are high!
The road to freedom is dark and long.
But every step I take brings me closer to the place where I belong,
in the land of freedom!*

About the Composer

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, Walker resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E.C. Schirmer of Boston (choral & vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral & instrumental music).

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.