

A painting of a moonlit night scene. A large, leafless tree stands on the left, its branches silhouetted against a dark sky. A bright, full moon is visible through the branches. A path leads from the foreground towards a house in the distance. The house has several windows, some of which are lit, suggesting an interior light source. The overall mood is quiet and atmospheric.

UNDER THE
SILVER
MOON

FOUR SONGS
AND A DUET,
WITH WORDS BY
TENNYSON

EPHREM
FEELEY

UNDER THE SILVER MOON

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Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809, the son of a Church of England clergyman. His childhood was spent in relative poverty; he was educated mainly at home by his father, but later went on to study at Cambridge. His father's disinheritance, humiliation, and eventual breakdown and alcoholism made a lasting impression on the poet.

From 1840 on, his poetry began to achieve fame, and in 1850 he was made Poet Laureate, in succession to Wordsworth. In 1886, he was knighted a baron, the only English poet to ascend to the peerage purely for his poetry. Tennyson's poetry is noted for its attention to cadence and rhythm, and often shows a somewhat idealistic notion of life, with a deep respect for traditional Victorian values. Much of his poetry is inspired by nature and the English countryside, and many poems deal with the profundity of the human condition.

These settings of four of Tennyson's poems were written in two stages: *Miriam's Song* and *Sweet and Low* date from 1994-1996 and were written as undergraduate assignments, and the remaining two - *The Blackbird* and *The Thristle* - were written during the summer of 2006. They are all written for soprano, although a duet setting of *Sweet and Low* (for soprano and mezzo-soprano) is included as an addendum to the collection.

EPHREM FEELEY
AUTUMN 2006

The Blackbird

Words: Alfred Tennyson

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Joyfully (♩ = 110)

Voice

Piano

mf

3

2/4

0

Detailed description: This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The vocal line is mostly rests, with a single note 'O' in the third measure. The piano accompaniment features a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and a bass clef with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has three flats, and the time signature is common time, which changes to 2/4 in the third measure.

4

black-bird, sing me some-thing well while all the neigh-bours shoot thee round. I

Pno.

mp

4

2/4

Detailed description: This system contains measures 4 through 6. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'black-bird, sing me some-thing well while all the neigh-bours shoot thee round. I'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and eighth notes. The key signature remains three flats, and the time signature is 2/4.

7

keep smooth plats of fruit-ful ground where thou may'st war - ble, eat and dwell.

Pno.

mp

7

mf

3

2/4

Detailed description: This system contains measures 7 through 9. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'keep smooth plats of fruit-ful ground where thou may'st war - ble, eat and dwell.'. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the eighth measure and a triplet of eighth notes in the ninth measure. The key signature remains three flats, and the time signature is 2/4.

10

The es - pal-iers and the stan-dards all are thine, the

Pno.

mp

14

range of lawn and park. The un - net - ted black - hearts ri - pen dark, all thine a - gainst the gar - den

Pno.

17

wall. Yet, though I spared thee

Pno.

mf

p poco più lento

21

all the spring, thy sole de - light is sit - ting still, with that gold dag - ger of thy bill, to

Pno.

cresc. poco a poco

Miriam's Song

Words: Alfred Tennyson

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Moderato (♩ = 54)

Voice

Mel - low moon of hea - ven, bright in

Piano

p

con ped.

6

blue. Moon of mar-ried hearts, moon of mar-ried hearts, moon, hear me you!

Pno.

cresc.

11

Twelve times in the year, bring me bliss, glo - bing ho - ney moons bright as

Pno.

mp

poco cresc.

The Throstle

Words: Alfred Tennyson

Music: Ephrem Feeley

With energy (♩ = 206)

Voice

"Sum - mer is co - ming,

Piano

6

sum - mer is co - ming; I know it, I know it, I know it! Light a - gain,

Pno.

11

leaf a - gain, life a - gain, love a - gain." Yes, my wild lit - tle po - et.

Pno.

17

Sing the new year in un-der the blue. Last year you sang it so glad-ly. "New, new, new, new!"

Pno. *f* *poco rit.*

22

Is it then so new that you should ca-rol so mad-ly?

Pno. *mp a tempo* *f*

27

"Love a - gain, song a - gain, nest a - gain,

Pno.

33

young a-gain." Ne-ver a pro-phet so cra-zy! And hard-ly a dai-sy as yet, lit-tle friend;

Pno. *mp*

Sweet and Low

Words: Alfred Tennyson

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Very gently (♩. = 52)

Piano

mp
con ped.

Voice

5 *p*
Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the west - ern sea.

Pno.

9
Low, low, breathe and blow, wind of the west - ern sea.

Pno.

13 *mf*
O - ver the roll - ing wa - ters go, come from the dy - ing moon and blow,

Pno.

mf faster

17 *p subito*

blow him a - gain to me; while my lit - tle one, while my pret - ty one, while my

Pno.

p *poco rit.*

21

lit - tle one, pret - ty one sleeps.

Pno.

mp a tempo

26

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest. Fa - ther will come to thee soon.

Pno.

30

Rest, rest on mo - ther's breast; Fa - ther will come to thee soon.

Pno.

Sweet and Low

Words: Alfred Tennyson

Duet Version

Music: E. Feeley

Very gently (♩. = 52)

Piano



mp

con ped.

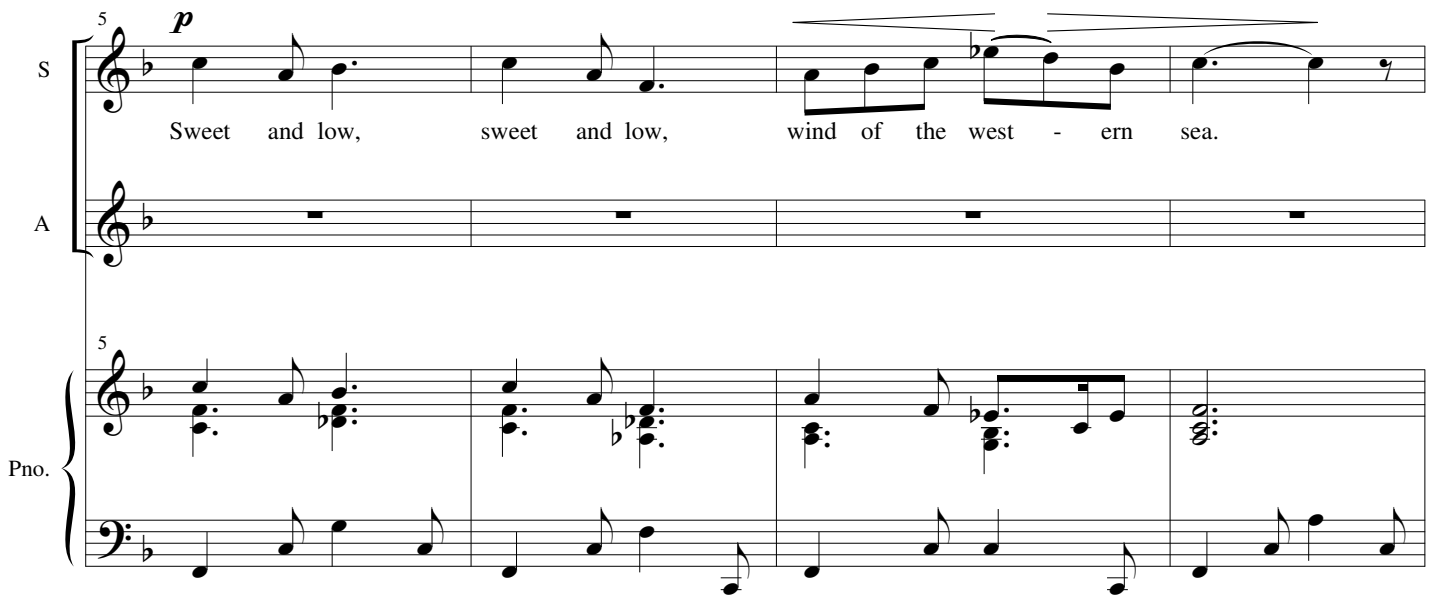
The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of chords and single notes in a 6/8 time signature, starting with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The left hand plays a simple eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a *con ped.* (con pèdalo) instruction.

S

p

Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the west - ern sea.

A



Pno.

5

The first system of the vocal duet features a Soprano (S) and Alto (A) part. The Soprano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the lyrics: "Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the west - ern sea." The Alto part is silent in this system. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) continues with a dynamic of *p* and a measure number of 5.

S

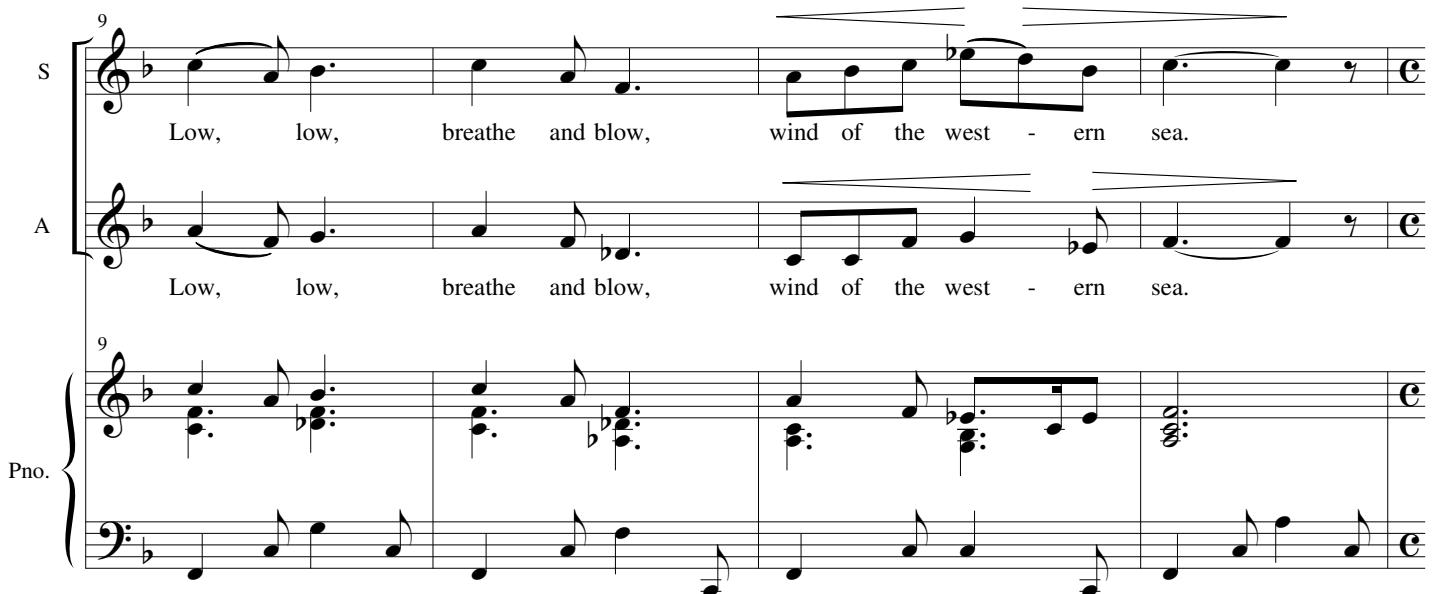
Low, low, breathe and blow, wind of the west - ern sea.

A

Low, low, breathe and blow, wind of the west - ern sea.

Pno.

9



The second system of the vocal duet continues the Soprano and Alto parts. Both parts sing the lyrics: "Low, low, breathe and blow, wind of the west - ern sea." The piano accompaniment (Pno.) continues with a measure number of 9.

13 *mf*

S O - ver the roll - ing wa - ters go, come from the dy - ing moon and blow,

A Wa - ters go. Moon, blow,

Pno. *mf faster*

17 *p subito*

S blow him a - gain to me; while my lit - tle one, while my pret - ty one, while my

A blow him a - gain to me. Lit - - - - tle one,

Pno. *p poco rit.*

21

S lit - tle one, pret - ty one sleeps.

A pret - ty one, sleep.

Pno. *mp a tempo*