

The Three Mysteries

- 1) *The Heart Could Never Speak*
- 2) *Song*
- 3) *If I Could Know*

**Music by Ken Johnston
to poems by Edwin Muir**

for SSA (or SAA) voices and piano

The version for SAB voices and piano composed 1994
This version 2002

Duration of individual songs: 1) 4' 2) 3' 3) 4' 30"

Versions of this piece are also available for the following voice combinations:

SATB
SAB

Some notes on Edwin Muir and his poetry

Edwin Muir was born in Orkney in 1887. He died in 1959.

The title, *The Three Mysteries* does not refer to these three poems as such, but rather to Edwin Muir's preoccupation and pursuit in much of his work of what he called the three 'mysteries' of life – where we come from, where we are going, and how we should live with one another.

He is trying to make us more fully aware of the nature of human life: what it is and what it could be, in both positive and negative terms.

One of his favourite techniques is the communication of a paradoxical or not readily reconcilable concept through his linking of opposing elements; for example - 'is and is not my own'; 'a giving be our taking'; 'a making our unmaking'.

The Three Mysteries

1) *The Heart Could Never Speak*

Poem -
Edwin Muir

for SSA (or SAA*) voices and piano

Music -
Ken Johnston

Dreamily ♩ = 72

6

11 **poco rit.** **A little faster than opening** ♩ = 78

16 **poco rit.**

21 **A tempo** **p**

S S
S unis. The heart could ne - ver speak But that the Word was spo - ken...

A tempo **p**

Ped. (sim.)

* The second soprano part can be sung by altos

Duration: 4'

25

S S

mp

S div.

3

We hear the heart break Here with hearts un-bro- ken. Time, teach us the

30

S S

3

art That breaks and heals the heart. Time, teach us the art That

35

S S

mp

S unis.

Heart, you would be dumb

A

mp

Heart, you would be dumb

mp

Ped.

40

S S

But that your word was said In time, and the e- choes come Throng- ing from the

A

But that your word was said In time, and the e- choes come Throng- ing from the

45 *mf*

S S
S div.
dead. Time, teach us the art. That re-sur-rects the heart.

A
dead. Time, teach us the art. That re-sur-rects the heart

mf

50 *mf* **poco rit.**

S S
Time, teach us the art. That re-sur-rects the heart.

A
Time, teach us the art. That re-sur-rects the heart.

mf **poco rit.**

Ped.

55 **A little slower** ♩ = 72 *mp* **poco rit.**

S
Tongue, you can on - ly say Syl-la - bles, joy and pain, Till

S
mp
you can say Syl-la - bles, joy and pain, Till

A
mp
Tongue, you can on - ly say Syl-la bles, joy and pain, Till

A little slower ♩ = 72 *mp* **poco rit.**

Ped. (sim.)

59 **A tempo**

S time, ha - ving its way, Makes the word

S time, ha - ving its way, Makes the

A time, ha - ving its way,

A tempo

62 **rit.** **A little faster** ♩ = 78

S live a - gain. Time, mer - ci - ful lord, Grant us to

S word live a - gain. Time, mer - ci - ful lord, Grant us to

A Makes the word live a - gain. Time, mer - ci - ful lord, Grant us to

rit. **A little faster** ♩ = 78

66

S learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us to learn your word.

S learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us to learn your word.

A learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us to learn your word.

71 **molto rit.** **A tempo**

S — Grant us to learn your word. ah

S Grant us to learn. ah ah

A

molto rit. **A tempo**

77

S ah *cresc. poco a poco*

S ah *cresc. poco a poco*

cresc. poco a poco

83

poco rit.

S ah (no breath)

S ah (no breath)

A *mp cresc. poco a poco* ah (no breath)

poco rit.

88

A tempo

f

S Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us_ to learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful

S Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us to learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful

A Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us to learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful

A tempo

f

93 *molto dim.*

S lord, Grant us to learn your word.

S lord, Grant us to learn your word.

A lord, Grant us to learn your word.

molto dim.

96 **molto rit.** **Slowly** ♩ = 52

S *p* 3 Grant us to learn.

S *p* 3 Grant us to learn.

A *p* 3 Grant us to learn.

molto rit. **Slowly** ♩ = 52

p

The Three Mysteries

2) Song

9

Poem -
Edwin Muir

for SSA (or SAA) voices and piano

Music -
Ken Johnston

Flowing ♩ = 168

Pno

mp

Ped. (sim.)

(LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

4 (LH under) (LH over) (LH under)

7 (LH over) (LH under) (LH under)

10 (LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

13 (LH over) (LH over)

16 S unis. *mp*

S S A

This that I give and

mp

Duration: 3'

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19

S
S

take, This that I keep and break,

A

(LH under) (LH over) (LH under)

22

S
S

Is and is not my own But lives in it-self a -

A

(LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

25

S
S

mf S div.
lone. Yet is be-tween us two, Mine on-ly in the

A

(LH under) *mf* Ped. (sim.)

29

S
S

brea-king, It all in the re-ma-king, Doing what I un-

A

mf Ped. (sim.)

33

S
S

do. Yet is be-tween us two, Mine

A

Yet is be-tween us

cresc.

f

Ped. Ped. (sim.) Ped. (sim.)

38

S
S

on - ly in the brea - king, It all in the re - ma - king,

A

two, Mine on - ly in the brea - king, It all in the re -

42

molto dim. **Calm, and a little slower** ♩ = 160

S
S

Doing what I un - do.

A

molto dim. **Calm, and a little slower** ♩ = 160

ma - king, I un - do.

molto dim.

p

(LH over)
Ped. Ped. (sim.)

45

S
S

S unis. *p*

With it all must be

A

48

S
S

well, There where the in - vi - si - ble Loom

51

S
S

sweet - ly plies its trade. All made there is

54

S
S

well - made.

57

S S *pp* S div. oo

A *p*

With it all must be well, There where the in -

60

S S

A vi - si - ble Loom sweet - ly plies its trade.

(LH under)

63

S S *p* ✓ All made there is

A All made there is well - made.

(LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

66

S
S

well - made. oo

p

A

All made there is well - made.

mp

cresc.

(LH under) (LH under) (LH over)

69

S
S

All made there is well - made. So be it be - tween us

mp *mf*

Primo tempo ♩ = 168

A

Primo tempo ♩ = 168

mf

(LH under) (LH over)

72

S
S

two; A gi - ving be our ta - king, A ma - king our un -

A

76

S
S

ma - king, A doing what we un - do.

cresc.

80 *f*

S
S

A

So be it be - tween us two; A gi - ving be our

So be it be - tween us two; A

84 *molto dim.*

S
S

A

ta - king, A ma - king our un - ma - king, A doing what we un -

gi - ving be our ta - king, A ma - king our un - ma - king, we un -

88 *mp*

S
S

A

do.

do.

do.

(LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

91 *mp*

S
S

A

S unis. *mp*

This that I give and take,

(LH under) (LH over) (LH under)

94

S
S
A

This that I keep and break, Is and is not my

(LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

S div.

97

S
S
A

own But lives in it-self a - lone.

own But lives in it-self a - lone,

But lives in it-self a - lone,

(LH under) (LH over) (LH under)

100

S
S
A

lives in it-self a - lone.

lives in it-self a -

(LH over) (LH under) (LH over)

103

S S

A

mf

ah

lone.

mf

cresc.

(LH under) (LH under) (LH over)

106

S S

A

mp

ah

p

ah

mp

p

(LH under) (LH over) (LH over)

109

S S

A

molto rit.

pp

(LH over)

The Three Mysteries

3) If I Could Know

Poem -
Edwin Muir

for SSA (or SAA) voices and piano

Music -
Ken Johnston

Simple and unhurried ♩ = 60

S S *S unis.* *p*
 Make me to see and hear_

Simple and unhurried ♩ = 60

Pno *p*
 Ped. _____ | (sim.)

6

S S *S div.*
 _ that I_ may know This jour- ney_ and the place to- wards which I go;

A *p*

10

S S
 For a be- gin- ning and an end are mine Sure- ly, _____ and have their sign_

A
 For a be- gin- ning and an end are mine _____

Duration: 4' 30"

14 — Which I and all in the earth and the hea- vens show. S unis. *p* 3

and all in the earth and the hea- vens show. Teach me to

Sure- ly, and all in the earth and the hea- vens show. Teach me to

cresc. *dim.*

18 rit. *pp* 3 A tempo

know, Teach me to know.

know, Teach me to know.

p *pp*

rit. *A tempo*

ped. *ped.* *ped.*

23 A little faster than the opening ♩ = 66 (S unis.) *p*

If I could tru- ly know that I do know This, and the

A little faster than the opening ♩ = 66 *p*

ped. (sim.)

27 S div.

S S

fore - shower of this show, Who is my - self, for plot and scene are mine, -

31

S S

—They say, and the world my sign, Man, earth and heaven, — co - pat - terned so or

cresc. Man, earth and heaven, — *cresc.*

35

S S

so, If I could know, If I could know, If I could know. —

co - pat - terned so or so, *mp* If I could know, If I could know, If I could

mp

Red. *Red.*

39

S S

know. ah and

p *mp*

A

If I could swear that I do tru - ly see The real world, and

p *mp*

Red.

43

S S
all it - self_ and free, _____ ah _____ Nor

A
all it - self_ and free, Not pri - soned in_ my shal - low sight's con - fine, Nor

p *mp*

47

S S
mine, but to be mine, → → Free - ly_ some - time _____ to come_ and be with
Free - ly_ some - time _____

A
mine, but to be mine, _____

cresc. *cresc.*

cresc.

51

S S
me, If I_ could see, If I_ could see, If I could see. _____
to come and be with me, *mf* If I_ could see, If I_ could see, If I could

A
If I_ could see, _____ If I_ could see, If I could

mf *mf*

mf

poco rit. **Tempo primo** ♩ = 60

55

S
S
A

see. *p* If I could tell that I do tru - ly hear A mu - sic, —
p If I could tell that I do tru - ly hear A mu - sic, —
 see. If I could tell that I do tru - ly hear A mu - sic, —

poco rit. **Tempo primo** ♩ = 60

p

Ped. (sim.)

59

S
S
A

cresc. not this tu - mult in my ear, ah con - fused or fine;
mp Of all that cries in the world, *cresc.*
cresc. not this tu - mult in my ear, ah con - fused or fine; If

cresc.

63

S
S
A

f If there were staff and sign Pitched high a - bove the bat - tle of hope and fear, —
f If there were staff and sign Pitched high a - bove the bat - tle of hope and fear, —
f there were staff and sign Pitched high a - bove the bat - tle of hope and fear, of

f

Ped. Ped. Ped. (sim.)

67 *mp* If I could hear. _____
mp If I could hear. _____

hope and fear, _____
If I could hear. _____

A little faster ♩ = 66

72 *p* S unis.
Make me to see and hear _____ that I _____ may know This jour- ney _____ and the place to- wards which I

p

A little faster ♩ = 66

76 S div.
go; _____ For a be- gin - ning and an end are mine Sure - ly, _____ ↗

For a be- gin - ning and an end are

80 and have their sign_____ Which I and all in the earth and the hea - vens

and have their sign,_____ and all ³ in the earth and the hea - vens

mine Sure - ly,_____ and all in the earth and the

cresc.

83 show._____ Teach me to know,_____

show._____ Teach me to know,_____

hea - vens show._____ Teach me to

dim. *p* *p*

87 *rit.* *A little slower* *rit.*

S unis. pp ³ Teach me to know._____

pp ³ know, Teach me to know._____

rit. *A little slower* *rit.*

pp