

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 SATB voices and piano

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:

SAB
SSA (or SAA)

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

Poem -
Edwin Muir

1) *The Heart Could Never Speak*
for SATB voices and piano

Music -
Ken Johnston

Dreamily ♩ = 72

Pno

p

Ped. _____ Ped.

6

poco cresc.

Ped. _____ (sim.)

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

mp

Ped. _____ (sim.)

16 **poco rit.**

Ped. _____ Ped. _____

21 **A tempo** *p*

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

p

Ped. _____ Ped. _____ (sim.)

Duration: 4'

25

S
A

mp

SA div.

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

30

S
A

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

35

S
A

mp

SA unis.

breaks and heals the heart. Heart, you would be dumb

T
B

TB unis. *mp*

Heart, you would be dumb

40

S
A

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

T
B

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

45 *mf*

S
A
T
B

SA div. TB div.

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

50 *mf* **poco rit.**

S
A
T
B

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

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

S
A
T
B

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

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

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

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

59 **A tempo**

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

A time, ha - ving its way, Makes the

T time, ha - ving its way,

B

A tempo

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

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

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

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

B (B) Makes the word 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.

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

T 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

A Grant us to learn. ah ah

T

molto rit. **A tempo**

77

S ah

A ah

cresc. poco a poco

cresc. poco a poco

cresc. poco a poco

83

poco rit.

S ah (no breath)

A ah (no breath)

T B ah *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* (no breath)

poco rit.

88

A tempo

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

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

T B *f* Time, mer-ci-ful lord, Grant us to learn your word. Time, mer-ci-ful

A tempo

93 *molto dim.*

S lord, Grant us to learn your word.

A lord, Grant us to learn your word.

T B lord, Grant us to learn your word.

molto dim.

96 **molto rit.** **Slowly** ♩ = 52

S *p* 3 Grant us to learn.

A *p* 3 Grant us to learn.

T B *p* 3 Grant us to learn.

molto rit. **Slowly** ♩ = 52

p

The Three Mysteries

2) Song

Poem -
Edwin Muir

for SAB 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 SA unis. *mp*
TB unis. This that I give and
mp

Duration: 3'

19

S
A

take, This that I keep and break,

T
B

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

22

S
A

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

T
B

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

25

S
A

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

T
B

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

29

S
A

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

33

S
A

do. Yet is be-tween us two, Mine

T
B

Yet is be-tween us

f

cresc.

f

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

38

S
A

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

T
B

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

42

molto dim.

S
A

Doing what I un - do.

T
B

molto dim.

ma - king, I un - do.

Calm, and a little slower ♩ = 160

p

molto dim.

p

Calm, and a little slower ♩ = 160

(LH over)

Ped. (sim.)

45

S A SA unis. *p*

With it all must be

Detailed description: This system covers measures 45 to 47. The vocal parts (Soprano and Alto) are marked 'SA unis.' and 'p'. They have long notes with ties across measures. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a dotted half-note pattern in the left hand.

48

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

Detailed description: This system covers measures 48 to 50. The vocal parts have moving lines. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note and dotted half-note patterns.

51

S A sweet - ly plies its trade. All made there is

Detailed description: This system covers measures 51 to 53. The vocal parts have moving lines. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note and dotted half-note patterns.

54

S A well - made.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 54 to 56. The vocal parts have long notes with ties. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note and dotted half-note patterns.

57

S A SA div. *pp*

T B TB unis. *p* TB div.

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

60

S A

T B

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

63

S A

T B

All made there is

All made there is well - made.

66

S A well - made. *p* oo

T B *mp* All made there is well - made.

cresc.

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

69 *mp* *mf* **Primo tempo** ♩ = 168

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

T B

Primo tempo ♩ = 168 *mf*

(LH under) (LH over)

72

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

76

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

cresc.

80 *f*

S
A

T
B

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

So be it be - tween us two; A

84 *molto dim.*

S
A

T
B

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 -

molto dim.

molto dim.

88 *mp*

S
A

T
B

do.

do.

mp

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

91 *mp*

S
A

T
B

SA unis. This that I give and take,

TB unis.

mp

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

94

S
A

T
B

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

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

SA div.

97

S
A

T
B

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
A

T
B

lives in it-self a - lone.

lives in it-self a -

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

103

S A *mf*

T B lone. *mf* TB div.

cresc. *mf*

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

106

S A *mp* *p*

T B *mp* *p*

mp *p*

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

109

S A *molto rit.*

T B *molto rit.*

pp

(LH over)

The Three Mysteries

3) If I Could Know

Poem -
Edwin Muir

for SATB voices and piano

Music -
Ken Johnston

Simple and unhurried ♩ = 60

SA unis. *p*

Make me to see and hear_

TB unis. *p*

Pno

p

ped. _____ | (*sim.*)

6

SA div.

— that I_ may know This jour- ney_ and the place to- wards which I go;

TB div.

10

SA

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

TB

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

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

Teach me to

cresc. *dim.*

18 rit. *pp* 3 A tempo

know, Teach me to know.

know, Teach me to know.

rit. A tempo

p *pp*

ped. *ped.* *ped.*

23 A little faster than the opening ♩ = 66 (SA 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 SA div.

S
A

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

31

S
A

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

cresc.
cresc.

35

S
A

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
A

know. ah and

T
B

TB unis. *mp*
 If I could swear that I do tru - ly see The real world, and

p *mp*

Red.

43

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

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

47

S A
mine, but to be mine, → Free - ly_ some - time_ to come_ and be with

T B
mine, but to be mine, Free - ly_ some - time_

cresc.

51

S A
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

T B
mf If I_ could see, If I_ could see, If I_ could

poco rit. **Tempo primo** ♩ = 60

55

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

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

poco rit. **Tempo primo** ♩ = 60

p

Ped. (sim.)

59

S A not this tu- mult in my ear, ah con - fused or fine;
mp Of all that cries in the world, —

T B not this tu- mult in my ear, ah con - fused or fine; If

cresc. *cresc.* *cresc.*

TB div.

63

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

T B there were staff and sign Pitched high a - bove the bat - tle of hope and fear, of

f *f* *f*

Ped. Ped. Ped. (sim.)

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

hope and fear, *mp* If I could hear.

A little faster ♩ = 66

72 *p* SA unis. *p* TB unis.

Make me to see and hear that I may know This jour-ney and the place to-wards which I

A little faster ♩ = 66

76 SA div. TB 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 ³ in the earth and the

cresc.

83 show. _____ Teach me to know, _____

show. _____ Teach me to know, _____

hea - vens show. _____

hea - vens show. _____

Teach me to

Teach me to

dim.

p

TB unis. *p* ³

87 rit. A little slower rit.

SA unis. *pp* ³

Teach me to know. _____

know, Teach me to know. _____

rit. A little slower rit.

pp