

Poem

Ken Johnston

for unaccompanied SATB voices (with divisions)

Text based on a poem by the New Zealand poet, A. R. D. Fairburn
and used with the kind permission of his daughters, Dinah Holman and Janis Fairburn

Composed March/April 2003

Duration of piece: 6'

This piece can be performed on its own or as part of a suite of three songs to words by A.R.D. Fairburn,
composed by Ken Johnston.

The other two pieces are:

Night Song: for unaccompanied SATB, duration 1' 45".

A Farewell: for unaccompanied SATB, duration 3' 30".

The order of pieces in this suite is: *Night Song* – *Poem* – *A Farewell* (total duration approx 12').

Each of these pieces can be performed effectively on its own, with one other, or as part of the whole suite.

Poem

for unaccompanied SATB voices (with divisions)

Poem - A.R.D. Fairburn

Music - Ken Johnston

Slowly ♩ = 48

Soprano (S): *p* (slur continues to bar 24)
Alto (A): *p* (slur continues to bar 24)
Tenor (T): *p* (continues to bar 24)
Bass (B): *p* (continues to bar 24)

Soprano (S): (stagger breathing)
Alto (A): (stagger breathing)
Tenor (T): *mp*
Bass (B): (stagger breathing)

Age will un - fas - ten us, and take our strength;

Soprano (S): (stagger breathing)
Alto (A): (stagger breathing)
Tenor (T): (stagger breathing)
Bass (B): (stagger breathing)

our world will end when you, the love - ly husk of love, lie

Duration: 6'

© Ken Johnston 2003

13

S
A
T
B

cresc.

still at length on the cold bed, and I, my limbs stained through and

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

17

S
A
T
B

mp

mp

mf

dim.

through with your beauty's blood, powerless be-

dim.

dim.

mp

dim.

21

poco rit. *pp* *mf* **A tempo, and moving forward**

S
A
T
B

pp

mf

side you lie. The world was old when

pp

mf

The world was old when

pp

mf

The world was old when

pp

mf

The world was old when

4

26 **poco rit.** **Slower** *pp* (sustain on the 'n' sound)

dim. *pp* *pp* *pp*

S we a-woke in this re- birth, and looked our love, and spoke; the moo- n,

A we a-woke in this re- birth, and looked our love, and spoke; the moo- n,

T we a-woke in this re- birth, and looked our love, and spoke; the moo- n,

B we a-woke in this re- birth, and looked our love, and spoke; the moo- n,

32 **Faster than opening** ♩ = 60

mp *p* *p* *p*

S white seal u - pon our mid - night bliss, a de - sert a - ges old at our first kiss.

A ah

T ah

B ah

36 *mp* *p* *p* *p*

S A Time will de- vour our days, love die be - fore we die. Dear

T B

43 **moving forward** *mp cresc.* **rit.** *dim.*

S A girl, when the dawn no lon- ger finds us close and sleep- ing still, wrapped in

T B

mp cresc. *dim.*

49 **Slowly** ♩ = 48 **Faster** ♩ = 60 **and moving forward**

p *mp cresc.*

S
A
T
B

one dream, Hea-ven's air a - round; when we, ri-sing in sun- light,

p *mp cresc.*

54 *mf cresc.* *f* *molto dim.* **poco rit.**

S
A
T
B

gaze no more on the en-riched earth, but see dust on the leaves and thin light from the fa-mished

mf cresc. *f* *molto dim.*

59 **Slowly (tempo 1)** ♩ = 48 *mp*

S
A
T
B

sun, and feel the dry-ness of the heart; then will our world be past, and a

p *mp*

64 *p*

S
A
T
B

new age be - gun, where - in we sleep and have no part.

p

69 **Faster** ♩ = 60 *mf* *mp* *mp*

S
A
T
B

And I would come up sing-ing from the south, or rise through smoth-ring tides of sleep

ah

ah

6

73

S *mp* deep as the sea, ah *mf cresc.* (O flame and

A *mf* and find your mouth, and lie there mo-tion-less till we be - came *cresc.*

T ah *mf cresc.* (O flame and

B

77

S *f* sha-dow of re-mem-bered time!) one shape, one thought, the li-ving form of love it-self;

A *f* one shape, one thought, the li-ving form of love it-self;

T *f* sha-dow of re-mem-bered time!) one shape, one thought, the li-ving form of love it-self;

B

82 **Tempo 1** ♩ = 48

S *pp* mm

A *pp* mm

T *p* then slip be-neath the wave still warm from you, still

B *pp* mm

86

S *rit. dim.*

A *dim.*

T *dim.* cry - ing your na - me.(mm)

B *dim.*