

JS 044
3 minutes, 15 seconds

Bright Wednesday Afternoons

SATB, a cappella

Music by
Joshua Shank

Text by
Emily Dickinson

Note from the composer

When Dr. Kevin Coker approached me about collaborating on a choral song cycle, we talked through many different themes that we felt might tie a set of pieces together. In a previous work, *Color Madrigals*, I had used the color wheel and texts by John Keats as a jumping-off point so, for this new cycle, we entertained various ways to do the same. The idea we hit upon that we thought might yield something interesting was a song cycle based around something entirely quotidian (literally): the days of the week. We sometimes see the week as a thing to make it through, but momentous events like the first atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima and man's first steps on the surface of the moon happened, boringly enough, on a Monday. But more personal stories—falling in love, having a child, losing a parent—can also happen to us no matter what day of the week it is. Thus, *Songs for Seven Days* was born.

To that end, I searched for texts that mentioned each day of the week and came up with some beautifully diverse offerings. For the fourth movement, I found an exquisite text by Emily Dickinson which finds the poet musing in her trademark voice.

B&F Music

Songs for Seven Days was commissioned by the Blue Valley Northwest High School Chamber Singers (Dr. Kevin Coker, conductor) for their performance at the 2014 Kansas Music Educators Convention.

The Text

I never felt at Home—Below

by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

I never felt at Home—Below—
And in the Handsome Skies
I shall not feel at Home—I know—
I don't like Paradise—

Because it's Sunday—all the time—
And Recess—never comes—
And Eden'll be so lonesome
Bright Wednesday Afternoons—

If God could make a visit—
Or ever took a Nap—
So not to see us—but they say
Himself—a Telescope

Perennial beholds us—
Myself would run away
From Him—and Holy Ghost—and All—
But there's the "Judgement Day"!

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

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for their 2014 performance at the Kansas Music Educators Convention

Bright Wednesday afternoons

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Gently (♩ = 76)

Soprano *mf* *mp* *simile*
I ne-ver felt at home be - low, — I ne-ver

Alto *mf* *mp* *simile*
I ne-ver felt at home be-low, — I ne-ver felt at home be-low, —

Tenor

Bass

5 (background)

felt at home be-low, I ne-ver felt at home be-low, I ne - ver felt at

(background)

I ne-ver felt at home be - low, — I ne-ver felt at home be - low, — I ne - ver

mf cantabile
I ne-ver felt at home be - low, And in the hand - some skies,

mf cantabile
ne-ver felt at home be - low, And in the hand - some skies,

10

home be-low, I ne-ver felt at home be - low I ne-ver felt at home be-

felt at home be - low, I ne-ver felt at home be-low, I ne-ver felt at

mf I shall not feel at home, I know.

mf I shall not feel at home, I know.

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15

low, I ne-ver felt at home be - low, Be-cause it's Sun-day all the

home be-low, I ne-ver felt at home Be-cause it's Sun-day all the

I don't like pa - ra-dise. Be-cause it's Sun-day all the

I don't like pa - ra-dise. Be-cause it's Sun-day all the

f

f

f

f

19

20

time, and re-cess ne - ver comes, and E-den-'ll be so

time, and re-cess ne - ver comes, and E-den-'ll be so

time, and re-cess ne - ver comes, and E-den-'ll be so

time, and re-cess ne - ver comes, and E-den-'ll be so

mf

mf

mf

mf

25 A bit slower (♩ = 70)

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26

poco rit.

lone - some; bright *Wednes - day af - ter - noons.

poco rit.

lone - some; bright *Wednes - day af - ter - noons.

poco rit.

lone - some; bright *Wednes - day af - ter - noons.

poco rit.

lone - some; bright *Wednes - day af - ter - noons.

31 Tempo 1

mf

If God could make a vi - sit, If God could make a vi -

mf

If God could make a vi - sit, If God could make a vi - sit,

mf cantabile

If God could make a vi - sit or

mf cantabile

If God could make a vi - sit or

35

(pattern change)

sit, If God could make a vi - sit, if God could make a vi - sit,

(pattern change)

If God could make a vi - sit, if God could make a vi - sit, if

mf cantabile

e - ver took a nap. So not to see us but they

mf cantabile

e - ver took a nap. So not to see us but they

* Pronounced "Wertz-day."

40

if God Him - self a te - le - scope.

God Him - self a te - le - scope.

say Him - self a te - le - scope.

say Him - self a te - le - scope.

f

f

f

f

44 Tempo 1

mf cantabile

a te - le - scope

mf cantabile

a te - le - scope

mf *simile* *mp* (background)

I ne-ver felt at home be-low, I ne-ver felt at home be-low, I ne-ver felt at

mf *mp* *simile* (background)

I ne-ver felt at home be-low, I ne-ver felt at home be-

49

per - re - ni - al be - holds me.

per - re - ni - al be - holds me.

home be - low, I ne - ver felt at home be - low, I ne - ver felt at

low, I ne - ver felt at home be - low, I ne - ver felt at home be -

f

f

f

f

53

mp *f*

My - self would run a - way From Him and Ho - ly Ghost and

mp *f*

My - self would run a - way From Him and Ho - ly Ghost and

f undulating

home be-low, I ne-ver felt, I ne-ver felt Him and Ho - ly Ghost and

f

low, I ne-ver felt, I ne-ver felt Him and Ho - ly Ghost and

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61 Slowing (♩ = 63)

58

rit. *mp no vibrato* *rit.* *lunga*

all. But there's the "Judg - ment Day"!

rit. *mp no vibrato* *rit.* *lunga*

all. But there's the Judg - ment Day"!

rit. *mp no vibrato* *rit.* *lunga*

all. But there's the "Judg - ment Day"!

rit. *mp no vibrato* *rit.* *lunga*

all. But there's the "Judg - ment Day"!

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Austin, November 2013

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