



M. E. Valverde

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A Green Voice
for SATB chorus (div.) and piano

About the Poet

Recognized as Iowa's "farmer-poet and philosopher," award-winning author of over a dozen collections of poetry, James Hearst was born in 1900 and raised on a farm near Cedar Falls. Not two years after joining the army, he survived a diving accident with injuries that resulted in paralysis of the legs and lower body. With his family's support, he continued his education through the University of Iowa, worked as a livestock farmer, and wrote poetry from early adulthood through, subsequently, the Great Depression. In 1941, he began his 34-year term as professor of creative writing and English at the college that would eventually be known as University of Northern Iowa.

Inspired by his life and work on a farm, his writings provide an account of the reality of North American agriculture as a means by which to express a spirit of revolution. The James and Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts, formerly his late wife's and his home, stands as a living cultural contribution to the community of Cedar Falls.

*Whatever cold tones
an empty sky echoes
after birds vanish
from meadow and tree,
and bright hues of color
fade as the flowers lie
buried in snow above
roots sealed in frost,
if the tunes grow faint
in the ear of your memory*

*and the country of your silence
seems windswept and bare,
give sun to this plant
that I bring you for Easter,
this small tree risen
with love from its earth,
and listen as soft leaves
unfold note by note,
it will add a green voice
to the time you need singing.*

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Composer's Notes

In "A Green Voice," spring is reborn after a period of cold desolation; wishes for nourishing light are granted as blooming trees foretell their abundance; and a lost memory is recovered with sweet music. A wintry breeze, depicted in the piano's flourishes, brings in the choir, and they sing a song of hope and regeneration. From near silence, punctuated by the piano's dry chords, the singing builds voice by voice through a long crescendo till the shining sun is revealed in colorful harmony.

While predominantly sung in four parts, there are moments of divisi in the inner voices, which may be reassigned as necessary.

Composed in 2023, the original SATB version of "A Green Voice" was commissioned for the Metropolitan Chorale of Iowa's Cedar Valley, an ensemble comprising of amateur and professional singers of diverse ages and experiences, under the leadership of Dr. Amy Kotsonis, for their 69th season in loving memory of patron of the arts C. Hugh Petterson. The following year, the SSAA voicing of "A Green Voice" was commissioned by California Choral Directors Association for their 2025 All-State Soprano-Alto Honor Choir, conducted Dr. Kimberly Dunn Adams, and was premiered at the California Music Educators Association Convention (CASMEC) in Sacramento.

dur. = ca. 3'30"

Commissioned for the Metropolitan Chorale, Ryan Occeña, conductor;
in loving memory of C. Hugh Petterson, patron of the Iowa arts community

A Green Voice

for SATB chorus (div.) and piano

James Hearst

1900-1983

Mari Esabel Valverde

b.1987

Cool and distant, poco andante ♩ = ca. 72

Piano



mp

molto rit.

The piano introduction is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It begins with a melody in the right hand featuring eighth-note patterns and a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The tempo is marked 'Cool and distant, poco andante' with a quarter note equal to approximately 72 beats per minute. The dynamics start at mezzo-piano (*mp*) and end with a 'molto rit.' (very ritardando) instruction.

A tempo

S

A

T

B

Pno.

p

p *assuringly*

What-ev-er cold tones an emp-ty sky

p *assuringly*

What-ev-er cold tones an emp-ty sky

p *assuringly*

What-ev-er cold tones an emp-ty sky

p *assuringly*

What-ev-er cold tones an emp-ty sky

p



The vocal score is for SATB voices and piano. It begins with a circled number 5, indicating the start of the vocal entry. The tempo is marked 'A tempo'. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) all sing the same lyrics: 'What-ev-er cold tones an emp-ty sky'. The piano accompaniment is marked *p* (piano). The piano part features a melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The dynamics for the piano part are *p* and *p* *assuringly*. The piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

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9

S
ech-oes — af - ter birds — van-ish from mead-ow and tree,

A
ech-oes — af - ter birds — van-ish from mead-ow and tree,

T
8
ech-oes — af - ter birds — van-ish from mead-ow and tree,

B
ech-oes — af - ter birds — van-ish from mead-ow and tree,

Pno.
mp *p* *mp*

13

A
and bright hues of co - lor fade

T
8
as the flowers lie bur-ied in

Pno.
p

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17

S if the tunes grow faint

A if the tunes grow faint

T snow if the tunes grow faint

B a - bove roots sealed in frost,

Pno. *m.d.* *non legato*

22

S in the ear of your mem-o-ry and the coun-try of your si-lence

A in the ear of your mem-o-ry and the coun-try of your si-lence

T in the ear of your mem-o-ry and the coun-try of your si-lence

Pno. *mp*

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molto rit.

26 *mf*

S seems — wind-swept and — bare, give —

A seems — wind-swept and — bare, give

T seems — wind-swept and — bare, give

B gives —

Pno. *mf*

A tempo
poco a poco cresc.

30 *f* *dim.*

S sun — give sun — to this

A sun — give sun — to this

T sun — give sun — to this

B sun — give sun — to this

Pno.

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34 *mp* *mf*

S plant that I bring you for Eas - ter, this small

A plant that I bring you for Eas - ter, this small

T 8 plant that I bring you for Eas - ter, this small

B plant that I bring you for Eas - ter, this small

Pno. *mp* *mf*

38 *poco a poco cresc.* *f* (opt. solo) *dim.*

S tree ris - en with love from its

A *poco a poco cresc.* tree ris - en with love from its

T *poco a poco cresc.* tree ris - en with love from its

B *poco a poco cresc.* tree ris - en with love from its

Pno. *mf*

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42 *mp*

S earth, and lis - ten...

A earth, and lis - ten...

T earth, and lis - ten...

B earth, and lis - ten...

Pno. *mp* *p espress.*

46

S lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

A lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

T lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

B lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

Pno. *mp*

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50 *mf* **poco rit.**

S note, it will add a green — voice to the time

A note, it will add a green — voice to the

T note, it will add a green — voice to the

B note, it will add a green — voice to the

Pno.

54 **Poco largo** ♩ = ca. 60

S you need sing - - - ing.

A *** time you need sing - - - ing.

T time you need sing - - - ing.

B time you need sing - - - ing.

Pno.

* Add second alto divisi if first tenor is not present enough.