



Gerald Cohen

Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar (Psalm 23)

For Solo Voice or Unison Chorus and Piano

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Adonai Ro'i was originally written, on the loss of a friend, as a solo a cappella melody. I am a cantor, and a dear friend and congregant died of cancer at the age of 42 in 1989. Her husband asked me to sing at her funeral, and I decided to write a setting of Psalm 23, which is traditionally sung at Jewish funerals and memorial services. This was indeed one of those cases of a piece of music just writing itself, in the course of perhaps 30 minutes, as I was filled with the emotions of my friend's death.

As I started singing the piece at other services, I received a very strong response to it, and decided to make a piano accompaniment. This was published in 1995, and soon was used by cantors all over the country, as well as in churches and other services and concerts. It is a very curious thing for a composer: I write many pieces of music of all kinds, and it is hard to know exactly why one particular piece captures people's emotions so strongly, but that is what happened with this particular piece.

I was soon asked by the Zamir Chorale of Boston to write a version for SATB chorus, and that version has also been widely performed. I have also arranged it for solo voice and orchestra, and chorus and orchestra; these versions have been performed by such ensembles as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the San Diego Symphony.

I just have to assume that the piece somehow taps into the strong emotions that I felt as I was writing it (I had also lost my father about 3 years before, so I am sure that loss is present as well), and that this then communicates itself to performers, listeners, and mourners. In 2003, I had the sad but powerful experience of singing the piece at my mother's funeral.

I am grateful that this piece has become a way for so many to express deep and delicate feelings. I hope that, if it is a piece that is meaningful to you, that you will feel free to contact me about your experience with it.

—Gerald Cohen

Adonai ro'i, lo e'nsar,
binot deshe yarb'tseini,
al mey m'nuchot y'nahaleini.
Nafshi y'shovev,
yancheini v'maglei tsedek,
l'maan sh'mo.
Gam ki eileych b'gei tsalmavet,
lo ira ra ki ata imadi,
shivt'cha umishantecha heima y'nachamuni.
Taaroach l'fanay shulchan neged tsor'ray,
dishanta vashemen roshi,
kosi r'vaya.
Ach tov vachased yird'funi
kol y'mei chayai,
v'shavti b'veit Adonai l'orech yamim.

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.
God gives me repose in green meadows,
God leads me beside the still waters.
God revives my spirit,
and guides me on the right path,
for that is God's nature.
Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no harm, for You are with me,
Your staff and your rod comfort me.
You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes,
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and kindness shall be my portion
all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the House of Adonai forever.

in memory of marcia scnarj

Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar

(Psalm 23)

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Gerald Cohen

Gently flowing ♩ = 100-104

p

A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, bin - ot

with ped.

6

God gives me repose in green meadows,

God leads me beside the still waters.

de - she yar - bi - tzei - ni, al mei m' - nu - chot, al mei m' - nu - chot y' -

13

God revives my spirit,

na - ha - lei - - - ni. Naf - shi y' - sho - veiv, y' - sho -

sempre legato

19

and guides me on the right path,

veiv, ————— yan - chei - ni b' - mag - lei —

Musical score for measures 19-22. The vocal line is in a single staff with lyrics. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'simile (sustain)'. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PERUSA ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

23

tse - dek, yan - chei - - - ni b' - mag - lei

Musical score for measures 23-26. The vocal line is in a single staff with lyrics. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'simile (sustain)'. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PERUSA ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

simile (sustain)

27

for that is God's nature.

tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an ————— sh' - mo. —————

Musical score for measures 27-30. The vocal line is in a single staff with lyrics. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'simile (sustain)'. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PERUSA ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

32

*mp**Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,*

— Gam — ki ei - leich b' - gei tsal - ma - vet, lo i -

37

*I fear no harm, for You are with me,**Your staff and your rod
comfort me.*

ra — ra ki a - t ma - di, shiv - t' -

42

poco allarg. a tempo

cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu -

48

rit. --- *a tempo* You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes,

ni. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa - nai

53

shul - chan ne - geu tso - r' - rai, di -

You anoint my head with oil:

58

poco cresc.

shan - - - ta va - she - men ro - shi ko -

poco cresc.

simile (sustain)

62

my cup overflows.

si - - - r' - va - - - ya. - - - Ach - - -

Surely goodness and kindness shall be my portion

66

**A little slower,
with rubato**

tov va - che-sed - - - yf - d' - fu - - - - ni kol y' -

70

all the days of my life,

*And I shall dwell
a tempo*

mei - - - cha - yai, kol y' - mei - - - cha - yai, v' - shav - - -

in the house of Adonai forever. poco allarg. a tempo

75

ti b' - veit A - do - nai l' - o - - - rech ya - mim.

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

81

rit. --- a tempo

A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, A - do -

87

, rit. al fine

nai ro - i lo ech - - sar.

ppp

Ped.