



Gerald Cohen

Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar (Psalm 23)

For SSA 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. The version printed here, for SSA chorus, was commissioned by the Cantors Assembly in celebration of the role of women as cantors in the past several decades. 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 8 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 echsar,
binot deshe yarbitseini,
al mey n'quchot y'nahaleini.
Nafshi y'shoveiv,
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 vachessed 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 benari

This arrangement for SSA chorus was written for the concert
celebrating Women in the Cantorate,
Cantors Assembly Convention, 2013

Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar

Gently flowing, not too slow ♩ = 100-104 (Psalm 23)

Gerald Cohen

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want. God gives me repose in green meadows,

Soprano 1
A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, bin - ot de - she yar - bi -

Soprano 2

Alto

Piano
Gently flowing, not too slow ♩ = 100-104
p

with ped. throughout

Note: M. 1-16 can also be sung as a solo

7 *God leads me beside the still waters.*

S 1
tzei - ni, al nei m' - nu - chot, al mei m' - nu - chot y' - na - ha -

S 2

A

7

14 *God revives my spirit,*

S1 lei - ni. Naf - shi y'-sho - veiv, y'-sho - veiv, yan -

S2 Naf - shi y'-sho - veiv, y'-sho - veiv, yan -

A Naf - - - shi y' - sho - veiv,

p

21 *and guides me on the right path,*

S1 chei - ni v'-mag - lei tse dek, yan - chei - - - ni v'-mag-lei

S2 chei - ni v'-mag - lei tse - dek, yan - chei - - - ni v'-mag-lei

A yan - chei - ni mag - lei tse - - - dek, yan - chei - ni

sempre legato

simile (sustain)

for that is God's nature.

27

S 1 tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an - sh' - mo.

S 2 tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an - sh' - mo.

A mag - lei tse - dek l' - ma - an sh' - mo. Gam

cantabile mp

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

I fear no harm, for You are with me,

33 *sotto voce p* Lu - lu lu - lu lu - lu lu - lu, lu - lu lu - lu

S 1 *simile*

S 2 *sotto voce p* Gam ki i - leich b' - gei ma - vet, lo i - - ra ra

A *simile* ki e - leich b' - gei tsal - ma - vet, lo i - ra - ra ki a -

mp

Note: only Sop. 1 singers who can sing very lightly should sing this line in mm. 33-40. Others can sing Sop.2, and some of the Sop. 2 can sing the Alto line.

Your staff and your rod comfort me.

allarg.

39 *mp*

S1 a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' - cha u - mi - shan - te - cha

S2 a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' - cha u - mi - shan - te - cha

A ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' - cha u - mi - shan - te - cha

39 *poco allarg.*

a tempo *rit.* *a tempo* *p* *p*

S1 *f* hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu ni, Ta - a - roch

S2 *f* hei - - - - - ma, ah. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa -

A *f* hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu - - - ni, ah. Ta - a - roch

45 *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo* *p*

in the presence of my foes,

52

S 1
l' - fa - nai — shul - - - chan — ne - ged tso - r' -

S 2
nai — shul - chan — ne - ged tso - r' - rai, — di -

A
l' - fa - nai — shul - chan ne - ged tso - r' - rai, — *poco cresc.*

52

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

58 *poco cresc.*

S 1
rai, di - shan - - ta va - she - men, ko - si r' - va - ya. —

S 2 *poco cresc.*
shan - - ta va - she - men ro - shi ko - si r' - va - ya. —

A *poco cresc.*
— di - shan - - ta va - she - men, ko - si r' - va - ya. —

58

sempre legato poco cresc.

simile (sustain)

Note: The melody in Sop. 2 should remain the most prominent voice in mm.58-65.

all the ways of my life,

A little slower,

Sop. solo: *p* *sweetly* with rubato

65

Ach tov va - che-sed yir-d' - fu - - - ni kol y' - mei - - - cha -

S1

pp *poco* *poco* *simile*

S2

pp *poco* *poco* *simile*

A

p *poco* *poco* *simile*

Ach tov che - sed yir - ' - fu - ni y' - mei

65

A little slower, with rubato

p

And I shall dwell in the house of Adonai forever.

a tempo (Tempo I)

71

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

S1

p

mei - - - cha - - - yai, v' shav - - - ti b' - veit a - do -

S2

p

mei - - - cha - - - yai, shav - - - ti a - do -

A

cha - yai cha - yai, v' - shav - ti a - do -

71

a tempo (Tempo I)

77 *poco allarg.* **f** *a tempo* *rit.* **p** *a tempo*

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

S 1
nai l' - o - - - rech ya - mim. A - do nai ro - i lo ech -

S 2
nai l' - o - - - rech ya - mim, ah.

A
nai l' - o - - - rech ya - mim, ah. A - do - nai

85 **pp** *rit. al fine* (Sop. 1 line very quiet here) **ppp**

S 1
sar, - - - A - do nai ro - i lo lo ech - sar. **ppp**

S 2
- do nai ro - i lo ech - sar. **ppp**

A
ro - i, lo ech - sar. **ppp**

85 *rit. al fine* **ppp**