THE SONG OF SHADOWS



for Mezzo Soprano & Piano

Phillip A. Cooke

THE SONG OF SHADOWS

for Mezzo Soprano & Piano

(2016)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

All breath marks are suggestions only

First performed (in orchestral version) on the 10 June 2016 by the Marischal Chamber Orchestra with Kathleen Cronie (soprano) and conducted by Chris Gray at King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, UK.

'Winter' and 'Autumn' first performed on the 05 May 2012 by Clare McCaldin and Paul Turner at Deddington Parish Church, Oxfordshire, UK

Duration: 14 minutes

Cover photograph: www.celtic-trails.com

For more information: www.phillipcooke.com

PROGRAMME NOTE

The Song of Shadows is an enlargement of a work of mine from 2012, Two de la Mare Songs which was written for the mezzo soprano Clare McCaldin. I had always felt these two songs ('Winter' and 'Autumn') were a little on the short side for a set and had wanted to write some companion songs should the opportunity arise. In early 2016 I wrote two new songs ('Sleep' and 'The Song of Shadows') for mezzo soprano and piano, before arranging the whole set for soprano and chamber orchestra.

The Song of Shadows is one of the most romantic and yearning pieces I have written, what I initially had thought of as quite austere in Two de la Mare Songs has become something much more rhapsodic and colourful in The Song of Shadows. The work is imbued with a sense of English pastoralism, there is something wistful and resigned about the whole set from the opening line 'Clouded with snow the cold winds blow' to the final 'silence where hope was' – whether this is a response to de la Mare's poetry or my own state of mind, I'm not sure – but there is something dark and unresolved at the heart of this piece which isn't always apparent in my other work.

PAC

TEXT

Winter

Clouded with snow The cold winds blow, And shrill on leafless bough The robin with its burning breast Alone sings now.

The rayless sun,
Day's journey done,
Sheds its last ebbing light
On fields in leagues of beauty spread
Unearthly white.

Thick draws the dark, And spark by spark, The frost-fires kindle, and soon Over that sea of frozen foam Floats the white moon.

Sleep

When all, and birds, and creeping beasts, When the dark of night is deep, From the moving wonder of their lives Commit themselves to sleep.

Without a thought, or fear, they shut The narrow gates of sense; Heedless and quiet, in slumber turn Their strength to impotence.

The transient strangeness of the earth Their spirits no more see: Within a silent gloom withdrawn, They slumber in secrecy.

Two worlds they have--a globe forgot, Wheeling from dark to light; And all the enchanted realm of dream That burgeons out of night.

The song of shadows

"Sweep thy faint strings, Musician, With thy long lean hand; Downward the starry tapers burn, Sinks soft the waning sand; The old hound whimpers couched in sleep, The embers smoulder low; Across the walls the shadows Come, and go.

Sweep softly thy strings, Musician, The minutes mount to hours; Frost on the windless casement weaves A labyrinth of flowers; Ghosts linger in the darkening air, Hearken at the open door; Music hath called them, dreaming, Home once more."

Autumn

There is a wind where the rose was, Cold rain where sweet grass was, And clouds like sheep Stream o'er the steep Grey skies where the lark was.

Nought warm where your hand was, Nought gold where your hair was, But phantom, forlorn, Beneath the thorn, Your ghost where your face was.

Cold wind where your voice was, Tears, tears where my heart was, And ever with me, Child, ever with me, Silence where hope was.

Walter de la Mare (1873 – 1956)

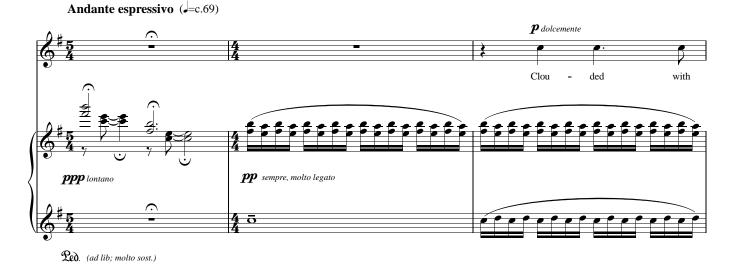
THE SONG OF SHADOWS

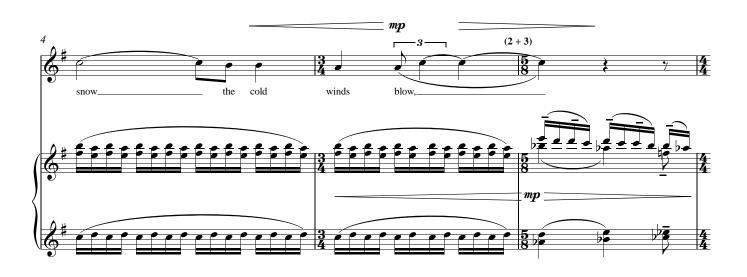
Four settings of Walter de la Mare for Mezzo-Soprano & Piano

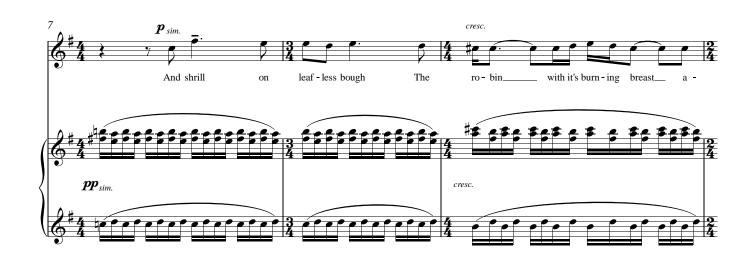
WALTER DE LA MARE (1873 - 1956)

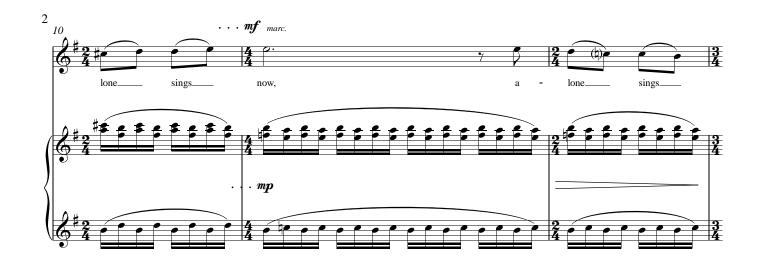
I. Winter

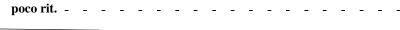
PHILLIP A. COOKE (2016)

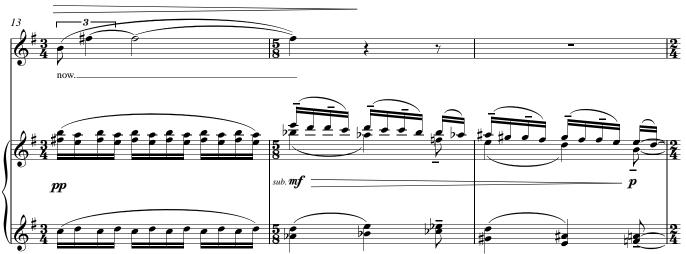




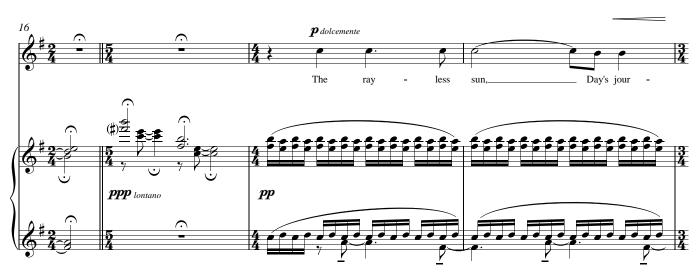


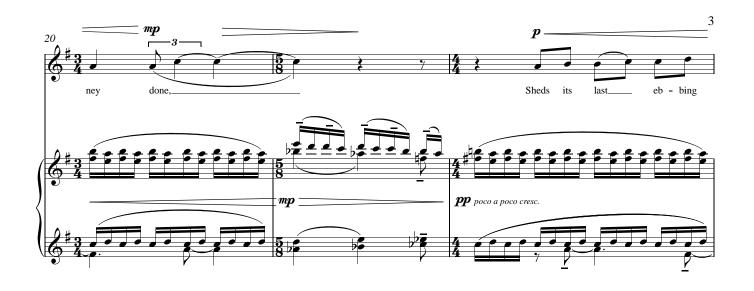


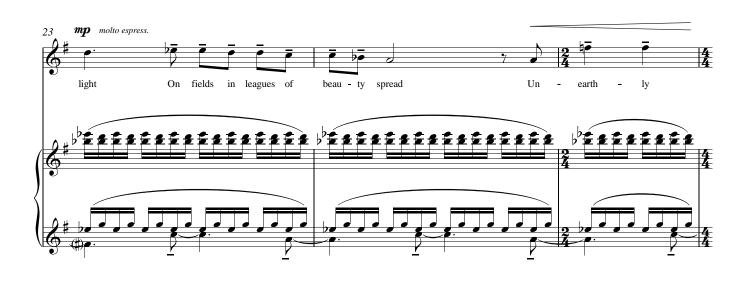


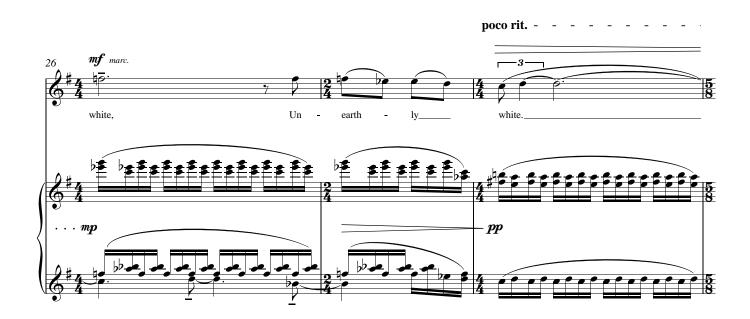


- - - A tempo

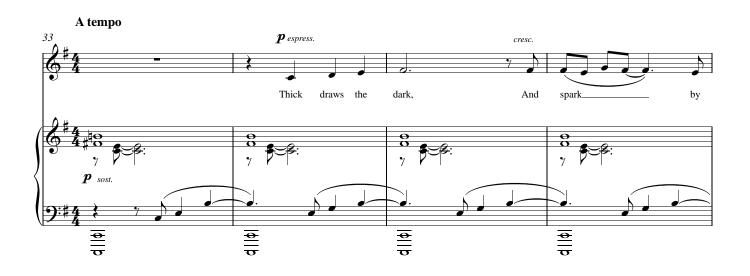


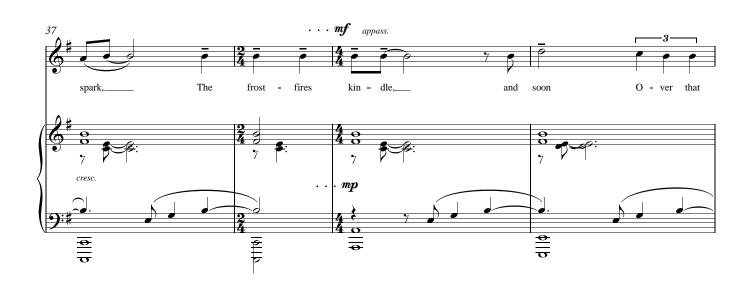


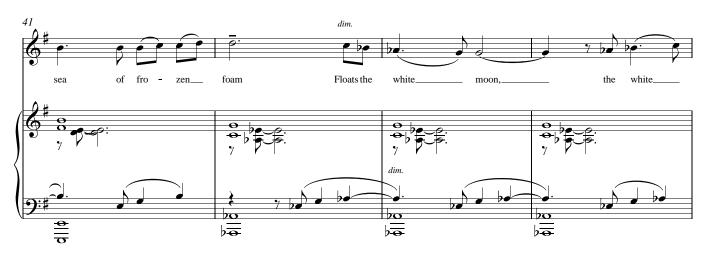


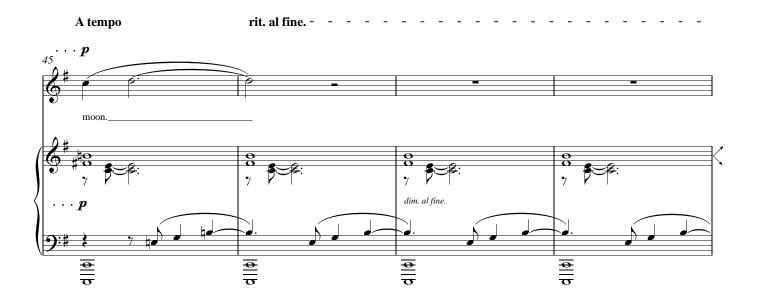






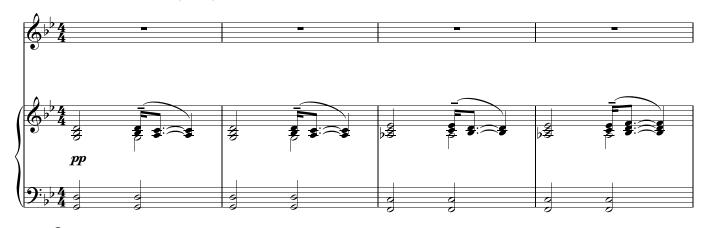




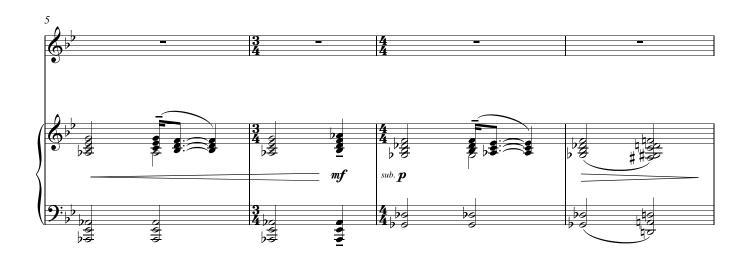




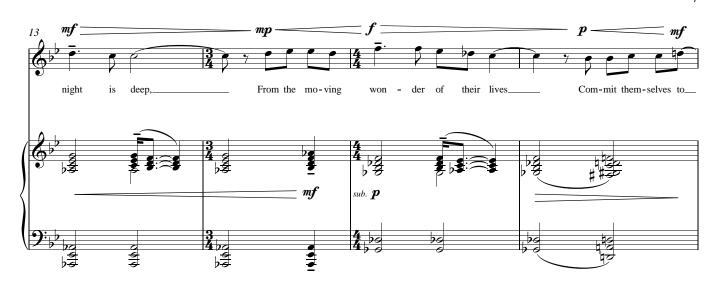
Andante lontano (=c.60)

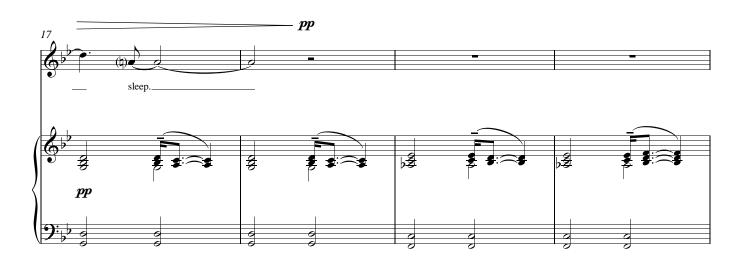


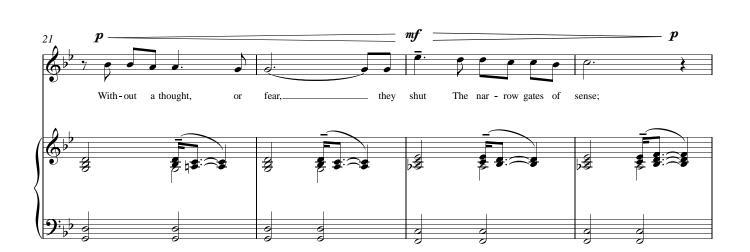
Led. (ad lib; molto sost.)

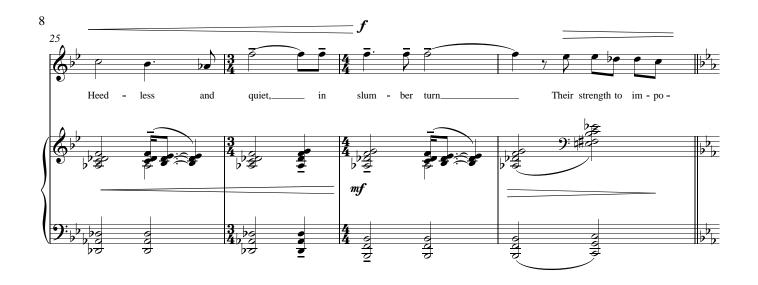


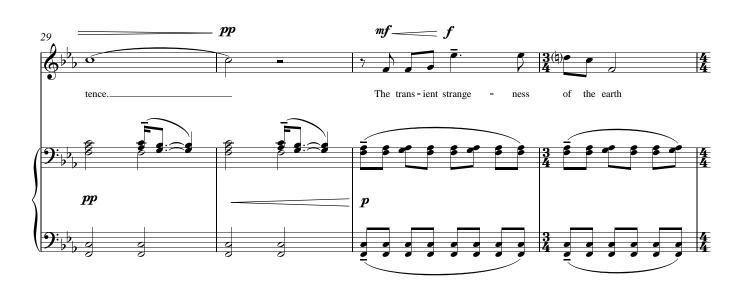


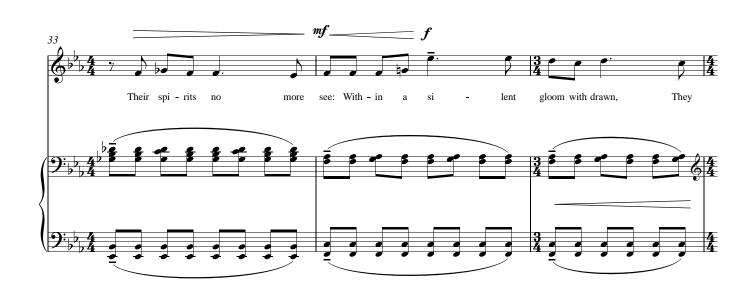






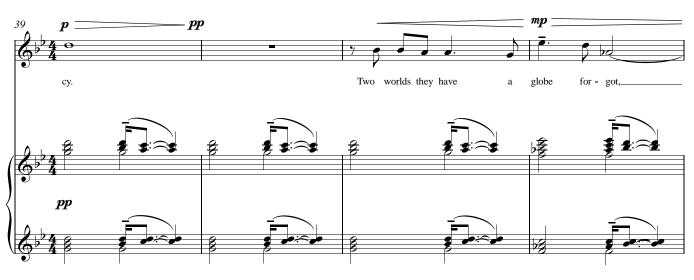


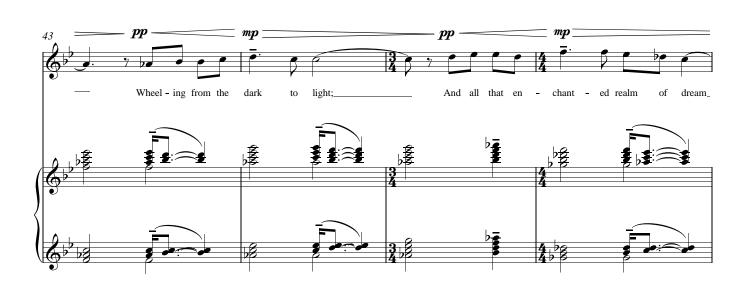




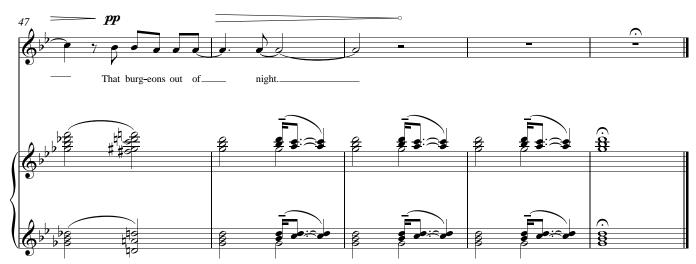


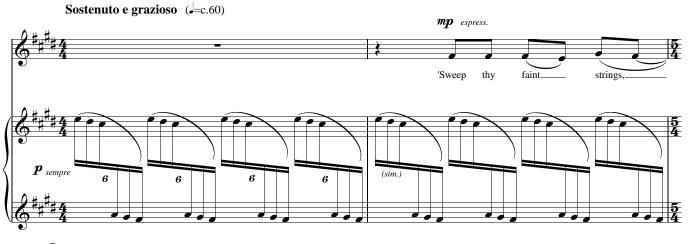
Primo tempo (=c.60)



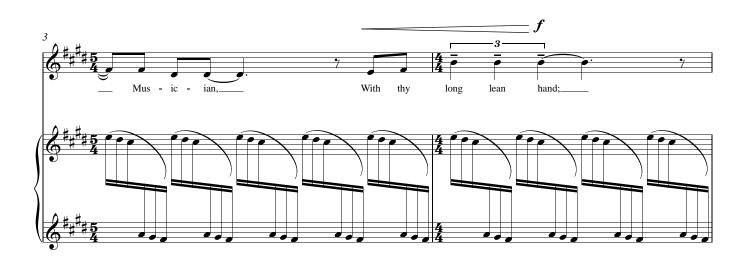


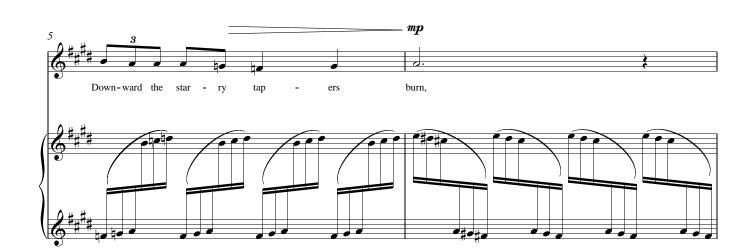


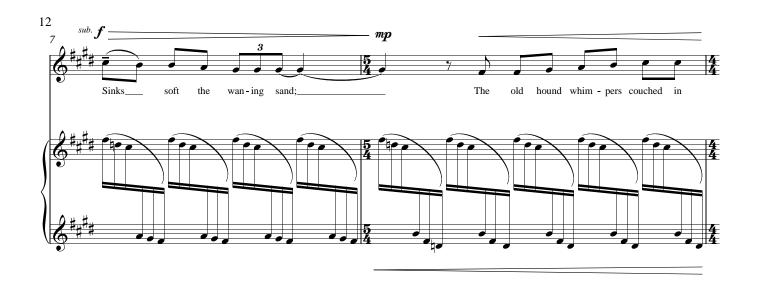


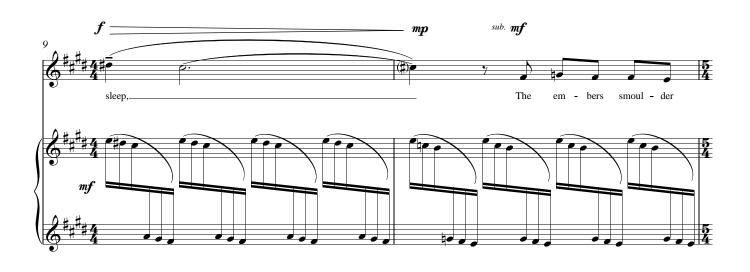


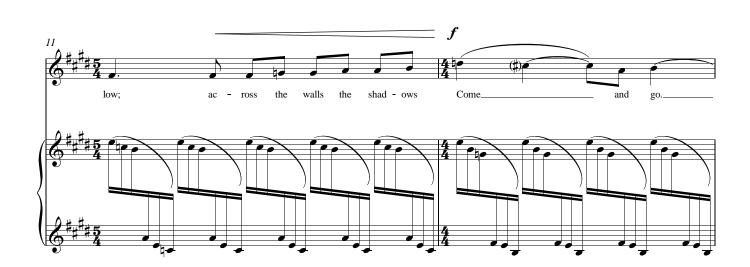
Led. (ad lib; molto sost.)







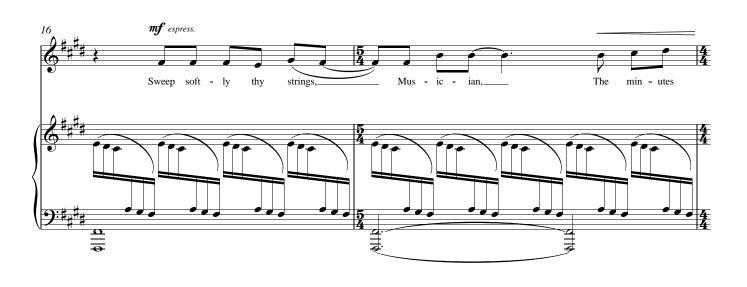


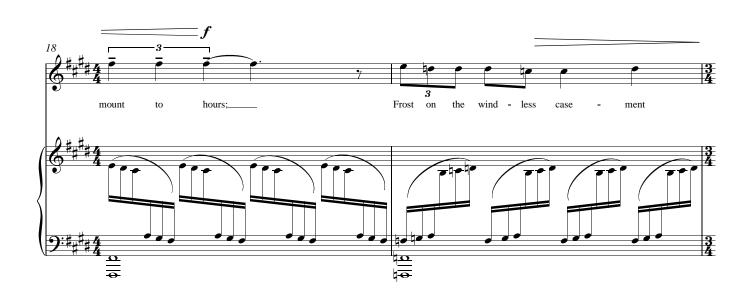


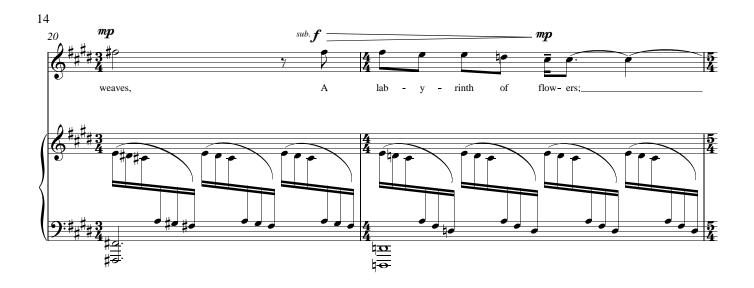




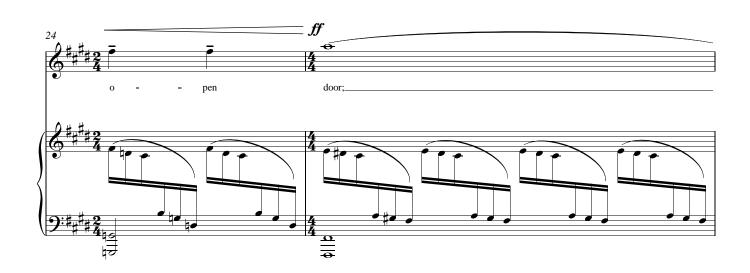


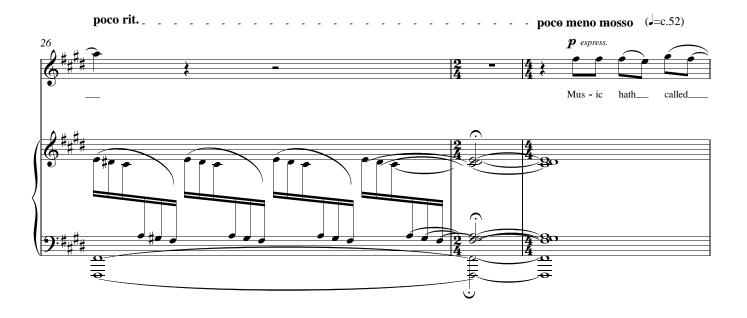


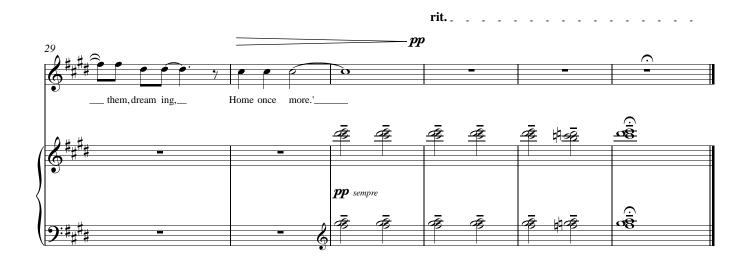






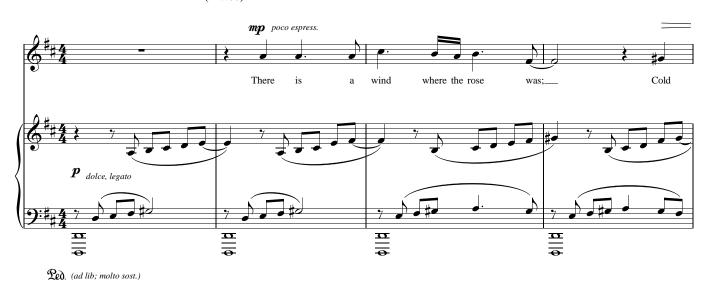


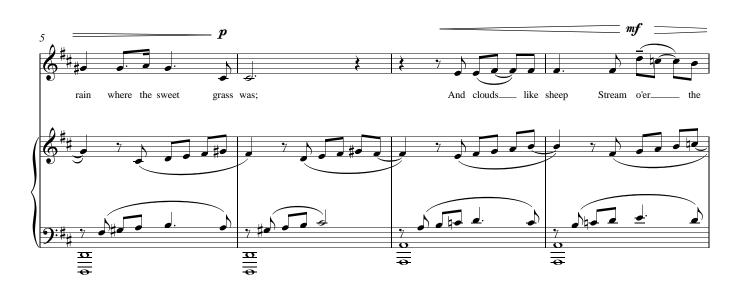


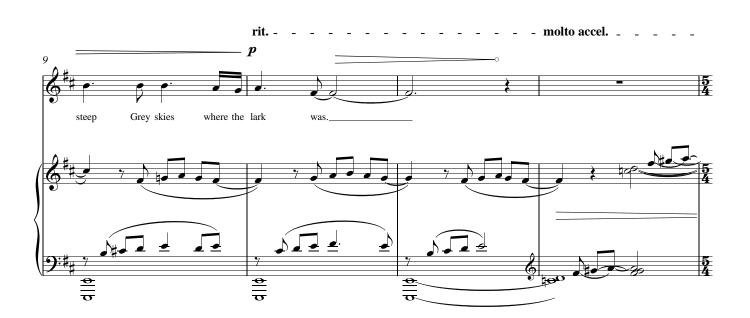


IV. Autumn

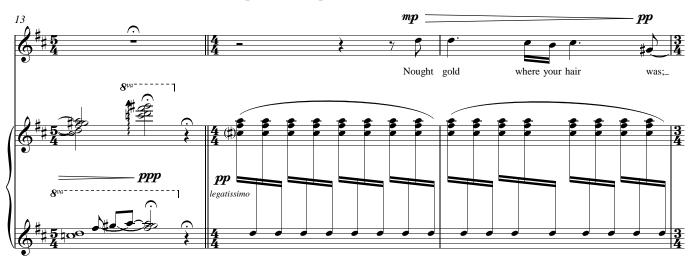
Andante con malincolico (=c.60)

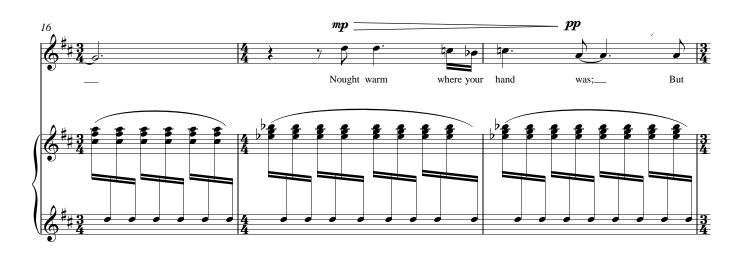


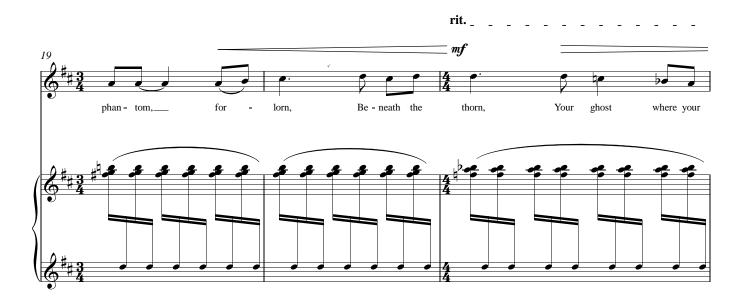


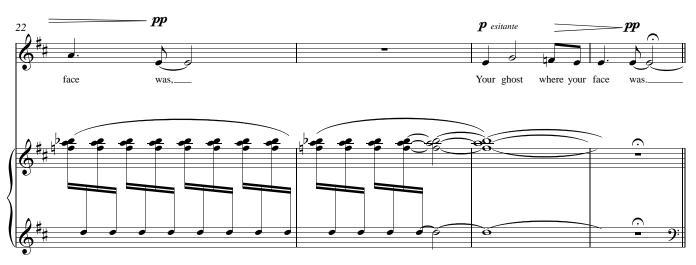


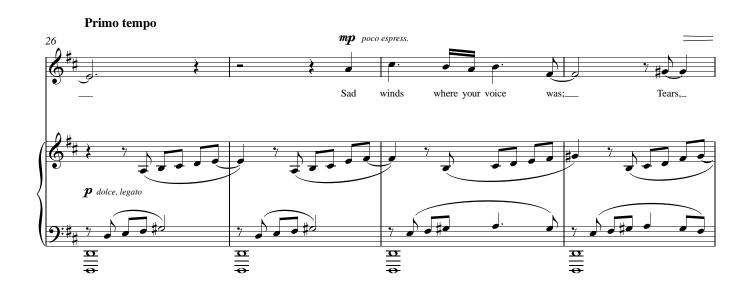
- - - - - - - Poco piu mosso; espressivo

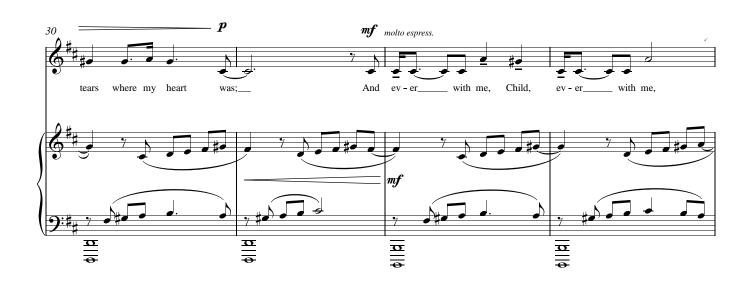


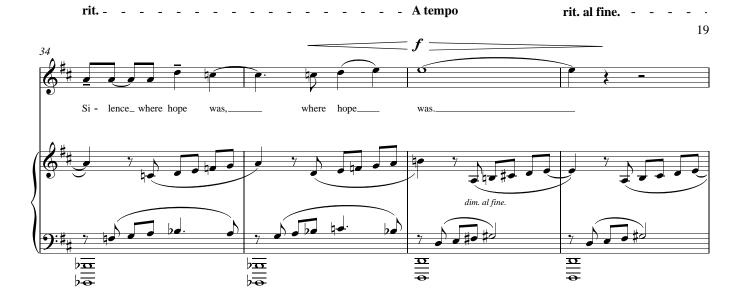


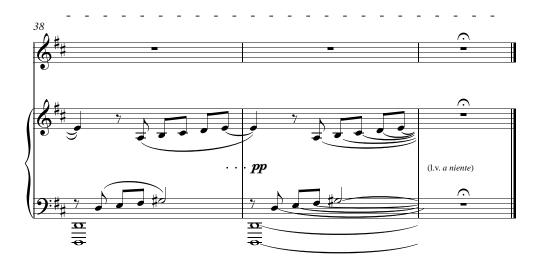












Little Bourton, Oxford, Eton Jan - Feb 2012; Portinscale, Oldmeldrum, Old Aberdeen Jan - Feb 2016