THE COMPOSER AS LITERARY CRITIC:

MUSICAL READINGS OF VICTORIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH SONG

by

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(Under the Direction of David Haas)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the intersections of the English Musical Renaissance (roughly 1880-1920) and the poetry of the Victorian era, approaching musical analysis through the lens of literary close reading and bringing English song into a reciprocal dialogue with current literary criticism in a series of three case studies. Through their settings, the composers prove to be quite prescient, anticipating modern critical concerns and highlighting the subtleties of the language. In this way, the composer plays the role of the literary critic, making their own argument and presenting their own reading of the poetry.

The first case study begins with a single poem, Christina Rossetti's "Song [When I am dead, my dearest]" (1848) and its musical settings by Liza Lehmann (1919), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1903), and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1904). I consider how each song deals with the idea of a "double poem," or a poem in which the explicitly stated intention is at odds with the ideas conveyed through the style and form of the text. The second case study broadens to a collection of poetry, examining settings of poems from A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) by Vaughan Williams (1909) and George Butterworth (1911 and 1912), exploring the ways in which Housman simultaneously presents and conceals queerness within his poetry and

how those strategies are altered through musical setting. The final case study examines a large-scale work of poetry, analyzing settings of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850) by Maude Valérie White (1885) and Lehmann (1899), considering how these composers engage with the vast scope of this work and the ways in which they confront the poem's complexities and contradictions.

These examples affirm the value of analyzing music through the lens of literary close reading and doing literary close reading through the lens of musical settings. Further, this project advocates for the performance and study of this underappreciated repertoire, especially the works of White, Lehmann, and Coleridge-Taylor, who have been historically underrepresented in scholarship and performance.

INDEX WORDS: English song, Victorian poetry, English Musical Renaissance, music and text, Christina Rossetti, A. E. Housman, Alfred Tennyson, Liza Lehmann, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, George Butterworth, Maude Valérie White, women composers

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2023

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August 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not exist without the encouragement, guidance, and support of so many friends, colleagues, and mentors. First and foremost, I want to thank my advisor, David Haas, who went all in on this project with me (even though he really wanted me to write about Scriabin). You encouraged me to push my boundaries but were always willing to meet me in the middle, and this work is better for it. Enormous thanks as well to my entire committee for their support, feedback, and expertise. Tricia Lootens inspired my interest in and love for Victorian poetry, and this project was born out of my work in her seminar. Naomi Graber provided steadfast guidance and encouragement throughout my time at UGA and gave thoughtful and insightful feedback that strengthened this work immensely. Emily Gertsch's influence as an educator, mentor, pedagogue, analyst, cheerleader, and friend cannot be overstated. Thank you all for your excitement for and engagement with this project.

I am also deeply appreciative of the support of the entire UGA Musicology/Ethnomusicology and Theory/Composition faculty, with extra thanks to Dickie Lee for his discerning feedback on Chapter 2. I want to extend a special thanks to Liza Stepanova, who helped me keep my musicianship at the forefront of my musicological work. Thanks also to the members of the North American British Music Studies Association and the UGA/University of Liverpool "Theory Club," who provided helpful comments on early iterations of this project. I am especially grateful to the UGA at Oxford program, which supported the archival components

of this project, and to my friends and colleagues on the program, Barbara Bradshaw, Zach Perdieu, and Jamie McClung.

I could not have completed this project without the support and camaraderie of my UGA musicology/ethnomusicology and theory colleagues: Cameron Steuart, Marta Riccardi, Sarah Mendes, Josh Bedford, Jenn LaRue, Stephen Turner, Chris Pfeifer, Will Shine, Samantha Cauthorn, and especially Arielle Crumley, who was kind enough to record some of these songs with me, and without whom I still would not know what they sound like. Thank you to Andrea Copland and Drew Griffin for the endless moral support and verbal processing. And finally, thank you to my family, whose dedication to education set me on this path and allowed me to pursue the work that I love.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The music of the English Musical Renaissance (roughly 1880-1920) and the poetry of the Victorian era share a commonality in their respective fields: that neither have been taken as seriously or been as well regarded as that which surrounds it both chronologically and geographically. But as each has undergone scholarly reevaluation (perhaps Victorian poetry more so than its musical counterpart), they have proven to be fruitful grounds for interpretive study. To explore the intersection of these two artistic eras, I have selected a representative sample of Victorian poetry that was popular among song composers: Christina Rossetti's "Song [When I am dead, my dearest]" (1848, hereafter referred to as "When I am dead, my dearest"), A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* (1896), and Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (1850). Each of these poems or collections is often anthologized and taught in English classrooms, and each has been set to music by a variety of composers. These texts share intersecting themes of memory, death, and the English landscape. I focus on musical settings by several composers of English song: Liza Lehmann, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, George Butterworth, and Maude Valérie White.

This underappreciated repertoire has received little critical attention, especially from scholars outside of Britain, likely because the style does not fit well with the German-centric, progress-focused narrative that characterizes much musicological research. Such a narrative devalues this music and characterizes it as not worthy of critical study because of the nature of the English musical style in the twentieth century, which retained much of the harmonic

language typically associated with the nineteenth century. Furthermore, until recently, most of the British scholarship that has considered these works is not critical in the sense of analyzing and interpreting. Rather, it describes and evaluates. The work of the era's female composers, two of whom I focus on in this project, is particularly under-researched, and I discuss some works that have not been published since their first edition and have no available recordings.

This critical study broadens the vocal repertoire by increasing awareness and encouraging performance of richly evocative works that have not seen widespread popularity, particularly those by Coleridge-Taylor, White, and Lehmann. This music deserves its place in the repertoire, for both its beauty and for its insight in literary interpretation, as evidenced by the following case studies. Some of the other songs in this study, particularly the settings of *A Shropshire Lad* by Butterworth and Vaughan Williams, are already frequently performed and beloved parts of the vocal repertoire; however they have not received deep engagement in the scholarship. Therefore, the critical study of these songs benefits future performers and audiences of these works, providing new contexts for approaching and understanding the poetic and musical meaning.

This project also presents an opportunity for interdisciplinary conversation, as I show not only how we as musicologists can benefit from engaging with recent literary scholarship, but also how the song settings of these poems can enrich ongoing conversations about the texts themselves. All three of these poetic works are frequently anthologized in educational texts and have received ongoing critical attention by major literary scholars.[1] Although music scholars have always been interested in connections with literature, there has been very little direct

[1] Selected anthologies: Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. E: The Victorian Age, 10th ed. (New York: Norton, 2018); Valentine Cunningham, ed., *The Victorian: An Anthology of Poetry & Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); Dorothy Mermin and Herbert F. Tucker, eds., *Victorian Literature, 1830-1900* (Boston: Thompson, 2002). Critical overviews of each individual text are presented in the following chapters.

engagement by musicologists with the analysis of English-language literature and few attempts to bring the benefits of musicological study back to literary criticism. By beginning with the expertise of current literary scholars to open deeper conversations about the nature and meaning of the text, we gain a much deeper interpretive framework for English song. Additionally, there are scholars currently working from the Victorian literature field to make connections to music.[2] Through this project, I join that conversation and contribute to those efforts.

This dissertation approaches musical analysis through the lens of literary close reading, bringing the songs in each case study into a reciprocal dialogue with current literary criticism of the texts. Often, the composers prove to be quite prescient, anticipating modern critical concerns and highlighting the subtleties of the language. In this way, the composer plays the role of the literary critic, making their own argument and presenting their own reading of the poetry. In each chapter, I use readings by literary scholars to present varying interpretations of a text, then I analyze song settings by multiple composers, showing the ways in which their readings align with those literary interpretations and exploring what else their readings bring to the conversation. While the composer's interpretation of the text will rarely align directly with any particular critic's reading, such comparative close reading reveals the insight and depth that each composer brings to the text and opens a productive interdisciplinary dialogue.

Review of the Scholarly Literature

Most of the twentieth-century scholarship on the English Musical Renaissance focuses on describing and evaluating music, and this tradition is tied to the long and distinguished history of

[2] See, for example, Yopie Prins, "'Break, Break, Break' into Song," in *Meter Matters: Verse Cultures of the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Jason David Hall (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), 105-134; Phyllis Weliver, ed., *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2005).

British newspaper criticism. Many of the early studies on the English Musical Renaissance were written by notable newspaper critics, who were the first to use the "Renaissance" terminology. Though there has been some debate over the term's accuracy and exactly what period it spans, it is a useful designation that is still employed in much of the scholarship of this music. J. A. Fuller Maitland was one of the first to use the phrase "Renaissance" to describe the era in his 1902 publication, *English Music in the XIXth Century* (although he was speaking of the years 1850-1900), and Frank Howes published *The English Musical Renaissance* in 1966, which was the first major history of the era.[3] Each had a long tenure as the head music critic for *The Times*. This newspaper-style criticism, filled with value judgements, characterizes most of the scholarship on this era throughout the twentieth century.

Stephen Banfield's 1985 work *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early 20th Century* is a foundational text for the vocal music of this era, as he presents a major reevaluation of early twentieth-century English song, with detailed attention given to many song composers who had been previously dismissed.[4] Notably for this project, he dedicates a chapter to the many musical settings of Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, and he includes a catalogue of works for all of the composers to whom he devotes significant attention. However, there are many reasons that this study needs to be updated. His work essentially continues in the tradition of Howes and the other newspaper critics, describing and evaluating the output of each composer and dismissing those he considers to be lesser, making a case for the historical reassessment of

[3] J. A. Fuller Maitland, *English Music in the XIXth Century* (New York: Dutton, 1902; Portland, ME: Longwood, 1976); Franks Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966). See also Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Gollancz, 1979); Michael Trend, *The Music Makers: The English Musical Renaissance from Elgar to Britten* (New York: Schirmer, 1985); Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).

[4] Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

those he deems the strongest. Additionally, he devotes little attention to female composers, and when he does mention them, he describes their music with typical feminizing language of "uninhibited emotionalism" and "feminine grace," always referring to Lehmann and White by their full names, while even the least mentioned male composers earn a last-name only reference.[5]

Sophie Fuller's 1998 dissertation, "Women Composers During the British Musical Renaissance, 1880-1918," fills some of the significant holes in Banfield's study.[6] After considering the general contexts for female composers of the time, Fuller explores in detail the lives and works of six female composers (including White and Lehmann) and gives a detailed works list for each composer. Most of the women she studies were primarily song composers due to the gendered expectations of the time, which Fuller discusses in detail. Her archival project lays the necessary groundwork for any future critical studies of White and Lehmann.

A small number of more recent studies are bringing new analytical attention to the music of this era. Eric Saylor's 2017 monograph *English Pastoral Music: From Arcadia to Utopia, 1900-1955* interrogates the idea of the pastoral in English music, and while he argues for the music's rehabilitation, his study asks new questions and does more than a simple re-evaluation.[7] Saylor's project has very different goals than the project at hand, and his focus is mainly on instrumental music, but his work is evidence of recent interest in critically examining English

[5] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 1:108. His preface acknowledges and apologizes for their absence, comically including their first and last names among a list of last names of male composers who are never mentioned again: "I have not covered Corder, Cowen, German, Liza Lehmann, MacCunn, McEwen, Mackenzie or Maude Valérie White, to name only eight prominent figures" (x).

[6] Sophie Fuller, "Women Composers During the British Musical Renaissance, 1880-1918" (PhD diss., King's College, University of London, 1998). Besides White and Lehmann, Fuller covers the life and works of Frances Allitsen, Rosalind Ellicott, Dora Bright, and Adela Maddison. Note also that Fuller prefers the more inclusive term "British Musical Renaissance."

[7] Eric Saylor, *English Pastoral Music: From Arcadia to Utopia, 1900-1955* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

music of this era. Particularly relevant for this project is his brief comparative study of three settings of a poem from Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* by Ivor Gurney, E. J. Moeran, and C. W. Orr, as well as a historiographic evaluation of Butterworth's reception.[8] More recently, Saylor's monograph on Vaughan Williams provides a contemporary reassessment of that composer's life and works.[9]

Linda K. Hughes's essay "From Parlor to Concert Hall: Arthur Somervell's Song-Cycle on Tennyson's *Maud*" is one of a small number of critical studies dealing with music and poetry in this era and is an important precursor for this project.[10] She considers how Somervell translates into musical terms what Tennyson does with poetic devices and concludes that Somervell's interpretation reflects his status as a mediating figure between the Victorian and post-Victorian eras. Hughes draws on Lawrence Kramer's idea that a song not only uses a reading of a poem but "*is* a reading" ("in the critical as well as the performative sense of the word"), and in being a new creation, it is also a "de-creation" of the original.[11] She shows how Somervell's excerpting and re-ordering of the text changes its meaning, and also how a few key musical moments support this revised narrative. While her interest in meaning is very plot-focused, as she deals with a narrative poem, her interpretation and application of Kramer's theory serves as a useful model for understanding how music can perform a reading of a text.

In his 2003 essay "Musical Reactions to Tennyson: Reformulating Musical Imagery in 'The Lotus-Eaters,'" Michael Allis extends these ideas and moves towards a dialogue with

[8] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music*, 111-120, 72-77.
[9] Eric Saylor, *Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).
[10] Linda K. Hughes, "From Parlor to Concert Hall: Arthur Somervell's Song-Cycle on Tennyson's *Maud*," in *The Lost Chord: Essays on Victorian Music*, ed. Nicholas Temperley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 102-118.
[11] Hughes, 108; Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984), 127.

literary scholarship.[12] He brings two settings of Tennyson's text, by Hubert Parry and Edward Elgar, into conversation with two diverging common literary interpretations, showing how each setting makes an argument in favor of one reading and therefore makes a significant contribution to the literary debate. Although Allis moves away from this methodology to a more eclectic approach in his 2012 monograph *British Music and Literary Context*,[13] the approach from this essay begins what could be a very fruitful reciprocal dialogue between literary and musical interpretation.

One essential resource for this project and any other like it is Bryan N. S. Gooch and David S. Thatcher's series of catalogues of musical settings of British poetry.[14] The catalogues, divided into Romantic, early to mid-Victorian, and late Victorian to modern (and a more recent volume focusing on Shakespeare), list all known musical settings of poems by "prominent British authors" from each era.[15] While they are obviously not exhaustive, particularly of poets who had not received critical attention before their publication in the 70s and early 80s, the catalogues are an invaluable resource and provide a starting point for finding musical settings of well-known works of poetry and for understanding how frequently such works were set by composers. Another important resource is the more recent *Christina Rossetti in Music* project, which catalogues musical settings of Rossetti's poetry, including a digital archive of musical scores, with the aim of facilitating new research that engages with settings of her poetry.[16]

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[12] Michael Allis, "Musical Reactions to Tennyson: Reformulating Musical Imagery in 'The Lotus-Eaters,'" in *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, ed. Phyllis Weliver (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 132-173.

[13] Michael Allis, *British Music and Literary Context: Artistic Connections in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2012).

[14] Bryan N. S. Gooch and David S. Thatcher, *Musical Settings of British Romantic Literature: A Catalogue*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland, 1982); *Musical Settings of Early and Mid-Victorian Literature: A Catalogue* (1979); *Musical Settings of Late Victorian and Modern British Literature* (1976).

[15] Gooch and Thatcher, *Musical Settings of Early and Mid-Victorian Literature*, vii.

[16] Mary Arseneau, et al., *Christina Rossetti in Music*, https://biblio.uottawa.ca/omeka2/christinarossettiinmusic/.

Methodology

This project builds on the methodologies introduced by Hughes and Allis, showing how a song performs a particular reading of a poem and bringing that reading into conversation with existing literary scholarship of the text. This method takes as a foundation Kramer's assertion that "a song… does not *use* a reading; it *is* a reading in the critical as well as the performative sense of the term: an activity of interpretation that works through a text without being bound by authorial intentions."[17] Kramer further asserts that the song can only make its reading by violating a contrary reading. My work builds on this idea by viewing the song as an argument for its own reading that can join and enrich an existing conversation about the poem's meaning. However, Kramer compares his version of the song's reading with what he claims the poet, or the poem itself, "wants to say," basing his work on the assumption that the poem has one single meaning before it is set to song.[18] In opposition to this, my study is grounded in the idea that a poem has more than a single potential reading within it and that many readings can be valid. Therefore, I will not compare the composer's reading to a single idea of the poem itself, but instead consider the song's reading, as established through my own analysis, to be one of many justifiable readings that can be brought together in a dialogue.[19] This requires an attention to the nuances of the text that is not paid in much of the previous musicological scholarship of texted music. For this reason, I begin each case study with an overview of the critical scholarship of the poetry, using it as a lens through which to begin my musical analysis.

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[17] Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, 127.

[18] Kramer commits more strongly to there being a single reading that the poem "wants to say" in the 1984 *Music and Poetry* (127) than in the revised version in his 2017 collection of essays, *Song Acts: Writings on Words and Music* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). However, the methodology still operates on the same assumption.

[19] While a song itself is certainly open to varying interpretations and readings, I will focus in this study on the level of bringing one reading of the song into the ongoing conversation of readings of the poetry. This is similar to David Lewin's presentation of his reading of "Auf dem Flusse," which, he writes, "I am of course claiming to be Schubert's, on the basis of his setting." Lewin, "*Auf dem Flusse*: Image and Background in a Schubert Song," *19th-Century Music* 6, no. 1 (Summer 1982): 47.

Kramer also takes as a given that the German Lied is the only genre fully developed enough to benefit from this type of work. Indeed, he writes that it is a "historical fact that the Lied brings the question of interpretive response to its fullest development."[20] This project dispenses with the notion that only German song is serious enough to warrant interpretive study and examines the rich body of English-language text and its corresponding music. Using Kramer's assertion that a song "*is* a reading," I instead turn to the existing analytical and critical scholarship of English poetry as a starting point for uncovering the interpretive depths of English song.

This study also takes as a foundation Edward T. Cone's assertion in *The Composer's Voice* that the voice heard in a composition is a dramatic persona of the composer. In this way, I do not ascribe the readings to the living composer, but rather the persona that is constructed through the musical settings.

In considering poetic and musical meaning on a local level, I employ a technique of comparative close reading, using the close readings done by literary scholars and examining those same moments in the music, asking the questions: How does the music reinforce a particular effect observed by the critic? Or negate it, neutralize it, or challenge it? I also consider broader issues in the literary criticism of each text, particularly for the larger-scale poetic works, examining how those issues manifest in or are challenged through the musical settings. This methodology allows me to begin with poetic analysis to deeply engage with the text, rather than interacting with the poetry at a surface level, which I find to be a fatal flaw of much musicology that deals with literature. In my musical analysis, I draw from music semiotics, especially the work of Robert Hatten, using tools including topic theory, markedness, intertextuality, and other

[20] Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, 129. This assertion remains in the later *Song Acts*.

expressive considerations, resituated within the context of early twentieth-century English music, to analyze how the music creates and argues for its own reading of the text.[21] The specific analytical tools vary in each chapter, as each case study responds to the issues that arise from the poems, songs, and literary criticism.

Repertoire for Study

The composers whose works are represented in this study are Ralph Vaughan Williams, George Butterworth, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Maude Valérie White, and Liza Lehmann. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), the best known of these composers, was at the center of the musical establishment in England as a student of both Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford, considered the patriarchs of the English Musical Renaissance. Vaughan Williams later taught at the Royal College of Music (RCM) and was a key figure of the English folk music revival.

Butterworth (1885-1916), who moved in the same circles, was also briefly a Parry student at the RCM and co-founded the English Folk Dance Society, but his life was cut short at the Battle of the Somme. He wrote very little in his short life, and he destroyed any works he wasn't satisfied with before going to war, but his life has lent itself to a convenient mythology, particularly because his story eerily reflects the work he is most known for: *A Shropshire Lad* and its many dead young soldiers.

Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was also an RCM insider, one Stanford's favorite pupils. His three cantatas on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* were extremely popular, but after their success, his subsequent works were not as well received by critics and

[21] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Danuta Mirka, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

audiences. Later in his short life, he connected with Black American writers and became involved in the Pan-African movement, collaborating with major figures such as Paul Laurence Dunbar.

White (1855-1937) was a prolific composer of songs, achieving great popularity and financial success during her lifetime. Born in France, she spoke many languages, setting as many texts in French and German as in English, and her love of Italian opera was particularly influential on her style. Still, she participated in the English musical establishment as a student of George Macfarren at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM, the erstwhile rival of the RCM), and she was a recipient of the Academy's prestigious Mendelssohn scholarship.

A close friend of White's, Lehmann (1862-1918) is the only composer in this study to have avoided any training from the RCM or RAM, as she was taught entirely by private tutors, including brief study with both Jenny Lind and Clara Schumann. The daughter of a painter and a singer, she trained primarily for a career as a concert singer, and she retired to focus on composition after a nine-year singing career. Her style is particularly influenced by the Lied, and she has been credited with establishing the song cycle as a genre in Britain.[22]

As I reviewed the primary and secondary literature, I selected the following three case studies by seeking commonly studied examples of Victorian poetry that were frequently or notably set by composers of the English Musical Renaissance. Both Rossetti's "When I am dead, my dearest" and Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* stood out for their sheer volume of musical settings. Banfield noted that the Rossetti poem was one of a group of lyrics that were set repeatedly because they offered "no resistance to the composer; any simple, well-made tune with a rippling accompaniment would fit."[23] This led me to many questions: What drew so many

[22] Fuller, "Women Composers," 219.
[23] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 1:8.

composers to write sentimental songs using this brief but complex, morbid, and subtly subversive lyric? In what ways could composers capture the poem's shades of meaning? Were some of these settings being too easily dismissed? These questions have led me to study the settings of this poem by Vaughan Williams (1903), Lehmann (1919), and Coleridge-Taylor (1904).

Poems from Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* were set in some form by almost every major composer of the English Musical Renaissance. In fact, Banfield considers its publication in 1896 as one of six landmark events that ushered in a new era of English song.[24] This led me to wonder what about this text demands musical setting, and what composers hoped to achieve or discover by giving it their own treatment. To explore these ideas, I selected Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* (1909) and Butterfield's two song cycles (1911 and 1912), some of the most performed and loved settings of the poetry.

In contrast, I was led to investigate settings of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* particularly because this book-length work seemed like a challenge that many composers avoided. In fact, Lehmann (with a song cycle in 1899) and White (with *Four Songs from Tennyson's In Memoriam* in 1885) are two of the only composers to have set more than a single lyric of the immense and influential 133-section poem.[25] Fuller notes that the text seems to have appealed more to female composers than their male counterparts, perhaps because of its strong homoerotic undertones,[26] and this raises interesting questions about gender and the suitability of this text for male or female composers, especially in contrast to Housman's work. Banfield writes off

[24] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song,* 1:3.

[25] Earlier in 1857, Mrs. Edward Gifford Shapcote included eight of the lyrics in her *Eleven Songs.* Stanford wrote three songs using *In Memoriam* texts, included in two different song sets, as well as one SATB setting (Gooch and Thatcher, *Musical Settings of Early and Mid-Victorian Literature*, 554-555).

[26] Fuller, "Women Composers," 173.

Lehmann's setting as unsuccessful, writing, in reference to Arthur Somervell, that "he was the only composer to interpret mature works by Tennyson and Browning successfully in music (though Liza Lehmann's *In Memoriam* has its advocates)."[27] This alone led me to investigate further. Fuller briefly discusses both Lehmann's and White's settings, and in reading her work, it became clear to me that these songs, which were well-received in their own time, were worthy of more critical attention. White's settings have not been commercially recorded, and it is my hope that this study helps bring them into the common repertoire. All three of these poetic texts and their musical settings raise interesting interpretive questions that complicate many of the assumptions about the English Musical Renaissance and its composers.

Chapter Organization

The following three chapters present case studies, organized by the scale of the poems and musical settings, as each will methodologically inform the next.

Chapter 2 begins with a single poem, Christina Rossetti's "When I am dead, my dearest" (1848) and its musical settings by Liza Lehmann (1919), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1903), and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1904). This chapter primarily focuses on how each song deals with the idea of a "double poem," or a poem in which the explicitly stated intention is at odds with the ideas conveyed through style and form of the poem.[28] While Lehmann and Vaughan Williams specifically contend with the details of critics' close readings, Coleridge-Taylor, placing the song within a cycle of Rossetti settings, draws on other musical references to enrich his own interpretation.

[27] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 1:43.

[28] As defined in Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poets, and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9ff.

Chapter 3 broadens to a collection of poetry, examining settings of poems from A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) by Vaughan Williams (*On Wenlock Edge*, 1909) and George Butterworth (*Six Songs from A Shropshire Lad*, 1911, and *Bredon Hill and Other Songs*, 1912). This chapter explores the ways in which Housman simultaneously presents and conceals queerness within his poetry and how those strategies are altered through musical setting.

Chapter 4 examines a large-scale work of poetry, analyzing settings of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam, A. H. H.* (1850) by Maude Valérie White (1885) and Liza Lehmann (1899). This chapter considers the challenges of engaging with the vast scope of this work of poetry, both in its length and in its depth. While White works on a smaller scale, with a set of four songs, and Lehmann takes on the larger project of a song cycle, each grapples with the poem's journey of doubt and faith, and each must confront the poem's complexities and contradictions.

A brief Chapter 5 draws conclusions from these case studies and considers the broader applicability of the methodology.

CHAPTER 2

"HAPLY I MAY REMEMBER, AND HAPLY MAY FORGET": CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S DOUBLE POEM IN MUSICAL SETTINGS OF "WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST"

This opening case study considers musical settings of Christina Rossetti's poem, "Song [When I am dead, my dearest]," a poem which has had enormous resonance and popularity, both in itself and as a song text. Stephen Banfield writes that its popularity with composers is due to the fact that it offers "no resistance to the composer; any simple well-made tune with a rippling accompaniment would fit."[1] However, criticism of the poem shows that there is more than meets the eye, and analyzing the text and music through this lens reveals that there is indeed resistance, especially for a composer who looks beyond the surface. Recent critics read a subversiveness in the text, revealing ways that it can be read as a Victorian "double poem," or, as Isobel Armstrong writes, "two concurrent poems in the same words."[2] This understanding of Rossetti's double poem is a fruitful starting place for musical analysis, as composers must reckon with the text's multiplicity of meanings.

Rossetti (1830-1894) is perhaps best remembered today in music for her contributions to the Christmas Carol literature, including "In the Bleak Midwinter," set to music by Gustav Holst in 1906. Rossetti was especially flattered by requests to use her poems as song texts, and in 1864,

[1] Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 8.

[2] Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poets, and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 11.

she wrote to her publisher, "the more of my things get set to music the better pleased I am."[3] Her 1848 poem titled "Song" was a favorite among English composers around 1900, with many producing light, sentimental renditions of the text.[4] However, the poem itself resists a simple treatment, and a close reading reveals its layers of complexity.

The poem (one of many titled "Song," and therefore referred to hereafter by its first line, "When I am dead, my dearest") is one of her earliest mature works, composed days after her 18th birthday.[5] However, it wasn't published until 1862 in her first volume, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, which launched her career as a public poet with its delicious titular poem and has proved an enduring object of fascination. In 1848, Rossetti was at the height of her involvement with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, an artistic and literary movement whose founding members include her two brothers, William Michael and Dante Gabriel. Ever-conscious of both the societal and religious expectations of women, Rossetti declined to become an official member but made several contributions to their short-lived periodical, *The Germ*. She also became engaged to Pre-Raphaelite painter James Collinson in 1848, and the poem was written while Collinson was away visiting his family to announce their engagement. They broke it off in 1850 after Collinson decided to re-devote himself to Roman Catholicism, which was incompatible with Rossetti's staunch Anglican faith (she was deeply religious, subscribing to the principles of the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement). Earlier in teen years, she had suffered from a physical and mental breakdown that was diagnosed as "religious melancholy," and both her religious devotion and

[3] Christina Rossetti to Alexander Macmillan, Dec. 26, 1864, in *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, vol. 1, ed. Anthony H. Harrison (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1987), 211.

[4] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 1:8.

[5] General biographical information from Jan Marsh, *Christina Rossetti: A Writer's Life* (New York: Penguin, 1994).

her health struggles would remain with her the rest of her life. Much of her work reflects a deep fascination with death, intertwined with her sharp wit.

Rossetti's Poem: Reception History and Criticism

Rossetti's reception history is complex, as she and her work are difficult to categorize. Her personal faith was often at odds with her proto-feminism, and even her wealth of strictly devotional poetry often has more than meets the eye. She has frequently been read within the tradition of the "Victorian poetess," already a well-established identity during her lifetime. Female poets were expected to write poems that embodied who they were supposed to be: emotional, pure, insubstantial, unpresuming, simple, and childlike.[6] However, as Isobel Armstrong theorizes, the poetess could both assimilate into this tradition and revolutionize it from within by employing a doubleness which allows a poem to be read against its own surface meaning.[7] Rossetti's many lyrics about dead and dying women both represent and defy the expectations of the poetess. As Armstrong writes, "her lyrics experiment with boundaries and the transgression of boundaries in such a way that a seemingly conventional lyric moves into a questioning of convention."[8] While Rossetti's lyrics about both love and religious devotion may seem unassuming, and indeed were dismissed for many years as unintellectual or merely pious,[9] she uses the small scale of her pithy poems to comment on expectations of femininity.

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[6] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, 316; Veronica Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory: Poetic Remembering and Forgetting from Tennyson to Housman* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017),165; Tricia Lootens, *The Political Poetess: Victorian Femininity, Race, and the Legacy of Separate Spheres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 3ff.

[7] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, 316.

[8] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, 344.

[9] See, for example, Ford Madox Hueffer, review of *The Collected Poems of Christina Rossetti*, *Fortnightly Review* 75 (March 1904): 393-405; Stuart Curran, "The Lyric Voice of Christina Rossetti," *Victorian Poetry* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1971): 287-299.

Since the mid-1980s, Rossetti's poetry has received renewed scholarly attention. The work of Jerome McGann marked one turning point. He argues that while the New Critics, who viewed a poem as a self-contained object, largely ignored Rossetti with their anti-historical focus, her work can only be fully understood through the lens of its context, and especially through the specifics of her idiosyncratic religious beliefs.[10] One of those beliefs is the doctrine of Soul Sleep, the idea that after death, the soul undergoes a waiting period before its resurrection at the final judgement. This doctrine is relevant to many of Rossetti's poems, including "When I am dead, my dearest," one of her earliest works, and the much later "Sleeping at Last" (1894), and McGann argues that it is the "single most important enabling principle in Rossetti's religious poetry."[11] The concept is critical to understanding even some of her less overtly religious works, including "When I am dead."

This poem is one of many of Rossetti's early short poems in which the speaker elegizes herself.[12] In it, the living speaker muses on her own future death, asking her beloved not to mourn, and stating her own indifference both to whether she is remembered or forgotten, and to whether she remembers or forgets her own life:

> When I am dead, my dearest,
> Sing no sad songs for me;
> Plant thou no roses at my head,
> Nor shady cypress tree:
> Be the green grass above me
> With showers and dewdrops wet;
> And if thou wilt, remember,
> And if thou wilt, forget.

[10] Jerome McGann, "The Religious Poetry of Christina Rossetti," *Critical Inquiry* 10, no. 1 (Sept. 1983): 127-144.

[11] McGann, "The Religious Poetry of Christina Rossetti," 135.

[12] The gender of the speaker is not explicitly given, and they could indeed be of any gender. While this is an interesting avenue for future study, for the purposes of this project, I will use she/her pronouns for the speaker, as much of this interpretation relates to the context of Rossetti as poetess, subverting the expectations of a female speaker. See Diane D'Amico, *Christina Rossetti: Faith, Gender, and Time* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 34; Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 203n36.

I shall not see the shadows,
    I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
    Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
    That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
    And haply may forget.[13]

This lyric, one of Rossetti's most often cited and anthologized poems (and most frequently set to music), has sparked public and scholarly interest since its publication through the present. As Rossetti's work has been re-evaluated, readings of this text have shifted from Stuart Curran's 1971 assertion that the poem portrays "quiet resignation to the mortality of love" to Constance W. Hassett's 2005 comment that the closing lines "can be read in any number of ways *except* as straightforward disinterest."[14] Some scholars have focused on the irony behind the poem's apparent apathy,[15] while others have taken interest in the poem as the embodiment of the liminal space between life and afterlife, a musing on the possibilities of Soul Sleep.[16]

In one of the most recent and detailed analyses of this poem, Veronica Alfano goes a step further, using close reading to show how the poetry undermines the speaker's request to be forgotten. In her 2017 monograph *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, Alfano's reading of this poem is part of a larger project exploring the ways in which depictions of remembering and forgetting

[13] Christina Rossetti, *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti*, vol. 1, ed. R. W. Crump (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 58. It is worth noting a few of the clarifying footnotes from the Oxford World's Classics edition of Rossetti's works. The editor notes that "With showers and dewdrops wet" indicates "not wet with tears," and that the archaic "haply" has a meaning similar to "perhaps." *Christina Rossetti: Poems and Prose*, ed. Simon Humphries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 406.

[14] Curran, 287; Constance W. Hassett, *Christina Rossetti: The Patience of Style* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press: 2005), 31.

[15] Angela Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart*, 2nd ed. (Brighton: Edward Everett Root, 2019), 145; Anne Jamison, "Passing Strange: Christina Rossetti's Unusual Dead," *Textual Practice* 20, no. 2 (2006): 257-280; Serena Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), vii.

[16] Simon Humphries, "Christina Rossetti's Tennysonianism," *The Cambridge Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (March 2015): 43-61; Dorothy Mermin, "The Damsel, the Knight, and the Victorian Woman Poet," in *Victorian Woman Poets: Emily Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti*, edited by Joseph Bristow (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 173.

in Victorian lyric poetry elucidate ideas about Victorian culture and society. She builds on previous readings but diverges from them to argue that the poem's structure and poetic devices contradict its explicit surface meaning, exemplifying Armstrong's concept of the "double poem." In this case, the speaker begs to be forgotten, but according to Alfano, the poetry insists on being remembered.

In her reading, Alfano describes the ways in which the poem's structure reflects the speaker's ambivalence. For example, she writes that "the seven-syllable dilation of 'And if thou wilt, remember' inevitably dwindles into the six-syllable contraction of 'And if thou wilt, forget,' making the choice between memory and its inverse sound arbitrary."[17] However, her reading differs from those before her in the argument that the poem's surface not only "conceals tones of cold apathy," but also that "its nonchalant resignation to being forgotten rings false."[18] Alfano supports this reading by analyzing the ways that the poem's striking memorability undermines its insistence on forgetting. One way this manifests is through the speaker's commands in the opening stanza, which are ostensibly modest and selfless. However, they draw attention to themselves and their own assertiveness by producing conspicuous trochees at the beginning of each line. While the poem's meter is generally iambic, these commands ("*Sing* no sad songs," "*Plant* thou no roses," "*Be* the green grass") force a trochaic stress, with emphasis on the first syllable. This effect undermines the explicit message of self-effacement, as the speaker issues forceful commands to the beloved.

[17] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 183. Alfano draws on the work of Elizabeth K. Helsinger in discussing amnesia and rhythmic contraction. Alfano, 203n34; Helsinger, *Poetry and the Thought of Song in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 136-137.

[18] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 184.

The poem is largely in trimeter, and Alfano notes that the third line of each stanza is in tetrameter, so each draws attention to itself.[19] These two lines each contain a prominent negation ("Plant thou *no* roses at my head" and "I shall *not* hear the nightingale"), and Alfano writes that their length "makes them prominent and obtrusive, as they fill the silence of the short pause one would have instinctively made at the end of a three-beat line–a pause that, for Rossetti, often encodes reticence and omission."[20] In the second stanza, this is the third in a series of repetitive negations ("I shall not," "I shall not," "I shall not"), whose catchy sing-song-ness make the lines even more memorable, therefore making the speaker even harder to forget. This third negation, on the tetrameter line, produces the most noticeable enjambment in the poem, as one line runs both metrically and semantically into the next. Here, in the lines "I shall not hear the nightingale / Sing on, as if in pain," the speaker denies hearing the nightingale. But, Alfano writes, the enjambment "allows the bird (a symbol of the lyricist) to sing on past the end of its line. Just so, the speaker sings on."[21] Through these and other poetic details, Alfano produces a convincing interpretation that the claims of the poem's speaker ring false as the poetic form demands remembrance.

The Musical Settings

This chapter brings three musical settings into this ongoing debate, composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1903), Liza Lehmann (1919), and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1904). In each setting, I consider how the music-compositional choices reinforce, subvert, or otherwise

[19] Notably, this pattern of lines one, two, and four being in trimeter, with line three in tetrameter, is the common "short meter" for hymn writing, showing another way that Rossetti may have been intentionally invoking Christian religious thought. However, the second half of each stanza does not follow this pattern.

[20] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 185.

[21] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 185.

comment on interpretations made by Alfano and others and show how each composer produces their own compelling reading of the text. Ultimately, each enriches this ongoing conversation by illuminating the text in a way only possible through the medium of music.

Vaughan Williams wrote his setting early in his career, during a fruitful period of song composition that included settings of other Victorian poetry such as his *Songs of Travel* (1901-1904), with texts by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *The House of Life* (1903), with texts by Rossetti's brother, Dante Gabriel. It was also around this time that Vaughan Williams began collecting folk tunes. Coleridge-Taylor's setting, the only of these three cast within a song cycle, is from the height of his career as a composer and conductor. His trilogy of Hiawatha cantatas, on which much of his fame rests, were composed between 1898 and 1900, and in the year of this song's composition (1904), he made his first tour of the United States through his involvement with the Pan-African movement. In contrast, Lehmann wrote her setting at the very end of her lifetime, and the song was published posthumously. Much of her later life was spent grieving the death of her son, Rudolf Bedford, from illness while training for the military in March 1916. The song is dated 29 July, 1918, and she died of a sudden affliction on the 19th of September, just two weeks after completing her memoirs.[22]

Musical Setting: Vaughan Williams

The settings by Vaughan Williams and Lehmann each speak musically to those specific moments in the poem that support Alfano's reading, shading the language to convey their own differing interpretations. While Lehmann's setting reinforces each of the techniques from Alfano's reading, Vaughan Williams' setting undermines them, showing an honest, earnest

[22] Liza Lehmann, *The Life of Liza Lehmann* (New York: Dutton and Company, 1918), 226.

speaker who may be taken at her word. His setting is fairly typical of his early song style, employing a modified strophic form, a tuneful, mostly diatonic melody, a harmonically interesting piano accompaniment, and an overall absence of virtuosity.[23] While this lovely setting is by no means straightforwardly sentimental, it negates many of the effects that allow for a subversive reading.

The two-bar piano introduction presents some of the song's primary ideas, through its inherent tension, themes of grief and absence, and religious undertones. The opening figure has the feel of a closing gesture, with its plagal motion to the tonic of G minor, and indeed this figure will return under the last line of each stanza and as a codetta (Figure 2.1). The harmonic progression of V7/iv–iv–i creates tension without functionally progressing, retreating from the non-functional iv to the tonic. This iv–i plagal motion, used as an opening gambit, suggests a religious sentiment associated with both Rossetti and Vaughan Williams, and the piano texture throughout resembles a four-part chorale style, which one may associate with Vaughan Williams' work on the English Hymnal, begun the following year. Additionally the D to C suspension in the first measure introduces the pathos that characterizes this setting. This opening creates a tension that, while it contains a harmonic resolution of dissonance (V7/iv–iv) and arrives on the tonic chord, fails to resolve melodically in the top voice, which sounds like it ought to continue through a three-note ascent from the opening G to scale degree three, either B-flat or B-natural. Instead, on the downbeat of m. 2, there is a quarter rest, and this measure employs the accompanimental pattern that will be used throughout, a bass note alone on the first beat followed by chords on beats two and four, supporting a chordal fifth in the highest voice. In only two measures, this opening gesture suggests piety, pathos, and absence.

[23] For more discussion of Vaughan Williams' style at this time, see Eric Saylor, *Vaughan Williams* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 41-54.

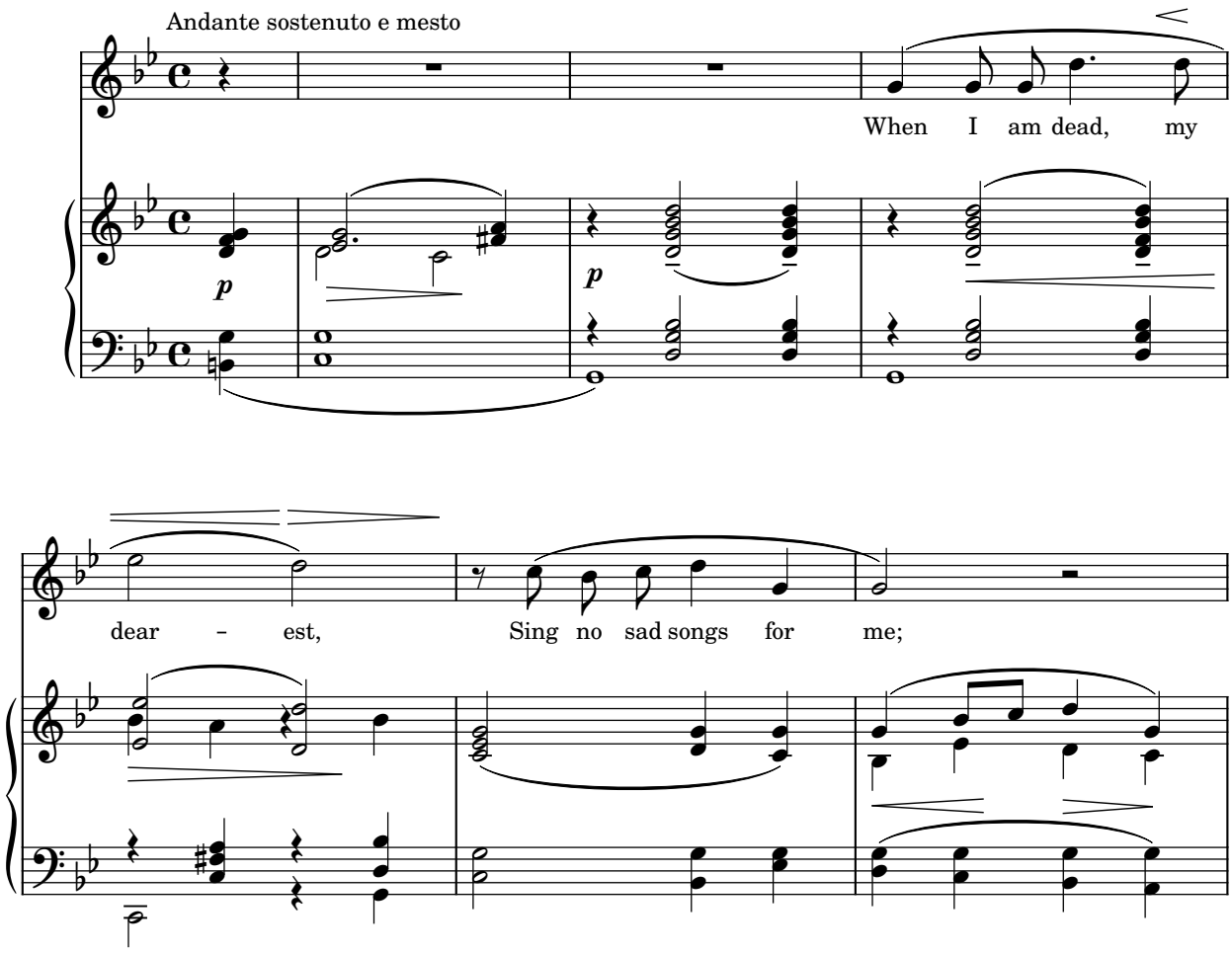

Figure 2.1, Vaughan Williams, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 1-6

Vaughan Williams' setting begins to diverge from Alfano's reading in the second line, "Sing no sad songs for me" (m. 5). He begins that line with an eighth rest, so that there is silence in the vocal line on the downbeat, followed by the word "Sing" on the second half of the beat. By displacing this word off of the beat, Vaughan Williams weakens the command, which, according to Alfano, demands a stressed syllable in the text alone. Additionally, by setting the words "Sing no sad" as eighth notes, followed by longer note values, the weight of these words is further minimized. Although some of the later commands, such as "Plant," fall on downbeats, the displacement of the initial "Sing" changes the overall effect of the speaker's commanding

voice, particularly on this word which is so important both to the title of the poem and to the medium in which it is now set.

The accompaniment in the second strophe also undermines the poetic devices of subversion. On the line "I shall not see the shadows," the accompaniment switches to a hymn topic – the piano plays a four-part, organ-like chorale texture with simple rhythms of quarter, half, and whole notes (with a few eighth-note passing tones), at a *pianissimo* dynamic (Figure 2.2).[24] This topic creates the impression of devotional piety, emphasizing one particular aspect of Rossetti's work and associations. In conjunction with the disavowals in the text, which Alfano reads as ringing false, the chorale topic lends the lines an earnestness that makes it difficult to hear them ironically. Additionally, in contrast to the first strophe, each vocal utterance starts firmly on the downbeat, so that each "I shall not" rings more forcefully than their corresponding lines in the first strophe. In the third and fourth lines of the stanza, "I shall not hear the nightingale / Sing on, as if in pain," Vaughan Williams conjoins them, as the enjambment demands, but he uses a phrase marking that ends at the comma after "Sing on," and begins another phrase indication on the following words, "as if." The singer is probably intended to take a breath here, as indeed she does in the only recording I've been able to locate.[25] The effect is that the nightingale, although it continues its song two syllables beyond the bounds of its line, does not freely continue to sing through the following line. In this way, the negation stands, and the text retains its more literal meaning.

[24] On the hymn topic, see Eric McKee, "The Topic of the Sacred Hymn in Beethoven's Instrumental Music," *College Music Symposium* 47 (2007): 27.

[25] Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Kissing Her Hair: Twenty Early Songs of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Sarah Fox (piano) and Iain Burnside (voice), Albion 2016.

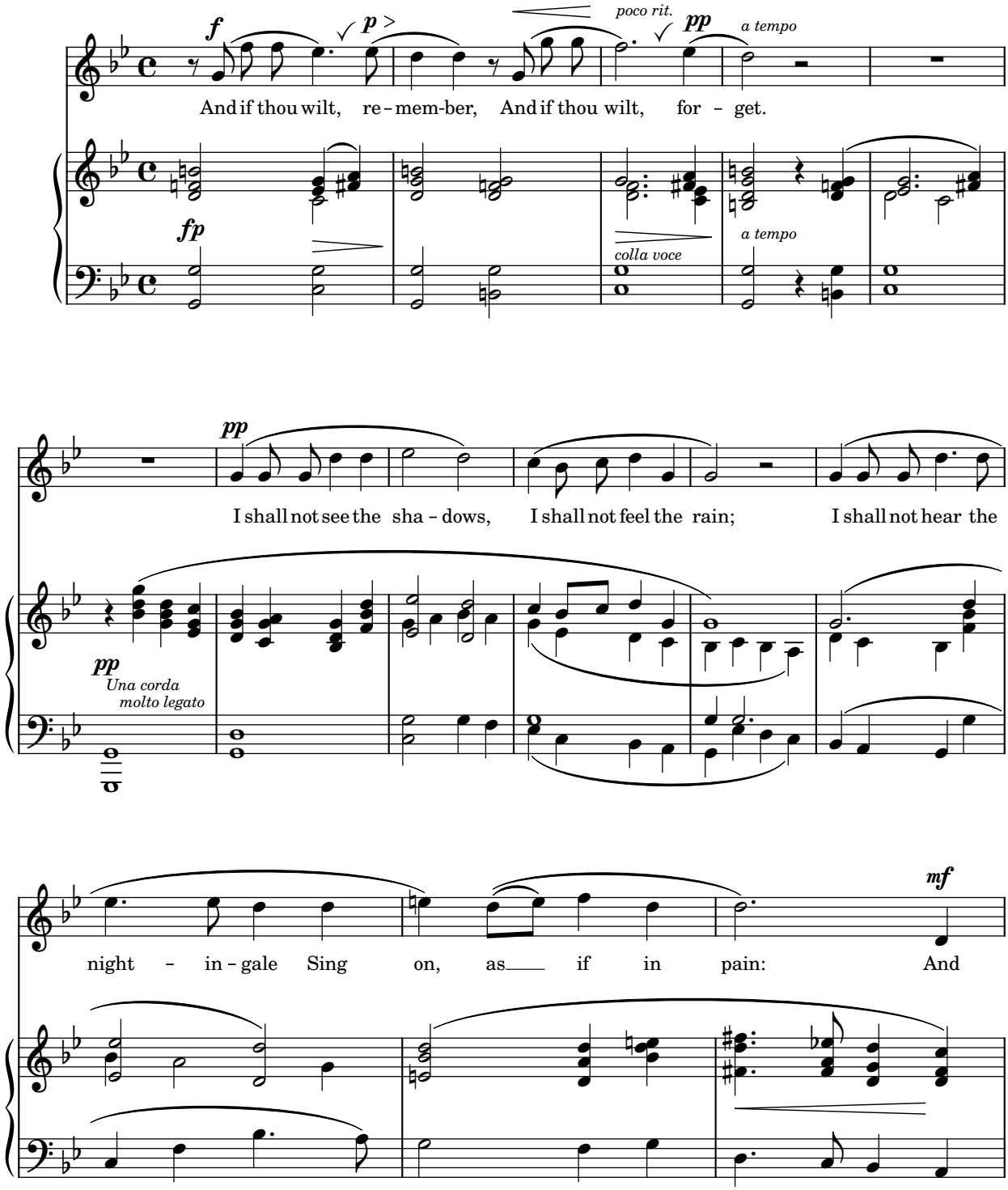

Figure 2.2, Vaughan Williams, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 15-28

When the opening gambit returns between the two strophes and as the song's postlude, it employs both the minor tonic and the Picardy third, embodying some of the text's ambivalence. In each recurrence, the gesture is played twice: first, in a modified version, to accompany the last line of the stanza, and then in the piano alone (Figure 2.2, mm. 16-20). Under each "forget," at the end of both stanzas, the tonic chord is placed on the downbeat and given a Picardy third (B-natural), conjuring further religious associations and resolving some of the uncertainty that the figure had in the introduction.[26] Further, the tragic *pianto* gesture on "forget" (E-flat to D in mm. 17-18) is juxtaposed with the non-tragic Picardy third, suggesting Robert Hatten's conception of abnegation, or "willed resignation," a spiritual acceptance of a tragic situation.[27] In between strophes, after the Picardy third in m. 18, the two-bar idea repeats in mm. 18-20, ending on the minor tonic, like in the opening. After the second strophe, in m. 36, the piano finally plays this material as a codetta, which the gesture has suggested from the beginning, and ends the song with the Picardy third (Figure 2.3). While there is still some uncertainty in the figure, with the refusal of the melody to resolve on the downbeat, the Picardy third signals the speaker's ultimate acceptance of her fate, whether remembered or forgotten, remembering or forgetting. Ultimately, the setting is a compelling, well-executed display of a face-value reading of the poem.

[26] These Picardy thirds are not to be confused with the frequent V7/iv chords that precede them, different only in the addition of the seventh (F) and the context, resolving to iv.

[27] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 59.

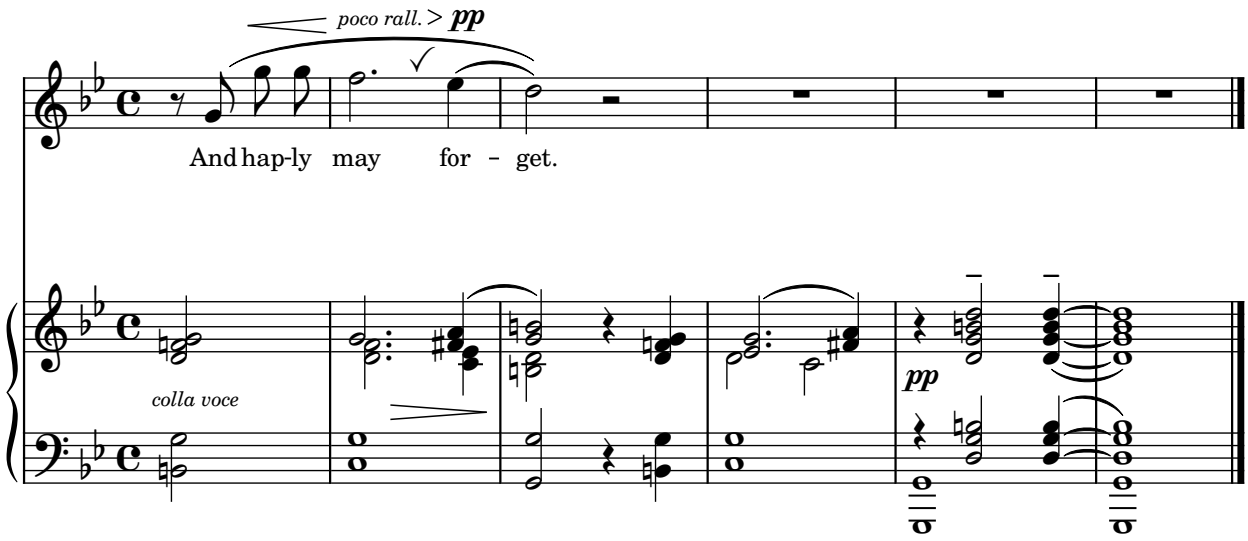

Figure 2.3, Vaughan Williams, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 34-39

Musical Setting: Lehmann

In contrast, Lehmann's setting is particularly sensitive to the possibility of the poem's irony. It reflects the ambivalence and unrootedness of the poem's speaker, and Lehmann's musical choices at key poetic moments keep intact the assertions from Alfano's reading. As Alfano emphasizes, the poem exists in a liminal space, an indeterminate realm resisting durational time.[28] The poem has no clear temporality, in part because the speaker is not actually dead but rather imagining her potential death. The piano introduction of Lehmann's setting creates this sense of timelessness though harmonic disorientation. The first two measures consist solely of a tonic chord with a bass suspension in the right hand alone, with a slow crescendo and decrescendo, which resolves to a root position tonic chord (F minor) when the vocal line begins in m. 3 (Figure 2.4). The right hand continues in the same sparse manner, with the left hand joining to double the melody only in m. 4. In Lehmann's songs, the piano usually doubles the

[28] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 187.

melody, so any moment when it does not, including the first sung measure of this song, is of particular note. There is no bass note in the low register until m. 5, and no tonic note in the bass register until m. 7. All of these factors create a sense that the song gradually appears out of thin air. While there is no metric irregularity in these opening compound-meter bars, Lehmann's introduction suggests the out-of-time realm of the poem by only slowly allowing the listeners to become rooted in the harmonic space. This general impression of disorientation, of slowly materializing out of nothing, suggests the liminal time that the poem occupies.

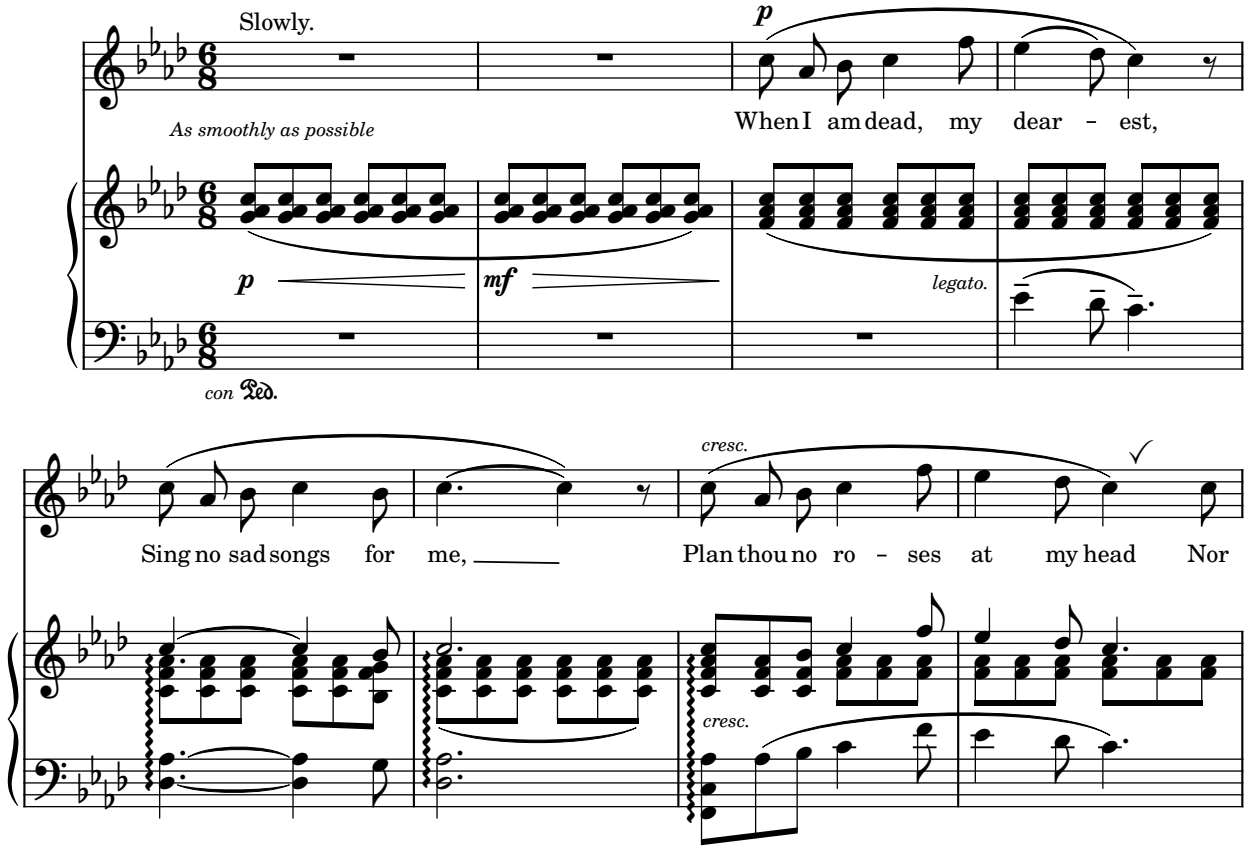

Figure 2.4, Lehmann, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 1-8

Unlike in Vaughan Williams' song, Lehmann's setting of the opening lines places the first syllable of each of the speaker's commands on a downbeat. This also allows "sing," the first word of the first command, to coincide with the first registral bass note in m. 5. Additionally, her choice of compound meter and use of this particular rhythm, three eighth notes followed by a quarter note for each command, emphasizes Rossetti's conspicuous trochees, and "Sing no sad songs" sounds strong and deliberate. This rhythmic setting reflects rather than obscures the poem's metric irregularities, the trochaic commands that Alfano reads as undermining their own message.

Lehmann's unusual setting of the second stanza also reinforces the idea that the speaker is not being entirely truthful in her desire to be forgotten. This setting, like Vaughan Williams', is in modified strophic form, but when Lehmann's second strophe begins, the music suddenly modulates down a half step for the first and second lines of the stanza (from F minor to E minor) and then again for the following two lines (to E-flat minor, Figure 2.5). In conjunction with a sudden shift in the accompaniment, this signals a *tempesta* topic. Aligning with Clive McClelland's definition of this topic, the accompaniment, already in a minor key, employs sudden, unusual modulations; large leaps in the left hand; a fuller texture; repeated notes; sequential motion; and loud, strong accents (also marked *più appassionato e cresc.*).[29] This passage is much louder, more accented, and more harmonically unstable than all of the dreamy music that has preceded it. With this sudden tempestuousness in the music, the speaker's claims not to see the shadows or hear the rain are undermined, as the storms are audibly present in the music.

[29] Clive McClelland, "*Ombra* and *Tempesta*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topics Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 282.

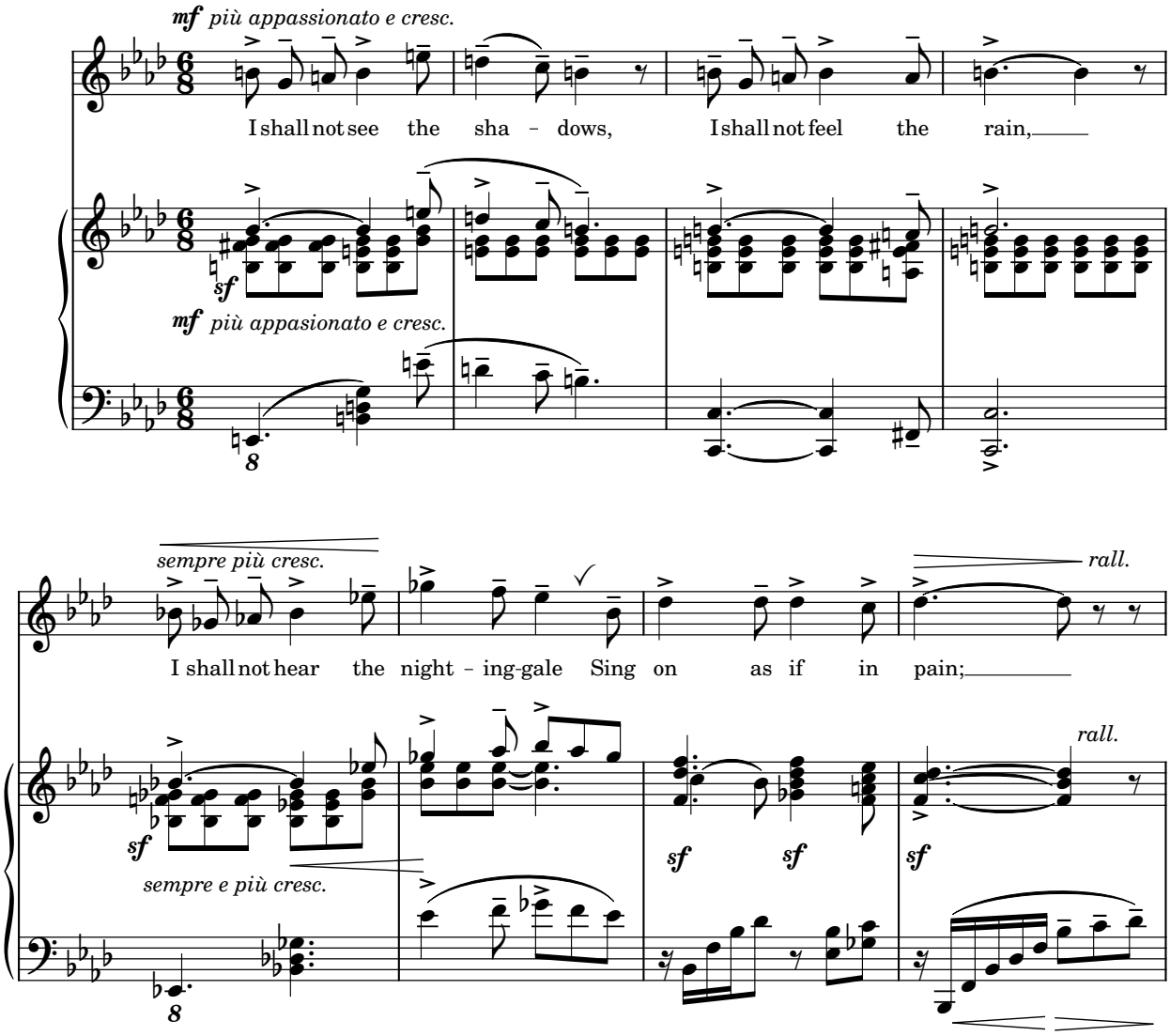

Figure 2.5, Lehmann, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 23-30

Additionally, Lehmann's treatment of the "nightingale" line supports the idea that the speaker hears it sing on. While she does include a breath mark after the word "nightingale" in m. 28, interrupting the enjambment, it makes less of an obtrusive interruption than in Vaughan Williams' setting, particularly because of the piano accompaniment. In another rare moment of not doubling the vocal line, the piano's top voice in m. 28 moves in contrary motion to the melody on the word "nightingale," then continues melodically through the singer's breath, before

shifting to a more flowing left-hand accompaniment. Again, the piano depicts the very thing that the speaker swears she cannot sense, as the right-hand melody allows the nightingale to "sing on" beyond the bounds of its line.

In these poetic moments that Alfano uses to justify her interpretation, Lehmann's setting either allows for or specifically reinforces the poetic devices that suggest that the speaker's self-effacement rings false. In contrast to Vaughan Williams' setting, it is much easier to hear a woman who speaks ironically, demanding in death the attention that she was perhaps not given in her lifetime. Lehmann's setting pre-dates by many years the literary criticism that reads the poem as ironic, and this makes her sensitivity to a subversiveness in the text particularly notable.

Musical Setting: Coleridge-Taylor

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's setting, like that of Vaughan Williams, resists Alfano's characterization of the poem. However, by recontextualizing the poem in a cycle of *Six Sorrow Songs*, all with texts by Rossetti, and by drawing on outside musical references, this setting conveys its own nuanced purpose and suggests new possibilities of meaning. Table 2.1 provides the titles, poetic sources, and key areas of each song.[30] The title of the cycle makes direct reference to W. E. B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), the last chapter of which is titled "Of the Sorrow Songs," referring to slave songs or spirituals, and which Coleridge-Taylor is known to have read in 1904, the same year as this cycle's publication (exact dates of composition are unclear). Several scholars have begun to draw attention to this connection, including Saeideh Rajabzadeh in her recent master's thesis, which analyzes the cycle through the

[30] The cycle was simultaneously published in two keys, for low and high voices. This analysis will use the high key.

lens of intertextual genre relationships between art song and spiritual.[31] She draws musical parallels between the cycle and the sorrow song genre, and she compellingly ties dualities throughout the cycle to DuBois's idea of double consciousness. In keeping with the goals of this project, my analysis will focus on intertextual references that Coleridge-Taylor makes to other English music and the ways that the song's placement in the cycle alters its possibilities of meaning.

Table 2.1, Texts of Coleridge-Taylor's *Six Sorrow Songs*

Song Title	**Rossetti Poem**	**Key(s)**
"Oh What Comes Over the Sea"	"Song" (1866)	E minor
"When I am Dead, My Dearest"	"Song" (Nov. 1848)	G major
"Oh, Roses for the Flush of Youth"	"Song" (1849)	F minor
"She Sat and Sang Always"	"Song" (Dec. 1848)	A major to minor
"Unmindful of the Roses"	"One Seaside Grave" (1853)	C-sharp minor to E major
"Too Late for Love"	from *The Prince's Progress* (1861)	G minor

"When I am Dead" is the second song in the cycle, following a stormy opening song titled "Oh What Comes Over the Sea," whose text comes from another poem titled "Song" written by Rossetti in 1866. In this poem, a speaker watches over the raging sea and concludes that none of it matters to her because nothing (or no one) is returning to her.

> Oh what comes over the sea,
> Shoals and quicksands past;
> And what comes home to me,
> Sailing slow, sailing fast?

[31] Saeideh Rajabzadeh, "'Haply I may remember, And haply may forget': The Doubled Nature of Intertextual Genre Relationships in Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Six Sorrow Songs, Op. 57*" (master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 2022).

A wind comes over the sea
    With a moan in its blast;
But nothing comes home to me,
    Sailing slow, sailing fast.

Let me be, let me be,
    For my lot is cast:
Land or sea all's one to me,
    And sail it slow or fast.[32]

In his setting of this first poem, Coleridge-Taylor invokes Dido's lament from Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (1689), the archetype of musical grief. He most clearly references the aria in setting the lines "Let me be, let me be, for my lot is cast" in mm. 13-16 (Figure 2.6). In this passage, the vocal melody forms a four-note chromatic descent, alternating short and long durations, which is reminiscent of Purcell's ground bass (Figure 2.7). Additionally, the top notes of the piano's chords, all placed in a low register, echo the chromatic descent, reflecting even more closely the rhythm of the aria's accompaniment. This would certainly be a familiar reference for English audiences of his time, and it brings to mind the short, memorable text of the lament:

When I am laid in earth, May my wrongs create
    No trouble in thy breast;
    Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

This musical allusion intersects compellingly with the text of the cycle's next song, "When I am Dead," suggesting a different angle on the speaker's request to be forgotten. Dido expresses a desire to control how she is remembered, imploring her loved ones to remember her, but only in a way that does not cause them pain. Coleridge-Taylor's cycle moves directly from the first song's Purcell allusion to "When I am Dead," another text about remembering and forgetting in death, thereby inextricably linking the two poems and the two speakers. In the context of

[32] Christina Rossetti, *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti*, vol. 1, ed. R. W. Crump (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 209.

Coleridge-Taylor's cycle, the request of the speaker in "When I am Dead" may be seen in juxtaposition to Dido's request, expressing indifference where Dido expressed strong preferences. Alternatively, one may think of Dido's attempt at control and therefore see this poem's speaker as doing the same, through means such as the ones detailed by Alfano. Finally, one might take the speaker at her word, that remembering and forgetting are equivalent, one not better or worse than the other. In this new context, this seeming indifference can be recast as an act of mercy.

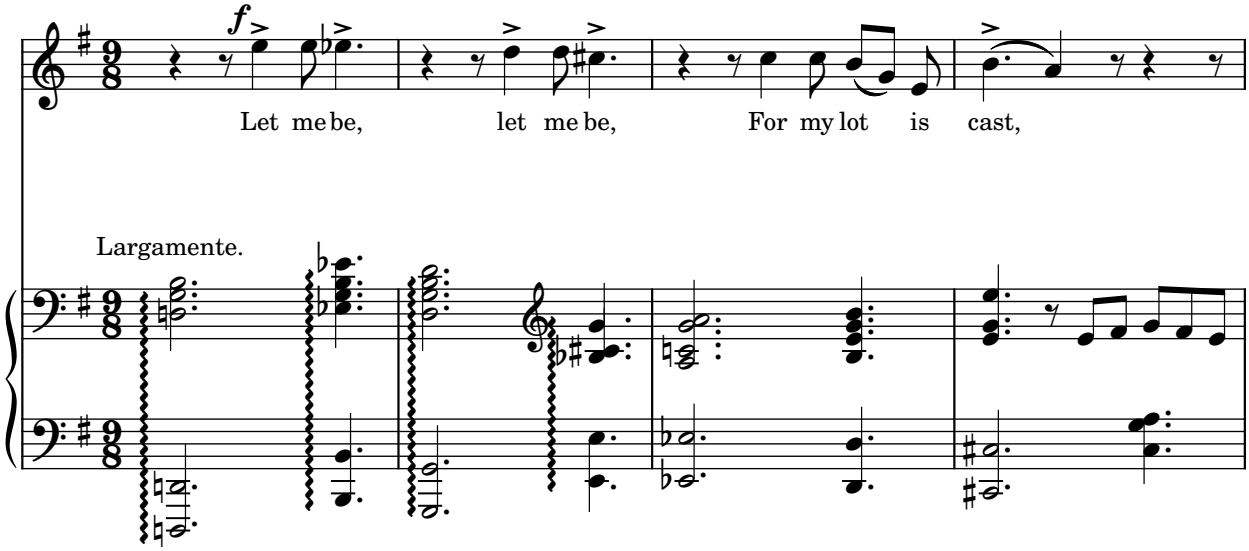

Figure 2.6, Coleridge-Taylor, "Oh What Comes Over the Sea," mm. 13-16

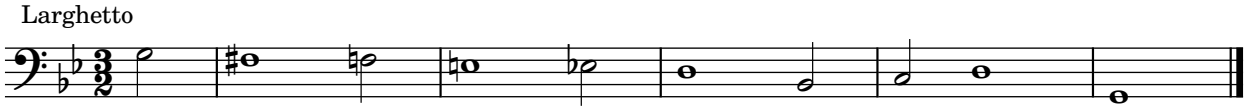

Figure 2.7, Purcell, "When I am Laid in Earth" ground bass

Coleridge-Taylor's "When I am Dead, My Dearest" is for the most part a sweet, strophic setting, even leaning towards the sentimental; however, these traits are recast by the context of

the preceding allusion. It opens in G major, and, while modally inflected, it is the only song in the cycle to both begin and end in the major mode. With its rolled piano chords and lilting triple meter, it sounds like the sun coming out after the previous song's storm (Figure 2.8). The opening measures recontextualize aspects of the preceding song, bringing them into the lighter sound world of this second setting. The D-sharp, so important as the leading tone of the first song's E minor, is now enharmonically recast as E-flat in the second song's second measure, creating the mode mixture that inflects this song with nostalgia. This non-functional, modally mixed minor iv, prolonged by a passing chord (mm. 2-4), contributes to the feelings of sentimentality without ultimately shaking the major key's influence. Additionally, the singer's first note is the same B on which she ended the previous song, recontextualized from scale degree five of the previous minor tonic to the mediant in G major. This reinterpretation further allows for a reading which connects the two songs, as the sudden shift in perspective recasts the lament of the first song as an opportunity for healing.

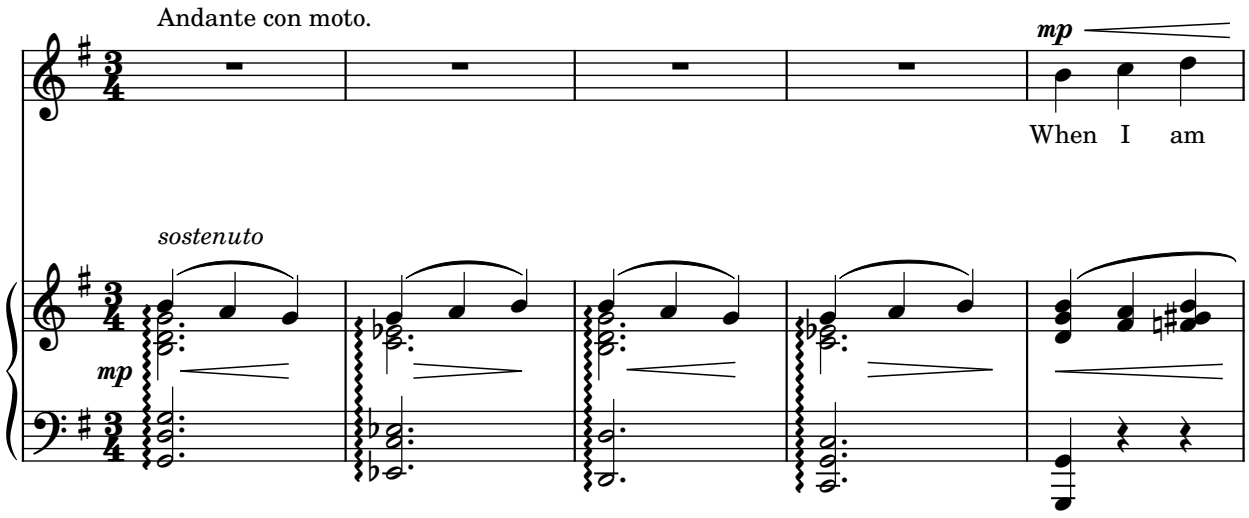

Figure 2.8, Coleridge-Taylor, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 1-5

Rather than actively working against the poetic moments that Alfano cites, as Vaughan Williams' setting does, Coleridge-Taylor leaves most of these moments relatively unmarked in this strophic setting. Like in Lehmann's setting, the opening commands fall on downbeats, but they are less emphasized in this simple triple meter than in Lehmann's compound meter, and the exact repetition of these rhythms and melodies for the second stanza's "I shall nots" further characterizes them as unmarked. Similarly, this setting seems to offer no particular commentary on the speaker's denials in the second stanza. There is no reason to believe that the speaker is disingenuous in the assertion that she cannot see the shadows or feel the rain, but the prospect of irony is also not actively undermined as it is for Vaughan Williams. Interestingly, Coleridge-Taylor repeats the word "sing" in the nightingale line, seemingly acknowledging and then side-stepping the issue of the enjambment (Figure 2.9). The repeated word ends one phrase and begins the next, cleanly separating the two but also adding emphasis on the act of singing, which seems natural in the context of the song and cycle.

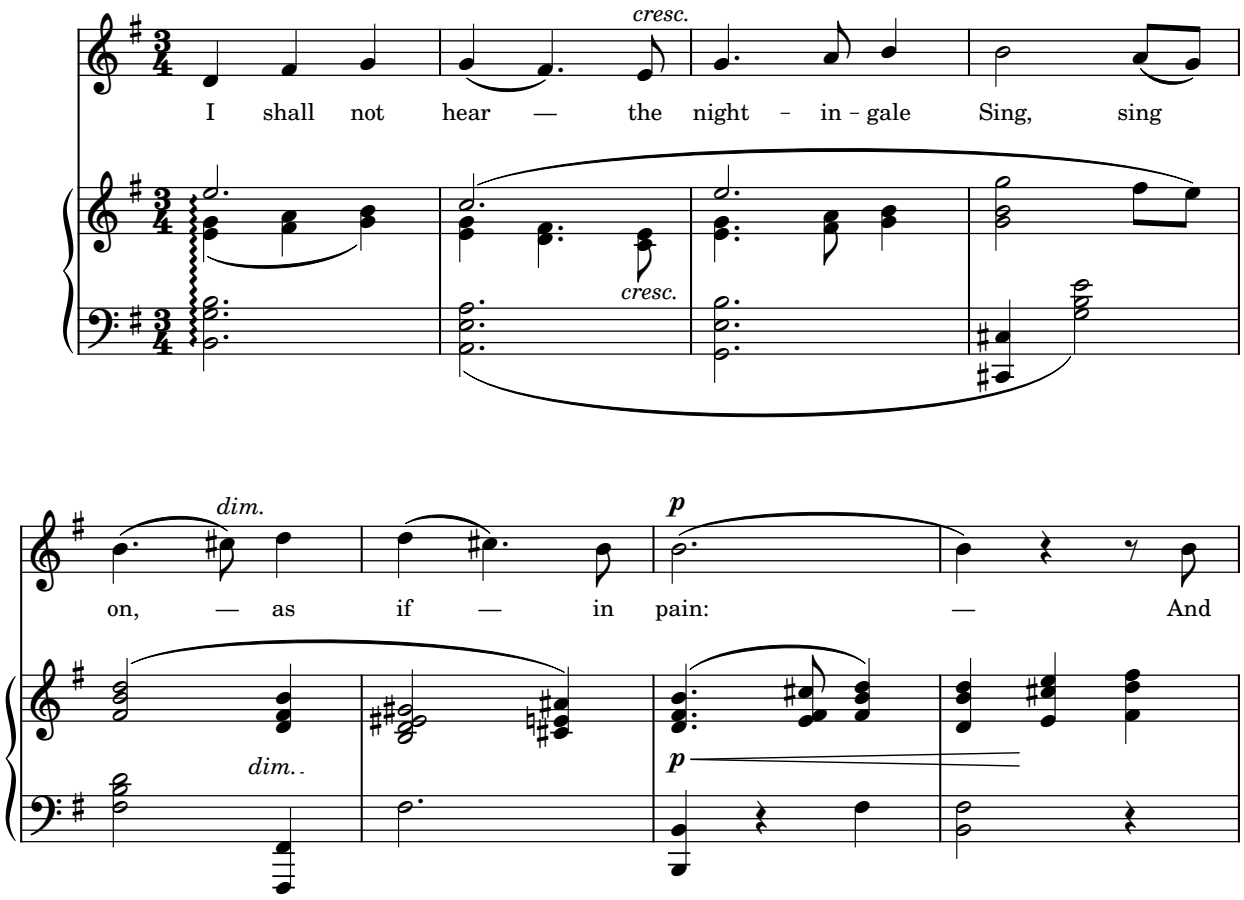

Figure 2.9, Coleridge-Taylor, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 41-48

The most marked lines in each strophe of this setting are the final two, which Alfano and others have drawn attention to in the poetry for their diminution. Both sets of lines, "And if thou wilt, remember, / And if thou wilt, forget" and "Haply I may remember, / And haply may forget," dwindle from seven syllables to six syllables, which, as Alfano writes, makes "the choice between memory and its inverse sound arbitrary."[33] In a sense, Coleridge-Taylor heightens this effect. The first of the two lines crescendos to *forte*, ascends to the highest pitch of the song, and is stretched metrically, filling a full measure with the middle syllable of

[33] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 183.

"remember," while the final line is marked *mezzo piano*, descends melodically, and is metrically unmarked (Figure 2.10). However, this sense of arbitrariness is only one possible interpretation of the dwindling effect. In this context, the word "remember" is the emotional climax of both strophes, drawing attention to this central dilemma of the text. While the final line is made smaller in many ways than the line that precedes it, it also features a descending chromatic line, a symbol of pathos, and the last two lines together are indeed memorably emotional in this setting.

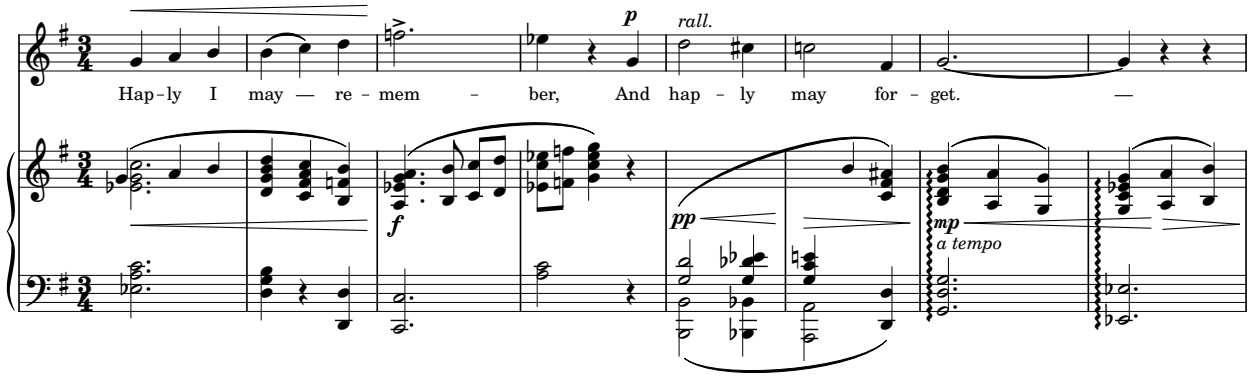

Figure 2.10, Coleridge-Taylor, "When I am Dead, My Dearest," mm. 55-62

In combination with the other aspects of the song and the cycle, these lines can be read as an emotional focal point: a caring loved one giving permission to move on, even at great personal cost. This interpretation is interesting in light of the biographical context. Coleridge-Taylor dedicated the cycle to his wife, Jessie Walmisley, and the second song, "When I am Dead," was performed at his funeral.[34] The sacrifice takes on greater resonance with Dido's pleas fresh in our minds – "Remember me, but ah! forget my fate." In this cycle, even if the speaker is taken at her word, her disavowal is just one part of a complex response to grief, loss, and death.

[34] W. C. Berwick Sayers, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Musician: His Life and Letters* (London: Cassell, 1915), 309.

Through the use of musical allusion, and by anthologizing the poem within the cycle, Coleridge-Taylor's setting uniquely contributes to the literary debate about textual meaning in ways that could not be achieved through words alone.

These examples show the type of productive dialogue that can occur when we analyze song through the lens of literary close reading. Vaughan Williams' setting shows the beauty and interest possible in a musical setting that takes a poem at face value and demonstrates the ways that music-compositional choices can undermine a potential reading of the text. Lehmann's work shows a composer's sensitivity to the plurality of meanings within a text and how certain musical devices might support the effects of poetic devices. Notably, in this case, the female composer's setting is more open to a feminist reading of the text. In this way, music can anticipate critical conversations about a text and be a productive voice in ongoing dialogues about a text's possibilities of meanings. Additionally, Coleridge-Taylor's setting shows how new possibilities of meaning can be created through assimilating a text into a cycle, a process that both anthologizes a text and allows for new layers of reference that reach outside the bounds of text. Not only does this approach provide new insight into the music, but through this type of analysis, musical settings can contribute back to the ongoing debates and expand the possibilities of poetic meaning.

CHAPTER 3

"LOOK NOT IN MY EYES": MUSICAL READINGS OF A. E. HOUSMAN'S STRATEGIES OF CONCEALMENT IN *A SHROPSHIRE LAD*

It is nearly impossible to discuss English song without encountering settings of A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*. The text was such an object of fascination among composers of the era that it could certainly warrant its own complete study. Recent scholarship of the collection has focused on the ways in which Housman simultaneously presents and obscures queerness within the text, and this case study will consider how musical settings of the poems necessarily alter those strategies of concealment. This chapter will also explore the ways in which composers grappled with an entire collection, in contrast to the single poem in the previous chapter, and demonstrate how this dissertation's methodology of using literary criticism as an entry point for musical analysis works when dealing with a poetry collection and a song cycle, rather than settings of a single poem. Most literary critics do not perform line-by-line close readings of *A Shropshire Lad*, but rather employ techniques that span the entire collection, and this will serve as the context in which to consider the musical responses to the text.

A Shropshire Lad, published in 1896, is one of only two collections of poetry that Housman published during his lifetime (the other, his *Last Poems*, in 1922). It consists of l63 individual poems with no clear narrative, although some have tried to ascribe one to it.[1] *A*

[1] B. J. Leggett, *Housman's Land of Lost Content: A Critical Study of* A Shropshire Lad (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970); Carol Efrati, *The Road of Danger, Guilt, and Shame: The Lonely Way of A. E. Housman* (Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002). See also Veronica Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory: Poetic Remembering and Forgetting from Tennyson to Housman* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 321n48.

Shropshire Lad was massively popular, especially during the years of the First World War, and it was common for soldiers to carry a copy of the slim volume with them in the trenches. Housman expressed his tongue-in-cheek wish to hear that "a soldier is to receive a bullet in the breast, and it is to be turned aside from his heart by a copy of *A Shropshire Lad* which he is carrying there. Hitherto it is only the Bible that has performed this trick."[2] Although it had a slow start, the collection was deeply ingrained in English culture by the second decade of the twentieth century.

Almost every composer of the era tried their hand at setting its poetry, with the first known setting by Arthur Somervell in 1904, and the multitude of settings are a well-known and loved part of the English song repertoire. Bryan N. S. Gooch and David S. Thatcher's catalogue of musical settings of late Victorian and modern British literature contains a disproportionate number of entries for Housman's relatively small output, and in Stephen Banfield's seminal monograph, *Sensibility and English Song*, he cites the collection's publication as one of the landmark events that initiated a new era of English song.[3] Something about the collection's style, its idealized depiction of the English landscape, and its themes of tragedy and death spoke to this generation of composers.

A Shropshire Lad: History and Criticism

While perhaps equally focused on mortality, Housman's poetry is quite different from that of Christina Rossetti, whose work played on the expectations of the poetess. This is clear in

[2] A. E. Housman to Grant Richards, Dec. 5, 1916, in Richards, *Housman: 1897-1936* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 155.

[3] Bryan N. S. Gooch and Davis S. Thatcher, *Musical Settings of Late Victorian and Modern British Literature: A Catalogue* (New York: Garland, 1976), 365-397; Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3.

the following poem, *A Shropshire Lad* (*ASL*) XXIII, one of the eleven set by George Butterworth:

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,
    There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill and the fold,
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,
    And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.

There's chaps from the town and the field and the till and the cart,
    And many to count are the stalwart, and many the brave,
And many the handsome of face and the handsome of heart,
    And few that will carry their looks or their truth to the grave.

I wish one could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell
    The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern;
And then one could talk with them friendly and wish them farewell
    And watch them depart on the way that they will not return.

But now you may stare as you like and there's nothing to scan;
    And brushing your elbow unguessed-at and not to be told
They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,
    The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.[4]

This poetry is typical of the collection in many ways: the simple language with many monosyllabic words, the self-contained lines, and the clear meter and rhyme scheme. Although its pentameter is atypical of the collection, it otherwise exemplifies the style and subjects of *A Shropshire Lad*. Running themes include the lives and deaths of young soldiers, farm lads, and exiles; contemplation of the English landscape; depictions of tragic love; and the glorification of suicide and other early deaths. Housman wrote and compiled the collection in the 1890s, when he was in his 30s and teaching Classics at University College London. He would later go on to be a fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge. Housman was an eminent scholar in the field and did not consider himself a poet by profession, even as his fame grew. Determined to keep his slim volume affordable, he refused to ever collect royalties on *A Shropshire Lad*.

[4] All Housman texts drawn from *The Poems of A. E. Housman*, ed. Archie Burnett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

Housman spoke very little about his poetry during his lifetime, with the notable exception of his 1933 Leslie Stephen Lecture at Cambridge, "The Name at Nature of Poetry," in which he said that "I have seldom written poetry unless I was rather out of health, and the experience, though pleasurable, was generally agitating and exhausting."[5] He described a process in which most of his stanzas came to him unprompted while on country walks, and any lines he had to supply himself were "a laborious business." After his death, his brother Laurence Housman published all of his remaining poems and donated his papers to the British Library (to be released after 25 years, in 1967). Through these documents, it became clear that he had fallen in love with his friend and flatmate from his undergraduate years at Oxford, Moses Jackson, and continued in his unrequited love for the rest of their lives. When Jackson was dying, Housman wrote to him, "You are largely responsible for my writing poetry and you ought to take the consequences" intending to give Jackson the royalties from his *Last Poems*.[6]

Laurence himself was as openly queer as one could be in Victorian England and was invested in work to destigmatize homosexuality.[7] While the brothers did not discuss it openly during their lifetimes, Laurence wrote after Housman's death that "he knew that I knew."[8] Many of the poems that Housman wrote during the period of composing what would ultimately become *A Shropshire Lad*, he left out of the collection, and they were published by Laurence in *More Poems* (1936) and *Additional Poems* (1937-9). This includes the oft-cited "Because I liked you better," which reads:

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[5] A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry: The Leslie Stephen Lecture Delivered at Cambridge, 9 May 1933* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 48-50.

[6] Andrew Jackson, "A Pivotal Friendship," *The Housman Society Journal* 36 (2010): 46.

[7] Keith Jebb, "The Land of Lost Content," in *A. E. Housman: A Reassessment*, ed. Alan W. Holden and J. Roy Birch (London: Macmillan, 2000), 43-44; Jebb, *A. E. Housman* (Chester Springs, PA: Seren Books, 1992), 54ff. Laurence was involved in the Order of Chaeronia, a secret society for homosexual men, and was the chairman of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology.

[8] Laurence Housman to A.S.F. Gow, June 2, 1936 (Trinity, Add. Ms. A. 71 188), quoted in Norman Page, *A. E. Housman: A Critical Biography*, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1996), 2.

Because I liked you better
    Than suits a man to say,
It irked you and I promised
    I'd throw the thought away.

To put the world between us
    We parted stiff and dry:
'Farewell,' said you, 'forget me.'
    'Fare well, I will,' said I.

If e'er, where clover whitens
    The dead man's knoll, you pass,
And no tall flower to meet you
    Starts in the trefoiled grass,

Halt by the headstone shading
    The heart you have not stirred,
And say the lad that loved you
    Was one that kept his word.[9]

In this poem, the speaker promises to "throw away" his ill-advised love for the addressee, while continuously dwelling on it. Veronica Alfano compares this to Rossetti's brand of forgetful remembrance, writing that "this lyric mirrors Rossettian efforts to forget certain emotional attachments, or at least to imitate amnesia by inhibiting sentiment."[10] This and others of the posthumous poems made apparent the themes of repressed yearning, even before the release of Housman's remaining papers.

The queer undertones of *A Shropshire Lad* were apparent to some but not most during Housman's lifetime. E. M. Forster and Oscar Wilde, both acquaintances of Housman, appreciated and admired the collection. The poems were mostly composed during Wilde's very public trials over his homosexuality, which would certainly have been an influence as Housman wrote and assembled the collection. While there is not clear evidence of Wilde acknowledging *A Shropshire Lad*'s queer themes, he drew comfort from the poems during his time in prison, and

[9] *More Poems*, XXXI.
[10] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 279.

they made quite an impression on him. Wilde's friend Robert Ross memorized several of the poems and recited them to Wilde while he was imprisoned, and upon his release, Housman himself sent Wilde a copy of the volume.[11]

The only extant writing from Wilde about *A Shropshire Lad* is in two letters to Laurence. In the first, he says "I've lately been reading your brother's lovely lyrical poems, so you see you have both of you given me that rare thing happiness."[12] In his following letter to Laurence, he says it is "absurd" that some friends don't "see the light lyrical beauty of your brother's work, and its grace and delicate felicity of mood and music."[13] He goes on to write in the same letter about his occupation in writing the poem that would become "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898), which reflects on his experiences in the penal system. In discussing masculinity in the poetry of both Housman and Wilde, Ruth Robbins compares this poem to Housman's work, particularly *ASL* IX ("On moonlit heath and lonesome bank"), concluding that both poets show that the fate of being executed "is escaped more by luck than good judgment."[14] R. P. Graves, one of Housman's foundational biographers, speculates that Wilde, whose own trials in part influenced *A Shropshire Lad*, was in turn inspired by Housman in writing "The Ballad of Reading Gaol."[15] Housman's simple verses clearly resonated with Wilde, who may have seen in them a similar struggle to his own, packaged and dealt with quite differently.

Unlike Wilde, Forster spoke openly about his queer understanding of the poems. He was an enormous fan of Housman, and they met on multiple occasions, although the relationship was

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[11] Richard Perceval Graves, *A. E. Housman, The Scholar-Poet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 113; John Stokes, *In the Nineties* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), 109.

[12] Oscar Wilde to L. Housman, August 9, 1897 in *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-David (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 923.

[13] Wilde to L. Housman, August 22, 1897, 928.

[14] Ruth Robbins, "'A Very Curious Construction:' Masculinity and the Poetry of A. E. Housman and Oscar Wilde" in *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 153.

[15] Graves, *The Scholar-Poet*, 114.

never as warm as Forster desired. From his first encounter with it, Forster felt an overwhelming emotional connection with *A Shropshire Lad*, and he makes multiple references to the collection in his novels, including a quote from *ASL* XXXII, "From far from eve and morning," in *A Room with a View* (1908).[16] The two writers had much in common. Both were scholars in their own ways, as Forster turned away from novel-writing for most of his life, focusing on criticism and biographies. Both also led lives of restraint in regards to their sexuality, although Forster was out to those in his inner circle (as a member of the Bloomsbury Group). Both writers had their more overtly homosexual works published upon their deaths. Forster wrote to a friend that *A Shropshire Lad* "concealed a personal experience" and that "the poet must have fallen in love with a man."[17]

Critics in the 1950s, writing between the publication of Housman's posthumous poems and the release of the rest of his papers, were divided in their interpretations. While George L. Watson was convinced of Housman's homosexuality (and interestingly, compared his relationship with Jackson to Alfred Tennyson's relationship with Arthur Henry Hallam, to be discussed in Chapter 4), his critical biography focuses on Housman's "divided life," keeping his private self completely separate from his public one.[18] More recently, in 2016, Martin Blocksidge takes on this claim and considers how such incongruities can be reconciled in his *A. E. Housman: A Single Life*.[19] Disagreeing with Watson in his own time, Norman Marlow spends much of his critical biography denying Housman's "unnatural" affections and speculating on other causes for Housman's fixation on mortality, including the death of his mother in his

[16] E. M. Forester, *A Room with a View* (London: Edward Arnold, 1908; London: Penguin, 1955), 32. Citation refers to the Penguin edition.

[17] Forster, 1930s memoir, from Memoirs, 1894-1963, GBR/0272/EMF/11, Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge, quoted in Philip Gardner, "'One Fraction of a Summer Field': Forster and A. E. Housman," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 31, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 1985): 163.

[18] George L. Watson, *A. E. Housman: A Divided Life* (London: Rupert Hart-David, 1957), 77.

[19] Martin Blocksidge, *A. E. Housman: A Single Life* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2016).

childhood.[20] In the same year, Maude M. Hawkins similarly speculated on the causes of Housman's "morbid slant on sex" in her *A. E. Housman: Man Behind a Mask*.[21] Some of the foundational critical texts on the collection were published in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including Christopher Ricks' collection of critical essays and B. J. Leggett's *Housman's Land of Lost Content*, a large-scale reassessment of *A Shropshire Lad* which considers how the collection is unified thematically and structurally, while insisting that any biographical context is irrelevant to the criticism.[22] In addition to the release of the critical edition by Archie Burnett, the decade leading up to and shortly following the centennial of *A Shropshire Lad* in 1996 brought much scholarship on the collection that began to critically consider the poetry's queerness, including John Bayley's critical monograph, Keith Jebb's critical biography, and Alan W. Holden and J. Roy Birch's edited collection, *A. E. Housman: A Reassessment*.[23]

It is now generally taken as a given in criticism of the collection that Housman's queerness is inseparable from his poetry, and the field has largely moved on from debating it as a question to finding what's interesting about his strategies of concealment. Much of the recent critical conversation considers how the collection's vagaries form a sort of protective barrier for the text's queerness.

Robbins writes that Housman's poetry could never be used against him in a criminal trial the way Wilde's was because it is characterized by restraint. She explains that beyond any specific content or meaning, "Wilde's lines spilled over in the excitement of what they were saying," but Housman's lines are strictly metrical, frequently monosyllabic, and rigorously end-

[20] Norman Marlow, *A. E. Housman: Scholar and Poet* (London: Routledge, 1958), 7, 151.
[21] Maude M. Hawkins, *A. E. Housman: Man Behind a Mask* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1958), 88.
[22] Christopher Ricks, ed., *A. E. Housman: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968); Leggett, *Housman's Land of Lost Content*, 8.
[23] John Bayley, *Housman's Poems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Jebb, *A. E. Housman*; Holden and Birch, *A Reassessment*.

stopped, giving the impression of simplicity, innocence, and restraint.[24] In this way, the peculiarities of Housman's style constrain the emotion of the text.

Burnett makes a similar argument in his essay, "A. E. Housman's 'Level Tones,'" writing that Housman uses a strict formality that simultaneously conceals and draws attention to its deeper complexities. He draws on Tennyson's *In Memoriam* to articulate how Housman's poetry can "half reveal / And half conceal the Soul within."[25] Burnett writes that "the power and distinction of many of the poems seem to me to derive from intense personal feeling presented with formal public decorum."[26] He furthers the argument, referencing the poem "Ask me no more, for fear I should reply," writing that it "is as much about not saying what cannot be said as it is about saying what can be said."[27] Burnett demonstrates how in "On Wenlock Edge" (*ASL* XXXI), the turbulence of the subject matter, in this case a storm, is contained by the regular stanzas and balanced structure. He writes, "the poem achieves equanimity, not by denying the forces of disturbance, but by containing them."[28] Thus Housman doesn't vanquish the strong emotions but contains them and wrestles them into regularity, and this is in effect throughout the collection.

Alfano, in her 2017 study of memory in Victorian poetry, furthers these ideas as she considers the collection through the lens of forgetful remembrance. She writes that the collection works as an intentionally failed elegy, not quite memorializing the dead lads to whom it alludes.

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[24] Robbins, "Curious Construction," 149, 148.

[25] Archie Burnett, "A. E. Housman's 'Level Tones,'" in Holden and Birch, *A Reassessment*, 6; Tennyson, *In Memoriam* V, 3-4, from Christopher Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson* (London: Longmans, 1969), 868. This lyric is one of the four set by Maude Valérie White, to be discussed in the following chapter.

[26] Burnett, "Level Tones," 4.

[27] Burnett, "Level Tones," 7. This lyric is from *Additional Poems* and was written during the period of composing *A Shropshire Lad*. The poem is listed in Laurence's Note-Book B, not far after "On Wenlock Edge" and "The lads in their hundreds." Laurence Housman, *A. E. H.: Some Poems, Some Letters and a Personal Memoir by his Brother* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 265.

[28] Burnett, "Level Tones," 5. Interestingly, he makes a brief comparison between the poem's effect and Vaughan Williams' setting, describing the music as "uninhibitedly violent."

If the speaker fails to fully remember the fallen lads of the poems, then both the lads and the speaker can remain untouchable and unimpeachable. She considers how the extremely short length of most of the poems blocks any attempt to make emotional confessions, as if each poem ends just on the cusp of the speaker saying something he shouldn't, and that Housman uses ambiguity to constrain taboo desires within the framework of familiar trimeter and tetrameter quatrains.[29] She also discusses how Housman's use of Classical references, in which he would have been extremely well-versed, allowed him to simultaneously generate and suppress homoeroticism, for example, in his multiple references to the myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection.[30] This is clear in poems such as "Look not in my eyes, for fear" (*ASL* XV), which compares the peril of staring at one's reflection to the danger of love for another lad. Alfano further writes that the poems are "so radically self-similar" that they're easy to remember but also easy to conflate with one another. This allows for a kind of forgetful remembrance that erases any specificity of subject or feeling.[31]

The self-sameness of the poems is even more interesting when one considers the fact that Housman refused to let the poems be anthologized out of context. While he allowed every composer who asked to set them to music, he did not generally allow them to print the texts of the poems in their programs.[32] The poems protected one another in their full context. Especially when considering the posthumously published poems that he wrote at the same time and left out of this collection, it is clear that those that almost say too much are carefully placed among the

[29] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 273, 279-80.
[30] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 281.
[31] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 293, 275.
[32] Richards, *Housman: 1897-1936*. Examples of refusals on 72-78. In 1914, he wrote to Richards "For 10 or 12 years I have adhered to the rule of not allowing my verses to appear in anthologies" (125).

rest. This makes the implications of composers' text selection, their own form of anthologizing, particularly relevant.

One of the most interesting sites of vagary in the collection is that of the landscape. At first glance, *A Shropshire Lad* seems so rooted in place: the title of the collection indicates such specificity. However, Housman had never been to Shropshire when writing the poems. His experience of the place was only from his fond memories of seeing the hills from his home in neighboring Worcester. In fact the poems themselves rarely reference specific locations, and even when they do, there is a sort of generic feeling that could place them anywhere in an idealized countryside. The Shropshire of the collection is a mythical space, only loosely related to the existing county. Even the title was a last-minute decision, suggested by Housman's friend and fellow scholar, Alfred W. Pollard, although at this stage, the collection already contained its handful of references to locations within Shropshire. The original title was "The Poems of Terence Hearsay," invoking a potential narrating character who is only mentioned by name in one poem, "'Terence, this is stupid stuff" (*ASL* LXII). Alfano writes, "Pastoral Shropshire, with its lads and lasses, encompasses everyone's illusory desires for a simpler way of life or for a romanticized youth. It is stubbornly remote and non-particular because it never existed, uninhabitable because it was never inhabited."[33] Because Housman chose to set the collection in a place he'd only seen from a distance, the landscape of the collection takes on a persistent vagueness that contributes to its intentional failure of specificity and memory.

Finally, it's necessary to mention some of the queer-coded images and ideas that appear in the poems. Many of the poems in the collection feature soldiers, sometimes as the central character, and more often as a distant figure or abstract idea. Several scholars have written about

[33] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 272.

the way that soldiers are used as a symbol in the collection, and Robbins notes that they were already a prevalent double image at the time for those "in the know."[34] Throughout the collection, the soldier functions as a figure of mutual understanding for the speaker through fleeting moments of unspoken intimacy. Bayley writes that soldiers are often used to connote eroticism though non-fulfillment.[35] Like in "The lads in their hundreds," a soldier, especially a soldier soon to die, is always just out of reach.

Robbins also suggests that the general use of young male speakers, and the constant references to them as "lads," suggests the homoerotic for those willing to see it, emphasizing "both maleness and youth, the twin reference points of the homoerotic."[36] Similarly, in his article "The Mechanics of Metaphor in *A Shropshire Lad*," Warren H. Kelly considers Housman's varying uses of "men" and "lads," suggesting that in "The lads in their hundreds," the fair is a liminal space "where people transgress their traditional identity."[37]

Another important site of Housman's queer-codedness, and particularly symbolizing the closeted experience, is the idea of one's own mind as a dangerous enemy. Robbins writes that the poems' subjects constantly need to escape, whether through suicide or other early death, or through an "unthinking life" via drunkenness, camaraderie, or other means.[38] A lad can only be allowed to keep living as long as he doesn't have to examine his own life or thoughts. Those that do are driven to their deaths.

Some scholars have considered the ways in which the collection's fixation with death is also a reflection of the experience of being closeted. Kelly writes that the missing referents in

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[34] Robbins, "Curious Construction," 158.
[35] Bayley, *Housman's Poems*, 32. See also Warren H. Kelly, "The Mechanics of Metaphor in *A Shropshire Lad*," *The Housman Society Journal* 27 (2001): 93-103; Jebb, "Land of Lost Content," 46ff.
[36] Robbins, "Curious Construction," 158.
[37] Kelly, "Mechanics of Metaphor," 98.
[38] Robbins, "Curious Construction," 150.

Housman's figurative language can be understood through the lens of homosexuality. Speaking specifically of "The lads in their hundreds," Kelly writes that "the poet's metaphorical appropriation of death throughout the poem may refer to the forced ending of an unsanctioned relationship."[39] Similarly, Jebb considers how death stands in for repression in the collection, stemming not only from the individual repression of sexuality, but also "the inexpressibility of homosexuality as such, of a homosexual community."[40] He writes that the Shropshire of the collection is "a world where (as if in some kind of revenge, a kind of curse) *all* love is haunted by death, and is punished."[41] In this way, even the doomed heterosexual relationships that proliferate *A Shropshire Lad* are deeply tied to the queer strategies of the collection.

The Song Cycles: Butterworth and Vaughan Williams

These critical considerations are complicated by the plethora of musical settings of these poems, the bulk of which were written long before Housman's papers and posthumous poems were published. This chapter focuses on settings by Ralph Vaughan Williams and George Butterworth, largely acknowledged to be some of the most sensitive settings and the most beloved.[42] The two composers were close friends and colleagues. Although Vaughan Williams was a mentor to Butterworth, the younger composer also helped his friend, famously suggesting

[39] Kelly, "Mechanics of Metaphor," 99-100.
[40] Jebb, "Land of Lost Content," 42, 48.
[41] Jebb, "Land of Lost Content," 51.
[42] While many, including Stephen Banfield and Eric Saylor, have written about settings of *A Shropshire Lad*, the only extant work comparable to my methodology is Paul Leitch's 1999 "Butterworth's Housman Re-Assessed: Lad Culture" (*The Musical Times* 140, no. 1866 [Spring 1999]: 18-28), in which he engages deeply with the text, even referencing Leggett's work, to analyze some of Butterworth's settings: "Loveliest of Trees," "Think No More, Lad," and "O Fair Enough Are Sky and Plain." While Housman's queerness is not part of his discussion, Leitch's ideas about the dangers of thinking in Butterworth's settings are certainly relevant to this chapter.

the composition of Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*,[43] and the two had a relationship of mutual respect.

Vaughan Williams' first Housman cycle, *On Wenlock Edge*, for voice and piano quintet, premiered in 1909.[44] Butterworth's two Housman cycles, *Six Songs from A Shropshire Lad* and *Bredon Hill and Other Songs*, both for voice and piano, were published in 1911 and 1912 respectively. Butterworth's songs were all written around the same time, some from the second collection composed before some from the first, so they can generally be thought of as one entity in two parts. Although Butterworth knew and would have been influenced by Vaughan Williams' cycle, as he was at present at the premiere of Vaughan Williams' "Is My Team Ploughing," there is clear evidence of Butterworth beginning to write music for these poems as early as 1905.[45] Both composers were most likely familiar with Somervell's settings, published in 1904.[46]

Butterworth's settings have piqued particular interest because of his own early death as a soldier, at age 31, at the hands of a German sniper in France in 1916. His seemingly prophetic songs have gained a new resonance as some of the few surviving compositions of a young man killed before his prime. Before leaving for his military training, Butterworth burned any works he did not deem fit for posterity, knowing he might never return. His story has taken on a mythological quality, and as Eric Saylor writes, his "life and tragic death fit the popular British myth of the noble sacrifice so perfectly that they could have been specially commissioned as a

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[43] Ralph Vaughan Williams to Alexander Butterworth, December 2, 1917, Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS. Eng. c. 3269, fols. 126-127.

[44] Vaughan Williams also arranged the cycle for orchestra c. 1923. Additionally, the composer published a second Housman cycle in 1927 titled *Along the Field*, using texts from both *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems*, scored for voice and violin. For a variety of reasons, including the date, style, and texts, that work is outside the scope of this study.

[45] Anthony Murphy, *Banks of Green Willow: The Life and Times of George Butterworth* (Great Malvern: Cappella Archive, 2012), 68, 39.

[46] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 1:233-4.

template for the genre."[47] Critics and scholars often discuss Butterworth in terms of his potential, as the "English soldier-artist and martyr whose death dealt a devastating blow to English music,"[48] and especially with this critical context, it is difficult to ignore the parallels between his life and settings such as "The Lads in their Hundreds."

Stephen Banfield, one of the foremost scholars of English song and of Butterworth, has written in *Grove Music Online* and elsewhere that the composer was "almost certainly gay," and would have been particularly drawn to the collection for that reason.[49] There is little to no evidence to support this, and most other scholars do not share in his assertion.[50] I will avoid this assumption, although it may be useful to note that it is a possibility, if far from a given.

In considering the relationship of Vaughan Williams' and Butterworth's cycles to Housman's strategies of concealment, text selection is an obvious place to start, because this type of selective anthologizing on its own can vastly change the perception of each individual text. Table 3.1 below shows which of Housman's texts each composer selected in these cycles, with the common texts noted in bold.[51]

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[47] Eric Saylor, *English Pastoral Music: From Arcadia to Utopia, 1900-1955* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 73.

[48] Saylor, *English Pastoral Music*, 75.

[49] Banfield, "Butterworth, George," *Grove Music Online/Oxford Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.04467; *Sensibility and English Song*, 1:239.

[50] Saylor writes that "there does not seem to be any existing evidence establishing him as heterosexual either… so Banfield's assumption is plausible, if more emphatically asserted than available evidence might warrant" (*English Pastoral Music*, 194n59). Philip Brookes speculates that the composer might have been asexual (*George Butterworth: Words, Deeds & Memory, an Unconventional Biography* [Munich: Musikproduktion Höflich, 2018], 255ff). Laurence Green refers to all such considerations as "unprofitable speculation" (*George Butterworth: Soldier and Composer* [Hitchin, UK: Fighting High, 2018], viii).

[51] Vaughan Williams also set "With Rue my Heart is Laden" (*ASL* LIV) in his later cycle, *Along the Field* (1927).

Table 3.1, *A Shropshire Lad* Cycles: Song Titles and Section Numbers[52]

Ralph Vaughan Williams *On Wenlock Edge* (1909)	George Butterworth *Six Songs from A Shropshire Lad* (1911) and *Bredon Hill and Other Songs* (1912)
On Wenlock Edge (XXXI)	Loveliest of Trees (II)
From Far, From Eve and Morning (XXXII)	When I was One-and-Twenty (XIII)
Is My Team Ploughing (XXVII)	Look Not in My Eyes (XV)
Oh When I Was in Love with You (XVIII)	Think No More, Lad (XLIX)
Bredon Hill (XXI)	The Lads in Their Hundreds (XXIII)
Clun (L)	**Is My Team Ploughing (XXVII)**
	Bredon Hill (XXI)
	Oh Fair Enough are Sky and Plain (XX)
	When the Lad for Longing Sighs (VI)
	On the Idle Hill of Summer (XXXV)
	With Rue My Heart is Laden (LIV)

It is immediately apparent that Butterworth selects more of the texts that scholars have identified as being particularly queer-coded. Of his 11 songs, two are about soldiers dying ("The Lads in Their Hundreds," "On the Idle Hill of Summer"), two involve personal contemplation of suicide ("Look Not in my Eyes" and "Oh Fair Enough are Sky and Plain"), one is about how overthinking leads to death ("Think No More, Lad"), and almost all the rest are either about one's own death or the death of friends ("Loveliest of Trees," "Is My Team Ploughing," "Bredon Hill", "With Rue my Heart is Laden"). Of the only two remaining texts, "When I was One-and-Twenty" and "When the Lad for Longing Sighs," "When I was One-and-Twenty" is an interesting case. From our current scholarly perspective, this text likely makes reference to Moses Jackson, with whom the poet began his friendship at age 21, but this information would not have been available to Butterworth. However, this may still impact interpretations of the text and music, apart from the composer's intent.

[52] Henceforth, the texts will be referred to by their song titles.

The text selection in Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* creates a very different overall impression. He does not choose a single poem about soldiers, and only two of the poems use the word "lad" ("Is My Team Ploughing" and "Clun"), including some in stanzas which he removes. In the 63 poems of *A Shropshire Lad*, the word "lad" appears 67 times.[53] Most of Vaughan Williams' selections are about death, but none are specifically about suicide, and there is less of a focus on *young* death. Overall, the text selection gives the impression of an older, wiser speaker considering death after a long life, rather than a young lad who must end his life or spend it avoiding his own thoughts.

It is also useful to consider the text selection in the context of the vagaries of landscape. Three of Vaughan Williams' six texts refer to specific locations ("On Wenlock Edge," "Bredon Hill," and "Clun"), and the two that are not also set by Butterworth do so substantially and repeatedly. (It is also worth noting that the titular Bredon Hill, set by both poets, is in Worcestershire, not Shropshire.) Overall, the text selection gives Vaughan Williams' cycle much more of a concrete sense of place than the poetry collection as a whole and than Butterworth's cycles. Only two of Butterworth's 11 texts mention specific locations at all ("Bredon Hill" and "The Lads in Their Hundreds"), and in the latter, Ludlow is only mentioned once.

The general musical styles also have implications both for and against the specificity of landscape. *On Wenlock Edge* was the first piece that Vaughan Williams composed after returning from his studies in France with Maurice Ravel, and the cycle's clear French influence makes it one of his least obviously English-sounding works. While, as Saylor writes, the influence of English folk song can be heard in the "beautifully naturalistic text setting,"[54] there is less obvious

[53] Counted by Cyril Connolly, reproduced as "A. E. Housman: A Controversy" in Christopher Ricks, ed. *A. E. Housman: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Edgewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 36.

[54] Saylor, *Vaughan Williams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 68.

reference to folk song than in many of his other works from this period. Butterworth's cycles, on the other hand, are more quintessentially English in style;[55] however, there is little to attach them to any more specific location. As Alfano writes of the poetry, Butterworth's music can be read as "stubbornly remote and non-particular."[56] It conjures an idealized landscape that simultaneously seems both integral to the work and impossible to map.

The song "When I was One-and-Twenty" presents an interesting case in regards to regional specificity. In the score, Butterworth notes that it uses a traditional tune. As yet, no scholar has been able to find a tune to match, and Butterworth's folk tune collecting, as well as that of his friends and colleagues, is incredibly well documented. As Butterworth specifically took a folk song trip to Shropshire in 1908, he would have had the option to use a tune from that region.[57] If indeed this is not, in fact, a true traditional tune, we might speculate that in writing his own "folk tune" for this song, Butterworth is contributing to an imagined idealized landscape.

Song Comparison: "Is My Team Ploughing"

One of the texts set by both Butterworth and Vaughan Williams, "Is My Team Ploughing," offers the opportunity to consider more specifically how the two composers' compositional choices impact Housman's strategies of concealment.[58] In setting this poem, each composer is tasked with portraying the dialogue between two speakers, one living and one dead.

[55] Saylor, discussing the English pastoral style, describes Butterworth's "gently flowing rhythms, modally inflected harmonies, and lyrical melodies" (Saylor, *English Pastoral Music*, 72).

[56] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 272.

[57] George Butterworth to Julia Butterworth, March 15, 1908, Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, M.S. Eng. c. 3269, fols. 107-108.

[58] "Is My Team Ploughing" presents a clearer basis for comparison than the settings of "Bredon Hill" because the constraints of the text necessitate similarities in the two composers' approaches, and therefore the differences in their understanding of the text become even more apparent. To be sure, there is much to be said in future about the other songs, which do not necessarily follow a clear pattern of interpretation in relation to Housman's strategies of concealment.

The dead speaker, entering first, asks his friend questions about life in his absence, and the two speakers alternate stanzas with their questions and answers. In the final stanza, the living speaker reveals that he now shares a bed with his dead friend's sweetheart.

"Is my team ploughing,
    That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
    When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,
    The harness jingles now;
No change though you lie under
    The land you used to plough.

"Is football playing
    Along the river shore,
With lads to chase the leather,
    Now I stand up no more?"

Ay, the ball is flying,
    The lads play heart and soul;
The goal stands up, the keeper
    Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,
    That I thought hard to leave,
And has she tired of weeping
    As she lies down at eve?"

Ay, she lies down lightly,
    She lies not down to weep:
Your girl is well contented.
    Be still, my lad, and sleep.

"Is my friend hearty,
    Now I am thin and pine,
And has he found to sleep in
    A better bed than mine?"

Yes, lad, I lie easy,
    I lie as lads would choose;
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,
    Never ask me whose.[59]

Like a number of other well-loved song texts, including Goethe's "Erlkönig," this poem necessitates that the composer write multiple characters to be sung by a single vocalist. Both composers use a mostly strophic form, alternating two different verses, where each character gets his own distinct music. The two settings have much in common; however, as this analysis will show, the composers make different choices about when to diverge from their simple strophic alternation, and this divergence displays two very different interpretations of the text. Butterworth's music highlights the final stanza's turn at the same moment that it is revealed in the text, but Vaughan Williams' setting of the final question-answer pairing reflects a dead speaker who anticipates a reason for concern, even before his friend delivers his shocking news.

Butterworth sets all of the stanzas of this poem; Vaughan Williams, however, abbreviates the text by removing two of the stanzas. When Vaughan Williams left out the stanza pair beginning with "'Is football playing," he greatly angered Housman, who wrote to his publisher, "I wonder how he would like me to cut two bars out of his music."[60] After Housman's death, Vaughan Williams defended the decision, writing "I also feel that a poet should be grateful to anyone who fails to perpetuate such lines as:– 'The goal stands up, the Keeper / Stands up to keep the goal.'"[61] Regardless of any judgments of the aesthetic value of those lines, we can consider the interpretive effects of removing them.[62] Although it does not seem to be a

[59] *ASL* XXVII.

[60] A. E. Housman to Grant Richards, December 20, 1920, in *The Letters of A. E. Housman*, vol. I, ed. Archie Burnett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 458.

[61] Ralph Vaughan Williams to Hubert Foss, March 25, 1938 in *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1895-1958*, ed. Hugh Cobbe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 256-7.

[62] In a 1966 article in *Victorian Poetry*, Robert Brainard Pearsall aims to determine who was correct, Housman or Vaughan Williams. While he defends the accused lines for their logic, he concludes that structurally and in terms of symbolism, the poem is better without them and ultimately gives the victory to Vaughan Williams. One might

motivating factor, Vaughan Williams might be accused of deleting some of the more queer-coded material, that is, the stanzas focused on lads playing sports. These lines contain two of the poem's three uses of the word "lad," and the very two lines that Vaughan Williams dismisses contain an obvious double entendre. Still, the overall effect is that the composer tightens up the narrative of the text by making it a three-phase conversation instead of four, and the story is now streamlined, focusing on the relationships of the poem's central figures. Thus without significantly changing the story, the deletion of these stanzas still alters the overall feel of the text.

Each composer effectively differentiates the two speakers in the stanzas they do use, setting them in stark contrast. Butterworth's "Is My Team Ploughing" is the last song in his first set, *Six Songs from A Shropshire Lad*. It follows "The Lads in Their Hundreds," which ends with a wistful, nostalgic piano accompaniment in compound meter in the key of F-sharp major (Figure 3.1). "Is My Team Ploughing" begins with the bass a tritone higher than the end of the previous song, immediately marking the shift to the eerie, ghostly mood (Figure 3.2). The key area is ambiguous throughout this setting. The opening chord, an F7 in second inversion, serves as the entire introduction, and the vocalist, embodying the dead speaker, enters immediately. While both the living and dead speakers are accompanied by piano chords that mostly occur every two beats, the differences in the accompaniment do much of the work to differentiate the two. The accompaniment for the dead speaker is *legatissimo*, harmonically unstable (all seventh chords, mostly alternating root position and second inversion), has the bass in a high range with a stepwise descent, and, along with the vocal melody, is marked *pianissimo* and *molto moderato senza rigore*. The dead speaker's melody mostly meanders around the descending pitches of the

consider a potential bias in this article towards erasing the poem's queerness. Pearsall, "Housman Versus Vaughan Williams: 'Is My Team Ploughing,'" *Victorian Poetry* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 42-44.

piano's highest notes, although its last measure ascends to reflect the question mark in the text. The final chord of the question is marked *pianississimo*, setting up the stark contrast with the living speaker's entrance that follows. The music for the living speaker, beginning on the line "Ay, the horses trample," is suddenly marked *forte* and *poco più moso*, accompanied by stable, root-position harmonies with lower, leaping bass notes. While it still cannot be ascribed to a single key area, the harmonies give the impression of stability in contrast to those of the dead speaker. The living speaker's melody has a general sense of ascent, although it returns to the same pitch on which it began, punctuated with a neighbor motion in m. 8.

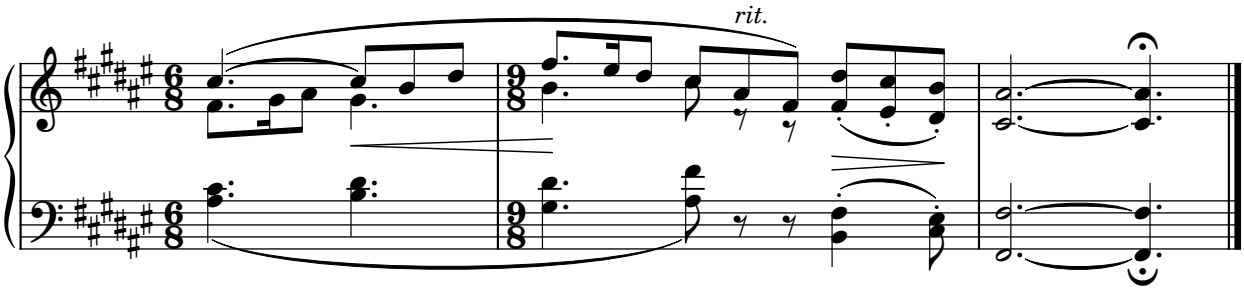

Figure 3.1, Butterworth, "The Lads in Their Hundreds," mm. 47-49

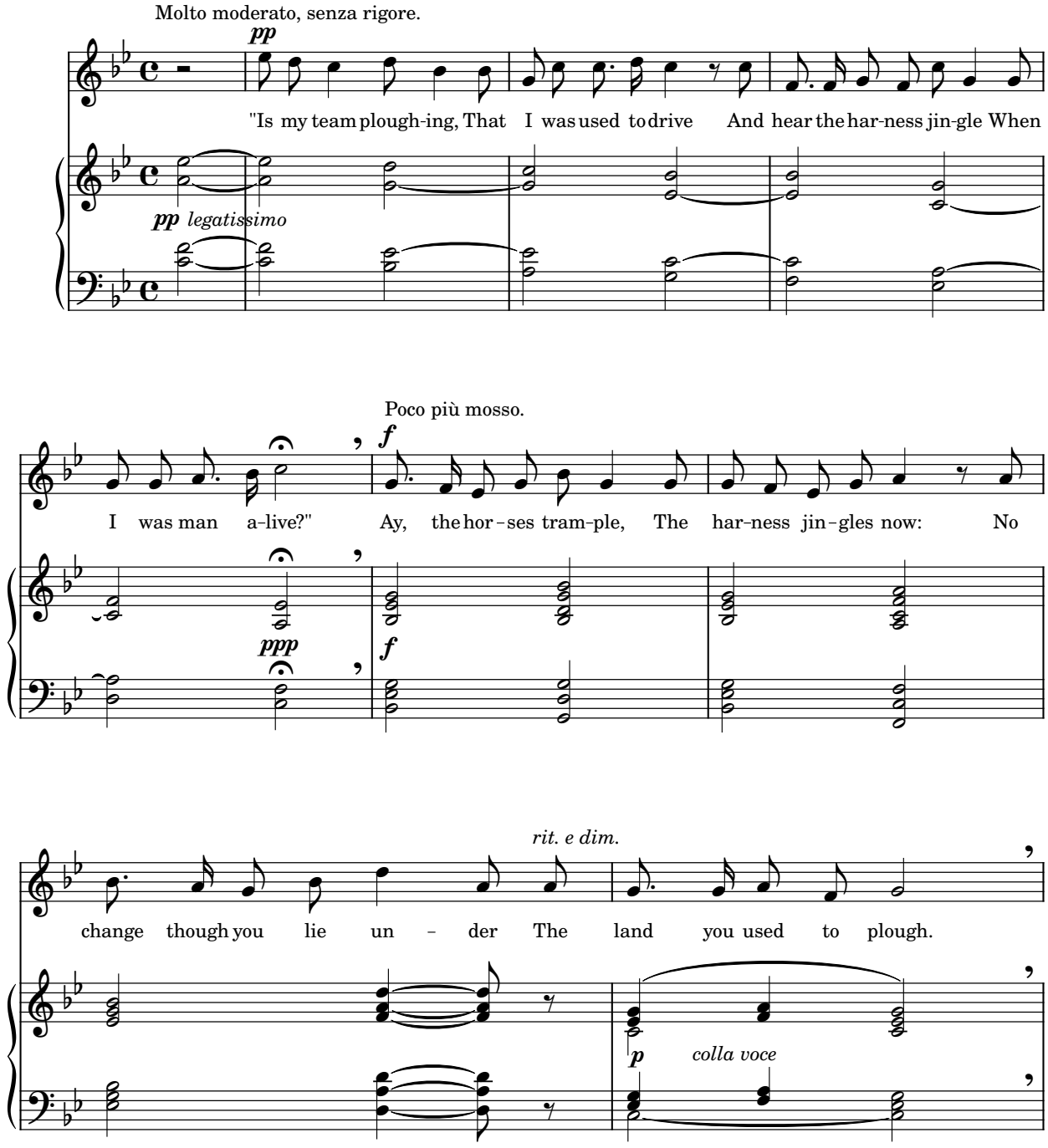

Figure 3.2, Butterworth, "Is My Team Ploughing," mm. 1-8

In Vaughan Williams' setting, the contrast is marked through instrumentation, tempo, accompaniment style, and motivic signifiers. "Is My Team Ploughing" is the third song of *On*

Wenlock Edge and also a significant departure from what precedes it. The second song, "From Far, From Eve and Morning," ends with a piano-only accompaniment, on an expansive rolled E major tonic chord, with the voice singing the fifth of the chord (Figure 3.3). "Is My Team Ploughing" begins in D dorian with only muted upper strings (Figure 3.4). The trio of first violin, second violin, and viola introduces a leitmotif which in some ways resembles a military topic, marked by the *andante* tempo, common meter, dotted rhythms, and triadic support. But this opening is inflected by death, signaled through the muted strings, *pianissimo* dynamic, *misterioso* marking, and displacement from the downbeat, as well as its rhythmic disintegration as it moves from the dotted rhythms into triplets, then finally into sustained chords that support the vocal entrance.[63] The leitmotif begins and ends with an alternation of A and G in the melody, supported by a root position D minor chord and a first inversion G major chord respectively, and its second measure has a brief rising and falling melodic line. As the rhythmic disintegration occurs, the two chords alternate before settling only on the D minor chord. The upper strings pulsate this chord on the offbeats over a decrescendo, then sustain it to support the vocal melody, creating an ambiguous sense of time. This deathly military topic can be read as implying, without explicitly stating, that the dead speaker was a soldier, which resonates with the themes of collection as a whole. The dead speaker's music in the first two strophes is accompanied by the muted string trio, without piano or cello, held on only the D minor chord, and the *pianissimo* vocal line is chant-like. Each time the dead speaker asks a question, the vocal entrance is preceded by a version of the opening leitmotif.

[63] Raymond Monelle discusses examples of "dysphoric marches" in Lieder, which usually reference the impending death of a soldier. Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 176.

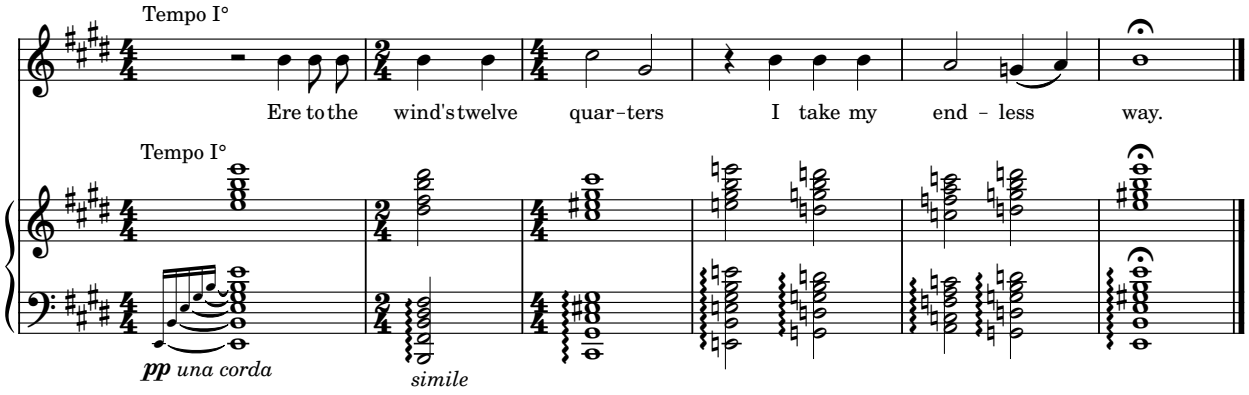

Figure 3.3, Vaughan Williams, "From Far, From Eve and Morning," mm. 22-27

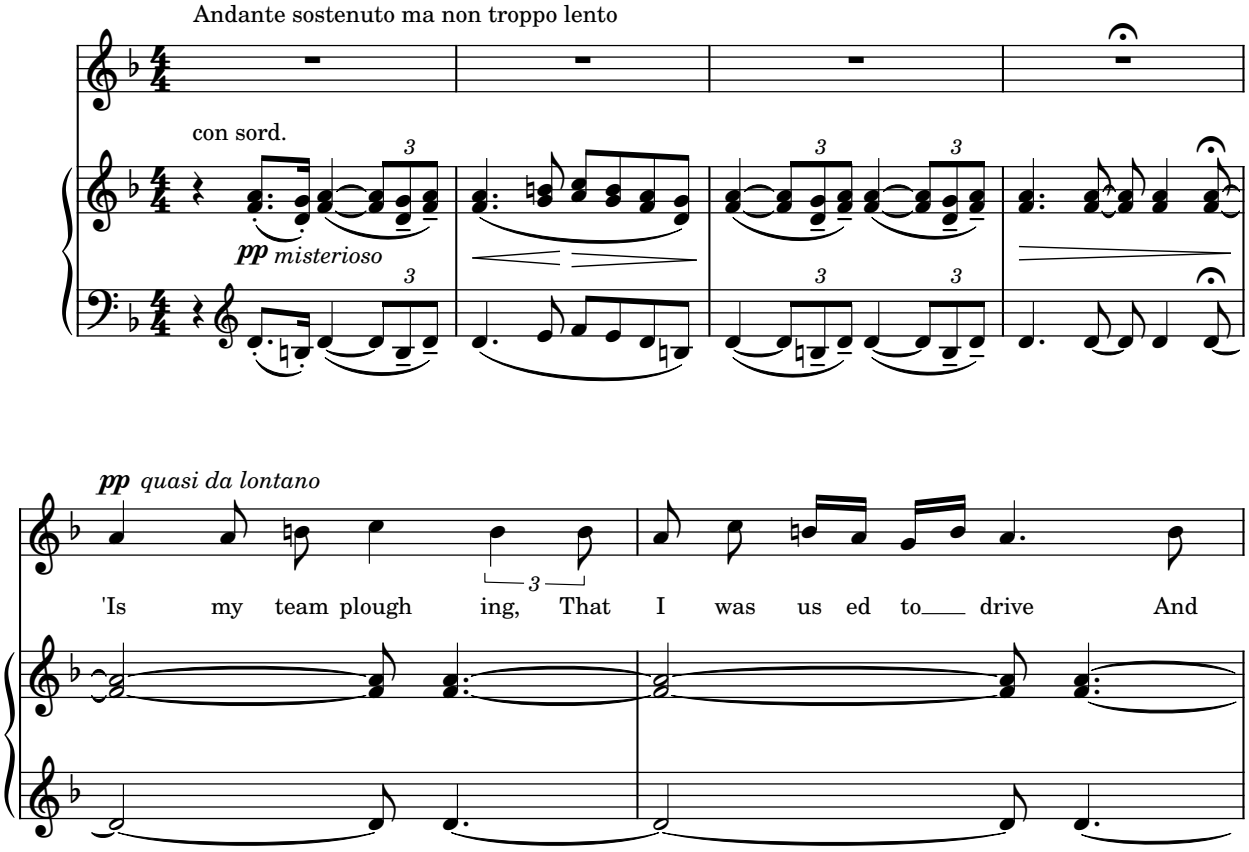

Figure 3.4, Vaughan Williams, "Is My Team Ploughing," mm. 1-6, reduction (violins and viola)

As the dead speaker finishes, the living speaker's entrance (in the first two strophes) is preceded by the entrance of constant triplet chords in the piano and an expressive line in the cello, with an *animado* tempo (Figure 3.5). In contrast to the dead speaker's music, the living speaker is accompanied only by the cello and piano, and the vocal entrance is marked *agitato* and *forte*. The vocal melody is disjunct, with dramatic leaps, and has a wider range than that of the dead speaker. Thus by delineating elements of tempo, texture, range, dynamics, and others, the composers each create two distinct characters, leaving singers to enhance them further through their articulation, vocal weight, melodic emphasis, and other performance choices.

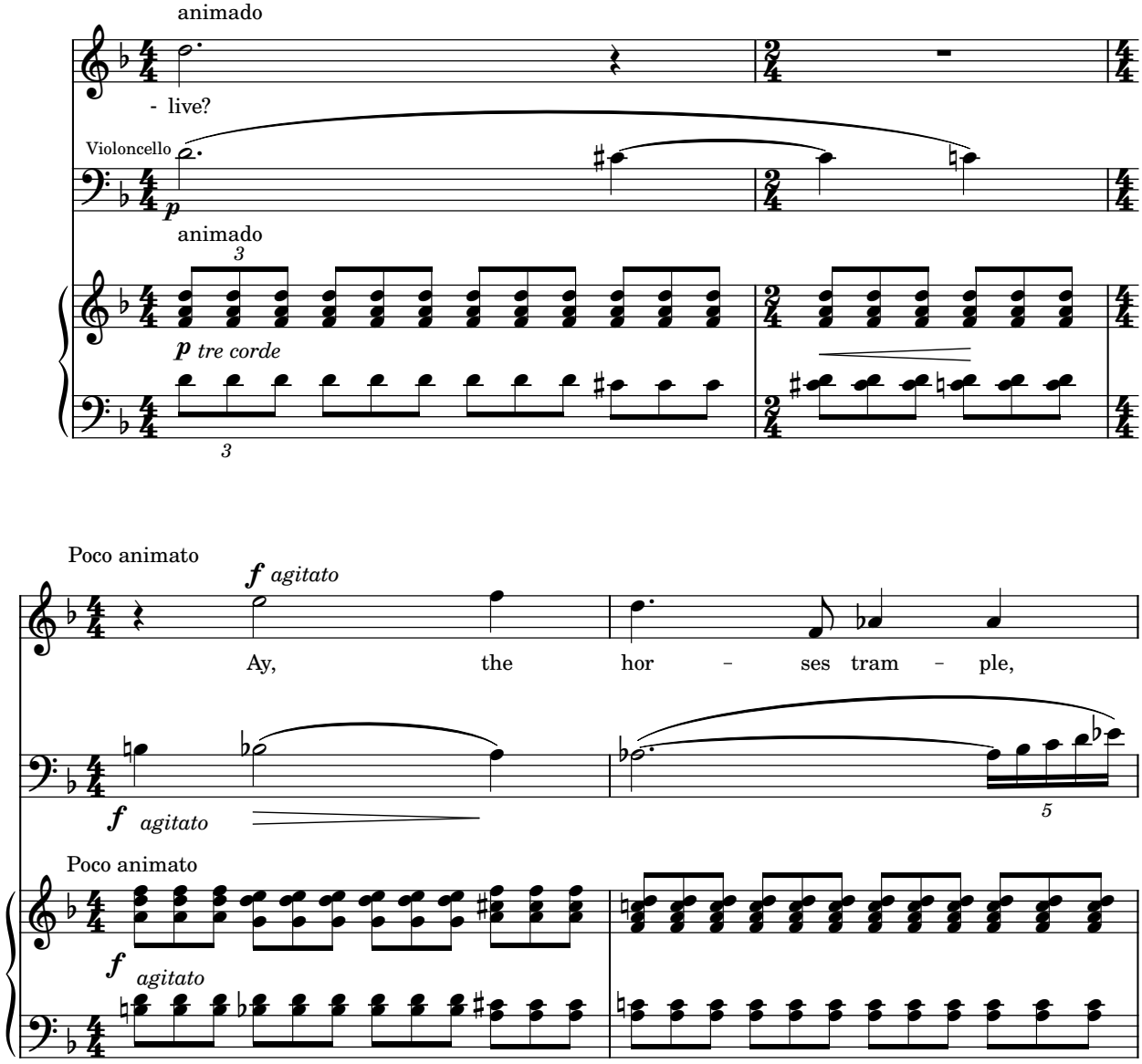

Figure 3.5, Vaughan Williams, "Is My Team Ploughing," mm. 9-12

The biggest difference in the two composers' readings of the text is displayed in the final two stanzas, which reveal that the living speaker is now with the dead man's sweetheart. In Butterworth's setting, the final question is stated in exactly the same way as the previous questions. It isn't until the last two lines of the living speaker's response that the listeners are alerted musically to the turn in the story. The notes are extended with fermatas on the word

"sweetheart," and the last line, "Never ask me whose," is suddenly marked *piano* and *lento*, as if the living speaker is shrinking back from delivering the news that is sure to wound his friend (Figure 3.6). In this way, in the narrative time of the song, the musical shift aligns directly with the poetry in conveying the shocking news. The audience can imagine being taken by surprise by the information at the same time as the dead speaker. Additionally, on the singer's final note, a C, the piano accompaniment begins an expressive descending line beginning on the E-flat just above it, marked *espressivo*. The piano's melody usurps the living speaker's final word, and this can be interpreted as an expression of the dead speaker's pain, as this is the same pitch on which the dead speaker always begins his question's descending line and the same chords from his accompaniment. The song (and therefore the cycle) ends with the tonal and harmonic ambiguity that has characterized the dead speaker's utterances. Butterworth's setting reflects and maintains the ambiguity of Housman's text, which leaves room for queer interpretations while restraining itself from saying anything too overt.

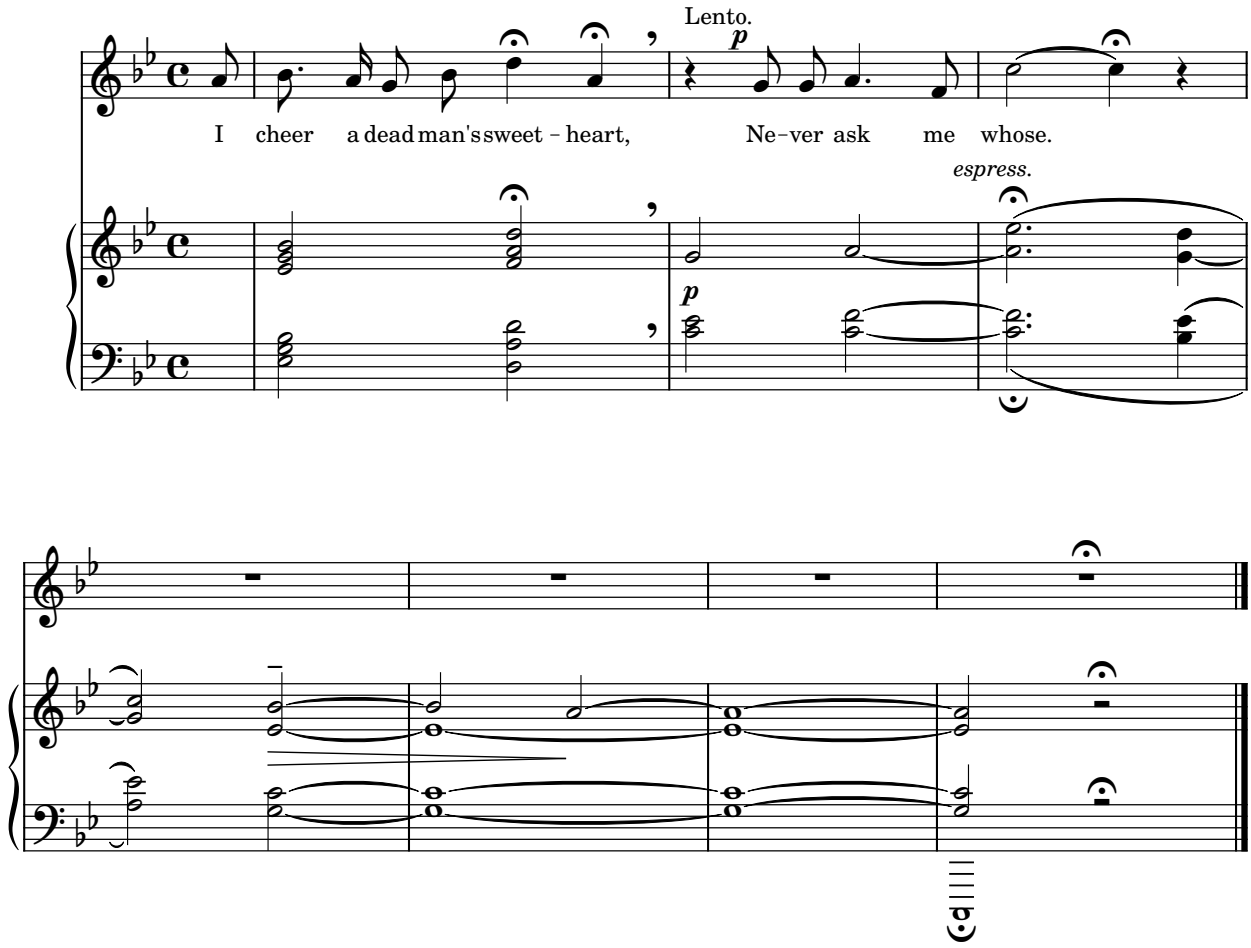

Figure 3.6, Butterworth, "Is My Team Ploughing," mm. 33-39

In Vaughan Williams' setting, the turn away from what's expected comes earlier, at the beginning of the final question, "'Is my friend hearty." The dead speaker's agitation increases here – not when he asks after his sweetheart, and not after his friend reveals that they are together, but when he asks how the living friend himself is doing. Before the dead speaker asks his question, the ensemble plays a shortened, transformed version of the song's opening leitmotif in m. 37 (Figure 3.7). Where it had previously been marked *piano* or *pianissimo* and performed by muted strings, it is now marked *forte* and *agitato* (a marking which has previously belonged only to the living speaker), with unmuted strings playing tremolo and the addition of the piano.

Shedding some of its more deathly associations, the leitmotif now sounds more overtly like a military topic. The motive has also lost its melodic line and is now reduced down only to the alternating chords. The singer enters at a *forte* dynamic instead of *piano* and begins a fourth higher than before, on D instead of A, with increased chromaticism and a wider range to signal the ongoing heightened emotion (mm. 39-44). The altered melody in m. 41, ascending to the song's highest pitch thus far, an A-flat, lays bare the speaker's concern in asking the ambiguous question: "And has he found to sleep in / A better bed than mine?" Unlike Butterworth's seemingly unsuspecting dead speaker, Vaughan Williams' dead speaker is clearly agitated before he even asks the question. He anticipates that the answer to this question is something he does not want to know, whether it's because he suspects that the friend is with his former sweetheart, or if his anxiety is for jealousy of the friend himself. The living speaker's answer is also heightened, with a text repetition on "yes, lad," and an altered melody with a wider range and louder dynamic (from m. 45).

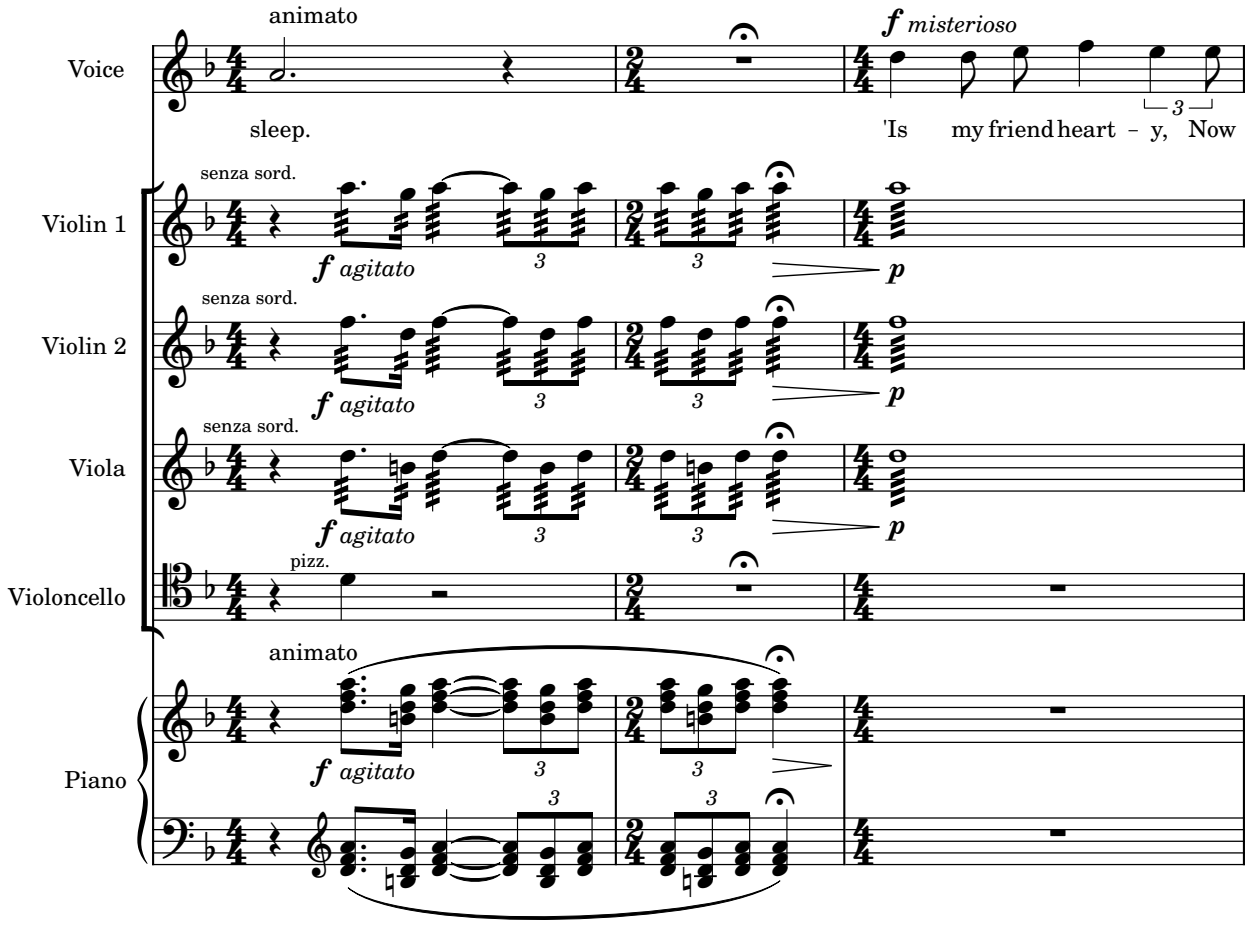

Figure 3.7, Vaughan Williams, “Is My Team Ploughing,” mm. 37-46

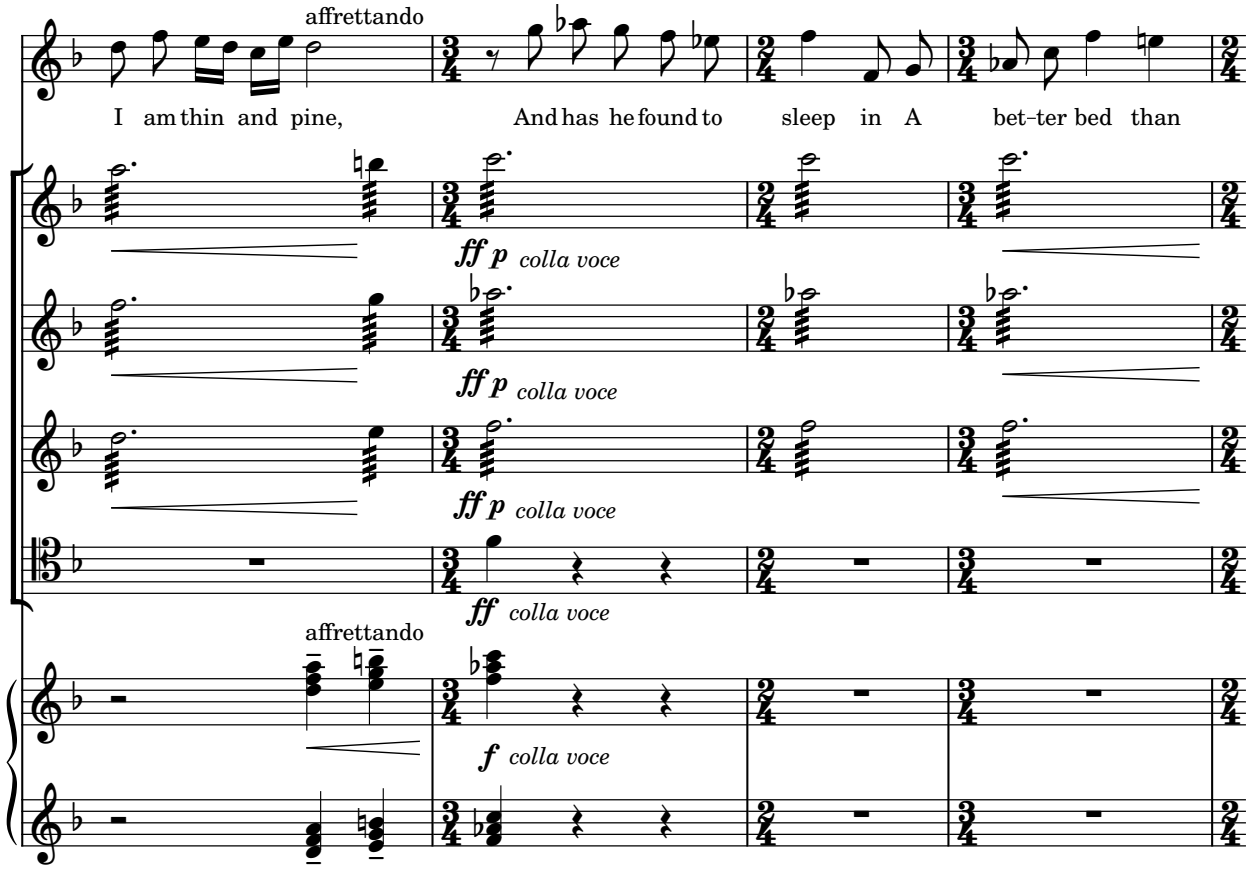

Figure 3.7, *cont.*

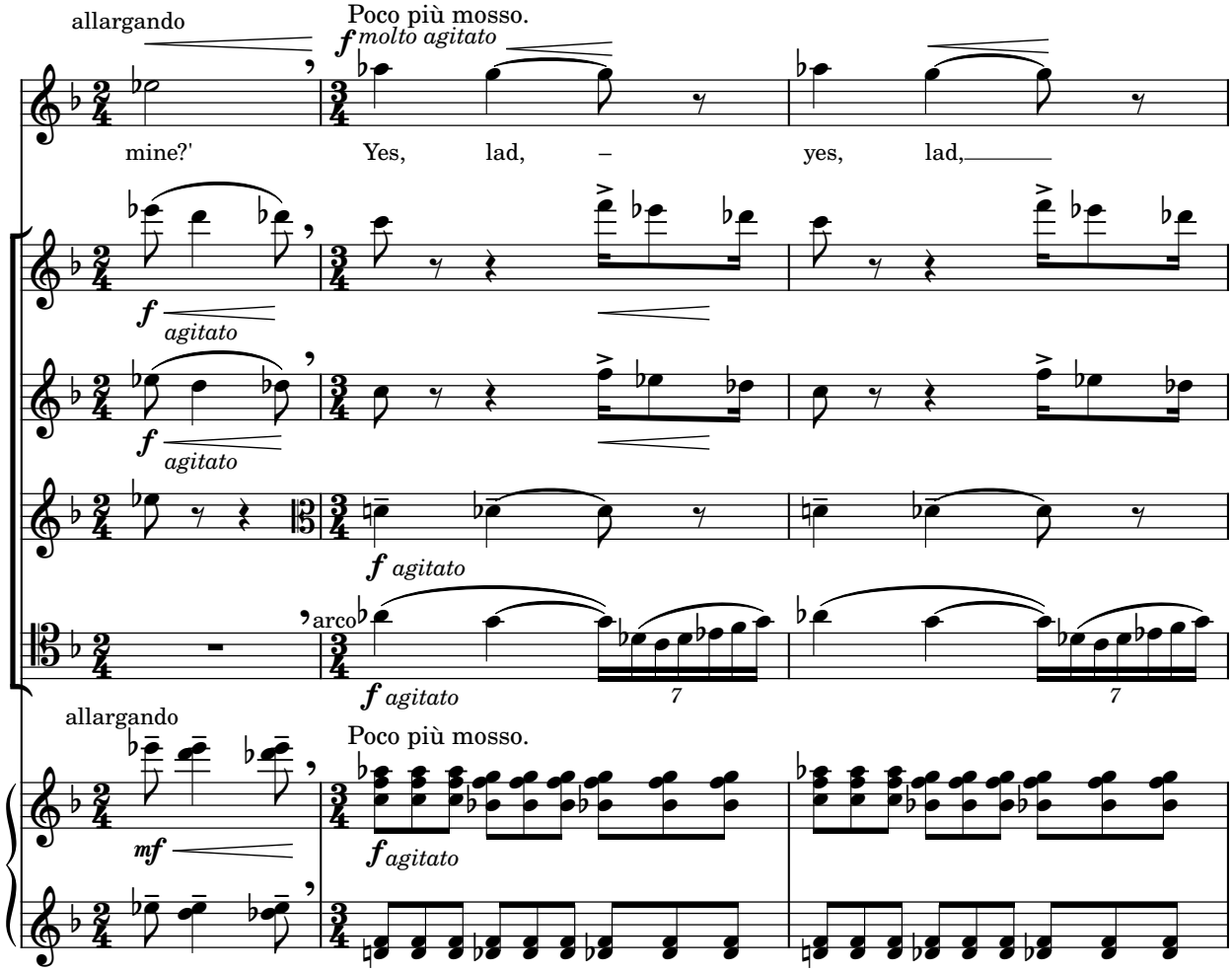

Figure 3.7, *cont.*

The last line, "Never ask me whose," is set apart by a sudden *piano* dynamic and lack of accompaniment, similar to Butterworth's ending, but in this setting, it is no longer the first sign that something is amiss (Figure 3.8). Towards the end of the singer's last note, the strings and piano enter at *fortissimo*, playing an even more fragmented version of the leitmotif. The two chords alternate in the dotted rhythm, followed by a dramatic octave descent, and this pattern repeats for two more measures, descending three octaves in total. The strings (now first violin, viola, and cello because of the lower register) play one more full, only slightly altered iteration of the opening leitmotif at *pianissimo*, now marked *tranquillo* (m. 58ff). The agency of this

expressive outburst cannot be as easily assigned to the dead speaker as in Butterworth's setting, where the piano mimics the dead speaker's vocal line, but it certainly signals a strong reaction to the news, if a short-lived one. This emotional outburst quickly fizzles out into an expressly tranquil mood. Most of this song's agitation has been displayed earlier, rather than in reaction to the living speaker's final words. Vaughan Williams omits what may be considered some of the more, although certainly not the only, queer-coded stanzas of this poem. However, the dead speaker's heightened anxiety in asking the final question can easily be read as an ambiguous jealousy, not specifying which of his living companions he is anxious for.

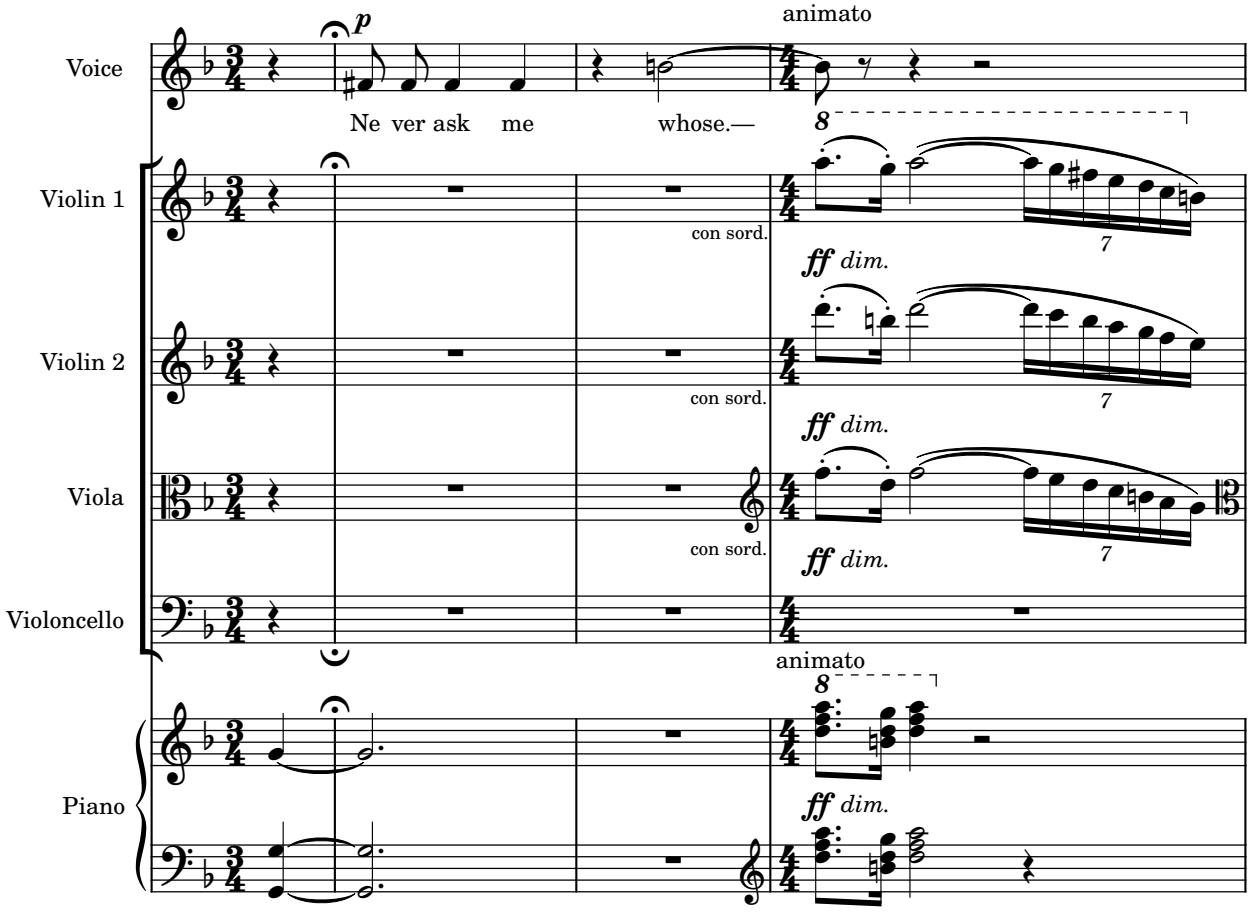

Figure 3.8, Vaughan Williams, "Is My Team Ploughing," mm. 53-58

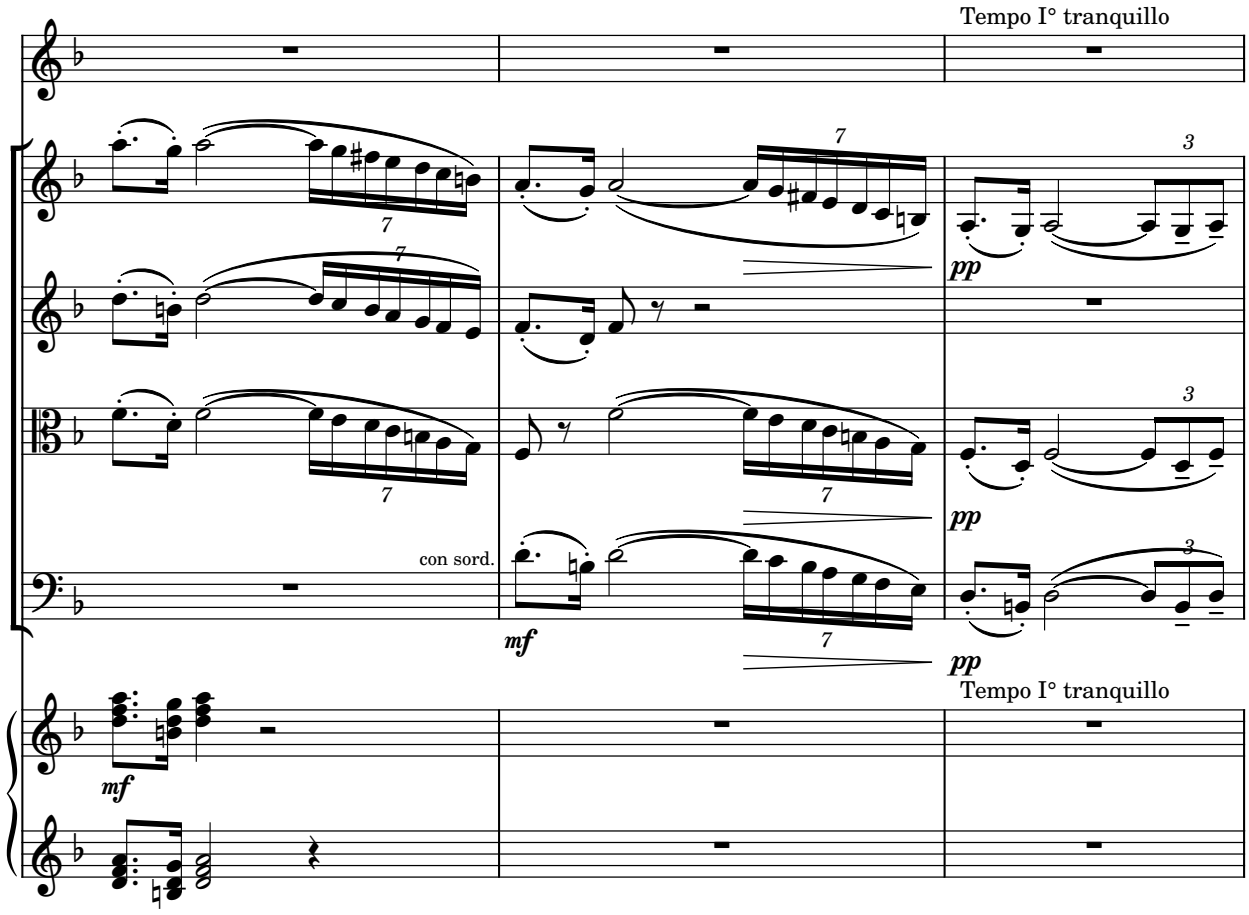

Figure 3.8, *cont.*

Overall, Butterworth's setting of "Is My Team Ploughing" allows for more of Housman's strategies of concealment. In particular, this poem's formulaic, repetitious nature helps conceal its depth of feeling, encoding while obscuring potential double meanings. It is possible to read the poem as almost akin to a nursery rhyme, alternating questions and answers in a didactic fashion. The revelation at the end is surprising and compelling but can easily hide in the monotony. By retaining the strophic structure of the song, using all of the stanzas, and waiting until the last moment to highlight the twist, Butterworth retains some of this monotony, and even his reveal is done in a fairly subdued manner. Alternatively, Vaughan Williams' pared down, tightened, three-phase conversation leaves less room for concealment, and the constantly

increasing agitation of the music, leading to a climax on the final question, draws out the intense feeling of the dead speaker and highlights the ambiguity of his concern. While Butterworth's setting subtly draws out the concealed themes of the poetry, Vaughan Williams' emotionally charged, impressionistic music shatters Housman's restraint.

Housman's collection as a whole works to simultaneously communicate and conceal its queer themes, and setting these poems to music inevitably alters that careful construction. In the larger cycles, both composers at times interfere with Housman's strategies of concealment and at times reinforce them. Butterworth's cycles preserve the collection's persistent vagueness and, to an extent, restraint, but just the selection of fewer than the 63 poems of the collection draws increased attention to lyrics such as "Look Not in My Eyes," which is no longer hidden among more innocuous texts. Vaughan Williams gives his cycle more regional specificity by using a higher proportion of lyrics with references to locations, but his text selection also constructs a less youthful image, moving away from texts that linger on thoughts of other lads. Still, the heightened emotionalism of his impressionistic setting contrasts sharply with Housman's practiced restraint. Further, these two musical settings open new readings of the text, as they provide two very different realizations of the poem's capacities. Each composer is in dialogue with Housman's text – in Vaughan Williams' case, a personal and fractious dialogue – and from the act of text selection to the details of musical composition, each setting brings its own voice to the conversation about how and what this text can mean.

CHAPTER 4

"I DO BUT SING BECAUSE I MUST": BELIEF, DOUBT, AND REVELATION IN MUSICAL SETTINGS OF TENNYSON'S *IN MEMORIAM, A. H. H.*

This study ends with an exploration of arguably the most significant work of Victorian mourning, Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam, A. H. H.* (1850). Tennyson wrote the poem as an elegy to his close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam (1811-1833), and it became central to the Victorian understanding of death and grief, not in the least because of Queen Victoria herself, who said that "next to the Bible *In Memoriam* is my comfort."[1] This poem's cultural significance and pervasiveness make the relative rarity of its setting to music, especially in contrast with A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, particularly interesting. In this chapter, I consider the only two large-scale settings of this text, both by women, Maude Valérie White's *Four Songs from Tennyson's In Memoriam* (1885) and Liza Lehmann's song cycle, *In Memoriam* (1899). This case study explores the two composers' very different approaches to realizing the potentialities of this fluid, multifaceted, and thematically complex text, as each demonstrates music's unique interpretive potential.

In addition to its cultural significance, *In Memoriam* was important for Tennyson both professionally and personally.[2] He was already fairly well established as a major English poet after his 1842 publication, *Poems*, but *In Memoriam* cemented his reputation, gained him the

[1] Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1897), 485. This is the memoir of the poet's son, named after Arthur Henry Hallam.

[2] Biographical and contextual information from Christopher Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson* (London: Longmans, 1969), 853-861; Erik Gray, ed., *In Memoriam*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, A Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2004), xi-xiv.

poet laureateship, and gave him the financial security he needed to marry Emily Sellwood, to whom he had been engaged on and off since 1836. The work, while personal in its inspiration, also reflects, as Tennyson wrote, "the voice of the human race."[3] The poet met Hallam, the subject of the elegy, in the spring of 1829 at Trinity College, Cambridge (the same college where Housman would later spend most of his career). Hallam quickly became close with Tennyson and his family, and by the end of that year, he was also engaged to Tennyson's sister, Emily. Hallam was already recognized as a particularly perceptive literary critic, and it was largely at his urging that Tennyson began to publish his own work. The young critic, not the future poet laureate, was, as Erik Gray writes, "the member of their circle mostly clearly destined for greatness."[4] While on a tour of the continent with his father in September 1833, Hallam died suddenly in Vienna of a stroke. Tennyson was informed by letter in October. Too distraught to attend the funeral, Tennyson quickly turned his grief towards poetic composition.

The weeks following Hallam's death were extremely productive for Tennyson, resulting in works such as "Ulysses," "Tithonus," and "Morte d'Arthur." He also began writing the lyric fragments that would eventually become part of *In Memoriam*. In spite of them all being in the same unusual stanza form, Tennyson claimed that he didn't intend them to be part of a larger work. He wrote, as quoted in his son's 1897 memoir, that "the sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many."[5] He wrote most of the lyrics over the course of the next 12 years, publishing *In Memoriam* 17 years after Hallam's death. His trial edition for friends and family

[3] H. Tennyson, *Memoir*, 1:305.
[4] Gray ed., *In Memoriam*, xi.
[5] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, quoted in H. Tennyson, *Memoir*, 1:304.

had no title, and he had considered titles such as "Fragments of an Elegy" and "The Way of the Soul." The first public edition was released anonymously, although the author was fairly quickly identified by reviewers and the public.

The book-length elegy consists of 131 numbered sections, a prologue, and an epilogue. The section lengths vary, but there are 729 total stanzas. The unusual stanza form is one of the hallmarks of the poem: iambic tetrameter, with an *abba* rhyme scheme. Tennyson said that he believed he had originated this stanza form, until he found that Ben Jonson and Sir Philip Sidney had used it in the 16th century.[6] Although written over the course of 17 years, the poem loosely covers a three-year time span, marked off by three Christmases. Some real events are depicted over the course of the poem, adjusted into the three-year frame, but as Tennyson wrote, "It must be remembered… that this is a poem, *not* an actual biography."[7] The poem traverses a non-linear path of grief, exploring themes that include questions of Christian faith and "honest doubt,"[8] contemporary concerns about science, and the power or inadequacy of language to express overwhelming grief. As indicated by The Poetry Foundation's overview, one strain of popular reception has always been to take the poem as "a real work of utility, to be read as a manual of consolation."[9] At the same time, it is also clear, as stated by Valerie Purton and Norman Page in the *Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Tennyson*, that "the poem is in fact culturally discursive and eclectic rather than dogmatic, ranging through moods and images as a diary of grief rather than as a prescription for curing pain."[10] This eclectic nature has opened the poem to a wide range of critical approaches.

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[6] H. Tennyson, *Memoir*, 1:306.
[7] H. Tennyson, *Memoir*, 1:304.
[8] *In Memoriam*, XCVI, 11. All citations of the poem come from Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson*.
[9] From The Poetry Foundation's biographical sketch of the poet. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/alfred-tennyson.
[10] Valerie Purton and Norman Page, *The Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Tennyson* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 122-123.

Like the works of Housman, this poem has drawn many critics to consider it in terms of gender and sexuality.[11] While queer theory will not be the focus of this chapter, as it is not the area of criticism that has proven most useful for understanding the text's setting in music, it merits brief consideration here, particularly because of the composers who did and did not choose to set the poem. There are many avenues for examining the text through a queer lens. Throughout *In Memoriam*, the poet embodies different perspectives other than that of a friend: a brother, a grieving widow, a husband, a mother, a child. Tennyson wrote that "'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking thro' him."[12] Shortly after the poem's anonymous publication, a critic wrote that "these touching lines evidently come from the full heart of the widow of a military man,"[13] assuming female authorship. It is therefore suggestive that this work was primarily set to music by women. Sophie Fuller, the only scholar thus far to devote significant space to either of these musical works, writes that "*In Memoriam*'s intense expressions of grief and emotion over the death of a friend were probably still regarded as somewhat problematic and more appropriately interpreted by a woman."[14] Indeed, with the exception of a few stand-alone songs by Charles Villiers Stanford, the only known composers

[11] For a historiography of homosexuality in the *In Memoriam* criticism, see Jack Kolb, "Hallam, Tennyson, Homosexuality and the Critics," *Philological Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 365-396. See also Alan Sinfield *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (London: Cassell, 1994); Jeff Nunokawa, "*In Memoriam* and the Extinction of the Homosexual," *ELC* 58, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 427-438; Matthew Curr, *The Consolation of Otherness: The Male Love Elegy in Milton, Gray, and Tennyson* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002); John D. Rosenberg, *Elegy for an Age: The Presence of the Past in Victorian Literature* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 44ff; Veronica Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory: Poetic Remembering and Forgetting from Tennyson to Housman* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 115-143.

[12] H. Tennyson, *Memoir*, 1:305.

[13] H. Tennyson, *Memoir*, 1:298.

[14] Sophie Fuller, "Women Composers During the British Musical Renaissance, 1880-1918" (PhD diss., King's College, University of London, 1998), 230. She also cites a review of the poem from *The Times*, writing, "Perhaps the men of the 1880s and 90s were still as uncomfortable with these heartfelt and occasionally homoerotic elegies to a dead male friend as the reviewer of 1851 who complained about the poem's 'tone of… amatory tenderness' and added: 'Very sweet and plaintive these verses are, but who would not give them a feminine application?'" (173).

who set more than a single lyric of *In Memoriam* to music were women.[15] In contrast with the tightly bound poetry of Housman, which attracted almost every male composer of the era, *In Memoriam*'s open, emotional portrayal of grief has drawn very few composers, and the only one who has attempted to scale this large-scale work of literature in a song cycle is Lehmann.

This case study differs from the previous two in considering such a large single work of poetry, and in examining musical settings that are of a very different nature from one another. The sections of *In Memoriam* are much more interconnected than the poems of *A Shropshire Lad*, and this poem has, if not a narrative, at least an emotional and chronological progression. While the act of anthologizing was certainly important in settings of *A Shropshire Lad*, it becomes even more important with this poem, and one might argue that this text is more fundamentally altered through excerpting than *A Shropshire Lad*. Additionally, the scope of this single poem is much larger than even the 63 poems of *A Shropshire Lad*, and Tennyson's poetic style has more syntactic complexity. Unlike in the previous chapters, the musical settings by White and Lehmann don't benefit from direct comparison. White's set of four songs and Lehmann's song cycle have very different goals and results in approaching the poem, and the two composers don't set any of the same texts. Additionally, the sheer quantity of criticism of *In Memoriam* is so vast that it is not useful to survey it in its entirety here. Therefore, I will consider the two composers' settings separately, introducing the literary criticism most relevant to each work. First I will analyze one of White's four songs in terms of the criticism for that individual lyric, and then I will consider Lehmann's cycle in the context of the criticism that deals with the

[15] In addition to White and Lehmann, Mrs. Edward Gifford Shapcote included 8 of the lyrics in her *Eleven Songs* in 1857. Stanford, who was a close friend of Tennyson's and set several of his other texts, wrote three songs using *In Memoriam* texts, included in two different song sets, as well as one SATB setting. The title of his "Elegiac" Symphony was also suggested by this poem. Bryan N. S. Gooch and David S. Thatcher, *Musical Settings of Early and Mid-Victorian Literature: A Catalogue* (New York: Garland, 1979), 554-555.

poem's overarching themes and concerns. These two analyses reveal the composers' differing readings of the text, as each must engage with the multiplicity of meanings in Tennyson's complex and multifaceted elegy.

White's *Four Songs from Tennyson's In Memoriam*

White's set of songs on *In Memoriam* dates from about the middle of her already very successful career as primarily a song composer.[16] She converted to Roman Catholicism in 1880, five years before composing these songs, and her faith was particularly important for her understanding of this religiously inflected text. Shortly after their premiere, White had the opportunity to perform the songs (playing the piano, with singer Cecilia Hutchinson) for Tennyson at his country home at Hazlemere. In her memoirs, White wrote that "he knew absolutely nothing about music," and that afterwards, he suggested that she do more literal text painting, with "some ethereal sort of rendering of the word 'light' and some dark sound for the word 'low.'" The composer was brave enough to explain to him the reasons why that would not produce an effective setting, writing in the memoir that "it is the spirit of the poem–the 'something' that lies between the lines of all fine poetry–that [the musician] tries to translate into music, not the exact meaning of each word." However, she wrote that she had not "convinced him in the least, and no more was said on the subject."[17]

White's four songs use some of the most quotable, aphoristic moments from *In Memoriam*, including "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all."[18] In

[16] In her dissertation, Fuller explores the factors that may have contributed to the correlation between female composers and song composition in this era, and specifically how White herself believed herself incapable of writing instrumental music or larger forms (Fuller, "Women Composers," 166).

[17] Maude Valérie White, *Friends and Memories* (London: E. Arnold, 1914), 292-3.

[18] These lines appear twice in *In Memoriam*, in section XXVII, 15-16, and in section LXXXV, 3-4. White draws on both of these sections for her song No. 2.

this way, she chooses not to engage with much of the poem's struggle and doubt, and there is no attempt to create a chronological narrative or an obvious emotional progression in the set. Table 4.1 below provides the sections and lines of poetry for each song. Song cycles were not yet popular in Britain in 1885, and as Fuller writes, the songs "work together as a group rather than a closely linked cycle."[19] Some of the songs' peculiarities support this assertion. The latter two songs were published in both a high and low key, while the first two were published in only one key, showing that the overall key relations were not important to the composer. The fourth song, which will be discussed in detail below, was published with an organ obbligato part (for only the high key, F-sharp), which further supports the idea that it might be freely performed on its own. However, the songs do have one moment of cyclic cohesiveness, as the fourth song, "Be Near Me When My Light is Low," contains a significant musical reference to the second song, "'Tis Better to Have Loved and Lost." As Fuller writes, the songs convey "two beliefs that were always of central importance to her – the power of love and of her faith,"[20] and the four settings explore these themes without attempting to form Tennyson's large-scale journey of grief into a single musical narrative.

Table 4.1, White, Text Selection from *In Memoriam*

Song Number	**Song First Line**	**Poem Section**	**Poem Lines**
No. 1	I sometimes hold it half a sin	V	1-8
No. 2	'Tis better to have loved and lost	XXVII	13-16
		LXXXV	49-52
No. 3	Love is and was my Lord and King	CXXVI	1-12 (all)
No. 4	Be near me when my light is low	L	1-16 (all)

[19] Fuller, "Women Composers," 173.
[20] Fuller, "Women Composers," 173.

White does set one lyric, section L, that in some ways serves as a microcosm of some of the more complex themes explored in the larger poem. This section occurs at a rather low point in the poet's journey, between the first and second Christmas.[21] It is written in the imperative, presumably directly addressing the dead friend, and it is notable for its parallel syntax and repetition. While the section's ending is not exactly optimistic, it points to the potential hope in life after death.

Be near me when my light is low,
    When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
    And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
    Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
    And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
    And men the flies of latter spring,
    That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
    To point the term of human strife,
    And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.[22]

This section has received particular attention in many of the studies that consider the entirety of *In Memoriam*.[23] In his monograph *The Language of* In Memoriam, which analyzes the work in terms of the structure of its language, Alan Sinfield writes about the ways in which the clause structure of this section draws attention to the emotional progression of the text. The

[21] I will follow the critical convention of referring to the poem's protagonist as "the poet." While this "poet" is separate from the historical Tennyson, this designation acknowledges the speaker's awareness that he is, in fact, composing a poem through which to deal with his grief. In the musical settings, I will refer to the protagonist as "the speaker," and I will use he/him pronouns throughout for ease of reading.

[22] *In Memoriam*, L.

[23] See also, Rosenberg, *Elegy for an Age*, 49ff.

conspicuous parallelism of each stanza beginning with "Be near me when" highlights the subtle differences in feeling from one stanza to the next. Sinfield writes, "The identical openings of the stanzas set off the adjustments in the poet's thought and make us juxtapose the changing attitudes."[24] He observes that the first three stanzas progress from personal to general: "The first stanza is the most personal, dealing with the poet's physical response… The second is more abstract and shows the poet in a more speculative mood, seeing Time and Life as purposeless and malevolent. The third is the most general, broadening out to a view of men as 'the flies of latter spring', maintaining their petty lives for a brief hour and then passing, we infer, into oblivion."[25] However, the fourth stanza pivots away from this progression to a new idea, "some dim hopes of an eternal day in which his friend might really be near him."[26] In Sinfield's reading, the first three stanzas follow a particular progression, while the fourth stanza, the most hopeful, presents a new direction of thought. He also notes the parallelisms beyond the opening lines, particularly the repetitions of "and" clauses, and explains that "this clause structure can build up emotional pressure."[27] In the first stanza, "the poet seems compelled to continue in the one form until the intensity of his depression is consumed. The reader is held in the same structure of thought while the poet forces through it all the pressure of his emotion."[28] This buildup of emotional pressure through repetition will be especially relevant in White's setting of the lyric.

Timothy Peltason, in his later study *Reading* In Memoriam, agrees that the stanzas present a progression, if a non-linear one, writing that "even within the space of a single lyric,

[24] Alan Sinfield, *The Language of* In Memoriam (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 97.
[25] Sinfield, *Language*, 96.
[26] Sinfield, *Language*, 97.
[27] Sinfield, *Language*, 97.
[28] Sinfield, *Language*, 97.

there is movement and change, a waxing and waning of intensity."[29] He agrees that the final stanza is more hopeful than the ones that precede it, if still one of "a Tennysonianly lovely gloom–truly lovely but somehow manageable," and concludes that "by the end of the lyric he has talked his way forward once again to the greater health and openness of anticipation."[30] In this way, the lyric reflects a movement out of the mire of grief into the possibility of hope, without fully reaching the state of acceptance that the poet seeks throughout the larger poem.

White's setting of this lyric draws heavily on her experience with church music, and the unusual structure of her song interacts interestingly with the parallelism and emotional buildup of the text. By far the longest song of the set, this setting is not strophic throughout, but it has strophic elements. The first stanza's vocal line is set almost entirely on one pitch, a repeated C, and this can retrospectively be understood as a proto-version of the strophe melody, which is fully presented (then elaborated) in the second and third stanzas.[31] The fourth stanza departs from this melody entirely. In this way, the setting clearly reflects Sinfield's conception of the lyric as a progression of three stanzas, with a pivot in the fourth stanza.

The unusual chant-like vocal line and organ-like accompaniment textures of the first stanza invoke nineteenth-century Catholic church music. Marked *religioso* and *come Recit.*, the voice repeats a single C, the dominant pitch in this F major setting, for almost the entire stanza (Figure 4.1). The piano supports this with long, held chords, all of which tonicize the dominant of C, with a C pedal in the bass for the first five measures.[32] Fuller suggests that this moment

[29] Peltason, *Reading* In Memoriam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 79.
[30] Peltason, *Reading*, 79.
[31] This song was published in both F and F-sharp. This chapter will refer to the version in F.
[32] The organ obbligato part, published only in F-sharp, primarily doubles the piano part, supplementing it with the organ timbre.

was specifically influenced by White's experience with chant at the London Carmelite church, of which the composer wrote:

> There is something essentially mystic in this strictly diatonic music without any fixed rhythmical measure. It has a power of suggesting eternal things that is possessed by none other to the same degree. It is like an almost transparent veil through which we can glimpse of the world beyond; *there is something in it that confirms our faith in life beyond the grave*.[33]

With this in mind, White's use of a rhythmically free reciting tone for almost the entire first stanza (and, as I will discuss below, the final line of the lyric) supports her reading of the text as one rooted in Christian religious belief, leaving room for the final stanza to affirm hope of life after death.

[33] Fuller, "Women Composers," 173; Maude Valérie White, *My Indian Summer: A Second Book of Memories* (London: Grayson, 1932), 115 (emphasis mine).

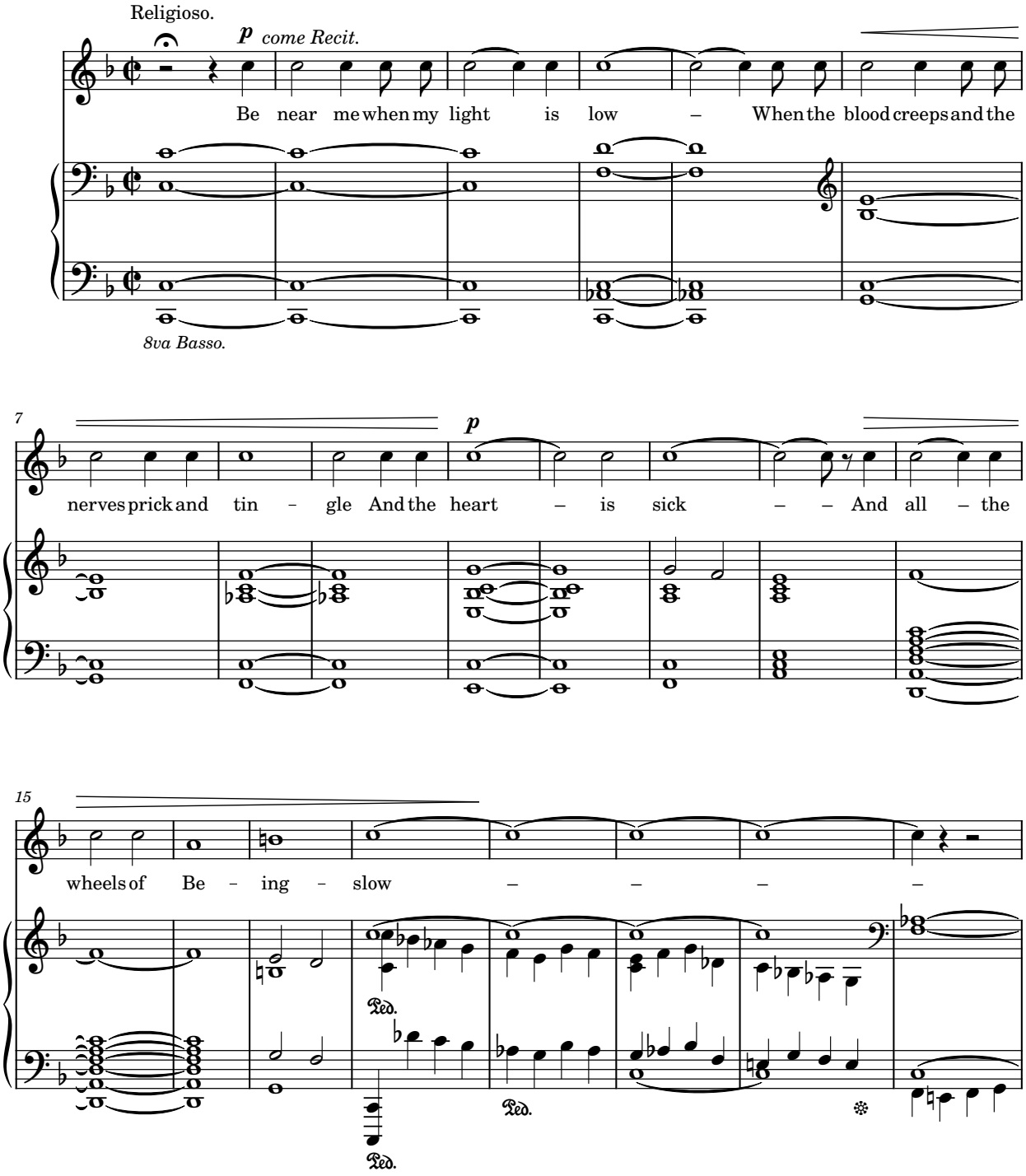

Figure 4.1, White, “Be Near Me When My Light is Low,” mm. 1-32

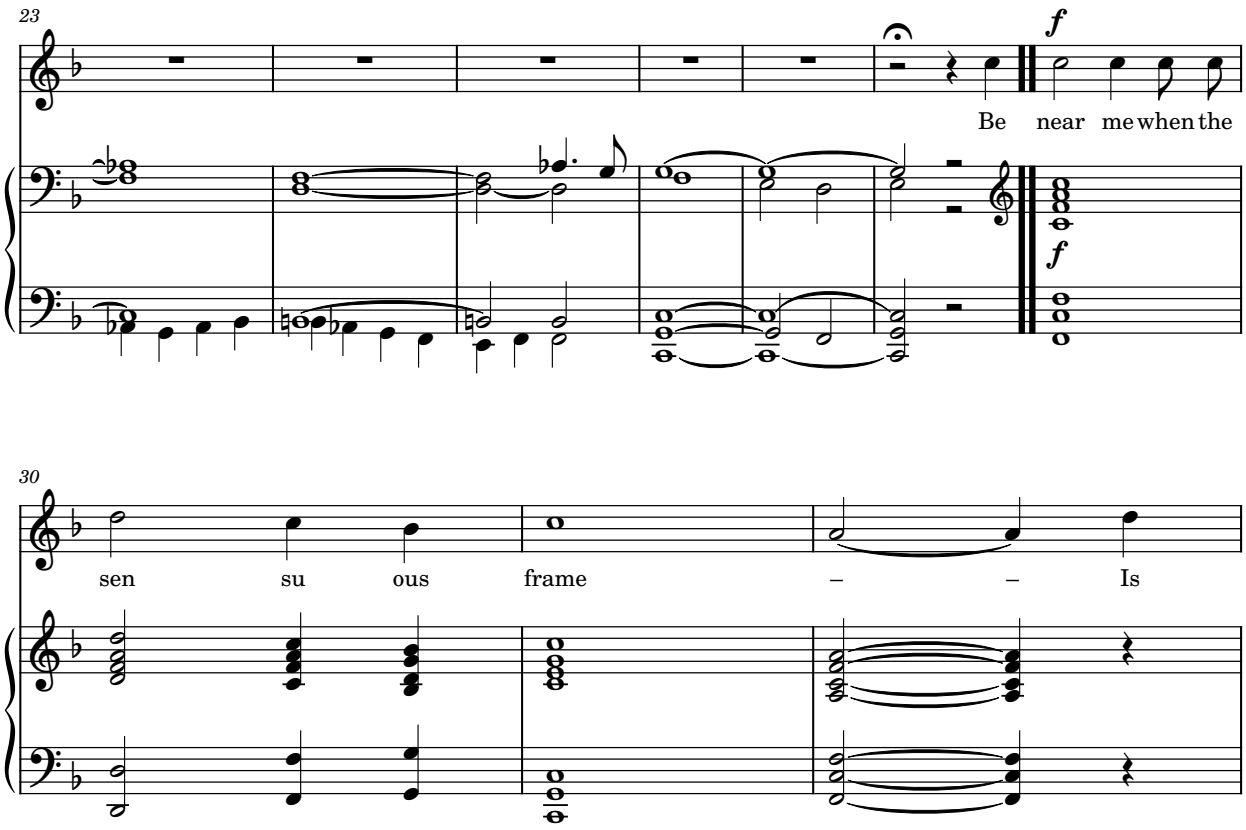

Figure 4.1, *cont.*

In addition to its religious quality, the repetition of a single pitch draws out the effects of the repetitions in the text, focusing inward with intense emotion. Similar to how Sinfield suggests that "the poet seems compelled to continue in the one form until the intensity of his depression is consumed,"[34] the singer wrings out all of the emotional pressure that can come from that single C. And like Sinfield's reader, the listener "is held in the same structure of thought while the poet forces through it all the pressure of his emotion."[35] This first stanza pushes the listener to the limit, as they hear 15 measures of the same vocal pitch, forcing the attention to the text and the internal turmoil it portrays.

[34] Sinfield, *Language*, 97.
[35] Sinfield, *Language*, 97.

After the voice finally changes its pitch to an A in m. 16, only to ascend by step back to the same C, the piano begins a more elaborate organ-like figuration, with long tones in some voices, while other voices move in parallel stepwise quarter notes (mm. 18-28). This section comes to a close with a motive that will become important for the song, a three-note stepwise descent followed by an ascending step (first introduced in the piano's top voice in mm. 12-14). In mm. 26-28, it appears in the piano's alto voice as a suspension with a neighbor motion around the third of the C major chord, a typical cadential figure for a chorale. This is related to the three-note descent that appears throughout the set of songs as a common expression of grief, and which Lehmann will also draw on in her own cycle. With this ending, the piano confirms C major, and thus the opening section ends in the dominant key area.

The second stanza opens with a definitive F major tonic chord in the piano, the first in this song, establishing immediately that the song has moved out of the suspended dominant space which has occupied thus far. However, the voice still begins with repeated Cs, in the same rhythm as the opening stanza, and does not diverge melodically until the text also departs from the parallelism. The impetus for this change is the word "sensuous," at which moment the speaker might be understood to be finally experiencing not only his inner turmoil, but also feeling something outside of himself. This melodic movement comes in the form of the aforementioned motive, a stepwise three-note descent, followed by a rising second (mm. 30-31). This strophe presents for the first time the primary melody of this song, supported by closed-position octave chords, in more of a typical piano texture than an organ or chorale-like one, with the top note mostly doubling the vocal melody and rhythm without significant elaboration. The third stanza, beginning with "Be near me when my faith is dry," repeats this melody, with a much more active piano accompaniment, including a countermelody which perhaps reflects the

speaker's move from exclusively interior thinking to something more communal, outside of himself. Thus the first three stanzas of the song have mirrored Sinfield's reading of the text, from deeply personal, unable to see outside of one's self, to a more general, outward-looking perspective.

White's setting of the fourth stanza diverges significantly from this semi-strophic structure, reflecting the shift in the text. As in Sinfield's description of the lyric, the song "moves in a new direction,"[36] and in a sense, White abandons her own parallel syntax here as the music shows the expansiveness of this final idea. The first line of the stanza, "Be near me when I fade away," is fragmented, stretched, and repeated for 27 measures, a marked departure from what has preceded it. It is at this point, beginning in m. 62, that the piano plays the extended quotation from "'Tis Better to Have Loved and Lost" (from mm. 23-30 of that song), and the voice serves almost an accompanimental role (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).[37] The borrowed section comes from White's setting of the lines "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Then never to have loved at all," so one could conceive of this section weaving together that idea with this stanza's text, asking the loved one to be nearby as the speaker looks to what comes beyond death. However, the long, sustained notes and the fragmentation obscure the text to an extent, and it is not yet clear to the listeners that this stanza points toward a future hope. At this moment, what is clear is that this is a significant departure from what has come before.

[36] Sinfield, *Language*, 96.
[37] The organ obbligato part rests for the entirety of this quotation.

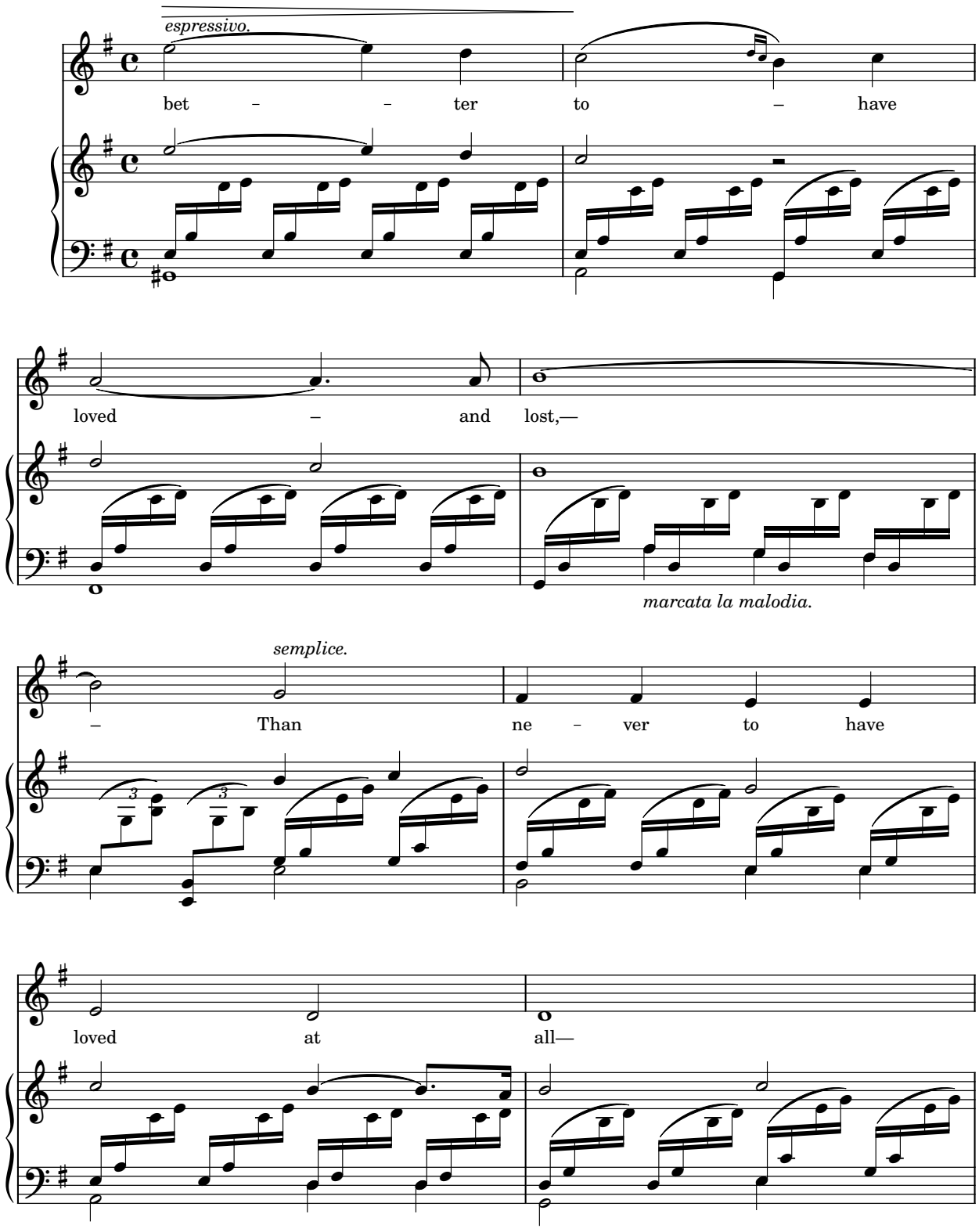

Figure 4.2, White, "'Tis Better to Have Loved and Lost," mm. 23-30

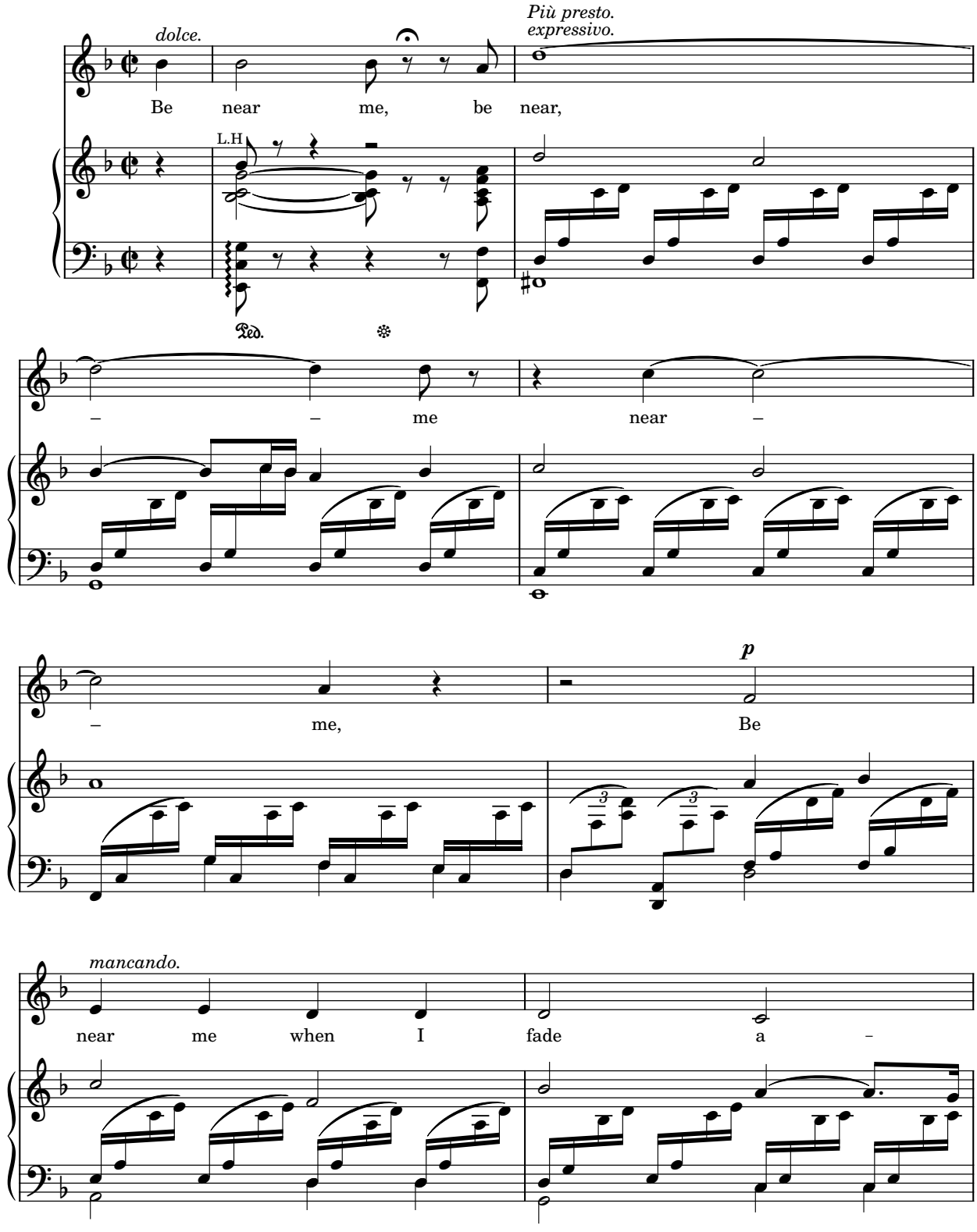

Figure 4.3, White, “Be Near Me When My Light is Low,” mm. 61-69

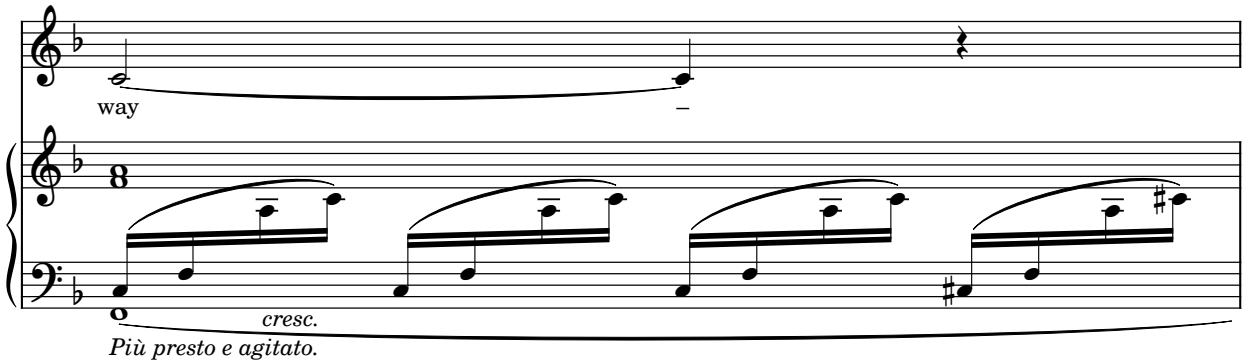

Figure 4.3, *cont.*

On the last statement of "when I fade away," the voice climactically ascends to an F, the highest note (with the loudest dynamic) thus far (Figure 4.4). This ascent makes a strong claim, as White uses ironic text painting to contradict the meaning of "fade away." This speaker is not fading away and is in fact doing the opposite, boldly claiming hope after emerging from the fragmented repetitions of the line. On the last line of the lyric, the vocal line reaches its true climax, a G, on the word "eternal," resolving to the tonic F for the word "day" (Figure 4.5). Here, in m. 104, the piano returns to its organ-like figuration from the end of the first section, with low bass notes, long soprano notes, and steadily moving, parallel inner voices. Then the voice repeats the last line of the text, "The twilight of eternal day," on a repeated C, bringing back the chant-like music from the beginning, so that the piety with which the song began is affirmed in this more hopeful final statement (mm. 108-113). While the voice does end on the dominant pitch, it has already proclaimed the tonic in m. 104 on the first statement of this final line, and the piano asserts the tonic with a *fortississimo* tremolo chord in the final measures (mm. 114-116).

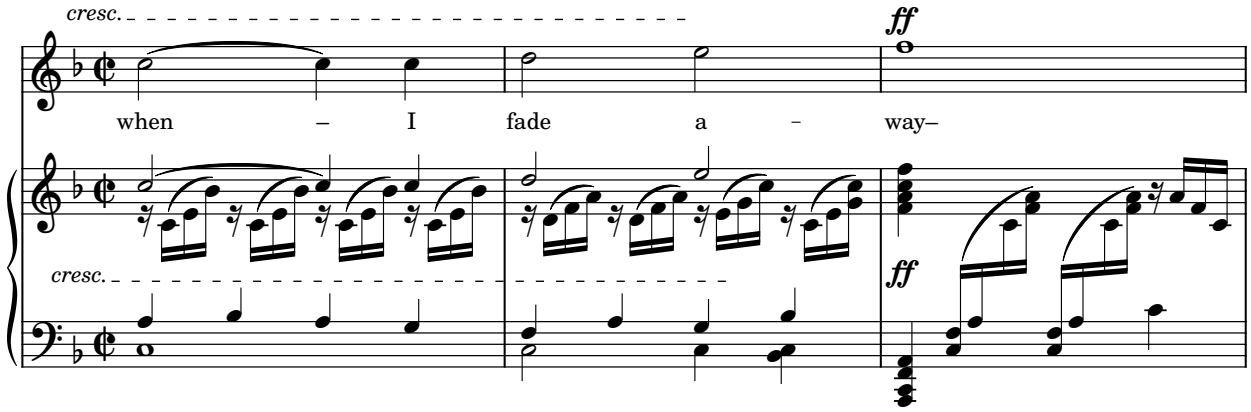

Figure 4.4, White, “Be Near Me When My Light is Low,” mm. 85-87

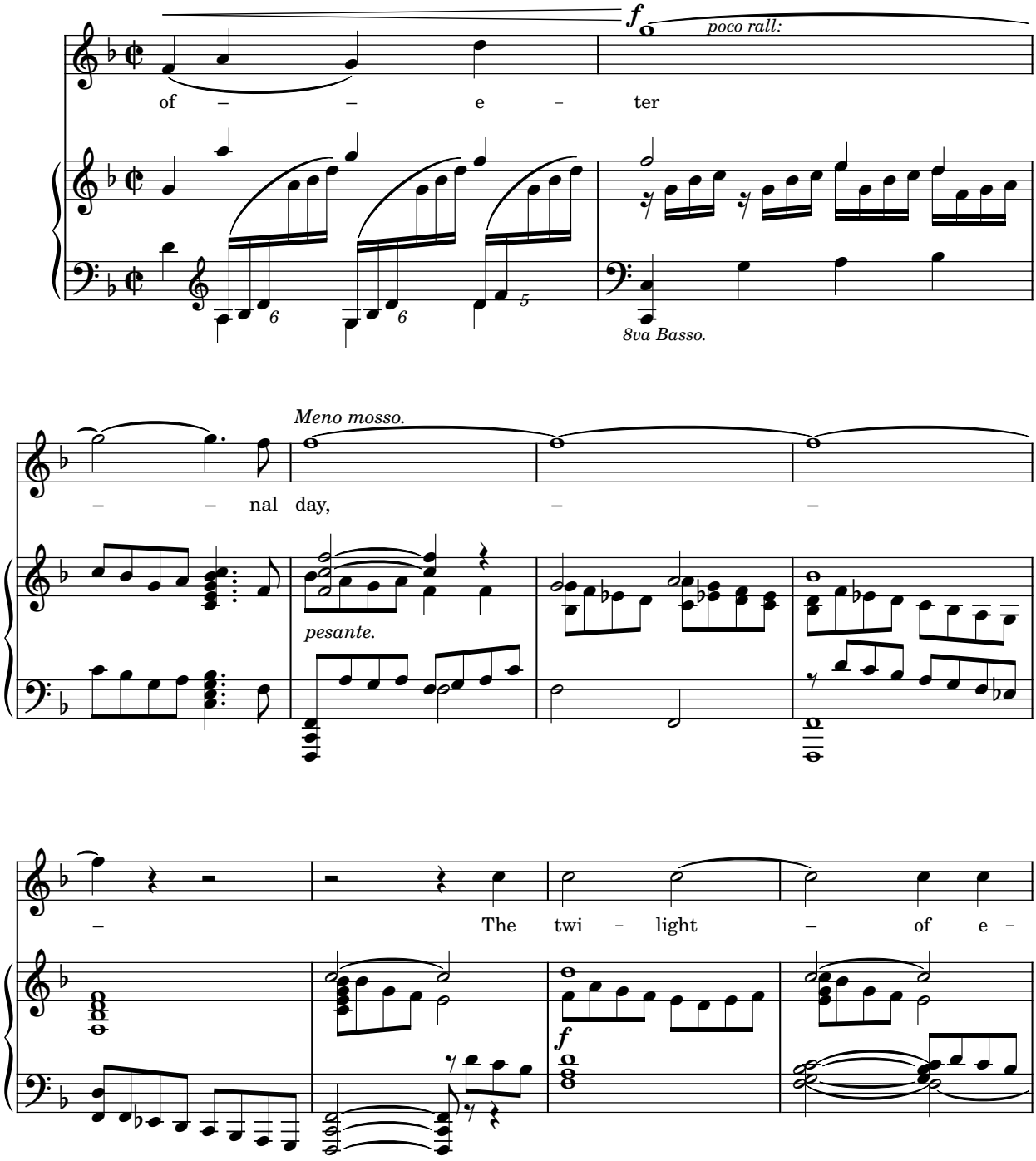

Figure 4.5, White, "Be Near Me When My Light is Low," mm. 101-116[38]

[38] I have made the following alternations from the original score, due to obvious misprints: m. 101, the treble clef is my addition; m. 113, beat 3, the notes in the published score are E-F-A-E; m. 113, beat 4 in the piano's left hand is originally notated as a half note; m. 114, beat 2 is originally noted as a dotted quarter note.

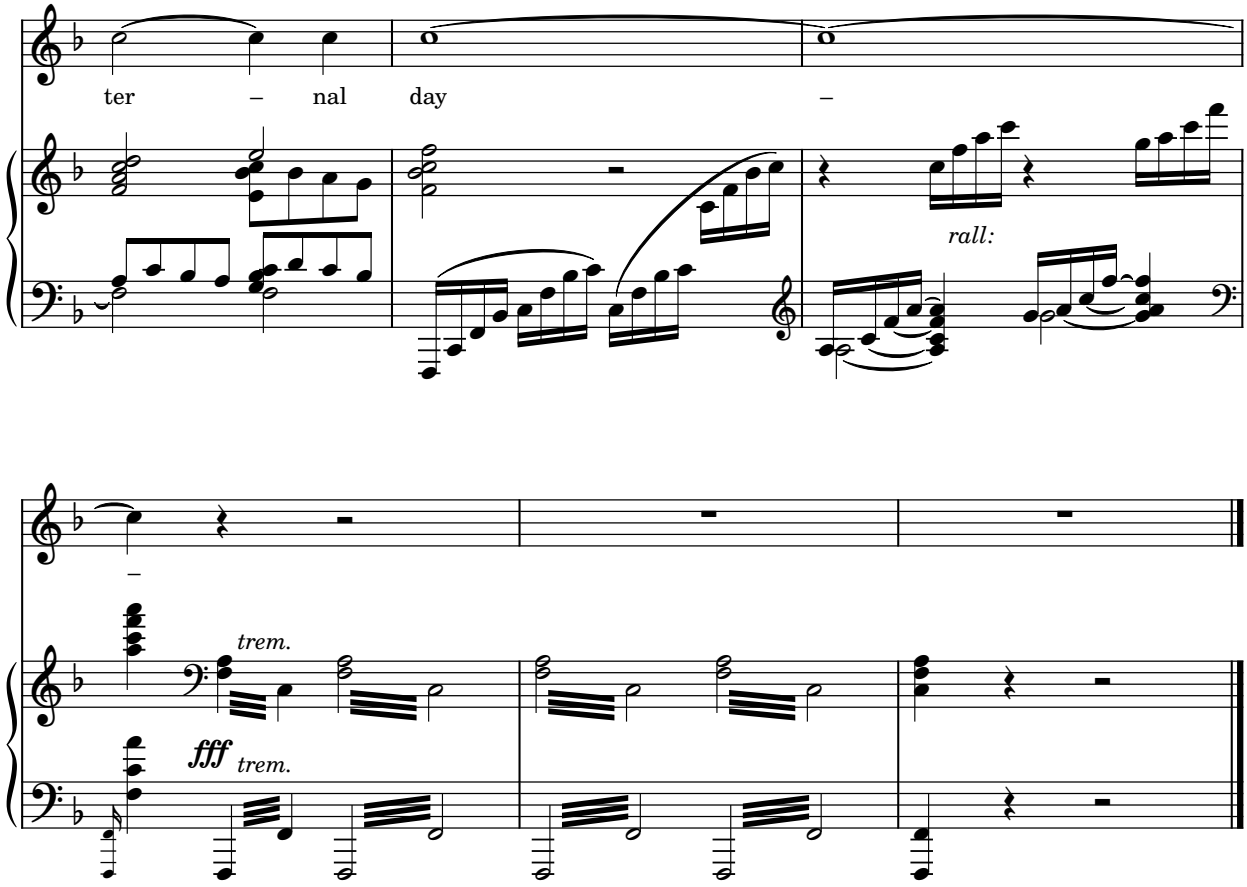

Figure 4.5, *cont*.

With the strong religious associations of the final chanted line and the organ-like texture, this seems like a definitive affirmation of faith, which is supported by White's own strong faith at the time of composition. Indeed, she wrote in her memoir that Tennyson said flippantly at their meeting "that he had not personally experienced a great many of the feelings expressed in the poem" (a statement that we might take with a grain of salt, occurring 35 years after the poem's publication), and she said this was shocking because she had "personally felt every single word of the four songs from the same poem that I had just set to music."[39] While this particular lyric of Tennyson's elegy does not straightforwardly assert Christian faith, and indeed the poet wrestles

[39] White, *Friends and Memories*, 293.

with the idea for many more sections, White's setting unabashedly confirms the hope in the "eternal day" present in this last stanza.

White's compositional choices amplify some of the effects that Sinfield observes in this particular lyric, but she also uses the text to assert her own affirmation of belief to end her set. Her approach to the text's religious themes contrasts Lehmann's more ambivalent setting, which engages more with the larger text's expressions of doubt. Lehmann's setting, 14 years later, wrestles with the text in a new way, seemingly attempting to capture the essence of the entire poem, while by necessity using only a small fraction of the complete text.

Approaching Lehmann's *In Memoriam*: Large-Scale Critical Issues

Tennyson's vast elegy has attracted criticism engaging with a broad range of ideas, from geology, astronomy, and other scientific concerns to the role of children, from queer theory and an abundance of Freudian criticism to detailed considerations of diction and syntax.[40] Out of this sprawling landscape of literary criticism, a few ideas stand out as particularly useful in approaching Lehmann's cycle.

One such idea, considered by many different critics in service of various larger goals, is the effect of Tennyson's unusual stanza form. Both the stanza's tetrameter and the *abba* rhyme

[40] For brief overviews of *In Memoriam* criticism, see Purton and Page, *Literary Dictionary of Tennyson*, 120-125 and Harold Bloom, ed., *Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, Bloom's Major Poets (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999), 69-87. On geology, see Isobel Armstrong, "Tennyson in the 1850s: From Geology to Pathology – *In Memoriam* (1850) to *Maud* (1855)," in *Tennyson: Seven Essays*, ed. Philip Collins (London: St. Martin's, 1992), 102-140. On astronomy, see Anna Henchman, "'The Globe we groan in': Astronomical Distance and Stellar Decay in *In Memoriam*," *Victorian Poetry* 41, no. 1 (April 2003): 29-46. On the role of children, see Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 59-162. For queer readings, see note 11 above. For Freudian criticism, see Terry Eagleton, "Tennyson: Politics and Sexuality in *The Princess* and *In Memoriam*," in *Tennyson*, ed. Rebecca Stott (London: Longman, 1996), 76-86; Kiera Allison, "The Repression of the Return: Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and the Art of the Unheard Echo," *Victorian Poetry* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 41-56; Irene Hsiao, "Calculating Loss in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*," *Victorian Poetry* 47, no. 1 (April 2003): 173-196. For a detailed consideration of the language, see Sinfield, *Language*.

scheme have warranted discussion. The use of tetrameter for a large-scale elegy is notable, particularly in contrast with works like Percy Shelley's elegy for John Keats, "Adonais," written in pentameter. Gray notes that using "the limited four-beat line" can seem juvenile, and that poets such as William Wordsworth and John Milton used this meter for their earlier works.[41] Veronica Alfano extends this to consider how the stanza form "may appear both effeminate and childish," focusing also on how this childlike state of mourning emphasizes the "regressive helplessness of the mourner."[42]

More unusual than the meter is the rhyme scheme, and scholars have explored the ways in which it is a manifestation of some of the poem's themes, in its journey away from and return back to the first line's ending syllable. Sinfield suggests that the rhyme scheme's circularity relates to the imagery of the circle used throughout the poem, symbolizing a cyclic view of life, or the confining, circular experience of grief.[43] Similarly, Sarah Gates considers the ways in which the stanza form embodies the conflicts and journey of the poet, writing that "the mourner at the beginning, like the stanza in its first line, must live through the difficult experience of middle time in order to arrive at his final state, as the stanza arrives at its closing rhyme."[44] Isobel Armstrong, in discussing the poem's "fundamental anxiety… about the dissolution of language altogether," refers to it as a "self-retarding stanza form" that "creates obstructions and blocks against itself."[45] Alfano discusses the rhyme scheme's halting nature, stating that it "parallels the fitful fluctuation of moods that are nonetheless drawn back again and again to

[41] Erik Gray, *The Poetry of Indifference* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 91.
[42] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 113.
[43] Sinfield, *Language*, 146-7. Sinfield also considers at length Tennyson's divergences from the strict adherence to this stanza form (182-5).
[44] Sarah Gates, "Poetics, Metaphysics, Genre: The Stanza Form of *In Memoriam*," *Victorian Poetry* 37, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 516.
[45] Armstrong, *Language as Living Form in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1982), 173, 176.

despair at the irrevocable fact of Hallam's death."[46] She also links the rhyme scheme to the larger thread of her monograph, the text's concern with flawed memory. In this work, where the poet has a deep anxiety about being able to properly remember his dead friend as time passes, the obsessive return to the opening rhyme is one manifestation of this anxiety. She writes further that "the couplet [*bb*] creates a sense of memorable finality–which is immediately destabilized and obscured by the belated return of the *a* rhyme."[47] In these various ways, scholars have found meaning in Tennyson's unusual choice of form, and as I will discuss below, Lehmann frequently breaks down this stanza form in her setting.

Another critical issue that is important for Lehmann's cycle is the history and interpretation of the poem's prologue and epilogue. The prologue was one of the last parts of the poem that Tennyson wrote, and he left it untitled, printed before the poem's main title, marked only with its year of composition, 1849. The opening stanza stamps the work from the outset as overtly Christian:

> Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
> Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
> By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
> Believing where we cannot prove;[48]

Indeed these opening lines were included as a hymn text in the English Hymnal.[49] However, it quickly becomes apparent as one continues reading that most of the poem is not written from this perspective, and that this faith is hard-won over the years-long mourning process. Irene Hsiao writes that the prologue serves "as introduction and apologia" and speaks "from a perspective

[46] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 111.
[47] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 126.
[48] *In Memoriam*, Prologue, 1-4.
[49] This is not a hymn for which Ralph Vaughan Williams composed an original tune; rather, it is printed with music by Orlando Gibbons. W. J. Birkbeck, et al., *The English Hymnal with Tunes*, mus. ed. Vaughan Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), 630, no. 483.

advanced temporally and emotionally from the rest of the poem, disparaging the speaker's youthful error and petitioning the reader for absolution."[50] In this way, it serves as a framing device, set apart from the rest of the text, but clearly shading the reading experience with strong Christian overtones.

The poem's epilogue celebrates the 1842 marriage of Tennyson's sister Cecilia to another friend, Edmund Lushington, and it is generally referred to as the epithalamium, or a poem for a bride on her wedding day. Tennyson himself reflected that the end of poem is "too hopeful… more than I am myself,"[51] and it paints an optimistic picture of future happiness in which the intended marriage of Hallam and Emily Tennyson is spiritually fulfilled by another union. John D. Rosenberg writes that "the Epilogue contains some of Tennyson's very best and worst poetry," and that he uses this lesser style for Cecilia and Lushington and reserves the greater poetry (lines 105 onwards) "for his own marriage in heaven," that of his reunification with Hallam.[52] Both the prologue and the epilogue seem to oversimplify the poet's journey. Alfano writes that "neither part of the poem's frame, neither the devout assurances of the epithalamion nor the confident cadences of the prologue, feels wholly earned. The final stanzas of a poem that Tennyson finds 'too hopeful' do not necessarily get the last word; its fraught journey, its persistent textual past, can seem more significant than its destination."[53] It is precisely this idea that Lehmann will experiment with in her own cycle, reconstructing the frame as her own commentary on the journey contained within it.

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[50] Hsiao, "Calculating Loss," 181.

[51] Tennyson to James Knowles, *Nineteenth Century* xxxiii (1893), 182, quoted in Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson*, 859.

[52] Rosenberg, *Elegy for an Age*, 62-63.

[53] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 140.

Still, faith is of central importance in *In Memoriam*. While the text wrestles with this faith in a non-linear progression, many scholars agree that it represents a journey through "honest doubt" to a more secure faith in life beyond the grave, solidified through a firsthand encounter with the dead. Most name section XCV as this turning point, which, as Purton and Page write, "at the heart of the poem, describes a mystical experience of momentary reunion with the dead."[54] While not the longest of the poem, this section draws attention to itself as one of the longer lyrics, with 64 lines. (See Appendix A for the complete lyric.) In this section, one of a group of lyrics set at the Tennyson family home in Somersby, the poet lingers outside on the lawn after a gathering. Once he is left alone, the poet, seized by the "hunger" to connect with his friend, begins to read their old letters, when he is suddenly struck by a vision of Hallam:

> And strangely on the silence broke
> The silent-speaking words, and strange
> Was love's dumb cry defying change
> To test his worth; and strangely spoke
>
> The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
> On doubts that drive the coward back,
> And keen through wordy snares to track
> Suggestion to her inmost cell.
>
> So word by word, and line by line,
> The dead man touched me from the past,
> And all at once it seemed at last
> The living soul was flashed on mine,
>
> And mine in this was wound, and whirled
> About empyreal heights of thought,
> And came on that which is, and caught
> The deep pulsations of the world,
>
> Aeonian music measuring out
> The steps of Time – the Shocks of Chance –
> The blows of Death. At length my trance
> Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.

[54] Purton and Page, *Literary Dictionary of Tennyson*, 123.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:[55]

The poet has a direct encounter with the dead friend, who "touched" him "from the past," and he does so through the medium of language ("word by word, and line by line"), which has been a central concern throughout the poem, and which is a theme in much of the criticism. While the poet expresses in line 44 that the vision ended with doubt, Tennyson wrote a note that "the doubt was dispelled by the glory of the dawn of the 'boundless day,'"[56] a reference to the last line of the section. From here, the poet moves forward in faith. While there is not a simple, uncomplicated acceptance and closure, the poetry that follows moves more surely towards faith and looks towards the future.

While some scholars discuss it in detail and others simply mention it in passing, almost all of the criticism takes as a given that section XCV is a significant turning point in the text. For example, Rosenberg writes that "there has been a change both within Section 95 and in the movement of the larger poem, which this section mirrors in miniature. The tomb-like, deserted house of Section 7 is now a house of light and life; and the blank day that ends the earlier lyric has broadened into the boundless day that ends section 95."[57] Most criticism that deals with the poem as a whole dedicates at least some space to discussing this section; however, a few scholars

[55] *In Memoriam*, XCV, 25-51.

[56] Gray, ed. *In Memoriam*, 70n6. This note, attributed to Tennyson, comes from the edition known as the "Eversley Edition," which was overseen by Tennyson and includes annotations by the poet and his son. Tennyson, *The Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, vol. 2, ed. H. Tennyson (London: Macmillan, 1907-1908).

[57] Rosenberg, *Elegy for an Age*, 61. This intersects compellingly with the idea discussed above of section L as a microcosm of the larger work, and each of these sections specifically begins with darkness and ends with light.

take issue with the weight that has been placed on this lyric as a pivotal moment. Hsiao situates the pivot earlier, in section LXXXV, another unusually long section at 120 lines, and the second in which the lines "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all" appear. She writes, "though XCV appears to manifest a contact with Hallam that is more authentic than the manufactured 'dialogue' of section LXXXV, in fact the mode of communication–that is, writing–has already been established in the earlier section… Section XCV is therefore not the 'turn' of *In Memoriam*, but the picture of the triumph that LXXXV's strategies have enabled."[58] In contrast, Alfano questions the permanence of XCV's pivot, focusing on the doubt that the poet experiences as soon as his trance ends. She writes that he only "briefly overcomes Hallam's strangeness to commune with his 'living soul'" and continues to fixate on the obsessive enacting of remembering and forgetting his friend.[59] In different ways, both Hsiao and Alfano disagree that section XCV is the necessary and definitive turning point of the poem.

These are just a few of the many ways in which critics draw out the complexities of Tennyson's vast and wide-ranging elegy. Ideas that one may take for granted, such the progression from doubt to faith, and where such a turn takes place, are subject to interpretation, and the text provides a variety of avenues for doing so. In a poem where the use of language itself is at stake, the field is ripe for a multiplicity of readings, and Lehmann joins this conversation with her reimagining of the elegy, with music at its center.

Analysis: Lehmann's *In Memoriam*

Lehmann's ambitious cycle, written in 1899, draws texts from throughout Tennyson's poem, and the composer wrote that "some of my very best writing is to be found in the pages of

[58] Hsiao, "Calculating Loss," 191.
[59] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 121.

In Memoriam."[60] The cycle premiered at the Saturday Pops in November 1899, sung by baritone Kennerley Rumford, to mostly favorable reviews.[61] The composer had recently had popular and critical success with her cycle for four voices, *In a Persian Garden* (1896), using texts from Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. As Fuller writes, "The song-cycle, whether for solo voice or several voices and piano, was not a genre commonly used by British composers at this time, and Lehmann had been consistently credited with establishing it in Britain."[62] While generally well-received, Lehmann's *In Memoriam* never reached the same level of popular success as *In a Persian Garden* or her subsequent cycle, *The Daisy Chain* (1900),[63] because, the composer speculated, of "the sombre character of the subject and the fact that one voice had to bear the whole burden."[64]

Lehmann certainly knew White's *In Memoriam* settings, as White was a close friend and mentor. For a time in the 1890s, the two composers lived in the same village, Pinner, and frequently played their works for one another.[65] Both composers wrote fondly in their respective memoirs of their time as friends and neighbors, and Lehmann wrote that "I had sung a great many of her exquisite songs."[66] Lehmann looked up to the elder composer, recalling an early memory of reading a glowing review of White's compositions in *The Times*, and adding, "I simply worshipped at the shrine of any woman who wrote music. Maude Valérie White, Marie Wurm, Chaminade – they seemed to me goddesses!"[67]

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[60] Liza Lehmann, *The Life of Liza Lehmann* (New York: Dutton and Company, 1919), 91. The cycle was published simultaneously in two keys, one marked "original key," for baritone or mezzo-soprano, and one marked "transposed key," for bass or contralto, written one half-step lower. I will refer to the original key.

[61] Lehmann, *Life of Liza Lehmann*, 91-93. Fuller, "Women Composers," 226.

[62] Fuller, "Women Composers," 219. See Fuller's footnote 39 for examples.

[63] Texts by various poets, including several by Robert Louis Stevenson.

[64] Lehmann, *Life of Liza Lehmann,* 91.

[65] White, *Friends and Memories*, 361.

[66] Lehmann, *Life of Liza Lehmann*, 72. White, *Friends and Memories*, 31, 248-9, 363.

[67] Lehmann, *Life of Liza Lehmann*, 23.

Lehmann's *In Memoriam* cycle has eleven sung numbers, as she referred to them, with a piano introduction and interlude, and a spoken epilogue. Table 4.2 provides the section and line numbers for each song.[68] Lehmann rarely uses one of Tennyson's sections in its entirety (she only does so in no. 5, with Tennyson's section LXVII) and often does not even leave entire stanzas intact, disturbing the quintessential *In Memoriam* stanza form. One of the through lines of Lehmann's text selection is poetry about music, and she uses many, but not all, of Tennyson's significant mentions of music. One particularly notable choice of text is the use of the opening three stanzas of Tennyson's prologue for the last sung number of the cycle, which reflects the prologue's advanced chronological perspective. This is followed by a spoken epilogue, with piano accompaniment, which uses not Tennyson's epilogue, but text from his section CXXV.

Table 4.2, Lehmann, Text Selection from *In Memoriam*

Song Number	**Song First Line**	**Poem Section**	**Poem Lines**
No. 1	I sing to him that rests below	XXI	1-4, 23-28
No. 2	O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me	LIX	1-3
No. 3	If Sleep and Death be truly one	XLIII	1-8
No. 4	Risest thou thus, dim dawn again	LXXII	1-8, 21-28
No. 5	When on my bed the moonlight falls	LXVII	1-16 (all)
No. 6	I cannot see the features right	LXX	1-8, 13-16
Interlude			
No. 7	Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet	LXXXVIII	1-8
No. 8	To Sleep I give my powers away	IV	1-12
No. 9	Sweet after showers, ambrosial air	LXXXVI	1-3, 8b-16
No. 10	Who loves not Knowledge? who shall rail	CXIV	1-2a, 4b-5, 9-13
No. 11	Strong Son of God, immortal Love	Prologue	1-12
Epilogue	Whatever I have said or sung	CXXV	1-8

[68] The given song numbers are my own addition, based on clear indications from Lehmann's score. I will use these numbers throughout for ease of identification.

This spoken epilogue seems like an unusual choice by today's standards, much like her composition of a cycle for four voices. Indeed even in Lehmann's time, the practice, which had long been popular in Britain, was already somewhat out of fashion.[69] It is probably for this reason that Lehmann noted in the published score that the epilogue was optional. In a mostly positive review of the premiere from the *Manchester Guardian* that Lehmann reproduced in her memoir, the reviewer wrote that "the accompanied recitation, forming an epilogue to the cycle, we hold to be a mistake, but on the whole the work is one of undeniable interest and poetic beauty."[70] Still, as discussed below, the epilogue seems core to Lehmann's conception of the work, and she would go on to write several more "musical recitations" after this.[71] Notably, Lehmann wrote in her memoir that she had set "some twelve numbers" from the poem, which, while phrased somewhat flippantly, indicates that she saw the cycle as a set of twelve, not eleven.[72]

Lehmann's work has a high degree of cyclic cohesion. The numbers are all to be performed *attacca*, with only a footnote that if a pause is necessary, it can be taken before the piano interlude.[73] Several themes and motives recur throughout the cycle, including a three-note descending sigh, often associated with the words "O sorrow," of which Fuller writes: "Such a figure has commonly been used to express grief but it is surely more homage than coincidence that a motif remarkably similar to the memorably insistent variant found toward the end of Lehmann's second section… had opened White's first *In Memoriam* setting."[74] It does seem

[69] Stephen Banfield writes that there was "a strong tradition of accompanied poetic recitation in England and elsewhere," listing examples by Granville Bantock, Arnold Bax, Frank Bridge, John Ireland, and Norman O'Neill. Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 371.
[70] Lehmann, *Life of Liza Lehmann*, 93.
[71] Fuller, "Women Composers," 232.
[72] Lehmann, *Life of Liza Lehmann*, 91.
[73] Lehmann, *In Memoriam* (London: John Church Company, 1899), 35.
[74] Fuller, "Women Composers," 229.

likely that Lehmann would have paid this tribute of inspiration to White; however, little else about the work bears much similarity to its predecessor.

As a pioneer of the English song cycle, Lehmann took on the challenge of writing a large-scale work that reflects the personal and spiritual journey of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, embracing the work's complexities and contradictions. Her text selection and music-compositional choices portray a similar, but not identical, non-linear journey from doubt to belief through subjective experience, even as she uses only a small sampling of the text. She does not set section XCV, but she repurposes other sections of text that, while they do not as explicitly depict a firsthand encounter with the dead, still accomplish a similar feat, and do so through the imagery of music. The following analysis, focusing primarily on songs no. 5, 6, 11, and the spoken epilogue, shows how Lehmann accomplishes her own turning point in no. 6, brought about through the power of music, and how her cycle ultimately dwells in the complexities of Tennyson's journey of faith.

Lehmann constructs multiple layers of framing in the cycle, both through text and music. The cycle's extended piano introduction, which presents some of the musical material that will be used throughout, prolongs B minor, which is the minor dominant of the key of the first song, E minor. From the first line of song no. 1, the text makes clear that the speaker is aware of the fact that he is singing – much like Tennyson's speaker's awareness of his own poetic language – and that this singing is an uncontrollable response to the grief he is experiencing. The opening song's text, from Tennyson's section XXI, reads as follows:

> I sing to him that rests below,
> And, since the grasses round me wave,
> I take the grasses of the grave,
> And make them pipes whereon to blow.

I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad: her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.[75]

[First stanza repeats]

In this way, Lehmann establishes from the first that the very act of singing is essential to the work's journey through grief. She also immediately begins to dismantle Tennyson's stanza form by including the partial stanza of lines 23-24, "I do but sing because I must, / And pipe but as the linnets sing." (See Appendix A for Tennyson's complete lyric.) This particular pair of lines is central to Sinfield's conception of the poem as a whole, as the piping linnet represents an impromptu outpouring of the poet's feelings.[76] With this lyric's references to pan pipes, Lehmann immediately draws together this compulsive act of singing with the pastoral elegiac tradition.

The second song further breaks down Tennyson's stanza form, using only the first three lines of section LIX:

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
[O Sorrow!][77]

Lehmann also repeats the words "O sorrow" several times, and the various melodic motives to which it is set become important motives that she continues to draw from throughout the cycle. In this case, as with the later song no. 10, the fragmented text is set in a recitative-like fashion.

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[75] *In Memoriam*, XXI, 1-4, 23-28.

[76] Sinfield, *Language*, 17. This is one half of the poem's duality that he illustrates, in contrast with the poem as a finished, constructed artifact.

[77] *In Memoriam*, LIX, 1-3. This section was added in the fourth edition of *In Memoriam* in 1851 (Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson*, 914). See Appendix A for complete lyric.

Most (but not all) of Lehmann's numbers that are more aria-like use complete stanzas, whereas she uses partial texts for these shorter, more discursive numbers. While not quite resembling prose, Lehmann uses these decontextualized verses to a different end, and these shorter numbers break up the cycle so that it is not only a series of lyrics, but an unfolding, almost operatic drama.

In Lehmann's setting, the dramatic pivot towards belief through subjective experience comes at the end of the first half of the cycle. The texts of the fifth and sixth songs both come from about the middle of *In Memoriam*, where many of the lyrics discuss sleep and describe dreams, and they occur substantially earlier than section XCV's waking encounter with the dead friend. In the context of the song cycle, the text of no. 5 (from Tennyson's section LXVII) still describes a nighttime fantasy, but Lehmann's recontextualization of the text for no. 6 (from Tennyson's LXX) allows it to fulfill the role of the pivot to belief through a true encounter with the dead, a belief that is supported by the music.

The text of song no. 5 depicts an imagined scene that the speaker experiences while lying awake in bed, perhaps in the liminal state between waking and sleep. He sees the church where his friend rests, touched by the same moonlight that streams through his own window, as the beam of light illuminates the letters on the tombstone. In the third stanza, as the moonlight disappears from both the fantasy and reality, the speaker finally drifts to sleep, alone in his bed, far from his friend's resting place. The final stanza confirms this distance, the separation between the living and the dead friends. This is the only complete *In Memoriam* lyric that Lehmann uses, and it reads:

> When on my bed the moonlight falls,
> I know that in thy place of rest
> By that broad water of the west,
> There comes a glory on the walls;

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.[78]

Lehmann clearly sets apart the third stanza in her setting, emphasizing the dreamy quality, as the speaker drifts to sleep. She begins the music for this stanza with a shift from the song's F minor to the distantly related C-sharp minor, and the first two lines ("The mystic glory swims away; / From off my bed the moonlight dies;") are sung over a sustained extended dominant chord with no third (Figure 4.6). This music, in a distantly related key and with a stagnant accompaniment, creates a dreamy sound, as if the scene is untethered from the reality around it. At the end of this stanza, the music slides back into F minor, returning to the musical material from the beginning of this number.[79] This lends the lines "And then I know the mist is drawn" a sense of finality, a return to reality with the knowledge that what has just occurred was only an illusion.

[78] *In Memoriam*, LXVII.
[79] Lehmann specifically notes that the piano should "Glide into the change of harmony" (see Figure 4.6).

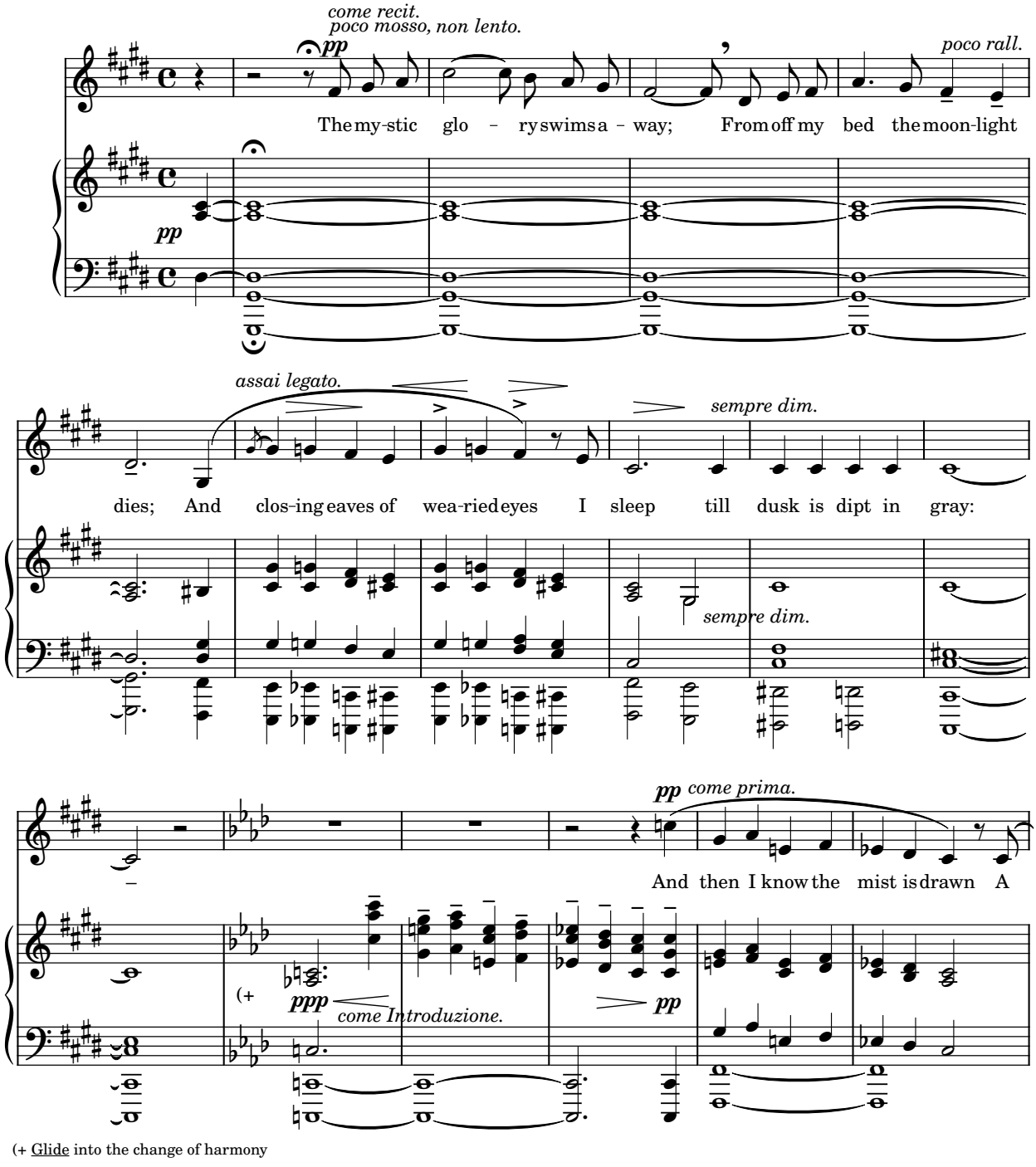

Figure 4.6, Lehmann, No. 5, mm. 40-55[80]

[80] In this and the following figures, there are some small alterations to stemming and note placement from the original score, due to limitations of the engraving software. These changes should not make a meaningful difference to performance or interpretation.

Song no. 6's text describes another vision, all shrouded shapes and ghostly figures, in which the speaker struggles to conjure the face of his friend. However, at its turning point, the speaker hears a "wizard music" that brings forth his face. Unlike in the previous song, this is not an illusion, but a true miraculous vision. The text reads:

> I cannot see the features right,
> When on the gloom I strive to paint
> The face I know; the hues are faint
> And mix with hollow masks of night;
>
> Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
> A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
> A hand that points, and pallèd shapes
> In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;
>
> Till all at once beyond the will
> I hear a wizard music roll,
> And through a lattice on the soul
> Looks thy fair face and makes it still.[81]

Crucially, just as the encounter in Tennyson's section XCV is brought about through the medium of language, the turning point in Lehmann's cycle is brought about through the medium of music. This is reflected not only in the text's "wizard music," but in the music of the song itself. The through-composed song journeys through a restless opening section, to a turbulent setting of the second stanza, containing a struggling, willed ascent towards a melodic goal, to a sudden, peaceful attainment of that goal in the song's relative major on the line "Till all at once beyond the will."

The song opens in F minor (the same key as the previous song), with quickly and clearly declaimed text for the first stanza, accompanied only doubled octaves in the piano. The music for the second stanza, beginning with "Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought," employs the *tempesta* topic, as the piano's right hand plays pulsating, accented chords, and the left hand plays

[81] *In Memoriam*, LXX, 1-8, 13-16. See Appendix A for complete lyric.

sixteenth-note ascending and descending chromatic scales, in octaves (Figure 4.7).[82] Throughout this section, the vocal line struggles towards its expected melodic goal of E-flat, indicating a "willed ascent" towards an "earned" arrival, as defined by Robert Hatten.[83] The voice outlines triads in large leaps, beginning on C minor (with C as the melodic high point) and ascending by half step every two measures. This is the most disjunct melody sung thus far, as the large leaps down and back up emphasize the struggle necessary for each half step attained. On the line "A hand that points, and pallèd shapes," the ascent makes it as far as D, supported by a B fully diminished chord (mm. 10-11). Instead of resolving this chord and reaching the melodic goal of E-flat, the piano's left hand here begins a bass descent from G, through F and E-natural to E-flat (mm. 12-16). E-flat, the goal toward which the voice has been struggling in the upper register, is attained not in the expected register, but instead by a gentle descent in the bass, replacing the difficultly "earned" arrival with one characterized by ease.

[82] As defined in Clive McClelland, "*Ombra* and *Tempesta*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 282.

[83] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 18.

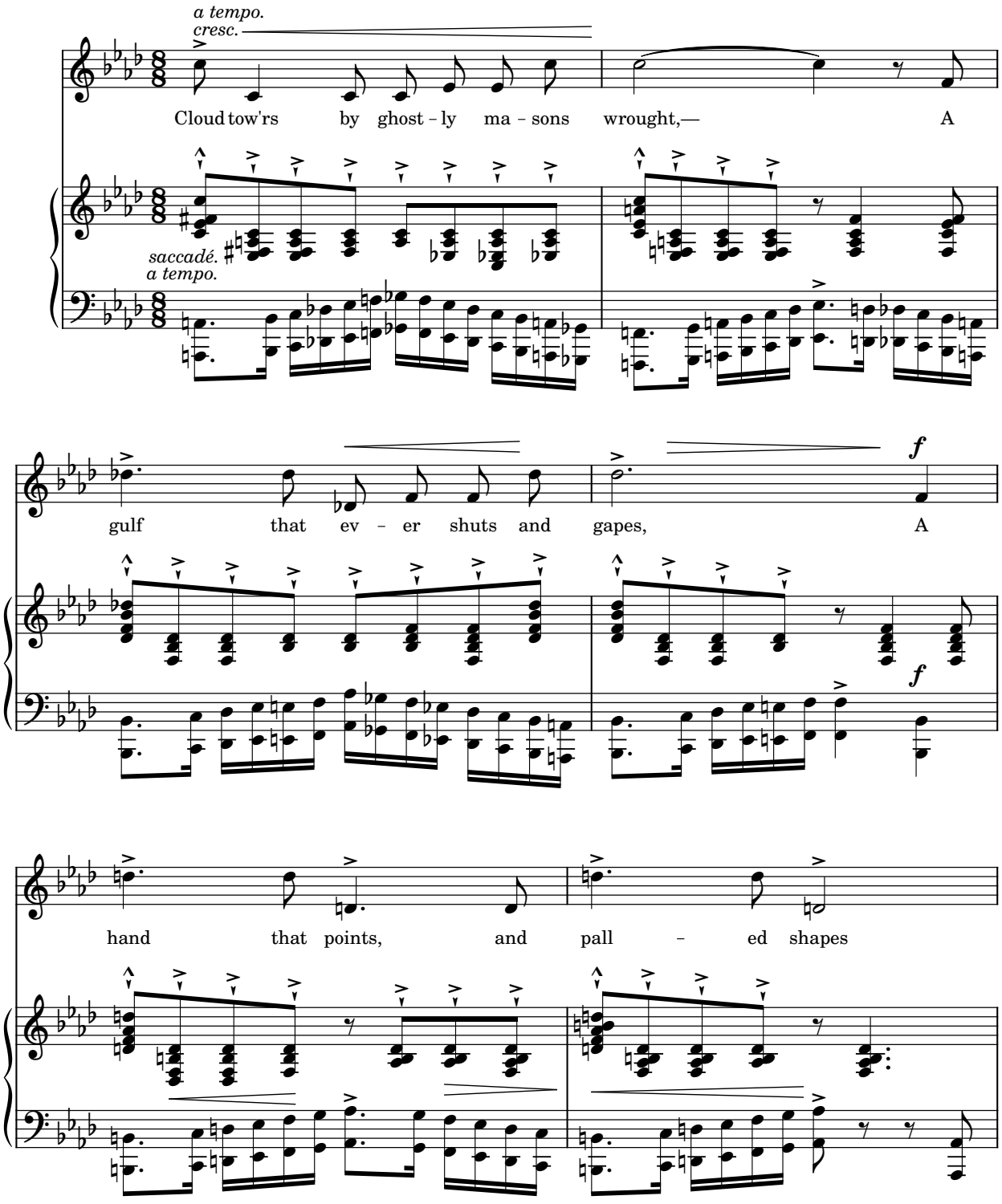

Figure 4.7, Lehmann, No. 6, mm. 6-20

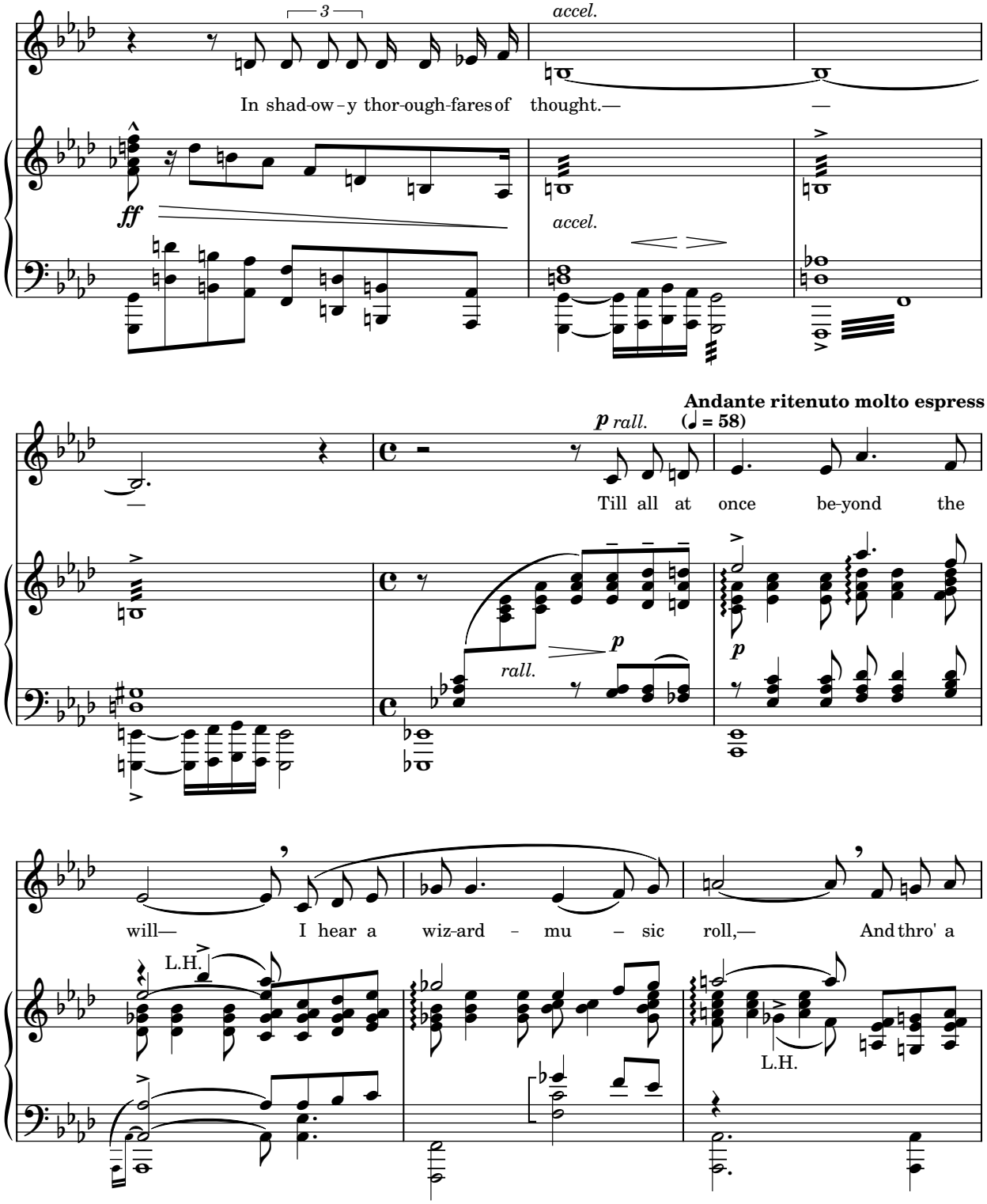

Figure 4.7, *cont.*

With this E-flat arrival in the piano's left hand in m. 16, the right hand plays an A-flat major triad, the relative major of the F minor in which the song began, and the music for this stanza is a transposed, transformed version of a theme from song no. 3. On the words "Till all at once," the voice sings C, D-flat, D-natural, E-flat, easily attaining its previous goal, and this gentle, major-mode melody is the "wizard music" that brings forth the friend's face. As Fuller writes, "the face is finally seen through the agency of music."[84] In contrast to the dreamy vision in the previous song, this section seems anchored in reality, both through the move to the relative major, rather than a distantly related key, and through the use of musical material from earlier in the cycle. Rather than a fantasy that feels untethered harmonically, melodically, and texturally, this vision is comfortable and grounded, like a return home. The rest of the song continues in a similar manner, ending the first half of the cycle tranquilly on A-flat major and sealing, at least for the moment, the miraculous transformation attained in this song.

Like in Tennyson's poem, the journey does not end here, and the rest of the cycle does not settle straightforwardly on belief or hope. The balance is somewhat different, as this occurs at about the halfway point, and Tennyson's turning point is closer to the three-quarter mark, but both continue their non-linear journey to acceptance. While the second half of the cycle contains some darker numbers, songs no. 7 ("Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet") and 9 ("Sweet after showers, ambrosial air") both strike a hopeful note, reveling in images of rebirth in nature.

Lehmann begins to close the frame in song no. 11, which uses as its text the first three stanzas of Tennyson's prologue. These lines expresses a confident belief in the triune Christian god and an acceptance of that god's wisdom in allowing men to die.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
    Whom we, that have not seen thy face,

[84] Fuller, "Women Composers," 227.

By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

By placing this text as the last song of her cycle, Lehmann could easily be signaling an uncomplicated acceptance of this doctrine, using Tennyson's belated opening sentiment to neatly tie up her own. However, both the optional spoken epilogue and the peculiarities of song no. 11 bring out the complexities of this acceptance.

While some aspects of song no. 11 indicate finality, others, including the key area, undermine that effect. The song's opening returns to music from the cycle's piano introduction, and on the words "Strong Son of God, immortal Love," this is the first time that this melody, from the cycle's third measure, has occurred in the vocal line (Figure 4.8).[85] This indicates the closing of the frame and perhaps a conclusion of the journey. But, like the piano introduction, song no. 11 is in B minor, and as Fuller writes, "this number is not musically conclusive, ending in the dominant key."[86] Towards the end of this number, the vocalist repeats the words "Thou art just" several times, each time affirming the key with an F-sharp to B dominant-to-tonic motion in the local key (Figure 4.9). However, the long piano postlude casts doubt over this assertion. The piano's left hand holds a B octave pedal for the last 22 measures of the song, excepting one beat.

[85] This thematic material has not reappeared at all in the cycle until song no. 10, a more recitative-like number that introduces song no. 11.

[86] Fuller further notes that "although the work can be seen as opening in B minor, the key is functioning as an introductory dominant to the E minor of the first vocal passage" (Fuller, "Women Composers," 231n78).

Over this, the right hand plays a series of accented suspensions, which Lehmann marks *come campana*, or "like a knell" (mm. 44-55). Even when played in an accented, bell-like fashion, they are highly unusual for funeral bells, instead invoking a sigh motive. Occurring every two measures, the suspensions are both struck and resolved on beat three, with an additional dissonant tone added on the downbeats, and each decrescendos from *fortissimo* to *piano*. In this way, the bells seem to be questioning, rather than indicating finality. This long, drawn out procession of grief is at odds with the conclusive sentiment of the text, shading Tennyson's "too hopeful" framing text with echoes of doubt and uncertainty.

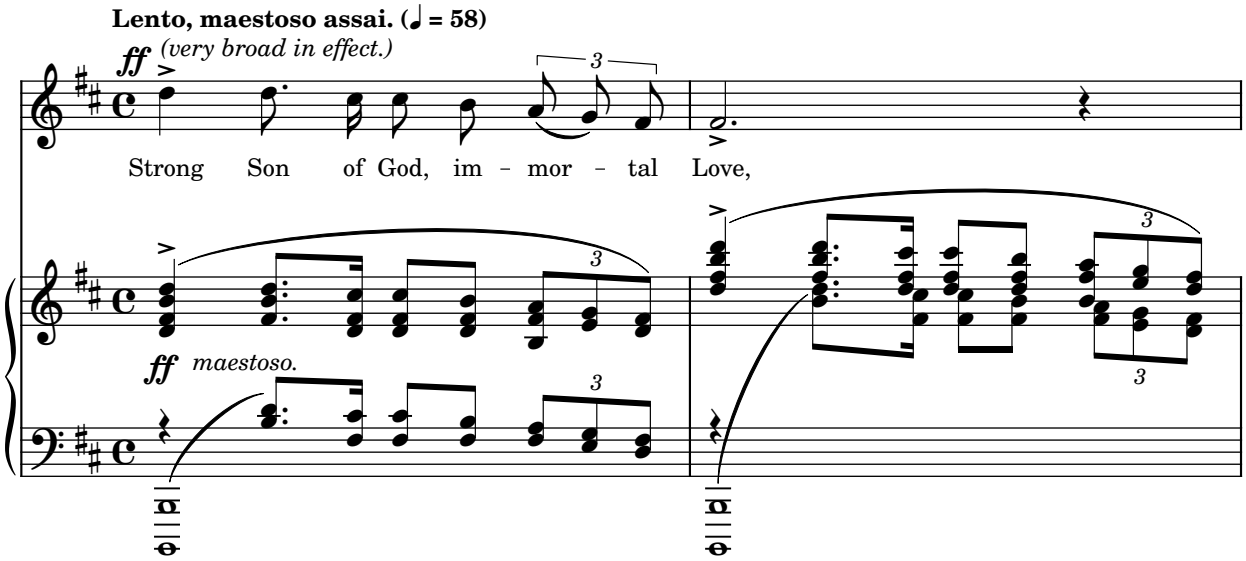

Figure 4.8, Lehmann, No. 11, mm. 1-2

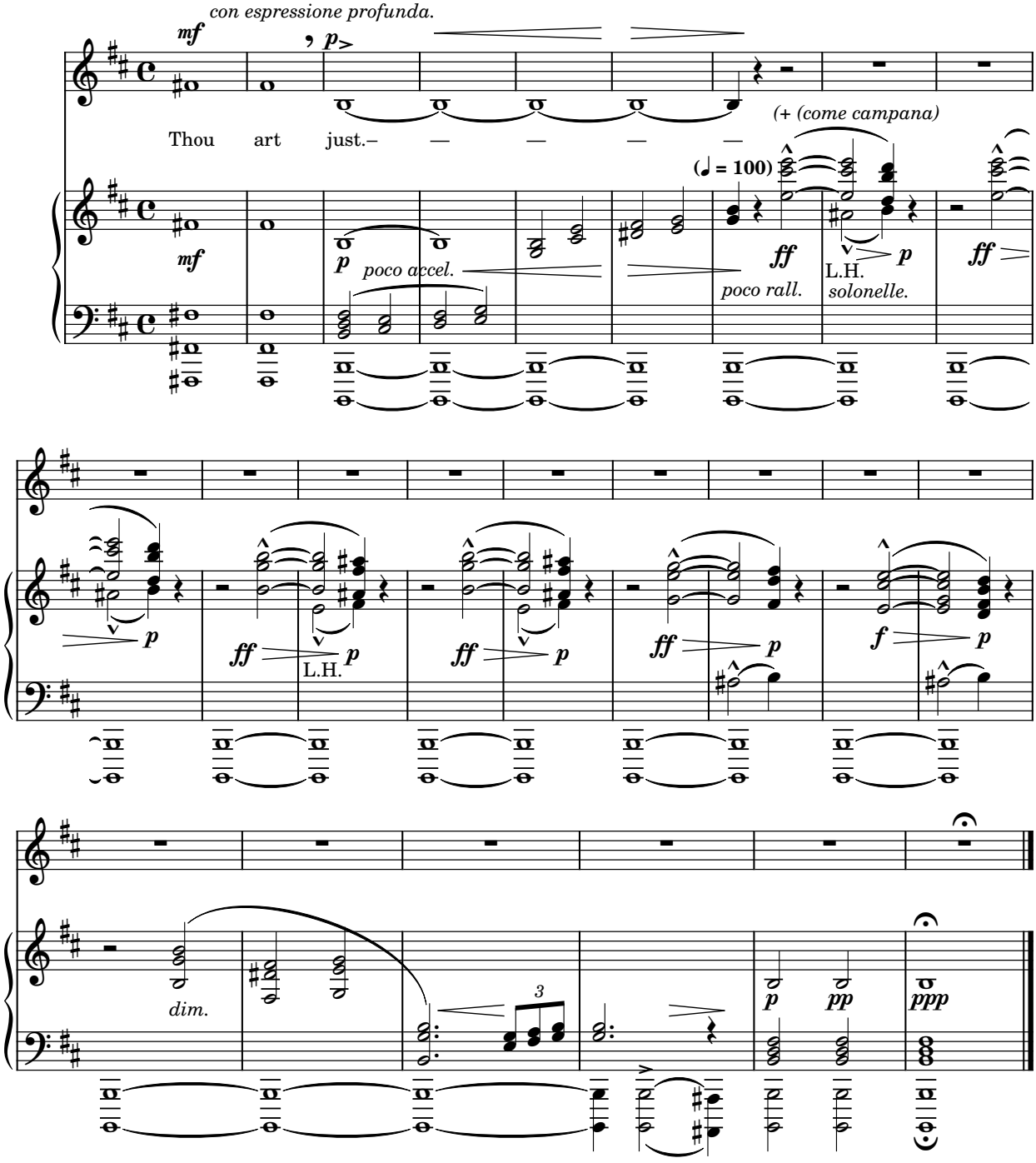

Figure 4.9, Lehmann, No. 11, mm. 38-61[87]

[87] I have made the following alterations to the original score, due to obvious misprints, confirmed against the transposed key: mm. 41-42, the tie in the vocal line is added; m. 44, the asterisk has been moved from the tempo marking to *come campagna*; m. 47, beat 1, the accent in the middle voice is added.

The cycle's spoken epilogue provides a further level of framing in which both the text and music speak to a different kind of ending than either the straightforward faith or uncertain sighs of the previous song. Here the speaker acknowledges the complexity of his journey. As Alfano wrote of the poem, "the final stanzas… that Tennyson finds 'too hopeful' do not necessarily get the last word; its fraught journey, its persistent textual past, can seem more significant than its destination."[88] In Lehmann's reconstruction of *In Memoriam*, this comes to the fore, as the speaker's final commentary draws the attention back to this fraught journey.

Lehmann draws the text from lyric CXXV, near the end of the poem, after the poet's encounter with the dead. This text pairs well with that of the opening song, in which the speaker acknowledges the medium of song, and he now reflects on the content of what's been sung:

> Whatever I have said or sung,
> Some bitter notes my harp would give,
> Yea, though there often seemed to live
> A contradiction on the tongue,
>
> Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
> She did but look through dimmer eyes;
> Or Love but played with gracious lies,
> Because he felt so fixed in truth:[89]

The text of this number takes a step outside of the narrative. The speaker, no longer singing, reflects from a different perspective, perhaps even defending the cycle's contradictions to the listener.

Proceeding directly from no. 11's B minor ending, the music of the epilogue begins and ends in G major, the relative major of the E minor key area established at the beginning of the cycle. This mediant motion doesn't return to the expected E minor tonic, but it does provide a sort of conclusiveness through directional tonality, and one that allows the cycle to end with a

[88] Alfano, *The Lyric in Victorian Memory*, 140.
[89] *In Memoriam*, CXXV, 1-8.

sense of hope.[90] Most of the epilogue uses the musical material first introduced in no. 3 and which was used for the "wizard music" of no. 6, now transposed to G major. However, there is a significant nod to E-flat, the goal which was attained in the vision of song no. 6. After a series of rising sigh gestures over a D pedal, there is an evaded cadence that goes to the flat-VI, E-flat major (Figure 4.10). This unusual moment again has the feeling of a revelation, as the chord is unexpected, then sustained through arpeggiation for several measures. This harmony immediately precedes the spoken voice's entrance, as the speaker reflects on the cycle as a whole. With this text, the use of the "wizard music," and the G major key area, the cycle ends on a hopeful note, but with an acknowledgement of complexity. The overtly Christian sentiments of no. 11 are not taken for granted here, but considered in light of an ongoing journey that may always include some doubt and contradiction. No. 11's text, Tennyson's prologue, is set with music that suggests uncertainty, but the spoken epilogue's text, which reflects on the journey, is paired with music of peaceful resolution. With her epilogue, Lehmann undoes some of the work of Tennyson's "too hopeful" conclusion from both his prologue and the epithalamion, choosing instead to linger in the contradictions of mourning.

[90] This draws on Benjamin K. Wadsworth's conception of directional tonality in the works of Robert Schumann and is an example of his "abrupt" category of directional-tonal works, although Wadsworth usually discusses the tonality of a single movement, not the large-scale tonal scheme of a multi-movement work. Wadsworth, "Directional Tonality in Schumann's Early Works," *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 4 (Dec. 2012).

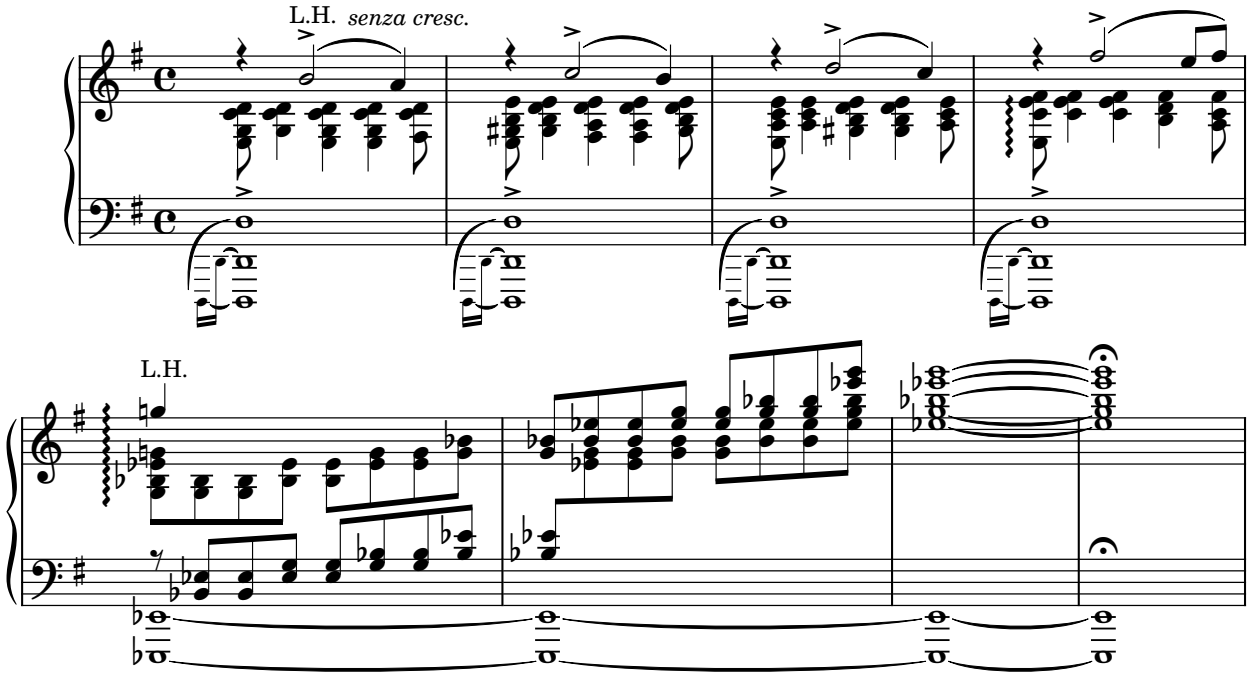

Figure 4.10, Lehmann, Epilogue, mm. 10-17[91]

White and Lehmann take very different approaches to setting *In Memoriam*, which looms large in the landscape of Victorian poetry. Each composer works on a different scale, as Lehmann's cycle wrestles with the poet's entire journey, and White sets only a selection of four lyrics. Still, White's fourth song spills over the bounds of the form, occupying many more pages than any of the other three songs, to interpret a text that encompasses many of *In Memoriam*'s themes. Through these settings, each composer deals in the subtleties of the text, drawing out beauty and complexity that may not be apparent at first glance, especially to an audience who may view the poem as a manual for dealing with grief. While one can easily interpret the poem, especially through the lens of its prologue and epilogue, as a straightforward affirmation of belief, these composers join the ongoing conversation that dwells in the depth of Tennyson's

[91] I have made the following alteration to the original score, due to an obvious misprint, confirmed against the transposed key: m. 15, beat 1, the flat on the B in the lower voice is added.

language and the uncertain journey of mourning. These songs, underperformed and underappreciated in the English song repertoire, merit further study and performance as music that thoughtfully and subtly interprets one of the most significant poetic texts of the era.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As each of these case studies has shown, poetic analysis and close reading have much to contribute to our understanding of song, and there is great benefit to using criticism of the text as a starting point for analysis. Particularly in the study of English and English-language music, this methodology reveals composers' insight into much loved and much studied works of poetry, illuminating a reciprocal relationship of artistic interpretation. Viewing this repertoire through the lens of literary analysis makes clear that there is a rich body of musical works that engage with English-language texts, even as the German Lied has been placed on a pedestal by scholars such as Laurence Kramer. The existing musicological scholarship and methodologies for dealing with the relationship between music and literature are designed for German Romantic music, long hailed as the gold standard in uniting the two arts. This project advocates for a new approach in which the musicologist utilizes deep engagement with English literature as the starting point for analyzing music-text relationships in English music and in this way does justice to the idiosyncrasies of this repertoire.

The first case study, analyzing settings of Christina Rossetti's "Song [When I am dead, my dearest]," demonstrates how composers can work for or against a particular close reading of the text through their compositional choices, as the music interacts with the intricacies of the text. Liza Lehmann's setting in particular draws out the possibilities of irony and subversiveness in the text, while Ralph Vaughan Williams instead highlights aspects of a more conventional reading. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's situating of the text within a cycle, with other intertextual

references, shows one way in which the medium of music can uniquely contribute its own layers of meaning back to the interpretation of the text. For further research, I am interested in a broader survey of the over 150 known settings of this text, with an eye towards identifying and exploring other insightful, subversive, or otherwise innovative readings of the poem.

My analysis of settings of A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* exemplifies the consequences of musical setting for the careful craft of a poet's style, which must be fundamentally altered through its union with music. Even just in the act of anthologizing that each composer performs, the collection takes on new shapes and functions. Further, through the composers' exquisite attention to the details of a single poem, "Is my team ploughing," the music makes possible certain revelations that have not been discussed in the extant criticism, reorienting the issues at the heart of the poem. My next steps in this part of the project include further work with Vaughan Williams' and George Butterworth's settings of "Bredon Hill," as well as bringing into the dialogue the voices of the abundance of other composers who set this text.

In the final case study, my analyses of White's and Lehmann's different approaches to Tennyson's *In Memoriam* show the composers' very intentional awareness of the medium of music and its ability to realize the text's potentialities. White's techniques capture and reframe the nuances of Tennyson's text, while Lehmann's cycle works as a large-scale reimagining of *In Memoriam*'s central journey that makes music an integral aspect of its transformation. I am particularly looking forward to further work with these two prolific composers of song whose work has been relatively untouched in the existing scholarship. Building on the archival work of Sophie Fuller, I aim to bring increased attention and awareness to the music of two keen interpreters of poetry.

In addition to its methodology, this study advocates for the performance and study of song from this era, and especially for the works of those composers who have been historically underrepresented: White, Lehmann, and Coleridge-Taylor. At this time, the works of these composers are only available, at best, in reprint editions, and at worst, in library archives. In conjunction with further scholarship of their music, I intend to work toward the publication of scholarly and performance editions of these songs and others by these composers, with the aim of making the performance, recording, classroom study, and audience enjoyment of such works more accessible. As these case studies have shown, the songs of all of the composers in this project display perceptive and insightful readings of the literature. Such music should be enjoyed by lovers of both arts.

These examples affirm the value of this work, analyzing music through the lens of literary close reading and doing literary close reading through the lens of musical settings. In addition to my expansions of each case study through scholarship, performing editions, and recordings, I will continue to explore the methodology's potential through other works from this era, such as Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden*, with text by Edward FitzGerald, Vaughan Williams' *The House of Life*, with text by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Coleridge-Taylor's *The Soul's Expression*, with text by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Further, I plan to extend this work to other eras of song and of English-language poetry, considering settings of poetry from the English Romantic generation or American poetry of the Harlem Renaissance. I hope that such work can open an ongoing, reciprocal dialogue between music analysts and poetry critics. The study of music and poetry in tandem creates new interpretive avenues that enrich both fields and shed fresh light on what each has to offer.

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APPENDIX A

COMPLETE TEXTS OF SELECTED LYRICS FROM *IN MEMORIAM*

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
    And, since the grasses round me wave,
    I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveler hears me now and then,
    And sometimes harshly will he speak:
    'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
    He loves to make parade of pain,
    That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
    For private sorrow's barren song,
    When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
    When Science reaches forth her arms
    To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
    Ye never knew the sacred dust:
    I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
    For now her little ones have ranged;
    And one is sad: her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.[1]

[1] All texts from Christopher Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson* (London: Longmans, 1969).

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
    No casual mistress, but a wife,
    My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
    Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
    And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centered passion cannot move,
    Nor will it lessen from to-day;
    But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
    With so much hope for years to come,
    That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
    When on the gloom I strive to paint
    The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
    A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
    A hand that points, and pallèd shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
    And shoals of puckered faces drive;
    Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
    I hear a wizard music roll,
    And through a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

XCV

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirred:
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seemed at last
The living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirled
    About empyreal heights of thought,
    And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Aeonian music measuring out
    The steps of Time – the Shocks of Chance –
    The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, so hard to frame
    In matter-moulded forms of speech,
    Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
    The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
    The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And sucked from out the distant gloom
    A breeze began to tremble ‘oer
    The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
    Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
    The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

‘The dawn, the dawn,’ and died away;
    And East and West, without a breath,
    Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.