

Alec Roth – THE FLOWER – words by George Herbert

anthem for unaccompanied choir

first performed by Ex Cathedra, conducted by Jeffrey Skidmore, Birmingham Town Hall, 20 November 2011

COMPOSER'S NOTE

Early in 2007, while staying at the Old Rectory in Bemerton, I set four verses of George Herbert's poem 'The Flower' at the suggestion of Canon Judy Rees of the George Herbert in Bemerton Group, who had invited a number of composers to make new settings of Herbert's poetry as hymns for congregational use (see below*). I subsequently re-worked this simple hymn-tune into the present more elaborate version as a short anthem for unaccompanied choir, especially for Ex Cathedra and Jeffrey Skidmore.

DURATION

ca. 3 minutes

FORCES REQUIRED

Unaccompanied choir SATB, with solo tenor or baritone in verse 3

PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

Score

SCORE SAMPLE

Click here for a [sample page](#) of the Score

RECORDING

The Flower is recorded by Ex Cathedra, directed by Jeffrey Skidmore, on the CD "[Shared Ground](#)"

The individual track may be sampled and downloaded at [iTunes](#)

TEXT

1. How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in spring;
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

2. Who would have thought my shrivell'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness? It was gone
Quite under ground; as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown;
Where they together
All the hard weather
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

3. And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write;
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing: O my only light,
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night.

4. These are thy wonders, Lord of love,
To make us see we are but flowers that glide:
Which when we once can find and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us, where to bide.
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

* ORIGINAL HYMN-TUNE VERSION

The original hymn-tune version of *The Flower* is one of 18 new hymn-tune settings published by the Royal School of Church Music in association with the George Herbert in Bemerton Group in 2007 under the title *Another Music: Through the Year with George Herbert*. The complete collection has been recorded by Sarum Voices, directed by Benjamin Lamb on Vif Records (VRCD077).

For further details, see the George Herbert in Bemerton website: www.georgeherbert.org.uk