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JULIANA HALL

NIGHT DANCES

6 Songs for Soprano and Piano

on Poems by
Elizabeth Bishop,
Emily Brontë,
Emily Dickinson,
and Edna St. Vincent Millay

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NIGHT DANCES was commissioned by the Schubert Club of Saint Paul, Minnesota for soprano Dawn Upshaw, who along with pianist Margo Garrett premiered the song cycle at the McKnight Theatre in Saint Paul, Minnesota on Tuesday, December 8, 1987.

Cover design by David Sims.



THE CRICKET SANG

The cricket sang,
And set the sun,
And workmen finished, one by one,
Their seam the day upon.
The low grass loaded with the dew,
The twilight stood as strangers do
With hat in hand, polite and new,
To stay as if, or go.
A vastness, as a neighbor, came,
A wisdom without face or name,
A peace, as hemispheres at home,
And so the night became.

-Emily Dickinson

SOME THINGS ARE DARK

Some things are dark—or think they are. But, in comparison to me,
All things are light enough to see
In any place, at any hour.
For I am Nightmare: where I fly,
Terror and rain stand in the sky
So thick, you could not tell them from
That blackness out of which you come.
So much for "where I fly": but when
I strike, and clutch in claw the brain—
Erebus, to such brain, will seem
The thin blue dusk of pleasant dream.

—Edna St. Vincent Millay

SONG

This shall be thy lullaby
Rocking on the stormy sea,
Though it roar in thunder wild,
Sleep, stilly sleep, my dark-haired child.
When our shuddering boat was crossing
Eldern's lake so rudely tossing,
Then 'twas first my nursling smiled;
Sleep, softly sleep, my fair-browed child.
Waves above thy cradle break,
Foamy tears are on thy cheek,
Yet the Ocean's self grows mild
When it bears my slumbering child.

—Emily Brontë

SLEEP, MOURNER, SLEEP!

Sleep, mourner, sleep! — I cannot sleep, My weary mind still wanders on; Then silent weep — I cannot weep, For eyes and tears are turned to stone.

—Emily Brontë

A SPIDER SEWED AT NIGHT

A spider sewed at night
Without a light
Upon an arc of white.
If ruff it was of dame
Or shroud of gnome,
Himself, himself inform.
Of immortality
His strategy
Was physiognomy.

—Emily Dickinson

SONNET

I am in need of music that would flow
Over my fretful, feeling finger-tips,
Over my bitter-tainted, trembling lips,
With melody, deep, clear, and liquid-slow.
Oh, for the healing swaying, old and low,
Of some song sung to rest the tired dead,
A song to fall like water on my head,
And over quivering limbs, dream flushed to glow!

There is a magic made by melody: A spell of rest, and quiet breath, and cool Heart, that sinks through fading colors deep To the subaqueous stillness of the sea, And floats forever in a moon-green pool, Held in the arms of rhythm and of sleep.

-Elizabeth Bishop

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For my very dear friends, Michael Dennis Browne and Lisa McLean

Night Dances



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Some Things Are Dark

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Juliana Hall (b. 1958)



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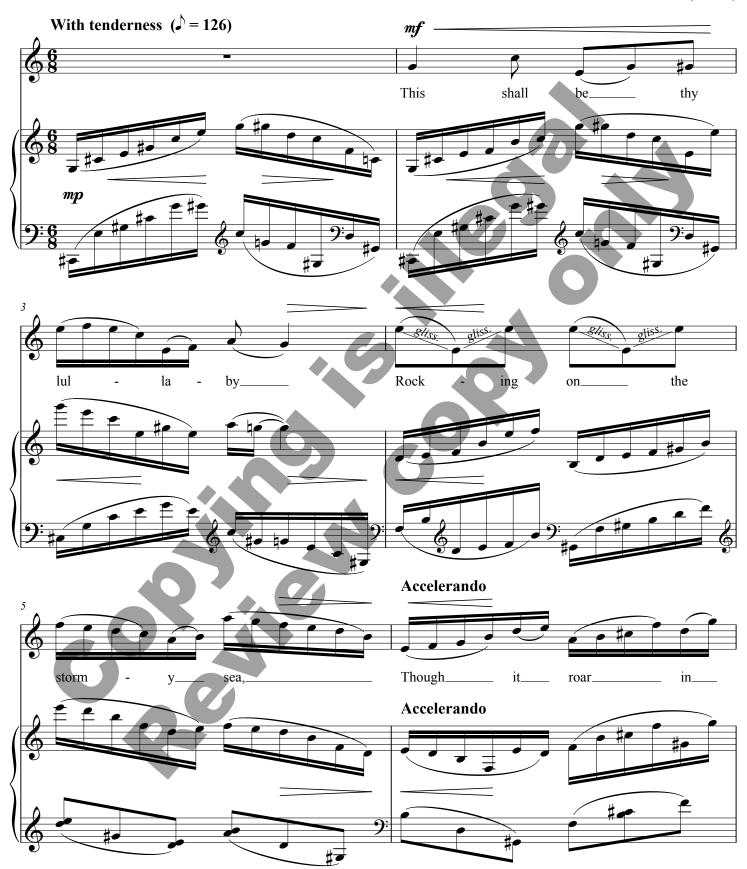
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Song

Emily Brontë

Juliana Hall
(b. 1958)



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Sleep, mourner, sleep!



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A spider sewed at night

Emily Dickinson

Juliana Hall
(b. 1958)



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