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Catalog No. 8318
 Commissioned by Dr. Tracy Lipke-Perry, Pianist
 University of Minnesota – Duluth

Songs from the High Sierra

for High Voice and Piano

John Muir (1838-1914)
 G. Walker, alt.

Gwyneth Walker

1. Ascent: "Glacier Birds and Other Companions" [Yosemite Valley, August 5th, 1872]

Tempo ad libitum

*playfully,
 as birds hopping across a glacier
 ascending black-note clusters*

*faster, scurrying
 higher*

*just a few birds
 very high*

mf quasi recitative

Dear Mrs. Carr: Your letter telling me to catch my best

rapidly, blurred, a glacier in the distance

pp barely noticed

And.

glacier birds,

and come to you and the coast mountains,

only makes me the more

p as a little bird in the distance

8va

8va

(And.)

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions

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an - xious to see you, and if you can not come up I _____

stop

(Pedal off)

(Ped.)

2

Moderate tempo ♩ = 108 *rit.* **Slower**, *p*

_____ will have to come down, if on - ly for a talk.

Moderate tempo ♩ = 108 *rit.* **Slower**

mf

5 *a tempo* (♩ = 108) *mf* **ecstatic**

My birds are fly - ing ev - ery - where, -

a tempo (♩ = 108) *gentle tremoli, as birds in flight*

p *mf*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

Slowly
f *espr.*

47

rit.

friends with - out ev - er see - ing them. _____ No

rit. *as a bird hopping* *Slowly*

ascending white-note clusters

And.

50

tenderly

p

miles of an - y meas - ure - ment can sep - a - rate your soul from mine.

(ringing)

(And.)

Tempo *ad libitum*

playfully,
as birds hopping across a glacier
ascending black-note clusters

faster, scurrying
higher

just a few birds
very high

Singer looks over at
the pianist, as if seeing
one last glacier bird.

54

p *pp*

2'45"

2. "Glory in the Mountains"

[Yosemite, 1871]

With motion ♩ = 92, but not rushed
(the grandeur of the mountains)

p

(the mountain top)

8va

with much pedal

4 *mf* with reverence for the wilderness

"The Spir-it" has led me in-to the wil-der-ness,

8va

7

and I am once more in the glo-ry of Yo-sem-i-te.

8va

mf

10

I am filled with vis-ions of snow-y for-ests of the

8va

13 *poco rit.* **Slightly slower** *f*

pine and spruce, and of moun - tain spires, pearl - y and half trans -

poco rit. **Slightly slower** *f*

16 *mf* *accel.*

par - ent, reach - ing in - to hea - ven blue not pur - er than them -

mf *accel.*

19 *a tempo* (♩ = 96) *f*

selves.

a tempo (♩ = 96) *f* *as a waterfall in the mountains*

22 *p* *in wonderment*

in wonderment *gentle, quivering tremoli* I wish that you could see the edge of the

p

58

most im-press-ive-ly su - blime. Next morn - ing was ev - ery way the

61

pur - est cre - a - tion. I ev - er be - held!

rit.

rit.

65

Slowly, grandly *rit.*

Slowly, grandly *rit.*

mf *mp* *p*

8va

2'45"

3. "Yosemite Falls"

[Midnight, April 3, 1871, Yosemite]

Flowing ♩ = 108
as a waterfall

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The piano accompaniment consists of a continuous stream of eighth notes, often grouped in triplets, with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The vocal line is in a soprano or alto range. The lyrics are: "O Mrs. Carr, that you could be here to mingle in this night moon glory! I am in the". The score includes performance instructions such as *mf* tenderly, *f*, and *mf*. There are also markings for *Leg.* (legato) and *Leg.* (legato) in the piano part. The score is divided into systems, with measures 4, 7, and 10 marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

13

Up-per Yo-sem-i-te Falls, and can hard-ly calm my-self to

Leg. *Leg.* *Leg.*

16

write, but you have been so pres-ent in my thought.

poco rit. **Slower, quasi recitativo**, *p*

poco rit. **Slower, quasi recitativo**

Leg. *p*

19

In the af-ter-noon, I came up to the moun-tain,

a tempo (♩ = 108) ***mf* with excitement and anticipation**

a tempo (♩ = 108) ***mf* gentle tremolo, with excitement and anticipation**

Leg. *Leg.* *Leg.* *Leg.*

23

with a blan-ket and a piece of bread, to spend the night in prayer

Leg. *Leg.*

24

49

bles-sing me now!— The grand - est notes of the year - ly an - them!— They

52

Free measure

p reverently

ech - o ev - ery fi - ber of me. I am going to stop here

(54)

un - til morn - ing, and pray a whole bles-sed night with the Falls and the moon.

55

a tempo

rit.

a tempo

rit.

8va
gently, as moonlight

(p) *pp*

4. "Ice!"

[Yosemite, December 11, 1871]

*(in which the author has a disagreement with Mrs. Carr!)***Quickly, as brittle ice**a black-note cluster followed
by a white-note (upward) glissando

f (ascending) *higher*

Red.

black-note cluster to white-note cluster tremoli

very high

Singer (may wish to step forward to the audience)
spoken loudly, with disgust and disbelief
(tempered with affection), directed at Mrs. Carr.

"Ice! So you dislike ice!!!"

p *ff* *p* *ff*

Red.

Singer resumes normal stage position

2 **Quickly** ♩ = 120, *ice crystals*

p

slight pedal

5 *mf* conversationally

But gla - ciers, dear friend —

mf *p*

Red.

ice is on - ly an - oth - er form of ter - res - trial love.

mf *p*

ped.

11

I am as - ton - ished to hear you speak so un - be - liev - a - bly of

rit. *rit.*

mf

ped.

14

Slower *a tempo* (♩ = 120) *rit.*

God's glo - rious crys - tal gla - ciers.

Slower *a tempo* (♩ = 120) *rit.*

p

ped. *slight pedal, as before*

18

Slower *f with disgust*

"They are on - ly pests," you say, and you think them

Slower *f*

The Singer dismissively cuts off the piano chord
(as an aside) *mf* curtly, with disdain , *f* ecstatic

40
liv - ing gla - ciers; (but you don't want to hear that) and

42
I have been in the can - yon a - bove, and I was going to tell you the

* cut-off again
45
beau - ty there; (but it is all ice-born and I was going to tell a - bout the
beauty, and too cold for you)

*This alternation between ecstatic love of glaciers and disdain for Mrs. Carr's dislike of ice continues through m. 56.

32

61

an - gels with fold - ed wings, white wings of snow - y bloom. —

64

lightly

— Locked hand in hand, the lit - tle spir - its did no - bly, —

67

rit.

— they were will - ing mes - sen - gers — to whom

70

Grandly

Grandly

God spoke "well done" from hea - ven, —

73 *mf*

call - ing them back to their homes in the

And.

76 *a tempo* (♩ = 120) *p* *rit.*

sky.

a tempo (♩ = 120) *ethereal* *rit.*

And.

79 (steps forward again, to tease Mrs. Carr) *mf* *recitative* *with much delight*

Next summer you will be con - vert - ed - you will be iced then!

playfully *very high*

short black-note cluster to white-note cluster tremolo

pp

And.

3'45"

5. Descent: "Sequoia"

[Squirrelville, Sequoia County Nut Time]

Grandly ♩ = 92
the majestic Sequoia trees

5

Be - hold the King in his glo - ry, King Se -

9

quo - ia! Be - hold! Be - hold! Be -

Slightly faster ♩ = 100, with motion
mf

13

hold! _____

Some time a - go I left for Se - quo - ia, and

Slightly faster ♩ = 100, with motion
a gentle background

p

Red. _____ Red. _____

f triumphantly

17

have been at his feet; fast - ing and pray - ing for light. For is he not the great - est

f

(Red.) _____ Red. _____ Red. _____ Red. _____

21

light in the woods? _____ And is he not the great - est light in the world? _____

Red. _____ Red. _____ Red. _____ Red. _____

38

50 **Faster** ♩ = 108

rit.

quo - ia!

Faster ♩ = 108

rit.

54 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

p gently

8va

loco

as the setting sun

57

p gently, as night approaches

The sun is set and the star can - dles are

60

lit to show me the way -

lit - tle Doug - las *squirrel and

*a reference to the Douglas fir, the home of the squirrel!

Walker | *Songs from the High Sierra* | 5. Descent: "Sequoia"

40

73

— Lord Se - quo - ia! ————— Be - hold! —————

77

— Be - hold! ————— Be - hold! Be -

81

ritard. to end hold! Be - hold! ————— *ff*

ritard. to end *cresc.* *loco* *ff* *8va*

8vb ————— *Ped.*

3'15"

Total duration: 15'15"

October 22, 2014

New Canaan, Connecticut