

TEXTS

I. I Cannot Live with You

I cannot live with you,
It would be life,
And life is over there
Behind the shelf

The sexton keeps the key to,
Putting up
Our life, his porcelain,
Like a cup

Discarded of the housewife,
Quaint or broken;
A newer Sèvres pleases,
Old ones crack.

I could not die with you,
For one must wait
To shut the other's gaze down,—
You could not.

And I, could I stand by
And see you freeze,
Without my right of frost,
Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise with you,
Because your face
Would put out Jesus',
That new grace

Glow plain and foreign
On my homesick eye,
Except that you, than he
Shone closer by.

They'd judge us - how?
For you served Heaven, you know,
Or sought to;
I could not.

Because you saturated sight,
And I had no more eyes
For sordid excellence
As Paradise.

And were you lost, I would be,
Though my name
Rang loudest
On the heavenly fame.

And were you saved,
And I condemned to be
Where you were not,
That self were hell to me.

So we must keep apart,
You there, I here,
With just the door ajar
That oceans are,
And prayer,
And that pale sustenance,
Despair!

II. My River Runs to Thee

My river runs to thee:
Blue sea, wilt welcome me?

My river waits reply.
Oh sea, look graciously!

I'll fetch thee brooks
From spotted nooks,—

Say, sea, take me!

—Emily Dickinson
(1830–1886)

David Ashley White (b. 1944)

For biographical information visit:
www.ecspublishing.com/composers

Commissioned by Betsy Cook Weber and the Moores School of Music Concert Chorale, University of Houston,
for a premiere at the 2011 Florilège Vocal de Tours, France

The Door Ajar

for SATB Chorus (divisi) unaccompanied

I. I Cannot Live with You

Emily Dickinson
(1830–1886)

David Ashley White
(b. 1944)

With agitated energy
♩ = 92–96

Soprano
I can - not, I can - not, can - not live, —

Alto
I can - not, I can - not, can - not live

Tenor
I can - not, can - not live, —

Bass
I can - not, can - not, can - not live, —

Keyboard
(for rehearsal only)

With agitated energy
♩ = 92–96

6 *(f)*

with you, it would be life, and life is o-ver there be-hind the shelf

(f)

with you, and life is o-ver there be-hind the shelf

(f)

with you, it would be life, and life is o-ver there be-hind the shelf

(f)

with you, it would be life, and life is o-ver there be-hind the shelf

12 *mp* *f* *mf*

— the sex-ton keeps the key to, put-ting up our life, his por-ce-lain, like a

mp *f* *mf*

— the sex-ton keeps the key to, put-ting up our life, his por-ce-lain, like a

unis. mp *f*

— the sex-ton keeps the key to, put-ting our life, his por-ce-lain,

mp *f*

— the sex-ton keeps the key to, put-ting our life, his por-ce-lain,

21

f
cup dis - card - ed of the house - wife, bro - ken, bro - ken; a new - er

f unis.
cup dis - card - ed of the house - wife, bro - ken, bro - ken, a new - er

mf unis.
like a cup dis - card - ed, quaint or bro - ken, bro - ken; a new - er

mf
like a cup dis - card - ed, quaint or bro - ken, bro - ken, a new - er

f unis.

28

p *ff* *mf* *< f*
Sèvres — pleas - es, old ones crack. I — could not die — with you,

unis. p *ff* *mf* *< f*
Sèvres — pleas - es, old ones crack. I — could not — die with you,

p *ff* *mf* *< f*
Sèvres — pleas - es, old ones crack. I — could not — die — with you,

p *ff* *mf* *< f*
Sèvres — pleas - es, old ones crack. I — could not — die — with you,

35 *mp* *< mf* *> p*

for one must wait to shut the oth-er's gaze down, — you could not.

unis. mp < mf > p

to shut the oth-er's gaze down, — you could not.

unis. mp > mf > p mf <

to — shut the oth-er's gaze down, — And

mp > mf > p mf <

to — shut the oth-er's gaze down, — And

41 *f with determination* *unis.*

Could I — see you freeze, — with - out my right of frost, death's

f with determination

Could I — see you freeze, — with-out my right of frost, death's

f with determination

I, could I stand by and see you freeze, — with - out, my right of frost, death's

f with determination

I, could I stand by and see you freeze, — with-out my right of frost, death's

47

ff *mf*

priv-i-lege? Nor could I rise with you, be-cause your face would put out Je-sus',

unis. *ff* *mf*

priv-i-lege? Nor could I rise with you, your face, —

unis. *ff* *mf*

priv-i-lege? Nor could I rise with you, your face, —

unis. *ff* *mf*

priv-i-lege? Nor could I rise with you, your face, —

53

mf *f*

on my home - sick eye,

f

that new — grace glow plain and for-eign ex -

mf *f*

new grace glow for-eign on my home-sick eye,

f

— that new — grace glow — for-eign ex -

58

than he shone clos - er by. They'd judge us - - how? For you served

cept that you, — shone clos - er by. They'd judge us - - how? For you

than he shone clos - er by. They'd judge us - - how? For you served

cept that you, — shone clos - er by. They'd judge us - - how? For you

65

Heav - en, you know, be-cause

served Heav - en, you know, I could not,

Heav - en, or sought to; I could not,

served Heav - en, I could not,

A little slower

♩ = 84

73 *mp* *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, I had
mp *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, I had
mp *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, and I had no more eyes
mp *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, no more

A little slower

♩ = 84

73 *mp* *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, I had
mp *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, I had
mp *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, and I had no more eyes
mp *expressively* *f*
 you sat-u-ra-ted sight, no more

80 *ff rit.*
 no more eyes for sor-did ex-cel-lence as Par-a-dise.
ff rit.
 no more eyes for sor-did ex-cel-lence as Par-a-dise.
ff rit.
 for sor-did, sor-did ex-cel-lence as Par-a-dise.
ff rit.
 eyes for sor-did, sor-did ex-cel-lence as Par-a-dise.
rit.

Tempo I

88 *unis. mp* *mf*

And were you lost, I _____ would be, though my name rang

unis. mp *mf*

And were you lost, I _____ would be, though my name rang

unis. mp *mf*

And were you lost, I _____ would be,

unis. mp *mf*

I _____ would be,

Tempo I

94 *f* *mf* *f*

loud - est _____ on the heav'n - ly fame. And were you saved _____ and

f *mf* *f*

loud - est _____ on the heav'n - ly fame. And were you saved _____ and

f *mf* *f*

loud - est _____ on the heav'n - ly fame. And were you saved _____ and

f *mf* *f*

loud - est _____ on the heav'n - ly fame. And were you saved _____ and

100

rit.
intensely, emphatically —

I con - demned to be where you — were not, that self were — hell

I — con - demned to be where you — were not, — that self were — hell

I con - demned to be where you — were not, that self were — hell

I — con - demned to be where you — were not, that self were — hell

rit.
intensely, emphatically —

rit.
intensely, emphatically —

unis.

rit.
intensely, emphatically —

rit.
intensely, emphatically —

A little slower than Tempo I

$\text{♩} = 84$

107

ff to me. *mf* So we must keep a - part, — I here, with

ff to me. *mf* So we must keep a - part, — I here, with

ff to me. *mf* We_ must keep a-part, you there, — with _

ff to me. *mf* We_ must keep a - part, you there, — with _

A little slower than Tempo I

$\text{♩} = 84$

114 *f*

just the door — a - jar that o - ceans are, — and pray'r, and that pale

f

just the door — a - jar that o - ceans are, — and pray'r, and that pale

f

just the door — a - jar that o - ceans are, — and pray'r, and that pale

unis. *f*

just the door — a - jar that o - ceans are, — and pray'r, and that pale

121

rit. *mp* *f*

sus - te - nance, de - spair, de - spair, de -

rit. *mp* *f*

sus - te - nance, de - spair, de -

rit. *unis. mp* *f*

sus - te - nance, de - spair, — de -

rit. *mp* *f*

sus - te - nance, de - spair, de -

Slower $\text{♩} = 76$

128

spair, O, De - spair! O, De - spair!

spair. O, De - spair! O, De - spair!

spair. O, De - spair! O, De - spair!

spair. O, De - spair! O, De - spair!

slowing

February 18, 2011 | Houston, Texas | 4:33

Only a brief pause between movements.

Copying
Review

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Dramatically
♩ = ca. 63

ff

Soprano
My riv - er runs to thee: Blue sea, wilt wel - come me? _

ff

Alto
My riv - er runs to thee: Blue sea, wilt wel - come me? _

ff

Tenor
My riv - er runs to thee: Blue sea, wilt wel - come me? _

ff

Bass
My riv - er runs to thee: Blue sea, wilt wel - come me? _

Dramatically
♩ = ca. 63

Keyboard
(for rehearsal only)

6 *p* *mf*

My riv - er — waits — re - ply. Oh sea, —

p *mf*

My riv - er — waits — re - ply. Oh —

p *p*

My — riv - er waits — re - ply Oh —

p *p*

My — riv - er waits — re - ply. Oh —

11 *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

— oh — sea. look gra - cious - ly! I'll fetch thee brooks from spot - ted nooks, —

mf *f*

— sea. — look gra - cious - ly! brooks from spot - ted nooks, —

mf *f*

sea. — look gra - cious - ly! I'll fetch thee brooks from spot - ted nooks, —

mf *f*

sea. — look gra - cious - ly! brooks from spot - ted nooks, —

17

say, sea, take me, say, sea, take me, say, sea, take me, say, sea, take me, say, sea, take me,

22

take me! take me! take me! take me! take me!

January 25, 2011 | Houston, Texas | 1:30

