



The English Teacher and English Song: A Sequel

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George D. Gopen

The English Teacher and English Song: A Sequel

In last February's issue of *CE*, Douglas Murray has offered us a useful listing of English poetry set to music and has called for additions to his list. The worth of the project seems to me evident: not only will those of us who already use music in poetry classes have a new source for old needs, but those who have not yet tried this interdisciplinary approach might be tempted. I respond here to his call for additional listings.

Some notes:

1. I have included, for the most part, only recordings that are currently available; any that are not currently available have been marked with [nca]. I have bothered to list them because of their intrinsic interest and in the hope that record libraries may have a copy.
2. I have limited the list to poetry that either is commonly taught or that can better be taught because of the existence of the music. The list would be a great deal longer had the more obscure poems been included.
3. Whenever more than one recording is listed, I silently indicate my own preference by listing it first.
4. This list is by no means exhaustive of English poetry that has been set to music and recorded.

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Arnold, Matthew

"The Scholar Gypsy" is excerpted to create the text for "An Oxford Elegy" by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1947-9), using a speaker instead of a singer. John Westbrook and the Jaques Orchestra, conducted by David Willcocks; Angel, S-36699.

"West London." Set by Charles Ives as part of an incomplete overture to be called "Matthew Arnold" (1921). Marni Nixon, soprano, with John McCabe, piano; Nonesuch, H-71209.

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Auden, W. H.

“St. Cecilia’s Hymn.” Set by Benjamin Britten in 1942 for four soloists and mixed chorus. QUINK Vocal Ensemble; Etcetera, ETC 1017. Also on “Europäische Chormusik,” Stockholm Kammerchor, Eric Ericson, Odeon, C 153-29 916/9.

“Out on the lawn I lie in bed.” Benjamin Britten used this poem in his “Spring Symphony” (1949). Various vocal forces conducted by the composer; London, 5612. Also Sheila Armstrong, Janet Baker, and Robert Tear with Andre Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra; Angel, S-37562.

“A Shepherd’s Carol.” A relatively early work (1944) of Benjamin Britten. The Wilbye Consort, Peter Pears, Director; London, OS 26527.

Bible, The

“In the Beginning.” A moving setting of the opening verses of Genesis which may not impress greatly on first listening but can transform permanently one’s response to that famous passage after several listenings. Mezzo Mildred Miller and the New England Conservatory Chorus, conducted by the composer; Columbia, M 30375. Also Tanglewood Festival Choir, John Oliver; DG, 2530912 PSI.

Psalms 14, 24, 25, 54, 67, 90, 100, 135, and 150 were set by Charles Ives. The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321 and MS 6921.

Psalm 150. Set by Benjamin Britten for chorus and orchestra. Boys of Downside School, Purley, conducted by the composer; London, STS 15173.

Several Psalms were set by Handel in “The Chandos Anthems” and are well recorded by the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge, directed by David Willcocks; Argo, ZRG 541 and ZRG 5490. Also Rutgers University Collegium Musicum; Vanguard, S227 and S-229.

Psalms 71 and 96 are the texts for two anthems by Henry Purcell, “In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust” and “O sing unto the Lord.” The Saltire Singers; Archive, ARC 3038.

The Book of Daniel and Psalms 81 and 137 were excerpted by Osbert Sitwell to make the text for William Walton’s stunning choral drama/cantata/oratorio, “Belshazzar’s Feast.” Baritone Walter Cassel, Rutgers University Choir, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy; Columbia, MS 6267. Also Benjamin Luxon, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Solti; London, 26525; and John Shirley-Quirk, London Symphony Orchestra, Previn; S-36861.

The Book of Job is represented by Henry Purcell’s “Man That Is Born of Woman: Funeral Sentences.” The Deller Consort and the Stour Music Festival Choir and Orchestra; RCA, VICS-1407.

The Song of Solomon has been mined for texts by many composers, including Henry Purcell (“My Beloved Spake”) and William Billings (“I Am the Rose of Sharon.”). For the Purcell: The Deller Consort; Bach Guild, BGS-5047; for the Billings: The Western Wind; Nonesuch, H-71276.

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 is the text of Christopher Shaw’s “A Lesson from Ecclesiastes.” The BBC Singers, BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Poole; Argo, ZRG 791.

For early American settings of Biblical texts, see the music of William Billings (16th Century Bostonian): (1) “Be Glad Then, America: The Fun and Faith of William Billings,” The National Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati; London, OS 26442; (2) “The Continental Harmony: Music of William Billings,” The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7277; and (3) “Early American Vocal Music: New England Anthems and Southern Folk Hymns,” The Western Wind; Nonesuch, H-71276. See also music by the Moravian composers of 18th Century Pennsylvania and North Carolina:

(1) "Music of the American Moravians," The Moravian Festival Chorus and Orchestra, Thor Johnson conducting, with members of the Fine Arts Quartet; *Odyssey*, 32 16 0340; and (2) "The Flowering of Music in America, Volume I: The Moravians," The New World String Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Raeburn, with several soloists; New World Records, NW 230.

Blake, William

"Songs of Innocence and Experience." Settings by Allen Ginsberg, performed by Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky, and friends. Ginsberg had the idea of composing these for several years but was hurled into doing it by witnessing the trial of the Chicago Seven in 1968. The music tends to follow the natural movements of the spoken voice in recitation. The unprofessional sounding performance may momentarily mask the depth of profundity of the settings, but that performance turns out to be innocentially functional; MGM, FTS 3083.

The "Ten Blake Songs" of Ralph Vaughan Williams were written for a film by the Blake Society Bi-centenary Committee. Vaughan Williams at first refused to set "The Lamb," because the sugary simplicity of the poem had always angered him; but during the project he actually composed a setting for it in his sleep. He awoke in a rage, but kept the song in the cycle. The best of the several performances still may be that of baritone John Langstaff and soprano Lois Winter, accompanied by Ronald Roseman and Hiroko Yajima on oboe and violin; Desto, DC-6482. Also Robert Tear, Philip Ladger, and Neil Black; Argo, ZRG 732.

Seven of the "Songs of Experience" are sewn together with six of the "Proverbs of Hell" to make Benjamin Britten's "Songs & Proverbs of William Blake, Op. 74," Baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau with the composer at the piano; London, OS 26099.

"O Rose, thou art sick." Under the title "Elegy," Benjamin Britten sets this poem most effectively and painfully in his "Serenade Opus 31 for tenor solo, horn, and strings." Peter Pears, Barry Tuckwell, and the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer; London, OS 26161.

"Blake Songs" by George Rochberg (1962) sets "Ah! Sunflower," "Nurse's Song," "The Fly," and "The Sick Rose." Jan DeGaetani with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble conducted by Arthur Weisberg; Nonesuch, H-71302.

"A Poison Tree" is set by Richard Wernick (1979) for soprano and mixed quintet. Lucy Shelton performs with a chamber ensemble conducted by Christopher Kendall; Smithsonian Collection, N 027.

"Five Songs of Experience." John Harbison (1975) set the "Introduction," "Earth's Answer," "Ah! Sunflower," "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," and "A Divine Image" with great power and imagination. Unfortunately the poor technical quality of the recording does not do the work or the performance justice. The Cantata Singers, conducted by the composer; CRI, SD 313.

"Nurse's Song (Experience)" and "The Door of Death": Part of a piece called "Changes" for two soloists and three choirs, by Gordon Crosse (1966). Jennifer Vyvyan, London Symphony Orchestra, Norman Del Mar conducting; Argo, ZRG 656.

"The Echoing Green" and "the Shepherd" have been set by William Busch. Peter Pears, tenor, with Viola Tunnard, pianist; Argo, ZRG 5439. [nca]

"A Divine Image" and part of "The Tyger" serve as chorales for the oratorio "Or Shall We Die?" by Michael Berkeley, the son of the better known Sir Lennox Berkeley. The work is straightforwardly didactic, anti-nuclear. Heather Harper, soprano, and David Wilson-Johnson, baritone, with the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Richard Hickox; EMI, ASD 2700581.

“Sound the Flute.” Benjamin Britten used this poem in his vocal “Spring Symphony.” (See above Auden: “Out on the Lawn I Lie in Bed.”)

“A Charm of Lullabies” by Benjamin Britten includes lyrics by Blake, Robert Burns, Robert Greene, Thomas Randolph, and John Philip. Maureen Forrester with John Newmark; Westminster Gold, WGS 8124.

Bridges, Robert

“In Terra Pax.” Almost conversational setting by Gerald Finzi (1954) of an untraditional Christmas poem made by combining Bridges’s “Noel: Christmas Eve, 1913” with Luke 11:8-14. Fine performance by soprano Jane Manning and baritone John Noble, the John Alldis Choir, and the New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Vernon Hadley; Lyrita, SRCS 93.

“Eternal Father.” The last sonnet in his collection “The Growth of Love,” set by Gustav Holst in 1927. The Columbia University Chapel Choir, with the Brass and Percussion Ensemble conducted by Searle Wright; Kapp, 9057.

“So perverse” is set by Frank Bridge. Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418. [nca]

Bronte, Emily

“Love and Friendship” has been set by John Ireland. Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418. [nca]

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett

“Sabbath Morning at Sea.” Setting by Elgar from his cycle *Sea Pictures*. Mezzo Janet Baker with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli; Angel, S-36796.

Browning, Robert

“Ah, love, but a day!” Simple and lovely treatment by Amy Beach (1867-1944), nicely performed by mezzo D’Anna Fortunato and pianist Virginia Eskin; Northeastern Records, NR 202. It also appears with two other Browning poems, “The year’s at the Spring” and “I send my heart up to thee,” on a recording by soprano Carolyn Heafner, with pianist Dixie Ross Neill; CRI, SD 462.

Song setting by Charles Ives of lines from “Paraclesus.” Mezzo Jan DeGaetani with pianist Gilbert Kalish; Nonesuch, H-71325.

Burns, Robert

For Scottish renderings of the poet’s own settings, see especially the performances by Jean Redpath, today’s queen of Scottish music, on Philo Records. She combines a flawless folk voice with a deep understanding of her country’s art and nature. Her performances make an interesting comparison with the more Scottish-macho-Hollywood performances of Kenneth McKellar; London, SW 99228.

“Dearie” and “Ye banks and braes o’ bonie Doon”: Amy Beach set these two poems more in the French idiom of Duparc or Faure; D’Anna Fortunato and Virginia Eskin; Northeastern Records, NR 202.

Byron, George Gordon, Lord

“A Farewell to Land” is a striking song by Charles Ives on lines from “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage” (1925). Soprano Jan DeGaetani and Gilbert Kalish; Nonesuch, H-71325.

Song setting taken from "The Incantation," by Charles Ives (1921). The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

"Deep in my soul" is set by Sir Edward Elgar. Louis Halsey Singers; Argo, ZRG 607.

Carroll, Lewis

American composer David Del Tredici has composed five major compositions based on *Alice in Wonderland*, two of which have been recorded at present. Few works in recent years have received such wide-spread acclaim, almost unanimous agreement from critics and audiences alike. (1) "In Memory of a Summer Day: Child Alice, Part One"; soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, conductor; Nonesuch, 79043.1 G. (2) "Final Alice"; soprano Barbara Hendricks with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti conducting; London, LDR 71018.

Chaucer, Geoffrey

"Merciless Beauty," Ralph Vaughan Williams has chosen a spare but moving setting for this poem, using soprano, violin, and cello. Lois Winter, Marvin Morgenstern, and John Goberman; Desto, DC-6482.

"Four Fragments from the *Caunterbury Tales*," by Lester Trimble (1958), is a jaunty and whimsical piece for soprano, flute, clarinet, and harpsichord that uses the beginning of the "General Prologue" and the descriptions of the Knight, the Squire, and the Wife of Bath. Adele Addison, soprano; Columbia, MS 6198.

Clare, John

"Four Songs of John Clare." The settings are by Stephen Dodgson, and they include "Trotty Wagtail," "The Peasant Poet," "Turkeys," and "the Fox." Tenor Wilfred Brown and guitarist John Williams; Odyssey, 32 16 10398.

"The Driving Boy." Benjamin Britten used this poem in his vocal "Spring Symphony" (1949). (See above, Auden: "Out on the Lawn I Lie in Bed.")

"The Evening Primrose." One of the "Five Flower Songs, Op. 47" (1950) of Benjamin Britten. QUINK Vocal Ensemble; Etcetera, ETC 1017.

Cowley, Abraham

"If Ever I More Riches Did Desire." The poem is the basis for a cantata of Henry Purcell (1686). The Deller Consort; Musical Heritage Society, MHS 4124.

"How Pleasant Is This Flowery Plain and Grove" is another of Cowley's poems set by Purcell. The Deller Consort; RCA, VICS-1506.

Crabbe, George

"Marsh Flowers." One of the "Five Flower Songs, Op. 47" (1950) of Benjamin Britten. QUINK Vocal Ensemble; Etcetera, ETC 1017.

Dickinson, Emily

"Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson." A song cycle of post-Mahlerian romanticism by Aaron Copland. Adele Addison, soprano, with the composer at the piano; Columbia, M 30375.

“Thirteen Dickinson Songs” (1977-78) by George Perle is a cycle somewhat reminiscent of Schoenberg’s “Pierrot Lunaire.” Soprano Bethany Beardslee (for whom the work was commissioned), with the composer at the piano; CRI, SD 403.

Ernest Bacon may have been the first American composer to have set Dickinson poems, his earliest being in 1927. Seven of them appear on a recording of American songs by soprano Carolyn Heafner, with Dixie Ross Neil at the piano; CRI, SD 462.

“Songs of Nature” by John Heiss (1974-5) ends with Dickinson’s “If I shouldn’t be alive” and includes poems by William Cullen Bryant, Longfellow, and Thoreau. Mezzo D’Anna Fortunato with The Boston Musica Viva, Richard Pittman, conductor; Nonesuch, H-71351.

“Heart not so heavy as mine” and “Musicians wrestle everywhere”: These two songs were set by Elliott Carter (1938) and can be found on “The Dove Descending: Choral Music Sung by The Canby Singers,” Edward Tatnall Canby, director; Nonesuch, H-71115.

“Let down, the bars, O Death!” Choral setting by Samuel Barber; Music from Washington Cathedral; Vanguard, VRS-1036.

Donne, John

“*Holy Sonnets of John Donne*, Op.35.” Nine of the “Holy Sonnets” are set here by Benjamin Britten. Peter Pears (with the composer at the piano) has recorded these twice, once at the beginning of his career and once at its height: (1) EMI/Angel, RLS 748; (2) London, OS 26099.

“Cycle for Declamation” by Priaulx Rainier includes three poems of Donne: “We cannot bid the fruits,” “In the womb of the Earth,” and “Nunc, lento sonitu.” Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418. [nca]

Dowson, Ernest

“Cynara.” A passionate setting by Frederick Delius for baritone and orchestra. John Shirley-Quirk and the Royal Liverpool Orchestra, conducted by Charles Groves; Angel, S-36603.

Frederick Delius combined nine poems by Dowson into a single continuous work for soprano, baritone, mixed chorus, and orchestra, under the title of “Songs of Sunset.” Fine performance by Janet Baker, John Shirley-Quirk, the Liverpool Philharmonic Choir, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Charles Groves; Angel, S-36603.

Dryden, John

In collaboration with Sir William Davenant, Dryden revised Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, allowing for a good deal of music by Henry Purcell. The loss of Shakespeare here is regrettable, but the gain of Purcell makes good amends. The Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra with soloists, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner; Musical Heritage Society, MHS 4479.

Eliot, T. S.

“The dove descending breaks the air.” Igor Stravinsky set part IV of “Little Gidding” from *Four Quartets*. The Canby Singers, Edward Tatnall Canby, director; Nonesuch, H-71115.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo

“Duty.” Song setting by Charles Ives (1911?). Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

Gay, John

Gay may have been the librettist for Handel’s “Acis and Galatea,” the composer’s single most popular work during his lifetime. The text is clearly a compilation of lines from Dryden, Pope, Hughes, and perhaps others as well. The Deller Consort with the Stour Music Festival Chamber Orchestra; RCA, VICS-6040. Also John Gardiner conducting the English Baroque Soloists; DG, ARC-2708038 PSI.

Hardy, Thomas

“Waiting Both,” “The Convergence of the Twain,” and “What’s There to Tell?” are set together as “Satires of Circumstance” by Seymour Shifrin (1964). Authoritative performance by mezzo Jan DeGaetani, with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble conducted by Arthur Weisberg; Nonesuch, H-71220.

“Earth, Air, and Rain” is a setting by Gerald Finzi of ten Hardy poems (1936). Finzi set more than 50 Hardy poems. Baritone Benjamin Luxon and pianist David Willison; Argo, ZRG 838.

“Winter Words, Op.52” of Benjamin Britten combines eight poems of Hardy into a song-cycle. Dorothy Irving, soprano, with Erik Werba, piano; Caprice, CAP 1061.

Herbert, George

“The Shepherds sing, and shall I be silent?” becomes a “Pastoral” for Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Hodie: A Christmas Cantata.” London Symphony Orchestra with soloists Baker, Lewis, and Shirley-Quirk, conducted by David Willcocks; Angel, S-36297.

Herrick, Robert

“Welcome maids of honour.” Benjamin Britten used this poem in his vocal “Spring Symphony” (1949). (See above, Auden: “Out on the Lawn I Lie in Bed.”) “To Daffodils” and “The Succession of the Four Sweet Months.” Two of the “Five Flower Songs, Op.47” (1950) of Benjamin Britten. QUINK Vocal Ensemble; Etcetera, ETC 1017.

“Bellman’s Song: Along the dark and silent night.” Setting for male chorus, part of a larger work entitled “Changes,” by Gordon Crosse (1966); Argo, ZRG 656.

Hopkins, Gerard Manley

“The Windhover.” An engaging choral setting by Sir Michael Tippett (1942), a madrigalian attempt “to express a continuing single experience over into musical imagery.” Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Nicholas Cleobury conducting; L’Oiseau-Lyre, DSLO 25.

“The World Is Charged with the Grandeur of God” is a song cycle of three Hopkins poems selected by Peter Pears and set by Sir Arthur Bliss (1969). The first and third are set for mixed chorus and brass choir, while the middle section is for women’s voices and two flutes. The Ambrosian Singers with members of the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Philip Ledger; Musical Heritage Society, MHS 3096. [nca]

Housman, A. E.

George Butterworth chose Housman poems exclusively for two song cycles, "Six songs from *A Shropshire Lad*," and "Bredon Hill." The former includes "Love-liest of trees," "When I was one and twenty," "Look not in my eyes," "Think no more, lad," "The lads in their hundreds," and "Is my team ploughing?" The latter contains "Bredon Hill," "O fair enough are sky and plain," "When the lad for longing sighs," "On the idle hill of summer," and "With rue my heart is laden." Baritone Benjamin Luxon and pianist David Willison; Argo, ZRG 838.

John Ireland chose six Housman poems for his song cycle "The Land of Lost Content": "The Lent Lilly," "Ladslove," "Goal and Wicket," "The Vain Desire," "The Encounter," and "Epilogue." Peter Pears considers these the finest Housman settings there are. Tenor Peter Pears with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418. [nca]

"Along the Field" is the title Ralph Vaughan Williams chose for this song cycle of eight poems gathered from *Last Poems* and *A Shropshire Lad* (1924). John Langstaff, baritone, with John Goberman, cello; Desto, DC-6482.

Jonson, Ben

"Modest and Fair" and "Still to be neat." Settings by Sir Edward Elgar. Baritone John Carol Case, pianist Daphne Ibbott; SAGA, 5304.

"Queen and huntress, chaste and fair" appears under the title "Hymn" in Benjamin Britten's "Serenade Opus 31 for tenor solo, horn, and strings." Peter Pears, Barry Tuckwell, The London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer; London, OS 26161.

Joyce, James

An entire recording has been devoted to "Songs to Texts by James Joyce." It includes settings from "Chamber Music" by Israel Citkowitz and by Seymour Barab, of "Poems Penyeach" by John Gruen, of sections of *Finnegan's Wake* by Samuel Barber and by Hazel Felman Buchbinder, and of sections of *Ulysses* by Thomas de Hartmann. Soprano Patricia Neway with Ralph Colston, piano; Lyrichors, LL 83.

"Goldenhair." Setting by Frank Bridge. Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418. [nca]

"Anna Livia Plurabelle." Musical setting by Andre Hodeir, who is probably best known for his book, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*. Hodeir calls this setting, rightfully so, a "jazz cantata." It could also be called a chamber opera, and could easily enough be choreographed and staged. Sopranos Monique Adlebert and Nicole Croisille, chamber orchestra conducted by the composer; Philips, PHS 900-255.

"I hear an army." Set for baritone and piano by Samuel Barber (1939). A somewhat Germanic performance by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, with Charles Wadsworth, pianist; Musicmasters, MM 20027. On the same recording is "Now have I fed and eaten up the rose," a much later work of Barber. The poem is a translation of Joyce's from the German of Gottfried Keller.

"To Wake the Dead" is a setting by Stephen Albert (1978) subtitled "Six Sentimental Songs and an interlude after *Finnegan's Wake*." Lucy Shelton is the soprano with a chamber group conducted by Christopher Kendall in a recording published by the Smithsonian Collection, N 027.

"Wake." A setting for soprano and septet (1968) by Fred Lerdahl of the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" section of *Finnegan's Wake*, much influenced by Joyce's recorded reading of the passage. Bethany Beardslee and members of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players; AR, 0654 083.

Keats, John

“Like a Sick Eagle.” Song setting by Charles Ives (1920). The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

The sonnet “O soft embalmer of the still midnight” is the final setting in Benjamin Britten’s striking “Serenade Opus 31 for tenor solo, horn, and strings.” Peter Pears, Barry Tuckwell, and the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer. London, OS 26161.

Kipling, Rudyard

“Tolerance.” Song setting by Charles Ives (1921). The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

Levertov, Denise

With the aid of Edward C. Dimock Jr., Levertov translated from the Bengali a small volume called *In Praise of Krishna*, 14 songs of which are set by George Rochberg (1970). The music is neither serial nor atonal, but highly chromatic. Soprano Neva Pilgrim with the composer at the piano; CRI, SD 360.

Lindsay, Vachel

“General William Booth Enters into Heaven.” Charles Ives adapted the poem into a six-minute song, quintessentially Ivesian, with different tunes appearing simultaneously in different keys. Marni Nixon, soprano, with John McCabe, piano; Nonesuch, H-71209. Orchestrated version: Gregg Smith Singers, Columbia Symphony Orchestra; Columbia, MS 6921.

“The Flower-Fed Buffaloes,” for baritone, six-part chorus, and seven players, is a composition of John Harbison’s (1976) that was inspired by an address by Judge Learned Hand, “The Spirit of Liberty.” The music sets Lindsay’s “The Flower-Fed Buffaloes” and “The Amaranth,” as well as poems by Hart Crane (“Enrich My Resignation”), Michael Fried, and Gary Snyder. Baritone David Evitts, with the Emanuel Choir of Boston, conducted by the composer; Nonesuch, H-71366.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth

“The Children’s Hour.” Song setting by Charles Ives (1901). The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

Lowell, Robert

“Phaedra.” Lowell translated the Racine play, which was then set as a cantata for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra by Benjamin Britten (1976). Janet Baker, English Chamber Orchestra, Stuart Bedford conducting; London; OS 26527.

Milosz, Czeslaw

“A Green Lowland of Pianos.” Translated by Milosz from the Polish of Jerzy Harasymowicz. Delightful treatment by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Charles Wadsworth; Musicmasters, MM 20027.

Milton, John

“Blest Pair of Sirens,” also known as “At a Solemn Music.” Setting by C. H. H. Parry, harmonically lush and constantly climactic. The London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult; Vanguard, VSD 71225.

“Two Milton Sonnets.” Poignant settings by Gerald Finzi (1928) of “When I consider” and “How soon hath time.” Ian Partridge, tenor, with the New Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Vernon Handley; Lyrita, SRCS 93.

“Evening” by Charles Ives is an adaptation of a few lines from “Paradise Lost.” Soprano Marni Nixon, pianist John McCabe; Nonesuch, H-71209.

“Comus: A Masque” (1634) originally included consort music by Henry Lawes; but in 1738 Drury Lane accepted a version of the poem prepared for the stage and including vocal music by the leading native English composer of the time, Thomas Arne. Margaret Ritchie, Elsie Morison, William Herbert, the St. Anthony Singers, conducted by Anthony Lewis; L’Oiseau-Lyre, OLS 140-1.

“The Morning Star.” Benjamin Britten used this poem in his vocal “Spring Symphony” (1949). (See above, Auden: “Out on the Lawn I lie in Bed.”)

“Hymn on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” provides two long passages for Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Hodie: A Christmas Cantata.” London Symphony Orchestra with soloists Baker, Shirley-Quirk, and Lewis, conducted by David Willcocks; Angel, S-36297.

A passage from *Paradise Lost* (Book XI, 779-805) is the text for one of the “Two Choruses, op. 14” of Alexander Goehr (1962). It is a virtuoso setting for baritone solo and chorus, influenced by the work of Olivier Messiaen. Baritone Geoffrey Shaw, the John Alldis Choir, and the Melos Ensemble, conducted by John Carewe; Angel, 36387.

O’Shaughnessy, Arthur

“The Music Makers” by Sir Edward Elgar uses O’Shaughnessy’s poem of the same name (also set, curiously enough, by Zoltan Kodaly at Oxford in 1948). This may be the quintessential English choral work. Mezzo-soprano Janet Baker, the London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, directed by Sir Adrian Boult; Vanguard, VSD 71225.

Owen, Wilfred

Benjamin Britten interlaced nine Owen poems with the Latin liturgy in one of the 20th Century’s greatest choral works, his “War Requiem.” Britten scored it for baritone, tenor, soprano, chorus, and two orchestras. He had Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Peter Pears in mind for the male roles, a German and an Englishman, to suggest the hostile parties of World War I. The 1962 recording with the original forces (Galina Vishnevskaya as the soprano, Britten conducting the London Symphony Orchestra) is still the standard; London, OSA 1255. Also good: Soderstrom, Tear, and Allen, City of Birmingham Orchestra, Simon Rattle; Angel, DS-3949.

Poe, Edgar Allen

“To Helen.” French-influenced setting by Charles Martin Loeffler, undeservedly neglected European composer who did most of his work in Boston, where he was assistant concertmaster of the Symphony Orchestra. His songs rival those of Faure, Ravel and Debussy. Fine performance by D’Anna Fortunato and Virginia Eskin; Northeastern, NR 207.

“Eldorado” has been set three times by Jack Beeson. The first (1951) is available on a recording by soprano Carolyn Heafner, with pianist Dixie Ross Neil; CRI, SD 462.

Pound, Ezra

“Eros,” by Fred Lerdahl (1975), is a series of 21 variations, each one 20 measures long, on Pound’s poem “Coitus,” from *Cathay* (1915). The music is dark and intense throughout. Mezzo Beverly Morgan with Collage, conducted by the composer; CRI, SD 378.

Roethke, Theodore

“Open House” is the title of a song cycle for tenor and chamber orchestra by William Bolcom (1975). It includes seven Roethke poems: “Open House,” “Give Way, Ye Gates,” “The Waking,” “The Serpent,” “I Knew a Woman,” the first from “Meditations of an Old Woman,” and “The Right Thing.” Paul Sperry, tenor, with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies; Nonesuch, H-71324.

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel

“Go, song of mine” was set by Sir Edward Elgar. Louis Halsey Singers; Argo, ZRG 607.

“The One Hope” has been set by John Ireland. Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418. [nca]

“Silent Noon” has been set by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Elly Ameling, soprano, with Dalton Baldwin, piano; CBS, 36682.

Sandburg, Carl

“Rat Riddles,” “Prayers of Steel,” and “In Tall Grass” are “Three Songs” by Ruth Crawford Seeger (1933). Seeger met the poet when she was chosen to give piano lessons to his children. She also set his poems in “The American Song Bag” (1927). Mezzo-soprano Beverly Morgan with the Speculum Musicae, conducted by Paul Dunkeli; New World Records, NW 285.

Shadwell, Thomas

“Now does the glorious day appear” was used by Henry Purcell for his “Ode for Queen Mary’s Birthday—1689.” What sounds pompous in the poem sounds persuasively celebratory in its musical setting. The *Accademia Monteverdiana*, conducted by Denis Stevens; Vanguard, Cardinal, VCS 10053.

Purcell wrote six birthday odes for Queen Mary, to poems by D’Urfey, Sedley, and Tate. Two of them, “Come Ye Sons of Art” and “Love’s Goddess Sure,” can be heard on a recording by The Early Music Consort of London, conducted by David Munrow; Angel, S-37251.

Shakespeare, William

A great many of Shakespeare’s songs were set in the mid-18th Century by London’s foremost native composer, Thomas Arne. Sixteen of them are collected in one recording: Contralto Maureen Forrester, tenor Alexander Young, Vienna Radio Orchestra, conducted by Brian Priestman; Westminster, WST 17075. [nca] There is another 18th Century collection, this time including works by Arne, Weldon, Chilcot, J. C. Smith, Augustine, Hook, Linley, Greene, and Haydn: Soprano April Cantelo, the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Raymond Leppard; L’Oiseau-Lyre, SOL 60036.

"She never told her love." Lines from *Twelfth Night*, set effectively by Haydn. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau with Gerald Moore; Odeon, ALP 1829.

"Take, O take those lips away," from *Measure for Measure*, has been treated interestingly by Bernard van Dieren. Peter Pears, tenor, with Viola Tunnard, pianist; Argo, ZRG 5439.

"Songs for Ariel" by Michael Tippett includes "Come unto these yellow sands," "Full fathom five," and "Where the bee sucks." Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5439.

"Orpheus with his lute" has been one of Shakespeare's most often set texts, and the Ralph Vaughan Williams is one of the most delightful. Tenor Robert Tear with Philip Ledger at the piano; Argo, ZRG 732.

"O Mistress Mine." Setting by Amy Beach. Mezzo D'Anna Fortunato and Virginia Eskin; Northeastern Records, NR 202.

Settings of "O Mistress Mine" by Sir Hubert Parry and "Pretty Ring-time" by Peter Warlock appear together on a fine recording by mezzo-soprano Janet Baker and pianist Gerald Moore; Angel, S-36456.

Ralph Vaughan William's "Serenade to Music," for sixteen solo singers, sets part of the interchange between Lorenzo and Jessica in V, i of *The Merchant of Venice*. It was written "in grateful recognition of the services to music" of Sir Henry Wood and premiered at the Wood Golden Jubilee Concert in 1938. The original soloists all had sung with Wood at some time, hence the need for the large number. London Philharmonic Orchestra and soloists conducted by Sir Adrian Boult; Angel, S-36698.

The "Macbeth doth murder sleep" speech, along with poems of Shelley, Tennyson, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Middleton, and Owen, make up the nocturnal text of Benjamin Britten's "Nocturne." Tenor Peter Pears with the strings of the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer; London, OS 6179.

Part of Ulysses's speech on "degree" (*Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii) is the text for one of the "Two Choruses, op. 14" of Alexander Goehr. It is a virtuoso work for two soloists and chorus, influenced by the work of Olivier Messiaen. Soprano Mary Thomas, contralto Pauline Stevens, the John Alldis Choir, and the Melos Ensemble, conducted by John Carewe; Angel, 3687.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe

"Ariette: As the moon's soft splendor." Delightful, unadorned setting by Amy Beach, known until recently as Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, one of the best American composers of the turn of the century. Mezzo D'Anna Fortunato with pianist Virginia Eskin, Northeastern Records, NR 202.

"Music." An unusual choice of text for Michael Tippett (1960), who did not much care for the Romantics. Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Nicholas Cleobury conducting; L'Oiseau-Lyre, DSLO 25.

"Music, when the soft voices die" has been set for chorus by Christopher Shaw. BBC Singers and Orchestra, conducted by John Poole; Argo, ZRG 791.

"O wild west wind" was set by Sir Edward Elgar; Argo, ZRG, 607.

"Love's Philosophy" has been set by Roger Quilter. Mezzo Janet Baker with pianist Gerald Moore; Angel, S-36456.

Sitwell, Edith

"Facade" is an entertainment written by the young Sitwell with the even younger William Walton (19 at the time). It caused something of a scandal when it was first performed (1922). Dame Edith Sitwell, reader, with an unidentified chamber orchestra, conducted by Frederick Prausnitz; Columbia Special Products Series, CML 5241.

Skelton, John

"Five Tudor Portraits," by Ralph Vaughan Williams, is a choral suite on poems of Skelton: "The Tunning of Elinor Rumming," "My Pretty Bess," "Epitaph on John Jayberd of Diss," "Jolly Rutterkin," and excerpts from "Lament for Philip Sparrow." The Skeltonics made for lively tempi and witty musical writing. Soprano Elizabeth Bainbridge, baritone John Carol Case, The Bach Choir, and the New Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by David Willcocks; Angel, S-36685. [ncal]

Spender, Stephen

"A Stopwatch and an Ordinance Map." A setting for male chorus with percussion and brass by Samuel Barber, inspired by the Spanish Civil War. The Robert Decorrier Chorale, The Symphony of the Air, conducted by Vladimir Golschmann; Vanguard, VSD-2083.

Spenser, Edmund

"The Merry Cuckoo." Benjamin Britten used this in his vocal "Spring Symphony" (1949). (See above; Auden: "Out on the Lawn I Lie in Bed.")

Stephens, James

"Reincarnation" is a setting by Samuel Barber of three Stephens poems: "Mary Hynes," "Anthony O'Daly," and "The Cooling." The Gregg Smith Singers; Everest, 3129.

Stevens, Wallace

"Last Poems of Wallace Stevens." Ned Rorem set seven late Stevens poems in 1972: "Not ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself; The River of Rivers in Connecticut; A Child Asleep in its Own Life; The Planet on the Table; The Dove in Spring; Of Mere Being; A Clear Day and No Memories." He has voiced his complete approval of the performance of soprano Rosalind Rees, cellist Sharon Robinson, and pianist Jerome Lowenthal on Leonards Records, LPI 116.

Stevenson, Robert Louis

Ralph Vaughan Williams used nine Stevenson poems to form his longest cycle for voice and piano, "Songs of Travel." The spiritual journey it describes seems to be influenced by that of Schubert's "Die Winterreise." Tenor Robert Tear with Philip Ledger at the piano; Argo, ZRG 732.

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord

"The splendour falls on castle walls" appears under the title of "Nocturne" in Benjamin Britten's "Serenade Opus 31 for tenor solo, horn, and strings." It includes one of the most memorable "dying echoes" in all musical settings of poetry. Peter Pears, Barry Tuckwell, the London Symphony Orchestra, with the composer conducting; London, OS 26161. The same poem has been set by Frederick Delius with quite different results. Louis Halsey Singers; Argo, ZRG 607.

"Queen Mary's Lute Song." Setting by Sir Edward Elgar. Soprano Mary Thomas, pianist Daphne Ibbott; SAGA, 5304.

"There is sweet music." Elgar arranged this poem as a partsong. Louis Halsey Singers; Argo, ZRG 607.

Thomas, Edward

"The Source." Chosen by Michael Tippett (1942) to contrast with Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Windhover," which together were published as "Two Madrigals." Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Nicholas Cleobury conducting; L'Oiseau-Lyre, DSLO 25.

Untermeyer, Louis

"The Swimmers." Exuberantly set by Charles Ives (1915-21) for voice and piano. Marni Nixon and John McCabe; Nonesuch, H-71209.

Vaughan, Henry

"Waters above." Benjamin Britten used this poem in his vocal "Spring Symphony" (1949). Recording conducted by the composer; London, 4512.
Elgar's settings of "The Shower" and "The Fountain" can be found in a good performance by the Louis Halsey Singers on Argo, ZRG 607.

Whitman, Walt

"When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed: A Requiem for Those We Love." Paul Hindemith chose Whitman texts for his secular requiem. Alto Louise Parker, bass George London, the Schola Cantorum of New York, and the New York Philharmonic, conducted by the composer; Columbia, ML 5973.

Ralph Vaughan Williams's only symphony to use sung texts was his first, which he called "A Sea Symphony," in which he makes use of passages from Walt Whitman's "Song of the Exposition," "Sea-Drift," and "A Passage to India." Soprano Heather Harper, baritone John Shirley-Quirk, and the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus are conducted by Andre Previn; RCA, LSC 3170.

Vaughan Williams also used Whitman poems for his "Dona Nobis Pacem" and his "Toward the Unknown Region." Soprano Sheila Armstrong, baritone John Carol Case, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult; Angel, S-36972.

"To what you said, passionately clasping my hand. . . ." Part of a cycle of American poems set for six singers and orchestra under the title of "Songfest" (1977) by Leonard Bernstein. The cycle also includes Frank O'Hara's "To the Poem," Lawrence Ferlinghetti's "The Pennycandy Store beyond the Elm," Langston Hughes's "I Too, Sing America," June Jordan's "Okay 'Negroes'," Anne Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband," Gertrude Stein's "Storyette H. M.," e e cummings's "if you cant eat you got to," Conrad Aiken's "Music I Heard with You," Edna St. Vincent Millay's "What My Lips have Kissed," and Edgar Allan Poe's "Israfel." Performance by Clamma Dale, Rosalind Elias, Nancy Williams, Donald Gramm, John Reardon, and Neil Rosenheim, with Leonard Bernstein conducting the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington; DG 2531 044.

"Who goes there?" Song setting by Charles Ives (1913). The Gregg Smith singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

"Apparition" is a fascinating setting of elegiac songs and vocalises for soprano and amplified piano by George Crumb. The poems include "The night in silence under many a star," "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed," "Dark mother always gliding with soft feet," "Approach, strong deliveress," and "Come lovely and soothing death." Soprano Jan DeGaetani and Gilbert Kalish; Bridge Records, BDG 2002.

"Carols of Death" by American composer William Schuman sets three of Whitman's death poems: "The Last Invocation," "The Unknown Region," and "To All, to Each." The Gregg Smith Singers; Everest, 3129.

In his "Songs of Farewell," Frederick Delius has set five sections from *Leaves of Grass* for double chorus. The passions of Delius and Whitman were equally extreme but separated by the Atlantic. Royal Choral Society and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent; Angel, S-36285.

"Once I passed through a populous city" has become Delius's "Idyll" for soprano, baritone, and orchestra. Heather Harper, John Shirley-Quirk, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra are conducted by Meredith Davies; Seraphim, S-60147.

"Sea Drift" is another Whitman poem that attracted Delius (1903). Baritone John Shirley-Quirk and the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Richard Hickox; Argo, ZRG 934.

Williams, William Carlos

"At the End of the Parade" is a cycle of six Williams songs by Yehuda Yannay (1970). It includes "Silence," "Death the Barber," "Sleep Song," "January," "Love Song," and "The End of the Parade" and is described by the composer as "lean but cohesive." Baritone Lawrence Weller with the Orchestra of Our Time, conducted by Joel Thome; CRI, SD 437.

Wordsworth, William

"Ode on Intimations of Immortality." A lush 45-minute setting of the entire text by Gerald Finzi for tenor solo, chorus, and orchestra. Tenor Ian Partridge, Guilford Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, Vernon Handley conducting; Lyrita, SRCS 75.

"The Rainbow." Song setting by Charles Ives (1921). The Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia, MS 7321.

Yeats, William Butler

"The Hosting of the Sidhe; The Host of the Air; and The Fiddler of Dooney." Settings by Charles Martin Loeffler, American composer of the early 20th Century, born in Germany but heavily influenced by Debussy. Mezzo D'Anna Fortunato and pianist Virginia Eskin; Northeastern Records, NR 207.

"The Cat and the Moon." An opera in once act, based on the Yeats play, by Thomas Putsche. Contemporary Players of the University of Chicago, conducted by Ralph Shapey; CRI, SD 245.

"Lullaby." An unaccompanied part-song written by Michael Tippett (1960) for the Deller Consort. Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Nicholas Cleobury conducting; L'Oiseau-Lyre, DSLO 25.

"The Curlew" is a setting of four Yeats poems by Peter Warlock (born Philip Heseltine): "He Reproves the Curlew," "The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love," "The Withering of the Boughs," and "He Hears the Cry of the Sedge" (three of them from *The Wind among the Reeds*, 1899). Yeats at first refused to allow Warlock permission to publish the poems, but support for the work from the Carnegie Foundation helped to change his mind. It is considered Warlock's masterpiece. Tenor Ian Partridge and The Music Group of London; Arabesque, AR 8018.

"There are seven that pull the thread." Setting by Sir Edward Elgar. Soprano Mary Thomas, pianist Daphne Ibbott; SAGA, 5304.

"When you are old" has been set by Frank Bridge. Peter Pears, tenor, with Benjamin Britten at the piano; Argo, ZRG 5418.