

I WILL BE EARTH

I will be earth, you be the flower.
You have found my root, you are the rain.
I will be boat, and you the rower.
You rock me and toss me, you are the sea.

How be steady earth that is now a flood.
The root is the oar afloat where has blown our bud.
We will be desert, pure salt the seed.
Burn radiant love, born scorpion need.

Poem by May Swenson

*Permission for the use of the poetry
has been granted by the estate of May Swenson.*

Songs for Women's Voices are musical settings of six poems by American poet May Swenson. The poems address a variety of topics — from feminism to God to romance to death — yet they speak with one voice, one style and one life-affirming philosophy. The musical settings are intended to present these poems in a simple and straightforward manner which seeks to portray the beauty, humor and passion of the words. It is suggested that each poem be read aloud (by a member of the chorus or reader) before the performance of each song. The poems may also be printed in the concert program. But it is recommended that the audience read the poems in advance (pre-concert or during intermission), perhaps also follow along in the printed version during the reading aloud, and then focus on the chorus during the actual singing.

—Gwyneth Walker

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, Walker resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.

Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer Music Company of Boston (choral and vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral and instrumental music).

May Swenson was born in Logan, Utah in 1913. She died in Ocean View, Delaware in 1989. In her lifetime, she worked mainly as a poet, publishing over 450 poems. Much of her life was spent in Greenwich Village, New York City, where she was a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.

Permission for the use of the poetry has been granted by the estate of May Swenson.

In 2005, the composer completed an orchestral accompaniment for these songs. The full score (#6509) and parts (#6510) are available from the publisher. (Individual parts are #6657.) The full score (#6670) and parts (#6671) for *I Will Be Earth* are available separately. (Individual parts are #6672.)

Duration: 14'00"
(20'00" with readings)

Instrumentation

2 Flutes
1 Oboe
1 Clarinet
1 Bassoon
2 Horns
Percussion (1 player)
Strings (minimum 4, 4, 3, 2, 1)

Commissioned by St. Joseph College, West Hartford, Connecticut,
in celebration of the 60th anniversary year: 1932-1992

Songs for Women's Voices

6. I Will Be Earth

for SSA Chorus and Piano

May Swenson**

Gwyneth Walker

Gently flowing, cantabile

♩ = 120 (♩. = 40)

rit.

Piano

The piano introduction is written for a grand piano in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a flowing melody with long, sweeping lines and some grace notes. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes. The piece concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and a fermata over the final chord.

6 *a tempo*
Tutti
mp cantabile

I will be earth, You be the flow - er.

This system contains the first line of the vocal melody and its piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a soprano clef and begins with a sixteenth rest followed by the lyrics. The piano accompaniment continues from the introduction, maintaining the same texture. The tempo is marked *a tempo* and the dynamics are *Tutti* and *mp cantabile*.

10 *a tempo*

You have found my root, you are the rain.

This system contains the second line of the vocal melody and its piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with the lyrics. The piano accompaniment features more complex textures, including some sixteenth-note patterns in the right hand. The tempo remains *a tempo*.

* Changes in the 2005 edition are in brackets [] throughout.

** Reprinted with permission of The Literary Estate of May Swenson.

15

I will be boat, and you the row-er. You

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

This system contains measures 15 through 18. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The piano part includes a prominent melodic line in the right hand with long slurs and a bass line with rhythmic accompaniment. Performance markings include 'Red.' and asterisks at the bottom of the piano part.

19

rock me, you toss me, you are the sea.

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

This system contains measures 19 through 22. It continues the vocal and piano parts. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line. Performance markings include 'Red.' and asterisks at the bottom of the piano part.

23

mp

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

This system contains measures 23 through 25. The vocal line is absent, and the piano part continues. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs, and the left hand has a bass line. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present. Performance markings include 'Red.' and asterisks at the bottom of the piano part.

26

Red. * *Red.* *

This system contains measures 26 through 28. The piano part continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line. Performance markings include 'Red.' and asterisks at the bottom of the piano part.

29 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ Quasi recitative [$\text{♩} = 80$]

S *mp* The

A *mp* 2 2 2 2
 How be stead - y earth that's now a flood.

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ Quasi recitative [$\text{♩} = 80$]

p

32

root is the oar a - float where has blown - our bud.

bud. _____

35

seed. _____

We will be des - ert, pure salt - the seed.

38 *mf*

Burn — ra — diant love, born — scor — — pion

mf

Burn — ra — diant love, born — scor — — pion

mf

rit. *

Slower, appassionato [♩ = 96]

41 *rit.*

need. _____

rit. _____

f

f

Slower, appassionato [♩ = 96]

rit. _____

f

roll sim.

rit. * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* *

45

Ah — Ah — Burn ra — diant

Ah — Ah — Burn ra — diant

blurred

rit. * *rit.* * *rit.* *

48

love, born scor pion

love, born scor pion

50

need.

need.

rit.

rit.

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

5 5 5

rit.

*

52

a tempo

p

Ah

a tempo

p delicato

rit. * *rit.* * *rit.* *

55

mf

I will be earth, You be the

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

59

p

flow - er. Ah

flow - er. You have found my root, you are the

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

63

mf *p*

rain. and

rain. I will be boat, and -

Red. * Red. * Red. *

67 *mf*

you the row-er You

you the row-er. You rock me and toss me,

mf

* *mf* * *mf* * *mf* *

71 *f*

rock me and toss me, you rock me and toss me, —

you rock me and toss me, —

f

* *f* * *f* * *f* *

74 *rit.* *senza dim.* 3 *Slowly*

rock me and toss me, —
rock me and toss me, You are the

rit. *senza dim.* 3 *Slowly*

rit. *Slowly*

red. * *red.* *

77

sea.

gently

* *red.* * *red.* * *red. held until the end.*

81 *poco accel.*

p

S1 you ___ are, you ___ are,

S2 you ___ are, you ___ are,

A you ___

poco accel.

(~~no.~~ hold until the end)

84

f

you ___ are the sea. ___

f

you ___ are the sea. ___

f

are, you ___ are the sea. ___

[8va.....]

f