

ETERNAL WINTER

"Holy Thursday" from *Songs of Experience*
by William Blake (1758-1827)

Joan Szymko

♩ = 72

Sop solo *f*

Is this a ho - ly thing to see In a rich and fruit - ful land,

Vc.

6 *dim.* *mp*

Babes re - duced to mis - er - ry, Fed with cold and u - surous hand?

dim. *mp*

Poco più mosso

11 **Tutti** *f* *mf* *mp*

S A Is that trem - bling cry a song? Can it be a song of joy?

T B Is that trem - bling cry a song? Can it be a song of joy?

Poco più mosso

piano *f*

16 *mf* Tutti Sop.

And so ma-ny chil-dren poor? — It is a land of pov-er-ty! their

Ten. *mf* *mf*

And so ma-ny chil-dren poor? — it is a land of pov-er-

20 *With ever growing dismay* rit.

sun does ne-ver shine, And their fields are bleak and bare. And their ways are fill'd with thorns: it is e-

rit. *colla voce*

23 *A tempo*

S ter-nal win

T *sempre mf*

B And their sun does nev-er shine. And their fields are bleak and bare. And their

A tempo *p* *R.H.* *L.H.*

A tempo

26 *solo:* *f* *mf*

It is e - ter - nal win - ter there.

S *mf*
A And their sun does never And their

T *f*
ways are fill'd with thorns: it is e - ter - nal win - ter there.

B *f*
ways are fill'd with thorns: it is e - ter - nal win - ter there.

29 *f*

solo It is e - ter - nal win - ter

S *f*
A f...ls are bleak and bare. And their ways are fill'd with thorns: it is e - ter - nal win - ter

there. *sempre f*

there. And their sun does ne - ver shine. And their fields are bleak and bare. And their

And their sun does ne - ver shine. And their fields are bleak and bare. And their

And their sun does ne - ver shine. And their fields are bleak and bare. And their

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 32 to 34. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are marked with *sempre f*. The lyrics are: "there. And their sun does ne - ver shine. And their fields are bleak and bare. And their". The piano accompaniment includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 5/4 and back to 3/4.

ways are fill'd with thorns: It is e - ter - nal win - ter

ways are fill'd with thorns: It is e - ter - nal win - ter

ways are fill'd with thorns: It is e - ter - nal win - ter

ways are fill'd with thorns: It is e - ter - nal win - ter

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 35 to 38. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "ways are fill'd with thorns: It is e - ter - nal win - ter". The piano accompaniment includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4.

37

rit. *dim.* **Meno mosso**

solo

it is e - ter - nal win - ter there. *dim.*

there. it is win - ter there. *dim.*

there. it is win - ter there. *mf* For where - e'er the sun does shine,

there. *dim.*

there. win - ter there. *dim.*

Meno mosso

rit.

(piano tacit to M. 47)

Meno mosso

dim.

41

mf **poco rit.** *p* *mf* Sop solo

S And where'er the rain does fall: Babe can ne-ver hun-ger there, Nor

T *mf* *p* *mf* Ten solo*

B Babe can ne-ver hun-ger there,

45

f

solo pov - er - ty the mind ap - pall.

solo pov - er - ty the mind ap - pall.

* Tenor solo may be substituted by an Alto

Tempo primo

end solo

47 **tutti:** *f* Is this a ho - ly thing to see, In a rich and fruit - ful

S (solo) *mf*

A *f* Is this a ho - ly thing to see, In a rich and fruit - ful *mf*

T *f* Is this a ho - ly thing to see, In a rich and fruit - ful *mf*

B **tutti:** *f* Is this a ho - ly thing to see, In a rich and fruit - ful *mf*

Is this a ho - ly thing to see, In a rich and fruit - ful

Tempo primo

51 *p* land, Babes re - duced to mis - er - y. Fed with

S *p*

A *p* land, Babes re - duced to mis - er - y. Fed with

T *p* land, Babes re - duced to mis - er - y. Fed with

B land, Fed with

mf *mp*

f

54

rit.

S
A
T
B

cold and u - surous hand?

cold and u - surous hand?

rit.

mp *p*

Holy Thursday
(from "Songs of Experience")

Eternal Winter is a setting of the poem "Holy Thursday" from William Blake's "Songs of Experience." (1794). The context for the poem is the annual Ascension Thursday service at St Paul's Cathedral (forty days after Easter), when poor and orphaned children from London's Church run charity schools sang as they were paraded into St Paul's for religious services. The tone here is much darker than in Blake's poem of the same name from his "Songs of Innocence," written five years earlier. He portrays the children's voices not as the angelic singing from "Songs of Innocence," but rather as a "trembling cry." The England of Blake's time was the richest, most powerful nation on earth. But in his eyes, "rich and fruitful" Britain is a "land of poverty," implying that society had turned a blind eye to these children, who will live in an "eternal winter" - perpetually impoverished and destined for a cruel life of "days filled with thorns." I set this poem because I was drawn to the powerful metaphors of Blake's "eternal winter," but also because I was so struck by how time passes and yet how little has changed in regard to society's regard toward childhood poverty. While the poor of Industrialized London most certainly lived in more wretched conditions; the fact is that today, in America, one in five of children under age six live in poverty. The child poverty rate in the USA, the country with the largest economy in the world, is two to three times higher than that of other major industrial nations.

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land.
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine
And their fields are bleak & bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns:
It is eternal winter there.

For where-e'er the sun does shine.
And where-e'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appall.

William Blake (1757-1827) was an English artist and poet. (pictured on cover). He was born in London and lived much of his life there. From a very early age he was inclined toward painting and poetry. Despite his prolific output he lived in poverty much of his life, as he struggled to make a living as an illustrator and engraver. Blake was a mystic and spoke openly of his visions. Most certainly a nonconformist, he kept company with some of the leading radical thinkers of his day, such as Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft. He believed in sexual and racial equality and justice for all, and abhorred oppression in all its forms. "Songs of Innocence and Experience" is his most popular work. Both books of "Songs" were printed in an illustrated format much like illuminated manuscripts. The earliest copies were printed and illuminated by Blake himself.

For information on composer, Joan Szymko, visit: www.joanszymko.com