

MILLAY SONGS

for Voice and Piano

Poems by

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

Music by

BRUCE TRINKLEY

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COMPOSER'S NOTE

Edna St. Vincent Millay was born in Maine in 1892. She attended Vassar College and became the best-known poet of her generation and the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. She died at her home, Steepletop, north of New York City in 1950.

MILLAY SONGS was composed during a residency at The Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences in Rabun Gap, Georgia, in October 2007.

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First Fig

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends –
It gives a lovely light!

Second Fig

Safe upon the solid rock the ugly houses stand:
Come and see my shining palace built upon the sand!

Elegy Before Death

There will be rose and rhododendron
When you are dead and underground;
Still will be heard from white syringas
Heavy with bees, a sunny sound;

Still will the tamaracks be raining
After the rain has ceased, and still
Will there be robins in the stubble,
Grey sheep upon the warm green hill.

Spring will not ail nor autumn falter;
Nothing will know that you are gone, –
Saving alone some sullen ploughland
None but yourself sets foot upon;

Saving the mayweed and the pigweed
Nothing will know that you are dead,
These, and perhaps a useless wagon
Standing beside some tumbled shed.

Oh, there will pass with your great passing
Little of beauty not your own, –
Only the light from common water,
Only the grace from simple stone!

Lament

Listen children:
Your father is dead.
From his old coats
I'll make you little jackets;
I'll make you little trousers
From his old pants.
There'll be in his pockets
Things he used to put there,
Keys and pennies
Covered with tobacco;
Dan shall have the pennies
To save in his bank;
Anne shall have the keys
To make a pretty noise with.
Life must go on,
And the dead be forgotten;
Life must go on,
Though good men die;
Anne, eat your breakfast;
Dan, take your medicine;
Life must go on;
I forget just why.

Winter Night

Pile high the hickory and the light
Log of chestnut struck by the blight.
Welcome-in the winter night.

The day has gone in hewing and felling,
Sawing and drawing wood to the dwelling
For the night of talk and story-telling.

These are the hours that give the edge
To the blunted axe and the best wedge.
Straighten the saw and lighten the sledge.

Here are question and reply,
And the fire reflected in the thinking eye.
So peace, and let the bob-cat cry.

1. First Fig

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Bruce Trinkley

from *A Few Figs from Thistles* (1920)

With intensity ♩ = 96

Piano

The musical score is written for piano and voice. The piano part begins with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first system of the piano part features a treble and bass staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic. A slur covers the first two measures, and a *dim.* marking appears in the third measure. The vocal melody enters in the second system, starting with a rest followed by a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "My can - dle burns at both ends; It will not last the night; But ah. my foes, and oh, my friends, It". The piano part continues with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in the second system, marked with a crescendo hairpin. The third system of the piano part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, also marked with a crescendo hairpin. Measure numbers 4 and 8 are indicated in boxes at the start of the second and third piano systems, respectively.

gives a love - ly light! It

[12]

mf

This system contains measures 11, 12, and 13. The vocal line begins in measure 11 with the lyrics 'gives a love - ly light!'. Measure 12 is a whole rest, and measure 13 begins with the word 'It' followed by a half note. The piano accompaniment starts in measure 11 with a half note chord. Measure 12 features a *mf* dynamic marking and a melodic line in the right hand. Measure 13 continues the piano accompaniment with a crescendo hairpin.

gives a love - ly light! _____

poco ritard.

[15]

mp

diminuendo al fine

poco ritard.

8va

This system contains measures 14, 15, 16, and 17. The vocal line continues from measure 13 with a long note in measure 14, followed by a half note in measure 15, and a whole note in measure 16. Measure 17 is a whole rest. The piano accompaniment begins in measure 14 with a *mp* dynamic marking. Measure 15 has a *diminuendo al fine* instruction. Measure 16 features a *poco ritard.* instruction. Measure 17 includes an *8va* marking for the right hand and ends with a double bar line.

2. Second Fig

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Bruce Trinkley

from *A Few Figs from Thistles* (1920)

With abandon ♩ = 96 *mf*

Voice

Piano

mf

Safe up - on the

sol - id rock the ug - ly hous - es stand: _____

Come and see my shin - ing pal - ace built up - on the sand! _____

mp cresc.

mf cresc. poco a poco

12

f

8vb

17

f

Come and see my shin - ing pal - ace

dim.

mp cresc.

21

built up - on the sand!

mf

cresc.

8va

ff

3. Elegy before Death

Edna St. Vincent Millay

from *Second April* (1921)

Bruce Trinkley

Adagio espressivo ♩ = 69

Voice

p

There will be rose and rho-do - den-dron When you are

Piano

p sempre sonore

dead and un-der - ground; Still will be heard from white sy - rin-gas—— Heav-y with bees, a sun-ny

5

Poco piu mosso ♩ = 76

mp

poco cresc.

mf

sound;—— Still will the tam-a - racks be rain - ing—— Af-ter the rain has

10

mp

p espressivo *poco rit.*

15 ceased, and still Will there be rob - ins in the stub - ble, — Grey sheep up -

mf *p* *pp* *poco rit.*

Tempo primo *mp*

18 on the warm green hill. — Spring will not ail nor au - tumn

molto cresc. *f* *mf*

22 fal - ter; Noth - ing will know that you are gone, — Sav - ing a - lone some sul - len

cresc. *f* *mf* *dim.*

p *mf*

27 plough - land None but your - self sets foot up - on; — Sav - ing the may - weed and the

p *mf* *sonore*

piu f *mp*
 pig - weed Noth - ing will know that you are dead, These, and per - haps a use - less
 31
f *mp*
 wag - on — Stand - ing be - side some tum - bled shed. — Oh, there will
 34
cresc. *f*
f dim. *mf* *mp espressivo*
 pass — with your great pass - ing Lit - tle of beau - ty not your own, On - ly the
 38
dim. *mp*
allargando
 light — from com - mon wa - ter, — On - ly the grace — from sim - ple stone!
 43
allargando

4. Lament

11

Edna St. Vincent Millay
from *Second April* (1921)

Bruce Trinkley

Rubato *f* *poco rit.*

Voice

Lis - ten chil - dren: Your fa - ther is dead.

Piano

ff *slow arpeg.*

con pedale

Andante doloroso ♩ = 80 *mp*

From his old coats I'll make you

5

p

lit - tle jac - kets; I'll make you lit - tle trou - sers From his old

8 10

, *mf*

10 pants. There'll be in his poc - kets Things he used to

12 put there, Keys and pen-nies Cov-ered with to - bac - co; Dan shall have the pen-nies To

15 save in his bank;— Anne shall have the keys To make a pret-ty noise with.

18 Life must go on, — And the dead be for - got - ten;

f- rubato *poco rit.*

ff *sonore*

Life must go on, _____ Though

p *a tempo* *mf*

p *mf*

good men _____ die; _____ Anne, eat your break-fast;

mp

mp

Dan, take your med-i-cine; Life must

p

p

go on; I for-get just why.

mp *non rit.* *lunga*

non rit.

5. Winter Night

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Bruce Trinkley

from *The Buck in the Snow* (1928)

Adagio rustico ♩ = 76

mf

Voice

Piano

sempre cantabile

mp

con pedale

Pile high the

hick-o-ry and the light Log of chest-nut struck by the blight. Wel-come-in the

5

win-ter night.

The day has gone in hew-ing and fell-ing,

10

mf

poco dim.

mf

Saw-ing and draw - ing wood to the dwell - ing For the night of talk and — sto-ry -

14

mp *mf* *mp*

mp *cresc.*

tell - ing. These are — the hours — that give the edge To — the

19

f *sub. p* *cresc.*

mf

blunt - ed axe and the best wedge. — Straight-en the saw and light-en the sledge.

24

mp

mp cresc. poco a poco

28 Here are ques - tion — and re - ply, And the

p cresc. poco a poco

32 fire re - flect - ed — in the think - ing eye. So

f *sub. p*

f cantabile

36 peace, — and let the bob - cat

cresc. poco a poco *mf*

p cresc. poco a poco *mf*

40 cry. —

dim. poco a poco *allargando*

dim. poco a poco *allargando*