

# **ROBERT FROST**

# **SONGS**

**for Voice and Piano**

**Poems by**  
**ROBERT FROST**

**Music by**  
**BRUCE TRINKLEY**

# ROBERT FROST SONGS

for Voice and Piano

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## COMPOSER'S NOTE

Robert Frost was born on March 24, 1874, in San Francisco but spent most of his life in the rural New England that he frequently wrote about. He received four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry and, at the age of 86, read a new poem at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration. He died in 1963.

**ROBERT FROST SONGS** was begun during a residency at The Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences in Rabun Gap, Georgia, in October 2007 and completed in State College, Pennsylvania in November 2007. The composer first encountered the poetry of Robert Frost in junior high school when he memorized "The Death of the Hired Hand" for English class. He encountered Randall Thompson's settings of Frost poems in *Frostiana* which he frequently conducted with his men's choruses. These are his first settings of Frost's poetry.

### *A Leaf Treader*

I have been treading on leaves all day until I am autumn-tired.  
God knows all the color and form of leaves I have trodden on and mired.  
Perhaps I have put forth too much strength and been too fierce from fear.  
I have safely trodden underfoot the leaves of another year.

All summer long they were over head, more lifted up than I.  
To come to their final place in earth they had to pass me by.  
All summer long I thought I heard them threatening under their breath.  
And when they came it seemed with a will to carry me with them to death.

They spoke to the fugitive in my heart as if it were leaf to leaf.  
They tapped at my eyelids and touched my lips with an invitation to grief.  
But it was no reason I had to go because they had to go.  
Now up my knee to keep on top of another year of snow.

### *To the Thawing Wind*

Come with rain, O loud Southwester!  
Bring the singer, bring the nester;  
Give the buried flower a dream;  
Make the settled snowbank stream;  
Find the brown beneath the white;  
But whate'er you do tonight,  
Bathe my window, make it flow,  
Melt it as the ice will go;  
Melt the glass and leave the sticks  
Like a hermit's crucifix;  
Burst into my narrow stall;  
Swing the picture on the wall;  
Run the rattling pages o'er;  
Scatter poems on the floor;  
Turn the poet out of door.

### *The Rose Family*

The rose is a rose,  
And was always a rose.  
But the theory now goes  
That the apple's a rose,  
And the pear is, and so's  
The plum, I suppose.  
The dear only know  
What will next prove a rose.  
You, of course, are a rose  
But were always a rose.

### *Pan With Us*

Pan came out of the woods one day,  
His skin and his hair and his eyes were gray,  
The gray of the moss of walls were they,  
And stood in the sun and looked his fill  
At wooded valley and wooded hill.

He stood in the zephyr, pipes in hand,  
On a height of naked pasture land;  
In all the country he did command  
He saw no smoke and he saw no roof.  
That was well! and he stamped a hoof.

His heart knew peace, for none came here

To this lean feeding save once a year  
Someone to salt the half-wild steer,  
Or homespun children with clicking pails  
Who see so little they tell no tales.

He tossed his pipes, too hard to teach  
A new-world song, far out of reach,  
For a sylvan sign that the blue jay's screech  
And the whimper of hawks beside the sun  
Were music enough for him, for one.

Times were changed from what they were:  
Such pipes kept less of power to stir  
The fruited bough of the juniper  
And the fragile bluets clustered there  
Than the merest aimless breath of air.

They were pipes of pagan mirth,  
And the world had found new terms of worth.  
He laid him down on the sun-burned earth  
And ravelled a flower and looked away.  
Play? Play? - What should he play?

### ***The Flood***

Blood has been harder to dam back than water.  
Just when we think we have it impounded safe  
Behind new barrier walls (and let it chafe!),  
It breaks away in some new kind of slaughter.  
We choose to say it is let loose by the devil;  
But power of blood itself releases blood.  
It goes by might of being such a flood  
Held high at so unnatural a level.  
It will have outlet, brave and not so brave.  
Weapons of war and implements of peace  
Are but the points at which it finds release.  
And now it is once more the tidal wave  
That when it has swept by leaves summits stained.  
Oh, blood will out. It cannot be contained.

# 1. A Leaf-Treader

Robert Frost

Bruce Trinkley

**Largo cantabile**  $\text{♩} = 63$

**Voice**

*mf*

I have been tread-ing on leaves all day un -

**Piano**

*mf* *con pedale*

*mp*

til I am au - tumn-tired. \_\_\_\_\_ God knows all the col - or and form of leaves I have

**3**

*f* *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

trod - den on and mired. \_\_\_\_\_ Per - haps I have put forth too much strength and been

**5**

*mf* *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

too fierce from fear. I have safe - ly — trod - den un - der - foot — the  
 leaves of a - noth - er year. —  
 All sum - mer long they were o - ver head, more lift - ed up than I. — To  
 come to their fin - al place in earth they had to pass me by. —

7 *f* *mf*  
 9 *mf* *mp*  
 11 *p* *non cresc.*  
 13 *non cresc.*

*poco cresc.* *mf*

All sum - mer long I thought I heard them threat - en - ing un - der their breath. \_\_\_\_\_ And

15

*poco cresc.*

when they came it seemed with a will to car - ry me with them to

17

*mf*

*poco rit.* *mp* **Poco meno mosso ed espressivo**

death. They spoke to the fu - gi - tive in my heart as

19

*poco rit.*

*p* *sonore*  
*colla voce*

*mf*

if it were leaf to leaf. ——— They tapped at my eye - lids and touched my lips with an

21

*mp*

*cresc. poco a poco* *f ten.*

in - vi - ta - tion to grief. ——— But it was no rea - son I had to go be - cause they had to go. ——— Now

23

*cresc. poco a poco* *ten.* *mf*

**Tempo primo** *poco rit.* *a tempo* *poco rit.*

up, my knee, to keep on top of a - noth - er year of snow. ———

26

*poco rit.* *a tempo* *poco rit.*



# 2. To the Thawing Wind

Robert Frost

Bruce Trinkley

**Allegro tempestoso** ♩ = 132

**Voice**

*f* > Come with rain, O

**Piano**

*f marcato*

*mf*

*mf*

loud South - west - er! Bring the sing - er, bring the nest - er;

*mp*

*mp cresc.* *f* *mp cresc.* *f*

Give the bur - ied flow'r a dream; Make the set - tled snow - bank stream;

*p cresc.* *mf* *p cresc.* *mf*

Find the brown be - neath the white;

12

*f* *dim.* *mp* *f* *mp*

But what-e'er you do to - night, Bathe my win - dow, make it flow, Melt it as the

16

*f* *sub. p* *mp* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc.*

ice will go; Melt the glass and leave the sticks Like a her-mit's cru - ci -

21

*f* *mp* *f* *poco rit.* *mf* *p cresc.* *mf* *f* *poco rit.*

Adagio con moto  $\text{♩} = 80$ *mf*

25 fix; Burst in - to my nar - row stall;

*mf dim.* *mp*

29 Swing the pic - ture on the wall; Run the rat - tling pag - es o'er;

*mp cresc.* *p cresc.*

*mf* Scat - ter po - ems on the floor; Turn the po - et

33 *mp* *cresc. al fine*

***ff* Precipitando**

out of door.

37 *ff*

# 3. The Rose Family

11

Robert Frost

Bruce Trinkley

**Andante con amore** ♩ = 104 *p molto legato*

Voice

The rose is a rose, And was

Piano

*p*

*con pedale*

al - ways a rose. But the theo - ry now goes That the

5

*cresc. poco a poco*

ap - ple's a rose, ——— And the pear is, and so's The plum, ———

9

*cresc. poco a poco*

*poco rit.* *f* *a tempo*

I sup - pose. The dear on - ly knows What will

*a tempo*

*poco rit.* *f*

*dim.* *rit.* *mp a tempo cresc.*

next prove a rose. You, of course, are a

*rit.* *a tempo*

*dim.* *mp cresc.*

*f* *mf* *dim.*

rose— But were al - ways a rose—

*f* *mf* *dim. poco a poco al fine*

*pp*

8va

24

# 4. Pan With Us

13

Robert Frost

Bruce Trinkley

**Larghetto grazioso** ♩ = 60 *mp* always legato and well-articulated

Voice

Piano

*mf* *con pedale* *mp*

Pan came out of the woods one day— His

skin and his hair and his eyes were gray, The gray of the moss of walls were they—

**5** *cantabile e sonore* *mf*

*warmly* *mf*

And stood in the sun and looked his fill At wood - ed val-ley and wood - ed hill.

**10** *mp*

*mp*

He stood in the zeph - yr, pipes in hand, On a height of nak - ed

15

*mp*

*cresc. poco a poco*

pas - ture land; In all the coun - try he did com-mand He

20

*cresc. poco a poco*

*mf*

saw no smoke and he saw no roof. That was well! and he stamped a hoof.

24

*mf* *dim.*

*sotto voce e calmato*

His heart knew peace, for none came here To this lean feed-ing save once a year

29

*pp*

*mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

34 Some-one to salt the half - wild steer, Or home - spun chil-dren with click - ing pails Who see so lit-tle they

*mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

39 tell no tales. He tossed his pipes, too hard to teach A

*mf* *mp* *quietly pulsing* *dim.* *p*

*cresc.* *f*

44 new - world song, far out of reach, For a syl - van sign — that the

*cresc.* *f*

*dim.* *mp*

47 blue jay's screech And the whim-per of hawks — be - side the sun — Were

*dim.* *mp*



# Poco meno mosso, con grazia

50 mu - sic e - nough for him, for one.

*p* *mp*

54 Times were changed from what they were: Such pipes kept less of pow'r to stir The

*p* *cresc.* *mf* *mp*

58 fruit - ed bough of the ju - ni - per And the frag - ile blu - ets

*dim.* *p molto espressivo* *pp colla voce*

61 clus - tered there Than the mer - est aim - less breath of air. \_\_\_\_\_

*allarg.* *allarg.*

The musical score is written for a voice and piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/8. The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'mu - sic e - nough for him, for one. Times were changed from what they were: Such pipes kept less of pow'r to stir The fruit - ed bough of the ju - ni - per And the frag - ile blu - ets clus - tered there Than the mer - est aim - less breath of air.' Performance markings include dynamics (*p*, *mp*, *mf*, *pp*), crescendos (*cresc.*), decrescendos (*dim.*), and tempo changes (*allarg.*). The piano part features various textures, including chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines.

# Tempo primo

17

*mp semplice*

They were pipes of pa - gan mirth, And the world had found new terms of worth.

64

*mp*

*cresc. poco a poco* *espressivo*

He laid him down on the sun - burned earth And rav-elled a flow - er and looked a - way.

68

*cresc. poco a poco*

## Largo espressivo

*f* *mf* *mp*

Play? Play? What should he play?

72

*mf* *p* *p*

*ruefully*

*allargando*

76

*pp*

# 5. The Flood

Robert Frost

Bruce Trinkley

**Con ira**  $\text{♩} = 116$  *mf*

Voice

Blood has been hard - er to dam back than wa - ter.

Piano

*f ben marcato* *mp*

4 Just when we think we have it im - pound - ed safe ————— Be-hind new bar-rier walls

*f* *with passionate conviction*

8 (and let it chafe!), It breaks a - way in some new kind of slaugh - ter.

*con pedale*

*mf* *f*

12 We choose to say it is let loose by the dev - il; But pow - er of blood it -

*mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

*mf*

16 self re - leas - es blood. It goes by might of be - ing such a

*f*

20 flood Held high at so un - nat - u - ral a lev - el.

**Con slancio** ♩ = 66

*mf* *mf*

25 It will have out - let, brave and not so brave. Weap - ons of war and

*mf* *mp*

*cresc.*

im - ple - ments of peace Are but the points at which it finds re -

**29**

*cresc.*

*f*

lease. — And now it is once more the tid - al wave — That when it has swept by, leaves

**33**

*mf*

*ff ben marcato*

sum - mits stained. — Oh, blood will out. — It

**38**

*f*

*poco rit.* *ossia* *a tempo* *allarg.*

can - not be con - tained. —

**42**

*poco rit.* *a tempo* *allarg.*

*ff*

*8vb*