Gwyneth Walker

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

for SATB Chorus (divisi) and Piano

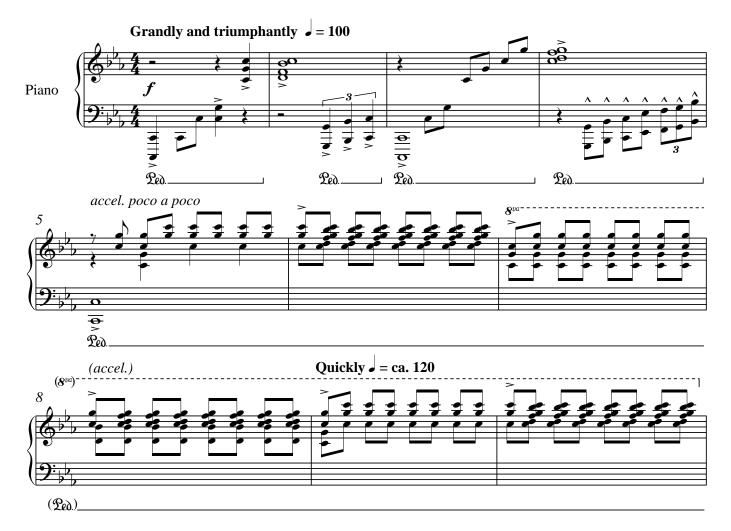
And Death Shall Have No Dominion

for SATB Chorus (divisi) and Piano

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

*And death shall have no dominion. Dead men naked they shall be one with the man in the wind and the west moon; When their bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, They shall have stars at elbow and foot; Though they go mad they shall be sane, Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again; Though lovers be love shall not; And death shall have no dominion.



*It is suggested that the first stanza of the poem be read aloud by members of the chorus before singing the song.

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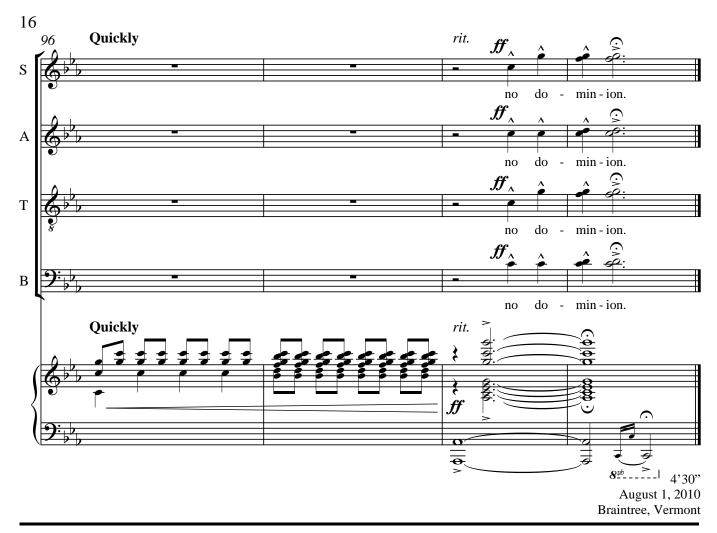












Program Notes

This musical setting of the well-known Dylan Thomas poem focuses on the strength and certainty of the message – though death may claim the mortal life, the spirit of humanity endures. Thus, the piano introduction and the first entrance by the chorus are marked "grandly and triumphantly." The musical language is often loud and forceful. Harmonies are bold – either spare (open fourths and fifths) or blunt (added seconds). The softening sonorities of thirds are rarely heard, especially in the opening verse. However, richer and gentler chords are chosen to express the life-affirming sentences:

Though they sink through the sea, they shall rise again... Break in the sun till the sun breaks down...

The poetic text primarily portrays the darkness and decay of death. And yet, with these few gloriously transcendent lines, the enduring spirit is celebrated. Thus, the final "no dominion" is victorious.

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, she 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 as well as the 2008 "Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities" from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum. Walker's catalog includes over 200 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus and solo voice. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer of Boston (choral and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).