



Christopher Beardsley

Of Phantoms and
Kindling Frost-fires
for voice and piano

CHRISTOPHER BEARDSLEY
OF PHANTOMS AND FROST-FIRES
Settings of poetry by Walter de la Mare

1. The Ghost

'Who knocks?' 'I, who was beautiful,
 Beyond all dreams to restore,
 I, from the roots of the dark thorn am hither.
 And knock on the door.'

'Who speaks?' 'I - once was my speech
 Sweet as the bird's on the air,
 When echo lurks by the waters to heed;
 'Tis I speak thee fair.'

'Dark is the hour!' 'Aye, and cold.'
 'Lone is my house.' 'Ah, but mine?'
 'Sight, touch, lips, eyes yearned in vain.'
 'Long dead these to thine...'

Silence. Still faint on the porch
 Brake the flames of the stars.
 In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand
 Over keys, bolts, and bars.

A face peered. All the grey night
 In chaos of vacancy shone;
 Nought but vast sorrow was there -
 The sweet cheat gone.

2. Nothing

Whsst, and away, and over the green,
 Scampered a shape that never was seen.
 It ran without sound, it ran without shadow,
 Never a grass-blade in unmown meadow
 Stooped at the thistledown fall of its foot.
 I watched it vanish, yet saw it not -
 A moment past, it had gazed at me;
 Now nought but myself and the spindle tree.
 A nothing! - Of air? Of earth? Of sun? -
 From emptiness come, into vacancy gone!...
Whsst, and away, and over the green,
 Scampered a shape that never was seen.

3. The Song of Shadows

Sweep thy faint strings, Musician,
 With thy long lean hand;
 Downward the starry tapers burn,
 Sinks soft the waning sand;
 The old hound whimpers couched in sleep,
 The embers smoulder low;
 Across the walls the shadows
 Come, and go.

Sweep softly thy strings, Musician,
 The minutes mount to hours;
 Frost on the windless casement weaves
 A labyrinth of flowers;
 Ghosts linger in the darkening air,
 Harken at the open door;
 Music hath called them, dreaming,
 Home once more.

4. Snow

No breath of wind,
 No gleam of sun -
 Still the white snow
 Whirls softly down -
 Twig and bough
 And blade and thorn
 All in an icy
 Quiet, forlorn.
 Whispering, rustling,
 Through the air,
 On sill and stone,
 Roof, - everywhere,
 It heaps its powdery
 Crystal flakes,
 Of every tree
 A mountain makes;
 Till pale and faint
 At shut of day,
 Stoops from the West
 One wintry ray.
 And, feathered in fire,
 Where ghosts the moon,
 A robin shrills
 His lonely tune.

5. The Snowflake

Before I melt,
 Come, look at me!
 This lovely icy filigree!
 Of a great forest
 In one night
 I make a wilderness
 Of white:
 By skyey cold
 Of crystals made,
 All softly, on
 Your finger laid,
 I pause, that you
 My beauty see:
 Breathe; and I vanish
 Instantly.

6. Blow, northern Wind

Blow, northern wind; fall snow;
 And thou – my loved and dear,
 See, in this waste of burthened cloud
 How Spring is near!

See, in those labouring boughs,
 Buds stir in their dark sleep;
 How in the frost-becrumbling ruts
 The green fires creep.

The dreamless earth has heard
 Beneath snow's whispering flakes
 A faint shrill childlike voice, a call—
 Sighs, ere she wakes . . .

What Spring have we? Turn back!—
 Though this be winter's end,
 Still may far-memored snowdrops bloom
 For us, my friend.

7. Spring

Now the slim almond tree
 Tells April soon will be
 Scattering her petals where
 Snow lies cold and bare.

Birds in its leafing boughs
 Echoes of spring arouse.
 Piercing the drowsy earth,
 Crocus her flower brings forth –

Wooing the bees. And soon
 Winter's ice-silvered moon
 Shall melt, shall kindle on high
 Springtime within the sky.

Duration: 16 minutes

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Of Phantoms and Kindling Frost-fires

1. The Ghost

Walter de la Mare

Christopher Beardsley

Slowly (♩=c60) *p whispered* long

Voice

"Who knocks?" —

Piano

pp long *becoming more insistent p* *mf*

A little quicker (♩=c80) *sempre legato*

5 *p* *mf* (*mf*)

"I, who was beau - ti - ful, Be - yond all dreams to re - store,

A little quicker (♩=c80)

p *mf* *p*

10 *p* *mp* *p*

I, from the roots of the dark thorn_ am hith - er. And knock on the door"

p *mp* *p*

15 **poco accel.** **mf** **a tempo** **f** **p melancholic**

"Who speaks?" "I- once was my

poco accel. **a tempo**

mf **p**

19

speech Sweet as the bird's on the air, When e-cho lurks by the

23

wa - ters_____ to heed; 'Tis I speak thee fair."

agitato, molto cresc.

27 **Agitated** **ff** **sub. p ma sempre agitato** **ff**

"Dark is the hour!" "Ay. and cold." "Lone is my house."

Agitated **ff** **p** **ff**

33 *p* *mf* *f*

"Ah, but mine?" "Sight, touch, lips, eyes yearned in vain."

37 *ff marcato* *whispered* *p* long *pp* long

"Long dead these to thine..." Si-lence.

accel. *long* *long*

40 **Not too fast** (♩=c60)

Not too fast (♩=c60)

p *pp sempre legato*

sempre con Ped.

43 *p*

Still faint on the porch Break the flames of the stars. In

45 *rit.* *mf*

gloom groped a hope-wea - ried hand _____ O - ver keys, bolts and bars.

rit. *mf*

49 *Slower* *p* (like a recitative) *Faster* (♩=c120)

A face peered... All the grey night In cha - os of va - can - cy

Slower *p* *Faster* (♩=c120)

54 *rit.* *f* *a tempo* (♩=c120) *rit.* *Tempo primo* (♩=c84) *p*

shone; Nought but vast sor - row was there—

rit. *f* *a tempo* (♩=c120) *rit.* *Tempo primo* (♩=c84)

59 *rit.* *p*

The sweet cheat gone.

8va *rit.* *p*

2. Nothing

Allegro scherzando (♩.=c120)

light and detached

Voice *mf*

Wsst, and a-way, and o-ver the green, Scam-pered a shape that ne-ver was

Pno. *mf*

4 *mf* *mp*

seen. It ran with-out sound, it ran with-out

Pno. *f* *mf* *mp*

8

sha-dow, Ne-ver a grass-blade in un-mown mea-dow

(←. = .→ *sempre*)

11 *f*

Stooped at the thi - stle-down fall of its

8va (←. = .→ *sempre*) *f*

14 ($\leftarrow \text{♩} = \text{♩} \rightarrow$ *sempre*)
mp *mp*
foot. I watched it van-ish,

17 *mf*
yet saw it not—

20 *accel.* *p* *accel.*

23 *a tempo* *f* *mf*
A mo - ment past, it had

26

mf *f* *mf*

gazed at me; Now naught but my-self and the

30

mp

spin - dle tree. A no - thing!— Of

33

mf *f* *ff*

air? Of earth? Of Sun?—

37

40 *mp* *mf*

From emp-ti-ness come, in - to va-can-cy gone!...

43

47 *mf*

Whsst, and a - - way, and o - ver the green,

49 *mf* *pp*

Scam-pered a shape that ne - ver was seen.

3. The Song of Shadows

Walter de la Mare

Christopher Beardsley

Slowly (♩=c60)

Voice

p

Sweep thy faint strings, Mu - si - cian, With thy

Pno.

p

Red.

5

long lean hand; Down - ward the star - ry ta - pers burn, Sinks soft the wa - ning

(sim.)

9

sand; The old hound whim - pers couched in sleep, —

(sim.)

Red.

12

The em - bers smoul - der low; A - cross the walls the sha - dows

17

Slower, hesitant *p*

come, and go. Sweep

22

soft - ly thy strings, Mu - si - cian, The mi - nutes mount to

26

mf **A tempo, more urgent** *f*

hours; Frost on the wind - less case - ment weaves A la - by - rinth of

A tempo, more urgent

29 *sub. p*

flowers; _____ Ghosts lin-ger in the dar - k'ning air, Hear - ken at the

non arp.

sub. p

33 *mf*

o - pen door; Mu - sic hath called them, drea-ming, drea-ming,

non arp.

mf

mp

38 *p*

Home once more. _____

p

Slowly and coldly (♩=c48)

Voice

Pno.

Slowly and coldly (♩=c48)
Quasi recit.

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

3 *p without nuance*

No breath of wind, ——— No gleam of sun —

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

7 *p* *p* *poco* *mp* *mp*

Still the white snow Whirls ——— Soft - ly, ——— soft - ly

p *pp* *p* *pp* *pp*

Red.

10 *pp* *mp hesitant*

down ——— Twig and bough And blade and thorn

p *mp* *p* *mp hesitant*

14

All in an i - cy Quiet, for-lorn.

f *poco accel.* *mp*

18

Whis-per-ing, rust-ling, Through the air, On sill and stone, Roof, - ev'-ry- where, -

p atempo *f*

22

It heaps, - heaps - its pow-der - y Crys-tal flakes, Of - ev' -

Ped. *Ped.*

25

tree A moun - tain makes; Till pale and faint - At shut of

28 *p* *poco*
 day, Stoops from the West One win try,—

31 *mp* *pp* *p*
 win - - try ray, And, feath-ered in fire, Where ghosts the moon, A

35 *sub. f*
 ro-bin shrills His lone - ly

38 *p*
 tune.

Quasi recit., poco rubato *rit.*
p *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

5. The Snowflake

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Lightly (♩=c100) *mp*

Voice: Be - fore I

Pno. *mp*

5

melt, Come, look at me!

light *8va* (loco)

8

This love - ly i - cy fi - li-gree!

(loco)

12

Of a great for - est In one night

8va (loco) *8va* (loco)

16

I make a wil - der - ness Of

(loco) *8va*

19

white: By sky - ey

mf

8va (loco)

22

cold Of crys - tals

8va

24

made, All

(loco) *8va*

26

soft-ly, on Your fin - ger laid,

(loco) *8va* (loco)

29

I pause,

f

32

that you My beau-ty see:

p

35

(breathily) Breathe, (ha) and I va-nish In-stant-ly.

pp

rapid (loco) *gliss.*

6. Blow, northern wind

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Fast (♩.=c132)

Voice

Pno.

f furious

Ped.

4

f

Blow, nor - thern wind;

9

f

fall snow;

Ped.

14

Slower, tenderly (♩.=c60)

p

And thou— my loved and dear, See, in this

Slower, tenderly (♩.=c60)

p gently

con Ped.

22

20

waste of burth-ened cloud How Spring is near!

26 **Fast** (♩.=c132)

Fast (♩.=c132)

f furious

Ped.

29

f

See, in those la - b'ring boughs,

33

Ped.

37 **Slower, tenderly** (♩.=c60)

p

Buds stir in their dark sleep; How in the frost be-crumb-ling

Slower, tenderly (♩.=c60)

p gently

con Ped.

43

ruts The green fires creep.

49 **Fast** (♩.=c132) **molto rit.** **Slower, tenderly** (♩.=c60)

p

The

Fast (♩.=c132) **molto rit.** **Slower, tenderly** (♩.=c60)

p

p gently

con Ped.

53

dream - less earth has heard Be - neath snow's

58

whis-per-ing flakes A faint shrill child-like voice, a

64

call- Sighs, ere she wakes... What Spring have we? Turn back!

71

Though this be win-ter's end, Still may far-mem' ried snow-drops bloom For

77

us, For us, my friend, my friend.

7. Spring

Walter de la Mare

Christopher Beardsley

Slowly (♩=c52) **Gently** (♩=72) *mf*

Voice: Now the slim al - mond tree Tells

Pno. *p* *mf legato*

5 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

Voice: A - pril soon will be Scat - ter - ing her pe - tals where

Pno. *poco rit.* *a tempo*

9

Voice: Snow lies cold and bare. Birds in its leaf-ing boughs

13

Voice: E- choes of spring a-rouse. Pierc- ing the drow-sy earth, Cro-cus her flow'r bring

18 *Slower* (♩=c60) *p*

forth- Woo - ing the bees. And soon Win - ter's

Slower (♩=c60) *p*

21 *accel.* *a tempo* (♩=c72) *f*

ice - sil-vered moon Shall melt, shall kin-dle on high Spring -

accel. *a tempo* (♩=c72) *f*

25 *ff* *poco rit.*

-time with - in the sky,

poco rit.

28 *p* *Slower rit.*

Spring - time with - in the sky.

Slower rit. *p*