

Tamsin Jones

song to bring us home

For SATB with accompaniment for
chamber organ

A setting of words by Lucy Crispin

2022



Merula Music MM 66

Commissioned by the Church of St John the Divine, Victoria, British Columbia with the help of funds generously bequeathed by Dr Mavis Gillie (1927-2021).

Composer's Preface

song to bring us home is an ambitious composition, despite its modest forces and duration. The purpose was to address three urgent themes of our times: the ongoing environmental crisis, acknowledgement of the great harms caused by European colonialism in the Americas and elsewhere, and the need for love, inclusion and respect among all people regardless of race, heritage, sexuality or gender. Furthermore, David Stratkauskas, Director of Music at St John's, asked that the piece could somehow offer hope. I brought these themes to my friend, the Cumbria-based poet Lucy Crispin, with whom I have worked before, and who I knew to possess the ability to speak volumes in highly economical, yet vivid verse. Lucy delivered a text that was concise enough to accommodate my dense, contrapuntal style and yet reached the heart of each theme.

The resulting composition consists of two main sections. The first deals with the environment, colonialism and then social division. The music, in the dark Aeolian mode, gradually becomes more intense and agitated, until a crisis is reached as "fear breeds fear, and rage breeds rage, and horrors escalate". At this point, the action of the Holy Spirit is called for: "then may the mighty rushing wing sweep clean the hearts of all". I responded by recasting the harmonic structure of the first half into the Lydian, a mode which is often felt to have an air of otherworldly tranquility. The music remains contrapuntal, but now the lines interact in a peaceful way, influenced by the Sanctus from the incomparable *Missa La Sol Fa Re Mi* by Josquin des Prez. Eventually counterpoint turns to homophony, as all turn to the hope in God's light and love. A short melodic fragment that served as introduction and ritornello in the first section is brought back at the very end, but this time modified to A major—the music has passed through crisis and resolution to the restoration of Eden.

The choir should be accompanied by a chamber organ or perhaps the choir division of a larger instrument. The "body percussion" and action noise called for in the crisis section should arise naturally, as though an impulsive extension of the increasing agitation of the music. Any sounds would do, provided that they were not performed in a gimmicky way,

from rapping knuckles gently against the music stand, through tapping or stomping feet, to rustling the pages of the music rhythmically.

Tamsin Jones

January 2022

Poet's Preface

I was delighted to work with Tamsin on this project. These are important subjects, and large. Given this, and that the brief was for a poem of only 8-10 lines, I needed to find a way to say as much as I could in a little space. I'm aware that I write from a position of privilege(s) and can't presume to speak to any individual or indeed group experience of, for instance, being subject to imperialism, or discrimination because of my sexuality. For both these reasons, then, I found myself needing to reach for images with a lot of "room" in them: to write allusively, and in terms of core emotions and experiences to which as many as possible might relate. Though the imagery in the second half clearly has Biblical resonance, I hope *song to bring us home* conveys a sense of an inclusive spirituality—a sense of the Golden Rule, some version of which is common to all religions.

Lucy Crispin

Kendal 2022

Duration

4' 50''

Words © 2022, Lucy Crispin.

Music © 2022, Tamsin Jones (Merula Music). MM 66.

song to bring us home

Lucy Crispin

With longing

Tamsin Jones

$\text{♩} = 60$

Soprano *p* When

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Organ *p*
8' (plaintive sound)

6

S. cracked earth lies ex - haust - ed, and air is rank with

A. *p* and breath - ing woods are felled,

T. *p* and breath - ing woods are felled,

B. *p* and breath - ing woods are felled,

Org. in strict time while accompanying

11

S. poi - sons and warm - - - - - ing wa - ters

A. and warm - - - - - ing wa - ters

T. and warm - ing, warm - ing, warm - ing wa - ters

B. and warm - - - - - ing wa - ters

Org.

15 *mf*

S. swell,

A. *mf* swell, —

T. *mf* swell, *mp* when first songs have been

B. *mf* swell, *mp* when first songs have been

Org.

27

S. *f* heart, when *f*

A. *f* heart, when *f*

T. *f* heart, when how you look or who you love, *f*

B. *f* heart, when how you look or who you love, *f*

Org.

31

S. how you look or who you love is cause e -

A. how you look or who you love is cause e -

T. when how you look or who you love, is cause e -

B. when how you look or who you love, is cause e -

Org.

Add 4' and any available louder stops

34 *ff* Body percussion may be added ad lib. until bar 42

S. nough for hate, when fear breeds fear and rage breeds

A. nough for hate,

T. nough for hate, when fear breeds fear and rage breeds rage, when

B. nough for hate, when

Org. strike the keys hard to provide a percussive effect



36

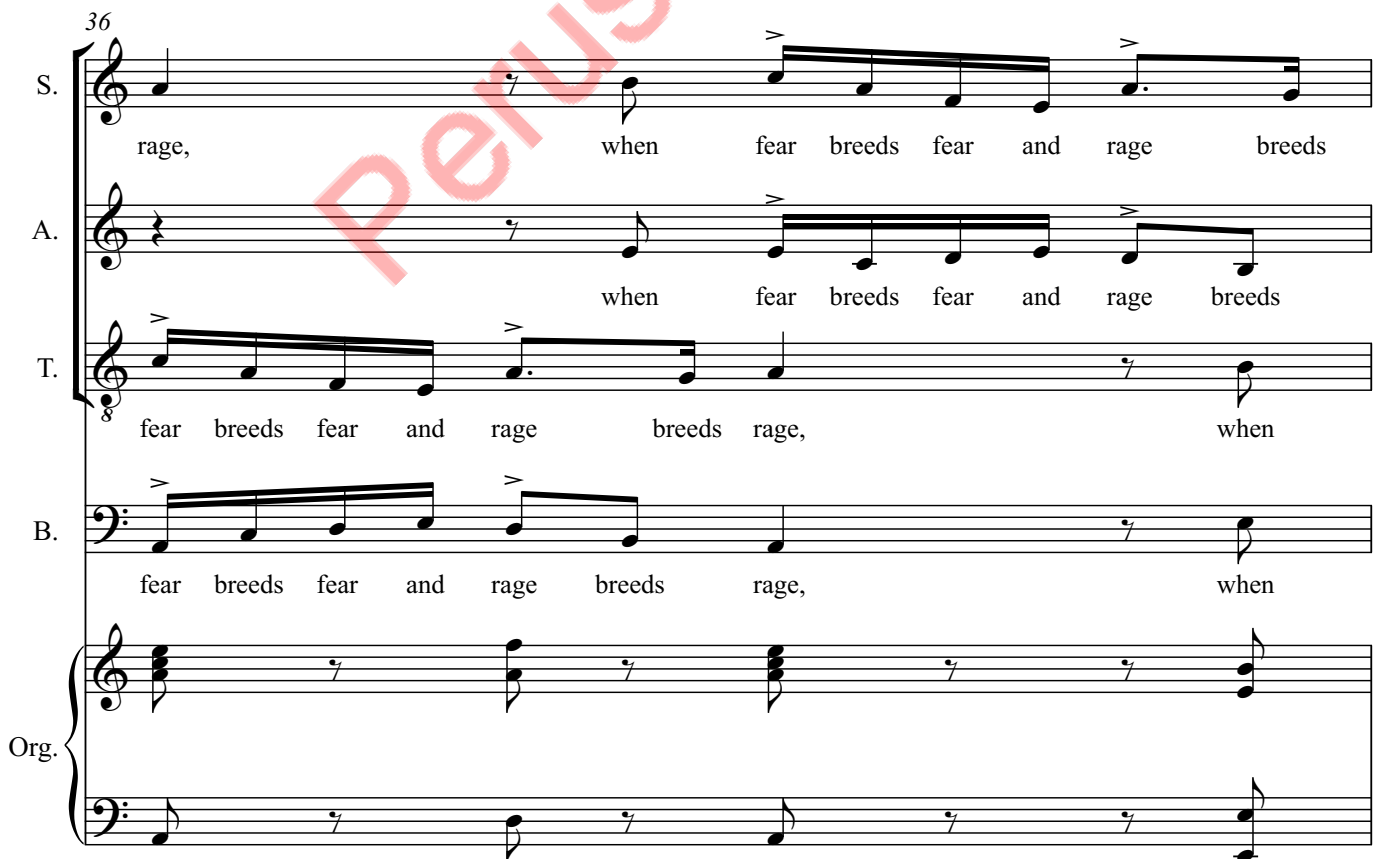
S. rage, when fear breeds fear and rage breeds

A. when fear breeds fear and rage breeds

T. fear breeds fear and rage breeds rage, when

B. fear breeds fear and rage breeds rage, when

Org.



39

S. *fff*
rage, and rage breeds rage, breeds rage and hor - - rors es - ca -

A. *fff*
rage breeds rage, and rage breeds rage and hor - - rors es - ca -

T. *fff*
rage, breeds rage, breeds rage, breeds rage and hor - - rors es - ca -

B. *fff*
rage breeds rage, and rage breeds rage and hor - - rors es - ca -

Org.

42

S. *ff* *mf*
- late then may the migh-ty rush - ing wind sweep clean the hearts of all,

A. *ff* *mf*
late then may the migh-ty rush - ing wind sweep clean the hearts of all,

T. *ff* *mf*
late then may the migh-ty rush - ing wind sweep clean the hearts of all, of

B. *ff* *mf*
late then may the migh-ty rush - ing wind sweep clean the hearts of all,

Org.

53

S. the voice_ that's still and

A. may_ there be heard_ the voice_ that's still and small, that's

T. still and small, the voice_ that's still, that's

B. there be heard through us_ the voice, still and

Org.

56

S. small, may_ light that is un - end - ing show the way to rise a - bove, _____

A. still and small, may_ light that is un - end - ing show the way to rise a - bove, a -

T. still and small, may_ light that is un - end - ing show the way to rise a - bove, a -

B. small, may light un - end - ing show the way to rise a - bove, a -

Org.