



Four Part-songs  
Op. 53, No. 4

Owls  
(An epitaph)

Sir Edward Elgar  
(1857-1934)

# Owls

Edward Elgar

Moderato ♩ = 76

S  
A  
T  
B

Noth - ing; The  
Noth - ing; The  
What is that? The  
What is that? The

*pp* *a tempo*  
*pp* *a tempo*  
*pp* *a tempo*  
*pp* *a tempo*

S  
A  
T  
B

leaves must fall, and fall - ing, rus - tle; That is all: They are dead As they  
leaves must fall, and fall - ing, rus - tle; That is all: They are dead As they  
leaves must fall, and fall - ing, rus - tle; That is all: They are dead As they  
leaves must fall, and fall - ing, rus - tle; \_\_\_\_\_

*poco cresc.* *pp* *dim.* *rit.*  
*poco cresc.* *pp* *dim.* *rit.*  
*poco cresc.* *pp* *dim.* *rit.*  
*poco cresc.* *dim. molto* *rit.*

5 *a tempo, solenne*  
S fall,— Dead at the foot of the  
A fall,— Dead at the foot of the  
T fall,— Dead, they are dead at the foot of the  
B That is all: They are dead at the foot of the

7 *ppp*  
S tree; All that can be is said.  
A tree; All that can be is said.  
T tree; All that can be is said.  
B tree; All that can be is said.

10 *pp*  
S Noth - - - ing.  
A Noth - - - ing.  
T *p* > What is it?  
B *p* > What is it?

## Owls

S *a tempo* *fp* *pp* *p*  
Noth - - - ing; A

A *a tempo* *fp* *pp* *p*  
Noth - - - ing; A

T *a tempo* *mf* *f* *p*  
What is that? A

B *a tempo* *mf* *f* *p*  
What is that? A

14 S *rit.* *dim.*  
wild thing hurt but mourns in the night, And it cries In its dread, Till it

A *rit.* *dim.*  
wild thing hurt but mourns in the night, And it cries In its dread, Till it

T *rit.* *dim.*  
wild thing hurt but mourns in the night, And it cries In its dread, Till it

B *dim.* *rit.*  
wild thing hurt but mourns in the night,

16 S *a tempo, solemne* *p* *pp*  
lies Dead at the foot of the tree;

A *a tempo, solemne* *p* *pp*  
lies Dead at the foot of the tree;

T *a tempo, solemne* *p* *pp*  
lies dead, it lies Dead at the foot of the tree;

B *a tempo, solemne* *p* *pp*  
It lies dead, lies Dead at the foot of the tree;

19

S All that can be is said.

A All that can be is said.

T All that can be is said.

B All that can be is said.

21

S Noth - - - ing.

A Noth - - - ing.

T What is it?

B What is it?

*a tempo*

S Ah! *pp rit.* A *a tempo*

A Ah! *pp rit.* A *a tempo*

T What is that? *p rit.* A *a tempo*

B What is that? *p rit.* A *a tempo*

## Owls

25

S march - ing slow of un - seen feet; That is all: But a

A march - ing slow of un - seen feet; That is all: But a

T march - ing slow of un - seen feet; That is all: But a

B march - - - ing slow, *dim.* *rit.*

28

S bier, spread With a pall, Is

A bier, spread With a pall, Is

T bier, spread With a pall, and a bier Is

B *rit.* And a bier Is

30 *a tempo, solenne* *dim.* *pp* *mesto* *pp*

S now at the foot of the tree; All that could be is

A *a tempo, solenne* *dim.* *pp* *mesto* *pp*

T *a tempo, solenne* *dim.* *pp* *mesto* *pp*

B *a tempo, solenne* *dim.* *pp* *mesto* *pp*

now at the foot of the tree; All that could be is

33

S  
said. Noth - ing.

A  
said. Noth - ing.

T  
said. Is it what? —

B  
said. Is it what? —

*pppp rit. mesto*

*pppp rit. mesto*

*pp* *pp* *>*

*pp* *pp* *>*

Novello and Company  
(1908)

What is that? Nothing;  
The leaves must fall, and falling, rustle;  
That is all:  
They are dead  
As they fall,—  
Dead at the foot of the tree;  
All that can be is said.  
What is it? Nothing.

What is that? Nothing;  
A wild thing hurt but mourns in the night,  
And it cries  
In its dread,  
Till it lies  
Dead at the foot of the tree;  
All that can be is said.  
What is it? Nothing.

What is that? Ah!  
A marching slow of unseen feet;  
That is all:  
But a bier, spread  
With a pall,  
Is now at the foot of the tree;  
All that could be is said.  
Is it what? Nothing.

Elgar

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