

Ode to Emily

By Caroline Lesemann-Elliott

*Dedicated to the
lovers of Emily Dickinson's
poetry*

1. In This Short Life

*That only lasts an hour
How much — how little — is
Within our power*

*2. Look back on time with kindly eyes
He doubtlessly did his best;
How softly sinks his trembling arm
In human nature's West!*

This work was inspired by the sense of expansiveness in the succinct simplicity of Dickinson's short poems. While they may not last long, the impact their words provide leaves our brains reverberating for a great deal of time, creating countless tendrils of idea spinning out from one small source of thought.

Conductor's notes

- Semiquavers should be sung as smoothly as possible, in a manner similar to a very controlled vibrato
- Each line should be sung through bar lines, so semiquavers overlap, creating continuity
- Demisemiquavers should be as light as possible
- Glissandi should be as long held as possible
- Accents should be short and punctuated

Moderato, ♩ = 85

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble. It consists of seven staves, each for a different voice part: Soprano (top two), Alto (middle two), Tenor (middle two), and Bass (bottom two). The music is in 6/4 time, with a tempo marking of Moderato and a metronome marking of ♩ = 85. The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is in 6/4 time, the second in 2/4, and the third in 4/4. The lyrics are: "In this short life, Life, that on-ly mere-ly lasts an hour_". The Soprano parts are marked *p* and have a glissando marking over the final notes. The Alto and Tenor parts have a *ff* marking. The Bass part has a *mp* marking and a triplet marking over the final notes.

Soprano
In this short life, Life,

Soprano
In this short life, Life,

Alto
In this short life, (*ff*)

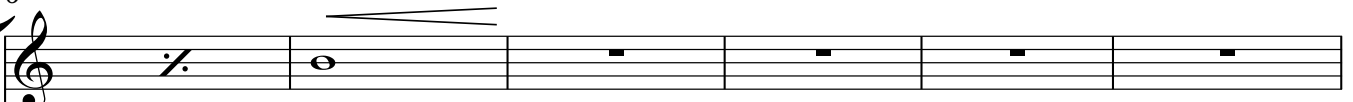
Alto
In this short life, (*ff*)

Tenor
In this short life, (*ff*)


Tenor
In this short life, (*ff*)

Bass
In this short life, *mp* that on-ly mere-ly lasts an hour_


Bass
In this short life,

S. 


Life,

S. 

Life,

A. 

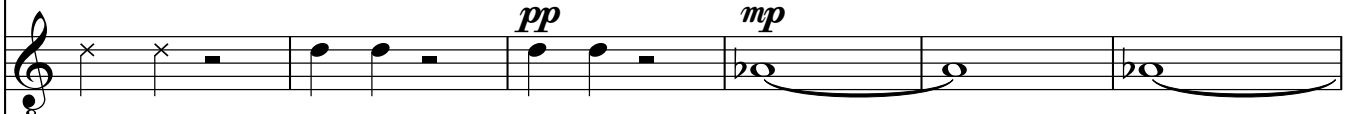
How — much, how lit- tle,

A. 


How — much, how lit- tle,

T. 


"mere- ly!" mere- ly, mere- ly, How much

T. 

"mere- ly!" mere- ly, mere- ly, How much

B. 

How much

B. 

How much

12

S. *mp* (ah) _____

S. *mf* Look back _____ on time with

A. is with-in our power.

A. is with-in our power.

T. power.

T. power.


B. power.


B. power.

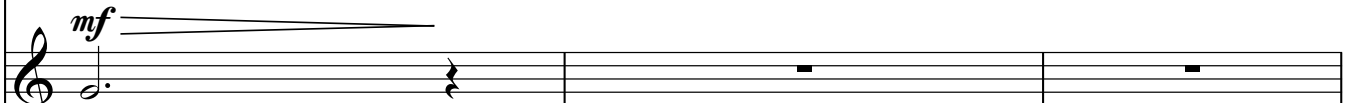
17

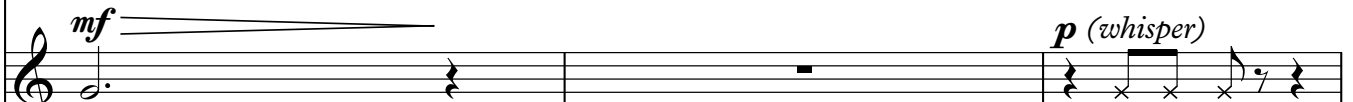
S.  *gliss.*
 (ah) _____

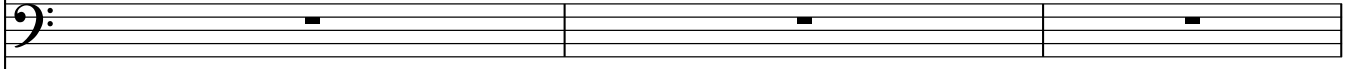
S. 
 kind - - ly (ah) _____

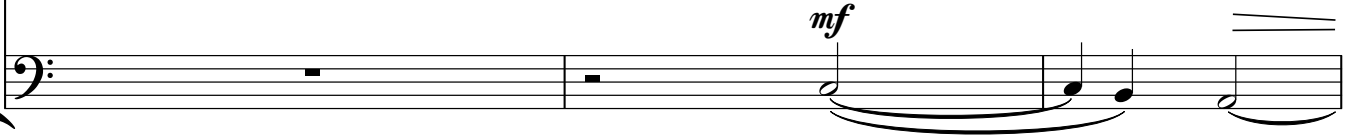
A. *mf* 
 Look back _____ on time with kind - ly

A. *mf* 
 Look back _____ on time with kind - ly

T. *mf* 
 8 eyes.

T. *mf* 
 8 eyes. *p (whisper)* In this life

B. 

B. *mf* 
 Look _____ back,

20

S. *mp gliss.*
 (ah)_____ (ah)_____

S. *gliss.* *gliss.*
 (ah)_____ (ah)_____ (ah)_____

A. eyes, look_____ back_____ on time with kind-ly

A. eyes, look_____ back_____ on time with kind-ly

T. *p*
 8 (ah)_____

T.

B. *mp*
 Look back_____ on time with kind - ly

B.

23

S. *gliss.*

S.

A. eyes, (ah)

A. eyes,

T. 4 (ah)

T. *p* (ah)

B. eyes

B. eyes, *p (whisper)* In this life

25

S.

S.

A.

A.

T.

T.

B. *mp*

B. *mp*

S. *f* he — doubt - less - ly

S. *mf* he doubt-less-ly did his best,

A. (ah)

A.

T. *mf* he doubt-less-ly did his best,

T. *mf* he doubt-less-ly did his best, (ah)

B. best, he doubt - less - ly

B. *f* best, he doubt-less-ly did his

30

S. *ff* 3
 did his best, (ah) (ah)

S. *f* 3 *ff* 3
 he doubt-less-ly did his best, (ah)

A. *f* 3 *ff* 3
 he doubt-less-ly did his best, (ah)

A. 3 3 3 *ff* 3
 (ah) (ah)

T. *f* *ff* 3
 (ah) (ah)

T. *ff* 3
 (ah)

B. *ff* 3
 did his best, (ah) (ah)

B. *ff* 3
 best, (ah) (ah)

34

This musical score page contains eight staves for vocal parts, labeled S., A., T., and B. on the left. The top two staves are for Soprano (S.), the next two for Alto (A.), the next two for Tenor (T.), and the bottom two for Bass (B.).

- Soprano 1 (S.):** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G4, a half note A4, and a whole rest.
- Soprano 2 (S.):** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G4, followed by a sixteenth-note triplet (A4, B4, C5), another sixteenth-note triplet (D5, E5, F#5), and a repeat sign.
- Alto 1 (A.):** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, a half note C5, a half note D5, and a half note E5. A slur covers the last three notes, with a '3' above and '(ah)' below.
- Alto 2 (A.):** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, a half note C5, a half note D5, and a half note E5. A slur covers the last three notes, with a '3' above and '(ah)' below.
- Tenor 1 (T.):** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, a half note C5, a half note D5, and a half note E5. A slur covers the last three notes, with a '3' above and '(ah)' below.
- Tenor 2 (T.):** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, a half note C5, a half note D5, and a half note E5. A slur covers the last three notes, with a '3' above and '(ah)' below.
- Bass 1 (B.):** Bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G2, a half note A2, and a whole note B2.
- Bass 2 (B.):** Bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 34-36: A half note G2, a half note A2, and a whole note B2.

37 *mf*

The musical score consists of eight staves. The top two staves are for Soprano (S.), the next two for Alto (A.), the next two for Tenor (T.), and the bottom two for Bass (B.).

- Soprano (S.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, *mf* dynamic, eighth-note runs. Measure 38: C-clef, rests. Measure 39: Treble clef, rests. Measure 40: Treble clef, quarter notes, triplets of eighth notes.
- Alto (A.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, quarter notes. Measure 38: Treble clef, quarter notes. Measure 39: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin. Measure 40: Treble clef, half note, *p* dynamic.
- Alto (A.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, quarter notes. Measure 38: Treble clef, quarter notes. Measure 39: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin. Measure 40: Treble clef, half note, *p* dynamic.
- Tenor (T.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, eighth notes, *8* marking. Measure 38: Treble clef, quarter notes. Measure 39: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin. Measure 40: Treble clef, eighth-note runs, *p* dynamic.
- Tenor (T.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, eighth notes, *8* marking. Measure 38: Treble clef, quarter notes. Measure 39: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin. Measure 40: Treble clef, quarter note, *p* dynamic, *gliss.* marking.
- Bass (B.):** Measure 37: Bass clef, rests. Measure 38: Bass clef, rests. Measure 39: Bass clef, rests. Measure 40: Bass clef, rests.
- Bass (B.):** Measure 37: Bass clef, rests. Measure 38: Bass clef, rests. Measure 39: Bass clef, rests. Measure 40: Bass clef, rests.

(ah)

(ah)

(ah)

(ah)

(ah)

(ah)

