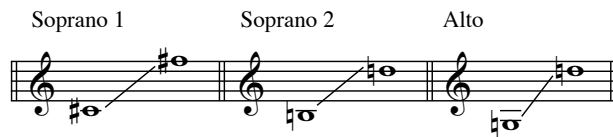


LET HIM RETURN

SSA / piano

Words and music by Rebecca Oswald
(1990)



Duration 6:30



Rebecca Oswald Music
rebeccaoswald.com

Rebecca Oswald (b. 1958) is an award winning composer and lifelong pianist. Her catalogue includes music for piano as well as other solo instruments, various chamber ensembles, string and full orchestra, art songs, all types of choral ensembles including chorus with orchestra, a clarinet concerto, and an opera. She has also written music for film and games. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree, *summa cum laude*, in music theory and composition from Westminster Choir College (1998), and a Master of Music degree in music composition from the University of Oregon School of Music (2001). For more information please visit rebeccaoswald.com or write to rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com.

Rebecca Oswald

LET HIM RETURN

SSA / piano

Program notes:

For millennia the home has been the bedrock of civilization, and in times of war, it has often fallen to the women to hold home and family together in the face of frightening uncertainty as to their men's fate. This song honors and validates that common experience of countless women across many cultures throughout the centuries. ***Let Him Return*** acknowledges these women's fear, anger, sadness, and raw courage as they pray the universal prayer that their men return safely home. Primarily triadic, there are numerous modulations throughout this work, effectively preventing harmonic predictability. The vocals begin with the altos in unison, then sopranos *divisi*, and finally all women in three part harmony. Likewise, the piano accompaniment opens with a simple log drum-like figure suggesting ancient times; the music's energy gradually increases in complexity to reflect the passage of centuries; it finally culminates in a contemporary, powerful rock ballad texture.

Requests:

- (1) Please report all U.S. performances of this work to BMI (classical@bmi.com) and to me (rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com) by emailing a JPG or PDF of a program, flyer, poster, or ticket showing the title of my programmed work(s) and my name (Rebecca Oswald).
- (2) Similarly, please report all non-U.S. performances to the host country's national performance rights organization, to BMI (classical@bmi.com), and to me (rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com).

Many thanks! I hope you and your choir enjoy singing ***Let Him Return***.

— Rebecca Oswald



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Let Him Return

If I close my eyes I can almost see him
Carving runes of magic in his sturdy quarterstaff.
Ghostly shadows dance across these cold cave walls;
I know this drying venison won't last him long.
I curse the sunrise; I dread the distant drums.
He kissed our sleeping children, and then held me so tight;
Strapping on his winter furs, he shouldered his pack, took his staff
And walked away into the coldest day I've ever known.

If I close my eyes I can almost see him
Sharpening his broadsword to a razor's edge.
We work beside the fire, yet my blood runs cold;
This salted meat and flatbread won't last him long.
I curse the sunrise; I dread the battle horn.
He kissed our sleeping children, and then held me so tight;
Fastening his baldric, he donned his cloak, saddled his horse
And rode away into the coldest day I've ever known.

I ask the goddess, / I ask the gods, Let him return to me,
Every day, every night, Let him return!
I light the candle, see how it burns,
See how it burns so bright,
Let him return, this night!

By candlelight, one lonely night can seem a lifetime.
By light of day, seasons slip away, through my hands.
Will he ever know before his call to go we made another child?
My candle burns, Let my man return from wartorn lands!

If I close my eyes I can almost see him
Polishing his firearms in grim resolve.
Empty reassurances won't quell my fear;
These sandwiches I'm packing won't last him long.
I curse the sunrise; I dread the airplanes' roar,
He kissed our sleeping children, and then held me so tight;
Gathering his guns and gear, he left for the airbase
And flew away into the coldest day I've ever known.

And I pray, my God! Let him return to me,
Every day, every night, Let him return!
I light the candle, see how it burns,
See how it burns so bright,
Let him return, this night!

Let Him Return

SSA / piano

Words and music by Rebecca Oswald

Rock ballad (♩ = 70)

Soprano 1
 Soprano 2
 Alto
 Piano

If I close my eyes I can

al - most see__ him Carv-ing runes of mag-ic in his stur - dy quar-ter - staff.

Ghost-ly shad-ows dance a-cross these cold cave walls; I know this dry-ing ven-i - son won't

* (=) indicates an enharmonic equivalent

10 *mp*
A last him long. I curse the sun - rise; I dread the dis-

10 *mp*

13 *p*
A - tant drums. He kissed our sleep-ing child - ren, and then held me so tight;

13 *p*

16 *mp*
A Strap-ping on his win-ter furs, he shoul-dered his pack, took his staff And

16 *mp*

18 *mf*
A walked a-way in - to the cold-est day I've e-ver known.

18 *mf*

21 (Alto's tacet till m. 42)

A

21

p

S 1

mp

If I close my eyes I can al - most see_ him Sharp-en-ing_ his broad-sword to a

S 2

mp

If I close my eyes I can al - most see_ him Sharp-en-ing_ his broad-sword to a

24

mp

24

S 1

ra - zor's edge. We work be-side the fi-re, yet my blood runs cold; This

S 2

ra - zor's edge. We work be-side the fi-re, yet my blood runs cold; This

27

27

mp

30 (=) *mf*

S 1 salt - ed meat and flat - bread won't last him long. I curse the sun -

S 2 salt - ed meat and flat - bread won't last him long. I curse the sun -

30

33 *mp*

S 1 - rise; I dread the bat - tle horn. He kissed our sleep-ing child - ren, and then

S 2 - rise; I dread the bat - tle horn. He kissed our sleep-ing child - ren, and then

33 *mf* *mp*

36 *mf*

S 1 held me so tight; Fast-en - ing his bal - dric, he donned his cloak, sad-dled his horse And

S 2 held me so tight; Fast-en - ing his bal - dric, he donned his cloak, sad-dled his horse And

36 *mf*

39 *f*

S 1 rode a - way_ in - to the cold-est day_ I've ev-er known.

S 2 rode a - way_ in - to the cold-est day_ I've ev-er known.

39 *f*

42 *f*

S 1 I ask the gods, Let him re - turn to_ me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry

S 2 I ask the gods, Let him re - turn to_ me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry

A I ask the god - dess, Let him re - turn to_ me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry

42 *f*

45

S 1 *mp*
night, Let him re-turn! — I light the can - dle, — see how it burns,

S 2 *mp*
night, Let him re-turn! — I light the can - dle, — see how it burns,

A *mp*
night, Let him re-turn! — I light the can - dle, — see how it burns,

45

mp

48

S 1 *mf* *f*
— See how it burns so — bright, Let him re - turn, — this

S 2 *mf* *f*
— See how it burns so — bright, Let him re - turn, — this

A *mf* *f*
— See how it burns so — bright, Let him re - turn, — this

48

mf *f*

51

S 1 *night!*

S 2 *night!*

A *night!*

51

mf *mp*

55

S 1 *p* By can - dle - light, one

S 2 *p* By can - dle - light, one

A *p* By can - dle - light, one

55

p *mp* *p*

59

S 1 *p*
lone - ly__ night__ can seem a__ life - time. By

S 2 *p*
lone - ly__ night__ can seem a__ life - time. By

A *p*
lone - ly__ night__ can seem a__ life - time. By

59

mp *p*

62

S 1
light of__ day,__ sea - sons slip a - way,__

S 2
light of__ day,__ sea - sons slip a - way,__

A
light of__ day,__ sea - sons slip a - way,__

62

mp *p*

65

S 1 *mp*
through my _ hands. Will _ he ev - er _ know

S 2 *mp*
through my _ hands. Will _ he ev - er _ know

A *mp*
through my _ hands. Will _ he ev - er _ know

65

mp

68

S 1 *p*
be-fore his call to _ go _ we made a - nother child?

S 2 *p*
be-fore his call to _ go _ we made a - nother child?

A *p*
be-fore his call to _ go _ we made a - nother child?

68

mf *mp* *p*

71 *mp* *mf*

S 1 My can - dle_ burns, Let __ my

S 2 My can - dle_ burns, Let __ my

A My can - dle_ burns, Let __ my

71 *mp* *mf*

FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY

74 *f*

S 1 man re - turn_ from war - torn lands!

S 2 man re - turn_ from war - torn lands!

A man re - turn_ from war - torn lands!

74 *ff*

FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY

77 *f*

S 1 If I close my eyes I can al - most see__ him

S 2 If I close my eyes I can al - most see__ him

A If I close my eyes I can al - most see__ him

80

S 1 Pol-ish - ing_ his fi-re - arms in grim re - solve. Emp - ty re - as - sur-an - ces__ won't

S 2 Pol-ish - ing_ his fi-re - arms in grim re - solve. Emp - ty re - as - sur-an - ces__ won't

A Pol-ish - ing_ his fi-re - arms in grim re - solve. Emp - ty re - as - sur-an - ces__ won't

80

83

S 1

quell my_ fear;_ These sand-wich - es I'm pack-ing won't last him long.

S 2

quell my_ fear;_ These sand-wich - es I'm pack-ing won't last him long.

A

quell my_ fear;_ These sand-wich - es I'm pack-ing won't last him long.

83

86

S 1

f I curse the sun - rise; I dread the air - planes' roar, He *mf*

S 2

f I curse the sun - rise; I dread the air - planes' roar, He *mf*

A

f I curse the sun - rise; I dread the air - planes' roar, He *mf*

86

89

S 1 *f*
kissed our sleep-ing child - ren, and then held me_ so_ tight; Gath-er-ing_ his guns and gear, he

S 2 *f*
kissed our sleep-ing child - ren, and then held me_ so_ tight; Gath-er-ing_ his guns and gear, he

A *f*
kissed our sleep-ing child - ren, and then held me_ so_ tight; Gath-er-ing_ his guns and gear, he

89

92

S 1 *ff*
left for the air - base And flew a-way in - to the cold-est day_ I've ev-er

S 2 *ff*
left for the air - base And flew a-way in - to the cold-est day_ I've ev-er

A *ff*
left for the air - base And flew a-way in - to the cold-est day_ I've ev-er

92

95

S 1 *ff* known. And I pray, my God! Let him re -

S 2 *ff* known. And I pray, my God! Let him re -

A *ff* known. And I pray, my God! Let him re -

95 *f* *ff* *8va*

98 *mf* turn to me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry night, Let him re-turn! I light the can-

S 1 *mf* turn to me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry night, Let him re-turn! I light the can-

S 2 *mf* turn to me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry night, Let him re-turn! I light the can-

A *mf* turn to me, Ev'-ry day, ev'-ry night, Let him re-turn! I light the can-

98 *mf* *8va*

101

S 1 - dle, — see how it burns, — See how it burns so — bright, Let him re-turn, *f* *ff*

S 2 - dle, — see how it burns, — See how it burns so — bright, Let him re-turn, *f* *ff*

A - dle, — see how it burns, — See how it burns so — bright, Let him re-turn, *f* *ff*

101



104

S 1 — this night! >

S 2 — this night! >

A — this night! >

104



107 *ritard.*

S 1

S 2

A

107 *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ritard.*

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