



The American Prize
2015 Finalist

Three Songs of the Soul

I. The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life

SATB *a cappella* with *divisi*



Poem by Jan Luyken

Music by Rebecca Oswald
(1998)



Duration 3:40



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

Three Songs of the Soul

I. The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life

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Program notes:

The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life is the first in a choral set entitled *Three Songs of the Soul*. Jan Luyken (1649-1712), a native of Amsterdam, lived a secluded life as a poet, artist, and engraver. The English translations of these three poems (Frank J. Warnke, tr.) first appeared in the Winter 1958 issue of *Comparative Literature* (Volume 10:1). In this choral setting, the melodies and harmonies aspire to express the meaning and beauty of the poet's metaphysical ideals. Within lightly extended tonality which develops throughout the piece via expanding and contracting harmonic progressions and modulations, each voice has its own lyrical life.

The engraving on the cover, "*De Musikant*," is from *Het Mensylek Bedryf*, a collection of engravings made in the studio of Johannes Luiken (another spelling of Jan Luyken) and his son Caspaares (Caspar). and was published in Amsterdam in 1694.

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 *The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life*.

— *Rebecca Oswald*



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Catalogue no. ROM-9801

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The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life

When the seedlet died in the lap of earth,
And seemed forgotten and forlorn,
The flower came to green rebirth,
From death to life as newly born.
From gloomy earth to the lovely light,
To give its hue and scent to all,
With heaven's face to greet its sight,
While dew and sunshine on it fall.
So grows the new and lovely creature,
Then goes to death of its own will,
To death and the grave; the taste is bitter,
But its dying yields a green life still,
A flower in Paradise so fair,
Though unseen by a blinded race,
It exhales to God its fragrance rare,
In the host of angels takes its place.
O dearest Jesus! Eternal good!
How ardently I long to be
A flower on your rose-deck't head,
Where never withering may be!
My Lord, my Jesus, make me strive
To long for death while yet alive.

Jan Luyken

English translation by Frank J. Warnke

The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life

from *Three Songs of the Soul*

SATB a cappella

Words by Jan Luyken
English translation by Frank J. Warnke

Music by Rebecca Oswald

Faithfully (♩ = 126)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano (reh. only)

pp

p

When the seed-let died in the lap of earth,

When the seed-let died in the lap of earth, And seemed for - got - ten and for -

7

S

A

T

B

p

p

mp

mf

From death to life

The flow - er came to green re - birth, From death to

The flow - er came to green re - birth, From death to

lorn, The flow - er came to green re - birth, From death to life

7

p

14 *mp* *mp* *mf*

S — as new-ly born. From gloom-y earth to the love-ly light,

A life as new-ly born. From earth to light,

T life as new-ly born. — From gloom-y earth — to the love-ly light,

B — as — new-ly born. From gloom - - - y earth to light, To

14 *mp* *mf*

20

S To give its hue and scent to all, With heav-en's face —

A To give its hue and scent to all, With heav-en's

T (=) * To give its hue and scent to all, With heav-en's face —

B give its hue and scent to all, With heav - - en's

20

* (=) indicates an
enharmonic equivalent

26 *f* *mf*

S to greet its sight, While dew and sun-shine on it

A face to greet its sight, While dew and sun - shine on it

T *più f* *f* to greet its sight, While dew and sun-shine on it fall.

B *f* *mf* face to greet its sight, While dew and sun - shine on it

26 *f* *mf*

33 *mp*

S fall. So grows the new and love - ly crea - ture, Then

A *mp* fall. So grows the new and love - ly crea - ture, Then

T *mp* So grows the new and love - ly crea - ture, Then

B *mp* fall. So grows the new and love - ly crea - ture, Then

33 *mp*

39

S goes to death _____ of its own will, To death and the grave; _____ the taste is

A goes to death of its own will, To death and the grave; _____ the taste is

T goes to death of its own will, To death and the grave; the taste is

B goes to death _____ of its own will, To death and the grave; the taste is

39

45

S bit - ter, But its dy - ing yields _____ a green life still, *mf*

A bit - ter, But its dy - ing yields _____ a green life still, _____ *mf*

T bit - ter, But its dy - ing yields _____ a green life still, _____ *mf*

B bit - ter, But its dy - ing yields _____ a green life still, *mf*

45

50

S *f*
A flow'r in Par - a - dise so fair, Though un - seen

A *f*
A flow'r in Par - a - dise so fair, Though un - seen

T *f*
A flow'r in Par - a - dise so fair, Though un - seen

B *f*
A flow'r in Par - a - dise so fair, Though un - seen

50

56

S *ff*
— by a blind - ed race, It ex - hales to God its fra - grance rare,

A *ff*
— by a blind - ed race, It ex - hales to God its fra - grance rare,

T *ff*
— by a blind - ed race, It ex - hales to God its fra - grance rare,

B *ff*
— by a blind - ed race, It ex - hales to God its fra - grance rare, In —

56

62 *mf* *ff*

S In the host of an-gels takes its place.

A In the host of an-gels takes its place.

T In the host of an - - - gels takes its place.

B the host of an - gels takes its place.

62

Prayerfully (♩ = 116)

69 *p* *mp*

S O dear - est Je - - - sus! E - ter - nal good! How ar - dent - ly

A Dear - est Je - sus! E - ter - nal good! How ar - dent - ly

T O Je - - - sus! E - - - ter - nal good!

B O dear - est Je - sus! E - ter - nal good!

69

76

S — I long to be A flow-er on your rose - deck't head, Where *f*

A — I long to be A flow-er on your rose - deck't head, Where *f*

T *mp* How I long to be A flow - - - er on your rose - deck't head, *f*

B *mp* How I long to be A flow - - - er on your rose - deck't head, *f*

76

84

S nev - er with - er - ing may be! My Lord, my Je - - sus, make me *p*

A nev - er with - er - ing may be! My Je-sus, make me *p*

T Where nev-er with - 'ring may be! My Je - sus, make me *p*

B Where nev - er with - 'ring may be! My Je-sus, make me *p*

84

91

mp *f*

S strive To long for death while yet a - live.

A strive To long for death while yet a - - - live.

T strive To long for death while yet a - live.

B strive To long for death while yet a - - - live.

91

mp *f*

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