

BUT STARS REMAINING

NICOLA LEFANU

But Stars Remaining was written in 1970 for the English soprano Jane Manning. It sets lines from two poems by Cecil Day-Lewis, bringing them together to create a scena lasting some seven minutes. It is an aubade, or dawn love-song; it begins with outward, extravert energy, and moves to an inward, intimate centre. It closes as the imagery moves out again, to the expanse of the sky at first light.

Now to be with you
Elate, unshared
My kestrel joy
O hoverer in wind
Over the quarry furiously at rest
Chaired on shoulders of shouting wind.

Rest from loving and be living.
Fallen is fallen past retrieving
The unique flyer dawn's dove
Arrowing down, feathered with fire.

Here's no neaning but of morning.
Naught soon of night but stars remaining,
Sink lower, fade, as dark womb
Recedes, creation will step clear.

Text adapted from two poems of C Day Lewis and used by permission.