

## **Rossetti Songs**

These settings of poems by Christina Rossetti are composed for women's voices and intended for amateur choir. Any selection from this collection may be made, and the songs sung in any order. Conductors may use solo voices, small groups or large choirs, as they wish.

If instrumental support is needed, they could be doubled by melody instruments, but keyboard (useful in rehearsal) is not suitable in performance. They may also be transposed: for example, 'Lullaby' could be transposed up a semitone, and violins used to play the ostinati.

Programme note:

These settings of seven poems by Christina Rossetti were composed in 2008; they were commissioned by MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir, artistic director Catherine Roma, for first performance Cincinnati, November 22nd, 2008.

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### **The Bourne**

Underneath the growing grass,  
Underneath the living flowers,  
Deeper than the sound of showers:  
There we shall not count the hours  
By the shadows as they pass.

Youth and health will be but vain,  
Beauty reckoned of no worth:  
There a very little girth  
Can hold round what once the earth  
Seemed too narrow to contain.

### **The Pancake**

Mix a pancake,  
Stir a pancake,  
Pop it in the pan;  
Fry the pancake,  
Toss the pancake,—  
Catch it if you can.

### **Lullaby**

Lullaby, oh, lullaby!  
Flowers are closed and lambs are sleeping;  
Lullaby, oh, lullaby!  
Stars are up, the moon is peeping;  
Lullaby, oh, lullaby!  
While the birds are silence keeping,  
(Lullaby, oh, lullaby!)  
Sleep, my baby, fall a-sleeping,  
Lullaby, oh, lullaby.

### from 'Goblin Market'

'For there is no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather;  
To cheer one on the tedious way,  
To fetch one if one goes astray,  
To lift one if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.'

### The Swallow

Fly away, fly away over the sea,  
Sun-loving swallow, for summer is done;  
Come again, come again, come back to me,  
Bringing the summer and bringing the sun.

### Home by Different Ways

Home by different ways. Yet all  
Homeward bound thro' prayer and praise,  
Young with old, and great with small,  
Home by different ways.

Many nights and many days  
Wind must bluster, rain must fall,  
Quake the quicksand, shift the haze.

Life hath called and death will call  
Saints who praying kneel at gaze,  
Ford the flood or leap the wall,  
Home by different ways.

### October Canzonet

Crack your first nut and light your first fire,  
Roast your first chestnut crisp on the bar;  
Make the logs sparkle, stir the breeze higher,  
Logs are cheery as sun or as star,  
Logs we can find wherever we are.

Spring one soft day will open the leaves  
Spring one bright day will lure back the flowers;  
Never fancy my whistling wind grieves,  
Never fancy I've tears in my showers;  
Dance nights and days! and dance on, my hours!

**Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)**