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JULIANA HALL

CHRISTINA'S WORLD

5 Songs for Soprano and Piano

on Poems by Christina Rossetti

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Cover design by David Sims.



² A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;

Hang it with vair and purple dyes;

Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,

And peacocks with a hundred eyes;

Work it in gold and silver grapes,

In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;

Because the birthday of my life

Is come, my love is come to me.

Who Has Seen the Wind?

Who has seen the wind?

Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?

Neither you nor I:

But when the trees bow down their heads,

The wind is passing by.

Up-Hill

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before.

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek?

Yea, beds for all who come.

Amor Mundi

"Oh where are you going with your love-locks flowing
On the west wind blowing along this valley track?"

"The downhill path is easy, come with me an it please ye,
We shall escape the uphill by never turning back."

So they two went together in glowing August weather,

The honey-breathing heather lay to their left and right;

And dear she was to dote on, her swift feet seemed to float on

The air like soft twin pigeons too sportive to alight.

"Oh what is that in heaven where gray cloud-flakes are seven,
Where blackest clouds hang riven just at the rainy skirt?"

"Oh that's a meteor sent us, a message dumb, portentous,
An undeciphered solemn signal of help or hurt."

"Oh what is that glides quickly where velvet flowers grow thickly,

Their scent comes rich and sickly?—"A scaled and hooded worm."

"Oh what's that in the hollow, so pale I quake to follow?"

"Oh that's a thin dead body which waits the eternal term."

"Turn again, O my sweetest, — turn again, false and fleetest:

This beaten way thou beatest I fear is hell's own track."

"Nay, too steep for hill-mounting; nay, too late for cost-counting:

This downhill path is easy, but there's no turning back."

When I am dead, my dearest

When I am dead, my dearest, Sing no sad songs for me; Plant thou no roses at my head, Nor shady cypress tree: Be the green grass above me With showers and dewdrops wet; And if thou wilt, remember, And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

— Christina Rossetti

for Gwen Coleman Detwiler

Christina's World

for Soprano and Piano

A Birthday



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Amor Mundi



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