

# Forgotten Voices

for SATB Choir

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**Forgotten Voices** for SATB choir was written for the DR VokalEnsemble as part of the Tenso Young Composers Workshop, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Mechelen, Belgium.

The poems in this piece all date from World War One and are by authors from colonies and dominions within British Empire. The sacrifice of soldiers and volunteers from these nations are often overlooked and their poetry even more so. I wanted to present some diverse voices here: an Indian officer, a Jamaican Sergeant, a Canadian Lieutenant and an Australian woman speaking for mothers who lost their sons so far away. They show four different voices and experiences with one common aim.

**From 'Ici repose' (1917) by 2nd Lieutenant B.F. Trotter**

O happy dead! who sleep embalmed in glory,  
Safe from corruption, purified by fire,  
Ask you our pity? - ours, mud-grimed and gory,  
Who still must grimly strive, grimly desire?  
You have outrun the reach of our endeavour,  
Have flown beyond our most exalted quest,  
Who prate of Faith and Freedom, knowing ever  
That all we really fight for is just a rest,  
The rest that only Victory can bring us  
Or Death, which throws us brother-like by you  
The civil commonplace in which twill fling us  
To neutralise our then too martial hue.  
But you have rest from every tribulation  
Even in the midst of war; you sleep serene.

**By Sergeant H.B. Montieth**

Lads of the West, with duty done, soon shall we parted be  
To different land, perhaps no more each other's face to see  
But still as comrades of the war our efforts we'll unite  
To sweep injustice from our land, its social wrongs to right.  
Then go on conquering-lift your lives above each trivial  
thing  
To which the meaner breeds of earth so desperately cling;  
And Heaven grant you strength to fight the battle for your  
race  
To fight and conquer, making earth for man a happier place.

**Poem by Dafadar Nathan Singh sent in a letter to Sawar  
Paran Singh (1916)**

The Sikh roars like a lion on the field of battle  
And yields up his life as a sacrifice;  
Whoever is fortunate enough to be born a Rajput  
Never fears the foe in battle;  
He gives up all thought of worldly pleasure  
And dreams only of the battlefield;  
He who fronts the foe boldly in battle  
Has God for his protection;  
Once a Sikh takes the sword in hand  
He has only one aim-victory.

**From 'The Woman of Five Fields' by Mary Gilmore**

"I weep but mother's tears: my sons  
Were my sons, bone of my bone:  
And, though in my heart I heard the guns,  
They went - and I made no moan."

# Forgotten Voices

2nd Lieutenant B.F. Trotter, Mary Gilmore  
Dafadar Nathan Singh and Sergeant H.B. Montieth

Francesca Le Lohé

q = 104  
Strong, declamatory

SOPRANO  
Vic - - tor - - ry Vic - tor -

ALTO

TENOR  
O hap-py dead! who sleep em-balmed in glo-ry Safe from cor-rup-tion pu-ri-fied\_ by

BASS  
Hea - - ven Hea - ven

Detailed description: This block contains the first four measures of the musical score. It features four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The Soprano part has lyrics 'Vic - - tor - - ry Vic - tor -' with dynamics *fp*, *f*, and *sim.* The Alto part is silent. The Tenor part has lyrics 'O hap-py dead! who sleep em-balmed in glo-ry Safe from cor-rup-tion pu-ri-fied\_ by' with dynamics *f* and *sim.* The Bass part has lyrics 'Hea - - ven Hea - ven' with dynamics *fp* and *sim.* The music is in 4/4 time, with a tempo of q = 104 and a 'Strong, declamatory' character. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

5

S.  
-ry

T.  
fire ask you our pi-ty ours mud-grimed and go-ry who still must grim-ly strive

B.  
grant Hea - - ven grant you strength

accel. . . . .

Detailed description: This block contains measures 5 through 8. The Soprano part continues with '-ry' and has a dynamic of *f*. The Tenor part has lyrics 'fire ask you our pi-ty ours mud-grimed and go-ry who still must grim-ly strive' with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The Bass part has lyrics 'grant Hea - - ven grant you strength' with dynamics *f* and *p*. The music is in 4/4 time. An 'accel.' marking is present at the end of the block.

9

q = 120

S.  
grant you strength grant

T.  
grimly de - sire you have out-run the reach of our en-dea-vour have fl-own be - yond our

B.  
grant you strength grant

Detailed description: This block contains measures 9 through 12. The Soprano part has lyrics 'grant you strength grant' with a dynamic of *f*. The Tenor part has lyrics 'grimly de - sire you have out-run the reach of our en-dea-vour have fl-own be - yond our' with a dynamic of *f*. The Bass part has lyrics 'grant you strength grant' with a dynamic of *f*. The music is in 3/4 time, with a tempo of q = 120.

15

S. *you strength grant you strength and grant*

T. *most ex-al-ted quest who prate of Fa-ith and Fre-e-dom know-ing e-ver that all we rea-lly fight for is*

B. *you strength grant you strength and grant*

22

q = 60

S. *you hea - ven yields*

A. *I weep I weep*

T. *just a rest*

B. *you hea - ven*

32

S. *yields*

A. *weep I weep*

T. *the rest that on-ly vic-to-ry can bring us vic-to-ry*

B. *soon shall par-ted be soon shall*

38

S. yields

A. *mf* *<* weep but mo-thers tears my sons

T. vic-to-ry or death that throws us bro-ther like\_ by you the ci-vil

B. parted be.

42

S. *p* poco accel. . . . .

A. my sons were my

T. com-mon-place in which twill flingus to neu-tra lise\_ our then too mar-tial hue

B. *p* soon shall par-ted be.

q = 66

46 *mf* *sim.*

S. yields yields

A. *f* > sons my sons

T. *f* but all we rea- lly fight for is just a rest the rest that on-ly

B. *mf* soon par- ted soon par-

S. *up his life as a*

A. *bone of my bone my sons my sons were bone of my bone and*

T. *victory vic-to-ry or death can bring us victo-ry vic-to-ry or death or*

B. *ted be no more each o- thers*

53 *f*

S. *sa - - cri - fice in my heart in my heart*

A. *though in my heart in my heart I heard the guns*

T. *death vic-to-ry or death in my heart in my heart*

B. *face to see in my heart in my heart*

*q = 60*

57

S. *in my heart in my heart in my heart*

A. *heard them in my heart and my sons bone of my*

T. *in my heart in my heart in my heart*

B. *in my heart in my heart in my heart*

*mf*

S. *pp*  
my heart sa

A. *p*  
bone they went they went

T. *p*  
my heart but you have

B. *pp*  
my heart sa

S. cri fice sa

A. *mp*  
and I made no moan they  
they went made they went

T. *3*  
rest from e-very trib-u-la-tion

B. cri fice sa

full voice to a whisper

S. cri sa-cri-fice

A. *p* *mp* *p*  
I made no moan they  
made they went

T. *mp* *p*  
even in the midst the midst of war you sleep se-

B. cri Hea

6 77 *sim.*

S. *sa - cri - fice sa - cri - fice*

T. *rene you sleep se - rene you sleep se - rene*

B. *- ven Hea - - - ven*

80 *ppp*

S. *sa - cri - fice sa - cri - fice sa - cri - fice*

T. *you sleep sleep*

B. *Hea - - - ven*