

Choral Music of Karen P. Thomas

The Singer's Path

SSAA unaccompanied

by Karen P. Thomas

Text by Sara Teasdale

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Published by Karen P Thomas Music
karenpthomas.com

The Singer's Path

by Karen P. Thomas

*Commissioned by the Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco,
Susan McMane, artistic director.*

*This commission was made possible by the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award
presented by Chorus America and funded by the American Composers Forum.*

The Singer's Path is a five-movement SSAA choral cycle on poetry by Sara Teasdale, one of the most lyrical and musical of poets. The particular poems chosen for this cycle are those with texts that are particularly relevant to young women, and which lent themselves to an exploration of life journeys.

I am deeply grateful to Susan McMane, with whom I worked closely to select the poetry for this commission. I also wish to thank the singers of the Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco, who contributed their ideas regarding which portions of the poems were especially meaningful to them - this helped to shape the overall arc of the cycle. Two of the singers contributed a short melodic idea and a rhythmic motif, both of which were woven into the movement, "Advice to a girl."

Most importantly, I thank Chorus America and the American Composers Forum for funding this commission in the name of Dale Warland, whose brilliant legacy of commissioning new choral music is simply unmatched.

Karen P. Thomas

If desired, the following quote by Sara Teasdale may be read by one of the singers prior to the performance of *The Singer's Path*.

*"You will recognize your own path when you come upon it
because you will suddenly have all the energy and imagination you will ever need."*

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Morning

from The Singer's Path

Poem by Sara Teasdale

Music by Karen P. Thomas

$\text{♩} = 88$ Exuberant

mf

S1 I went out on an Ap-ril morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was

S2 I went out on an Ap-ril morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was

A1 I went out on an Ap-ril morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was

A2 I went out on an Ap-ril morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was

5

S1 high, my heart was high, I was a child *> mp*

S2 high, my heart was high, I was a child *> mp*

A1 high, my heart was high, I a

A2 high, my heart was high, I was a child *>*

9

S1
— of the shin - ing mead - ow, of the shin -

S2
— of the shin - ing mead - ow, of the shin -

A1
mp child of the shin - ing mead - ow, of the shin -

A2
mp — of the shin - ing mead - ow, of the shin -

12

S1
- - - ing mead-ow, I was a sis - ter of the sky,

S2
- - - ing mead-ow, I was a sis - ter of the sky,

A1
- - - ing mead-ow, I was a sis - ter of the sky,

A2
- - - ing mead-ow, I was a sis - ter of the sky, —

17 *mf* $\text{♩} = 69$ *p* *mp* *p*

S1 sis - ter of the sky. There in the wind - y morn - ing

S2 sis - ter of the sky. There in the wind - y flood morn - ing

A1 sis - ter of the sky. of morn - ing

A2 sis - ter of the sky. morn - ing

21 *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

S1 long - ing lift - ed from me, lost as a

S2 long - ing lift it's from me, lost as a

A1 long - ing lift weight from me, lost as a

A2 long - ing lift from me, lost as a

rit. *a tempo*

26 *mp* *p* *p* *mp*

S1
sob _____ in the midst of cheer-ing, swept _____

S2
sob _____ midst of cheer-ing, swept _____

A1
sob, a sob in the midst of cheer-ing, _____ swept _____

A2
sob _____ cheer - - - ing, swept _____

rit. *tempo primo*

31 *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

S1
— as a sea - bird out to sea. _____ I went out on an Ap - ril

S2
— as a sea - bird out to sea. _____ I went out on an Ap - ril

A1
— as a sea - bird out to sea. _____ I went out on an Ap - ril

A2
— as a sea - bird out to sea. _____ I went out on an Ap - ril

37

S1
morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was high, — my heart was high,

S2
morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was high, — my heart was high,

A1
morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was high, — my heart was high,

A2
morn-ing all a - lone, for my heart was high, — my heart was high,

This system left blank for security.
Thank you for your understanding.

42

S1

S2

A1

A2

46

S1 I was a sis - ter of the sky, *f* *mp*

S2 I was a sis - ter of the sky, sis - ter of the sky, *f* *mp*

A1 I was a sis - ter of the sky, sky, *f* *mp*

A2 I was a sis - ter of sis - ter of the sky, *f* *mp* *f* sky,

50

S1 sky, *f* *mp* *f* *rit.* *mf* *sfz p* *ff*
the sky.

S2 sky, *f* *mp* *f* *rit.* *mf* *sfz p* *ff*
the sky.

A1 sky, *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *rit.* *mf* *sfz p* *ff*
the sky.

A2 sky, *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *rit.* *mf* *sfz p* *ff*
the sky.

Advice to a girl

from The Singer's Path

7

Poem by Sara Teasdale

Music by Karen P. Thomas

$\text{♩} = 73$

S 1

S 2 *whisper* *p* *Individual 2nd sopranos whisper "no one" in free rhythm. Begin with sparse entrances, gradually create dense texture.*

A 1 *pp* *cresc.*

A 2 *pp* *cresc.*

No one *cresc.*

mm

mm

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Individual 1st sopranos whisper "no one" in free rhythm. Begin with sparse entrances, gradually create dense texture.

S 1

S 2 *mp* *A few singers continue freely whispering "no one."*

A 1 *p*

A 2 *p*

No one worth pos - ses - sing can be quite pos -

Advice to a girl

A few singers continue freely whispering "no one."

Whisper "no one" in free rhythm. Repeat ad lib.

10 *p* *sotto voce*

S 1 No one worth pos - ses - sing can be quite pos - sessed.

S 2 sessed. *mp* *sotto voce* No one worth pos - ses - sing

A 1 *A few altos whisper "no one" in free rhythm. Repeat ad lib.*

A 2 *A few altos whisper "no one" in free rhythm. Repeat ad lib.*

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Solo, spoken decisively in free rhythm:

"No one worth possessing
can be quite possessed."

a tempo

13 *rit.* *mf* *mp*

S 1 mm... oh Lay that on your heart,

S 2 can be quite pos - se - ss'd. mm... oh Lay that on your heart,

A 1 oh Lay that on your heart,

A 2 oh Lay that on your heart,

all parts gradually open to "oh"

** end whispering*

19

S 1 — my young an-gry dear; — this truth, this hard and pre - cious stone, lay it

S 2 — my young an - gry dear; — this truth, this hard and pre - cious stone, lay it

A 1 — my young an-gry dear; — this truth, this hard and pre - cious stone, lay it

A 2 — my young an-gry dear; — this truth, this hard and pre - cious stone, lay it

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26

S 1 on your hot cheek, on your hot cheek, my young an - gry dear, —

S 2 on your hot cheek, on your hot cheek, my young an - gry dear, —

A 1 on your hot cheek, on your hot cheek, my young an - gry dear, —

A 2 on your hot cheek, on your hot cheek, my young an - gry dear, — lay it on your

Advice to a girl

32

S 1 on your heart, let it hide your tear.

S 2 lay it on your heart, let it hide your tear.

A 1 lay it on your heart, let it hide your tear.

A 2 heart, let it hide your tear.

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39

S 1 Hold it, hold it, hold it like a cry - stal when you are a -

S 2 Hold it, hold it, hold it like a cry - stal when you are a -

A 1 Hold it, hold it, hold it like a cry - stal when you are a -

A 2 Hold it, hold it, hold it like a cry - stal when you are a -

45 *pp* *accel.* *cresc.*

S 1 lone and gaze in the depths, in the

S 2 lone and gaze in the depths, in the

A 1 lone and gaze in the depths, and gaze in the depths, in the

A 2 lone and gaze in the depths, and gaze in the depths, in the

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49 *rit.* *f* *mf* *a tempo* *p* *mp*

S 1 depths of the i - cy stone, long, look long, you

S 2 depths of the i - cy stone, long, look long, you

A 1 depths of the i - cy stone, and you

A 2 depths of the i - cy stone,

rit.

55 *dim. poco a poco* *pp*

S 1 will be bless'd, — be bless'd, you will be bless'd, be bless'd:

S 2 *dim. poco a poco* *pp*

S 2 will be bless'd, — be bless'd, be bless'd, be bless'd:

A 1 *dim. poco a poco* *pp*

A 1 will be bless'd, — be bless'd, be bless'd, be bless'd:

A 2 *mp dim. poco a poco* *pp*

A 2 will be bless'd, — will be bless'd, — be bless'd:

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$\text{♩} = 63$

61 *mp sotto voce* *molto rit.*

S 1 — No one worth pos - ses - sing can be quite pos-sessed.

S 2 *mp sotto voce*

S 2 — No one worth pos - ses - sing can be quite pos-sessed.

A 1 *mp sotto voce*

A 1 — No one worth pos - ses - sing can be quite pos-sessed.

A 2 *mp sotto voce*

A 2 — No one worth pos - ses - sing can be quite pos-sessed.

Refuge

from The Singer's Path

Poem by Sara Teasdale

Music by Karen P. Thomas

$\text{♩} = 52$

p < *mp* > *p*

Soprano 1
From my spi - rit's gray de - feat, _____

p < *mp* > *p*

Soprano 2
From my _____ spi - rit's gray de - feat,

p < *mp* > *p*

Alto 1
From my _____ spi - rit's gray de - feat, _____

p < *mp* > *p*

Alto 2
From my _____ spi - rit's gray de - feat,

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⁴ *mp* < *p* >

S 1
from my pul - se's flag - ging beat, _____ from my

mp < *p* >

S 2
from my _____ pul - se's flag - ging beat, from my

mp < *p* >

A 1
from my _____ pul - se's flag - ging beat, _____ from _____

mp < *p* >

A 2
from my _____ pul - se's flag - ging beat, from _____

Refuge

accel. poco a poco

♩ = 58

8

S 1 *mp* *p*
 hopes that turned to sand sift-ing through my close - clenched

S 2 *mp* *p*
 hopes that turned to sand sift-ing through my close - clenched

A 1 *mp* *p*
 — my hopes — that turned — to sand — sift-ing through my close - clenched

A 2 *mp* *p*
 — my hopes — that turned — to sand — sift-ing through my close - clenched

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

accel. poco a poco

11

S 1 *mf* *p* *mp*
 hand, from my own fault's slav - er - y, if I can

S 2 *mf* *p* *mp*
 hand, from my own fault's slav - er - y, I can

A 1 *mf* *p* *mp*
 hand, from my own fault's slav - er - y, if I can

A 2 *mf* *p* *mp*
 hand, from my own fault's slav - er - y,

♩ = 63

15

S 1 *mf* , *f* *mf* *rit.* *a tempo*
 sing, I still am free, am free. I still am free, I still am

S 2 *mf* *f* *mf*
 sing, I still am free. I still am free, I still am

A 1 *mf* *f* *mf*
 sing, I still am free. I still am free, I still am

A 2 *mf* *f* *mf*
 sing, I still am free. I still am free, I still am

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rit. ♩ = 52 *Broadly*

20

S 1 *f*
 free. For with my sing - ing I _____ can make a re-fuge

S 2 *f*
 free. For with my sing - ing I _____ can make a re-fuge

A 1 *f*
 free. For with my sing - ing I _____ can make a re-fuge

A 2 *f*
 free. For with my sing - ing I _____ can make a re-fuge

Refuge

16

♩ = 58

23

S 1
for my spi - rit's sake, a house of shin-ing words, — a house of shin-ing words, *mf*

S 2
for my spi - rit's sake, a house of shin-ing words, — a house of shin-ing words, *mf*

A 1
for my spi - rit's sake, a house of shin-ing words, — a house of shin-ing words, *mf*

A 2
for my spi - rit's sake, a house of shin-ing words, — a house of shin-ing words, *mf*

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29

S 1
— to be my fra - gile im - mor - ta - li - ty. *mp* *mf* *molto rit.* *mp*

S 2
— to be my fra - gile im - mor - ta - li - ty. *mp* *mf* *mp*

A 1
— to be my fra - gile im - mor - ta - li - ty. *mp* *mf* *mp*

A 2
— to be my fra - gile im - mor - ta - li - ty. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Autumn Dusk

from The Singer's Path

Poem by Sara Teasdale

Music by Karen P. Thomas

$\text{♩} = 60$

S 1 *p* I saw a - bove a sea a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine, *mp*

S 2 *p* I saw a - bove a sea a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine, *mp*

A 1 *p* I saw a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine, *mp*

A 2 *p* I saw a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine, *mp*

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of the musical score. It features four vocal staves labeled S 1, S 2, A 1, and A 2. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 60. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Dynamics range from piano (*p*) to mezzo-piano (*mp*). The lyrics are: S 1: 'I saw a - bove a sea a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine,'; S 2: 'I saw a - bove a sea a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine,'; A 1: 'I saw a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine,'; A 2: 'I saw a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine,'.

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7

S 1 *p* shine, shine, shine, *mp* sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine,

S 2 *p* shine, shine, shine, *mp* plan-et shine,

A 1 *mp* I saw a-bove a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan - et shine, *p* *mp*

A 2 *mp* I saw a-bove a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan - et shine, *p* *mp*

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the musical score, starting at measure 7. It features the same four vocal staves. Dynamics include piano (*p*), mezzo-piano (*mp*), and a brief piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are: S 1: 'shine, shine, shine, sol-i-tar-y plan-et shine,'; S 2: 'shine, shine, shine, plan-et shine,'; A 1: 'I saw a-bove a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan - et shine,'; A 2: 'I saw a-bove a sea of hills a sol-i-tar-y plan - et shine,'.

12 *p*

S 1 and there one near, no one, — no one, — there was

S 2 and there one near, no one, — no one, — there was

A 1 was no or far, no one, — no one, — there was

A 2 — was no or far, no one, — no one, — there was

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17 *mp* *mf*

S 1 no one, near or far, — to keep the world — from be-ing mine,

S 2 no one, near or far, — to keep the world — from be-ing mine,

A 1 no one near, no one, near or far, world — from be-ing mine,

A 2 no one near, no one, near or far, — to keep the world from be-ing mine,

22 *mp* *poco accel.* *expansive* *mf* *rit.*

S 1 — be-ing mine, to keep the world, to keep the world from be - ing

S 2 — be-ing mine, to keep the world, to keep the world, the world from be - ing

A 1 — be-ing mine, to keep the world, to keep the world, the world from be-ing

A 2 — be-ing mine, to keep the world, the world, the world from be-ing

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27 *a tempo* *p* *molto rit.* *mp* *p*

S 1 mine, _____ to keep, to keep the world from be - ing mine.

S 2 mine, _____ to keep, to keep the world from be - ing mine.

A 1 mine, _____ the world, the world, the world from be - ing mine.

A 2 mine, _____ the world, the world, the world from be - ing mine.

Barter

from The Singer's Path

Poem by Sara Teasdale

Music by Karen P. Thomas

♩ = 100

mf *mp* *mf*

Soprano 1
Life has love - li - ness to sell, _____ all

Soprano 2
Life has love - li - ness to sell, _____ all

Alto 1
Life _____ has love - li - ness to sell, _____

Alto 2
Life has love - li - ness to sell, _____

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

mp

S 1
beau-ti-ful and splen - did things, splen - did, blue waves white-n'd on a

S 2
beau-ti-ful and splen - did things, blue waves white-n'd on a

A 1
_____ and splen - did things, blue waves white-n'd on a

A 2
_____ and splen - did, beau-ti-ful and splen-did things, blue waves white-n'd on a

8 *mf*

S 1 cliff, soar - ing fire that sways and sings,

S 2 cliff, soar - ing fire that sways and sings,

A 1 cliff, soar - ing fire that sways and sings,

A 2 cliff, soar - ing fire that sways and sings,

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12 *mp* *mf*

S 1 and sings, sways and sings; life has

S 2 sways and sings; love -

A 1 sways and sings; life,

A 2 sways and sings; life,

17

S 1 *mp* *mf*
love - li - ness to sell, all beau - ti - ful and splen - did

S 2 *mp* *mf*
- li - ness, all beau - ti - ful and splen - did

A 1 *mf*
— life has love - li - ness to sell, — beau - ti - ful and splen - did

A 2 *mf*
— life has love - li - ness to sell, — all

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20

S 1 *mp* *p* *mf*
things, soar - ing fire that

S 2 *mp* *mf* *mf*
things, life has love - li - ness to sell, fire that

A 1
things, splen - did things to sell,

A 2 *p* *mf*
beau - ti - ful and splen - did things, soar - ing fire that

24

S 1 sways _____ and sings; _____ and chil - dren's fa - ces *mp*

S 2 sways _____ and sings, and sings; _____ and chil - dren's fa - ces *mp*

A 1 *mf* sways _____ and sings; _____ and chil - dren's fa - ces *mp*

A 2 sways _____ and sings, and sings; _____ and chil - dren's fa - ces *mp*

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

28

S 1 look-ing up, — look-ing up hold - ing won - der *mf*

S 2 look-ing up, — look-ing up hold - ing won - der *mf*

A 1 look-ing up, — look-ing up hold - ing won - der *mf*

A 2 look-ing up, — look-ing up hold - ing won - der *mf*

rit. *p* *a tempo* *relaxed*

S 1
like a cup. —

S 2
like a, won - der like a cup.

A 1
like a cup. — Life has love - li -

A 2
like a, won - der like a cup. Life has love - li -

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

mp

S 1
Life has love - li - ness to sell, mu - sic like a curve —

S 2
Life has love - li - ness to sell, mu - sic like a curve —

A 1
ness, has love - li - ness to sell,

A 2
ness, has love - li - ness to sell,

46

S 1
— of gold,

S 2
— of gold,

A 1
mp scent of pine trees in the rain, eyes that love you,

A 2
mp scent of pine trees in the rain, eyes that love you,

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

53

S 1
p arms that hold, *mp* arms that hold, *mp* and for your

S 2
p arms that hold, *mp* arms that hold, *mp* and for your

A 1
mp eyes that love you,

A 2
mp eyes that love you,

60

S 1 *mf* spi - - - rit's de - light, *mf* ho -

S 2 *mf* spi - - - rit's de - light, *mf* ho -

A 1 *mp* and for your spi - rit's small de - light, *mf* ho

A 2 *mp* and for your spi - rit's small de - light, *mf* ho -

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

expansive

rit.

64

S 1 - - ly thoughts that star the night.

S 2 - - ly thoughts that star the night.

A 1 - - ly thoughts that star the night.

A 2 - - ly thoughts that star the night.

f *Tempo Primo* *mf*

S 1 *f* *mf*
Spend all you have for love - li - ness,

S 2 *f* *mf*
Spend all you have for love - li - ness,

A 1 *f* *mp* *mf*
Love - li - ness, spend all you have for

A 2 *f* *mp* *mf*
Love - li - ness, spend all you have for

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72 *mf*

S 1 *mf*
buy it and ne - ver count the cost;

S 2 *mf*
buy it and ne - ver count the cost,

A 1 *mf*
love - li - ness, — ne - ver cost; —

A 2 *mf*
love - li - ness, ne - ver, ne - ver count the

75

S 1
for one white sing - ing hour of peace, _____ white

S 2
count the cost; one white sing - ing hour of peace, _____ white

A 1
mf
one white sing - ing hour of peace, _____ white

A 2
mf
cost; _____ one white sing - ing hour of peace, _____ white

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

78

S 1
sing - ing hour, _____ hour of peace _____
p *mp* *mf*

S 2
sing - ing hour, _____ hour of peace _____
p *mp* *mf*

A 1
sing - ing hour, _____ white sing - ing hour of peace _____

A 2
sing - ing hour, _____ white sing - ing hour of peace _____

81

mf

S 1
count ma - ny a year of strife well

S 2
count ma - ny a year of strife well

A 1
count ma - ny a year of strife well lost, well

A 2
count ma - ny a year of strife well lost,

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84

mp *mf*

S 1
lost, and for a breath of ec - sta - sy, give

S 2
lost, and for a breath, a breath of ec - sta - sy, give

A 1
lost, breath, a breath of ec - sta - sy, give

A 2
lost, and for a breath, a breath of ec - sta - sy, give

* elide "-ny a"

expansive

rit. al fine

89

f

S 1
all you have been, give all you have been,

S 2
all you have been, give all you have been,

A 1
all you have been, give all you have been,

A 2
all you have been, give all you have been,

PERUSAL ONLY - DO NOT COPY

rit.

93

ff

S 1
— give all you have been, or could be.

S 2
— give all you have been, or could be.

A 1
— give all you have been, or could be.

A 2
been, have been, or could be.