

Gwyneth Walker

The Race

a fable for Narrator and Piano

based on the story "*The Hare and the Tortoise*"

The Race

duration: 12'00"

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*The Race* is a contemporary adaptation of the familiar story, "The Hare and the Tortoise." In this new version, the central characters (Rabbit and Tortoise) remain the same. But, additional characters (the neighbors, the Owl) are added. Sights and sounds from the neighborhood are incorporated. [A baseball game. The birds singing. Neighbors waving "hello."] And, the race itself takes place with the characters donning running shoes and caps. A referee starts the race, with the sound of a Starter's Pistol.

There is a moral to this well-known story: slow down and appreciate your surroundings (!). And, the entire adventure ends in a grand celebration party for all!

This work may be performed in standard concert clothing (although running shoes and caps may be added). It would be most effective to have props on the stage. For example, if drawings of a Rabbit and Tortoise, or even stuffed animals, might be placed on chairs or music stands in front of the Narrator, then these characters might be acknowledged at appropriate times in the narrative.

Reference is made to a lighthouse, neighbors waving to the "racers," birds heard singing and children playing baseball. All of these elements can be displayed through props or posters. And an agile Narrator might run (or walk) past the characters and places as the race is described.

The role of the Narrator is to bring the characters and places to life through the reading, gestures to props and costume additions ad lib. The pianist provides the musical depiction of the story. And although changes of costume are not required of the pianist, adding a running cap at letter [P] is requested in the instructions and would be a nice touch.

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Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council as well as the 2008 "Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities" from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum.

Walker's catalog includes over 200 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus and solo voice. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer of Boston (choral and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at www.gwynethwalker.com.

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# The Race

*a fable for Narrator and Piano*

Words and Music by  
Gwyneth Walker

(Narrative precedes the musical commentary)

**Narrator:** This is a story about a race. A road race between two animals.

**Fanfare**

**Quickly** ♩ = 144, *with energy*

Piano

*with pedal* *loco*

4 *rit.*

*p*

**N:** Once upon a time, there was a speedy animal.

**A**

7 *p*

**N:** He was a sprinter.

**A1** **Quickly** ♩ = 160

8 *p*

**N:** He ran so quickly that the wind whistled as he went by!

9 **B** *Pianist exhales loudly*

[imitating the wind whistling as the Rabbit rushes by]

4

N: He was a Rabbit. A Speedy Rabbit.

**C** Quickly ♩ = 160, as if hopping

10

*p* *mp*

N: In fact, he was always in such a rush, that he never slowed down to notice the beautiful lighthouse at the end of his road, casting its circle of light out to the ships at sea.

**D** Moderate tempo

14

*mf cantabile* *rit.* *p*

*with pedal* *Ped.*

N: He never heard the birds singing in the trees overhead.

**D1** Moderate tempo

18

*p as birds singing*

N: He did not stop to watch the children playing baseball in the park.

**D2** Moderate tempo

19

*f* *\*LH tap ledge\*\**

\* to simulate the sound of a baseball hitting a bat, or (for the agile pianist) approximate a baseball swing (with both hands) while making a knocking sound with the tongue.

\*\*The Narrator might catch an imaginary ball!

N: And, he never waved “hello” to his neighbors sitting on their porch.

**D3** Moderate tempo  
as if waving “hello”

23

*p* *f*

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

N: He was very speedy, and always rushed to where he was going.

**E** Quickly ♩ = 160

25

*p* *mp*

29

*8va* ----- random, ascending, white-note clusters  
*loco*

*LH* *RH* *p* *cresc.*

33

both hands, random clusters,  
scampering up the keyboard

*8va* -----

*cresc.* *f*

6

N: And then, there was the Tortoise.

**F** Slowly

35

Musical notation for measure 35, featuring a piano (*f*) dynamic and a fermata over the final note.

N: [A Tortoise is a VERY LARGE turtle!]

**F1** Very slowly

36

Musical notation for measure 36, featuring a piano (*f*) dynamic and a fermata over the final note, with an *8vb-* marking.

N: He was not speedy. In fact, he never ran at all. He plodded along at a leisurely pace, always stopping to admire the lighthouse at the end of his street, casting its circle of light out to the ships at sea.

**G** Slowly

38

Musical notation for measures 38-41, featuring *mf cantabile* dynamics, triplets, and a *rit.* marking.

N: He always slowed down to listen to the birds singing in the trees overhead.

**H** Slowly

42

Musical notation for measure 42, featuring a piano (*p*) dynamic and a marking *p as birds singing*.

N: And, he always stopped to watch the children playing baseball in the park.

**I** Slowly

43

Musical notation for measure 43, featuring a piano (*f*) dynamic and a marking *\*LH tap ledge*.

\*to simulate the sound of a baseball hitting a bat. See footnote on page 2.

N: Of course, he always waived “hello” to his neighbors, sitting on their porch.

**J** **Slowly**  
as if waving “hello”

47

*p* *f*

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_

N: He was a slow Tortoise, but he always got to where he was going...eventually!

**K** **At a slow, lumbering tempo**

49

*f*

53

**Grandly**  
*rit.*

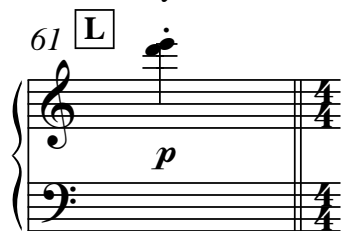
57

*dim.* *p* **Less slowly** *rit.*

8

N: One day, the Rabbit

61 **L**



N: (who was a boastful creature) said to the other animals: “I am the fastest animal of all. I am very speedy. Therefore, I challenge any of you to a race. See if you can catch me!” The other animals drew back in fear. They did not want to race the Speedy Rabbit. They knew that they could not catch him. But, the Tortoise

**L1** Slowly

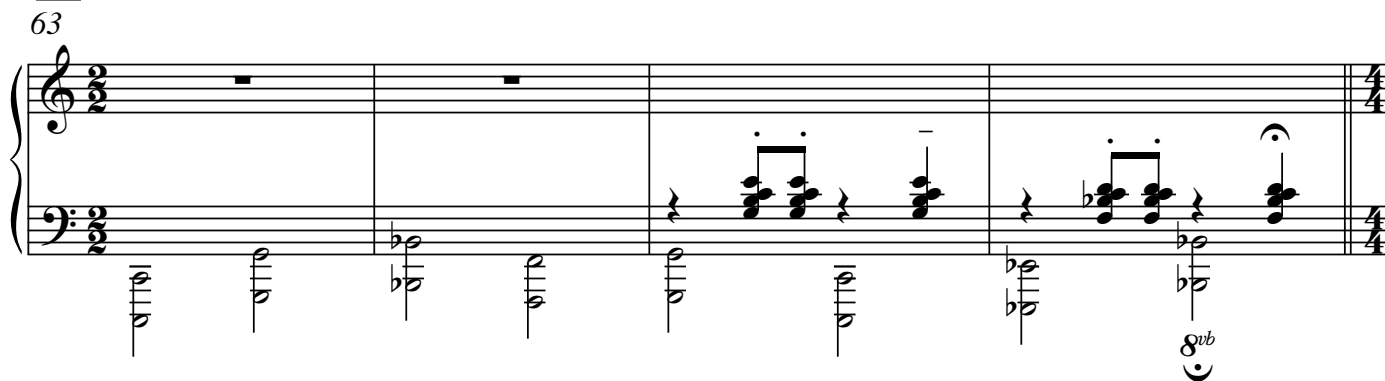
62



N: (brave Tortoise!) stepped forward and said: “Speedy Rabbit, I am not afraid of you. I will race you. I accept your challenge.”

**M** At a slow, lumbering tempo

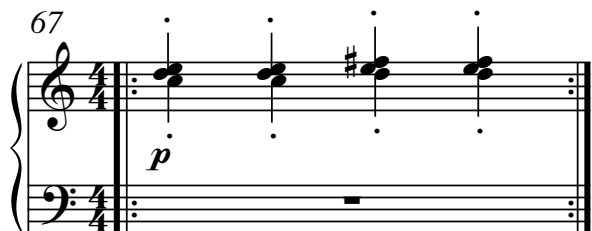
63



N: The Rabbit laughed and replied: “YOU?!? You will race me?!? Why, you are the slowest animal on the block. I can beat you on only one foot if I wanted!”

**N** Quickly [repeat a few times]

67



N: The Tortoise replied slowly: "That may be true. But you should save your boasting until after the race."

**O** Quickly ♩ = 144, with energy

68 (preparing for the race)

with pedal

loco

8vb

"Rabbit" motive

72 8va

p

"Tortoise" motive

8va

77

loco

Hold chord  
[to beginning of  
next reading]

N: So, the Rabbit and the Tortoise changed into their running clothes. They put on their running shoes, and their running caps.

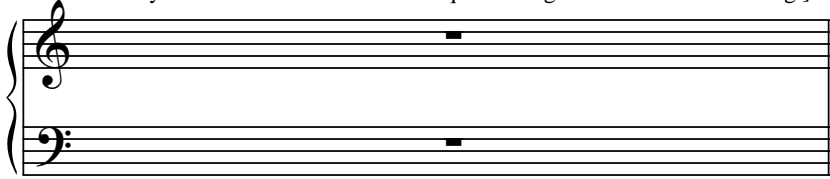
**P**

80 [Narrator and Pianist may put on caps]

**N:** And, they lined up at the Starting Line. The Owl acted as Referee, and he said: “Runners take your marks..... ready.....set.....GO!” [Narrator claps hands loudly, to start the race.]

**P1**

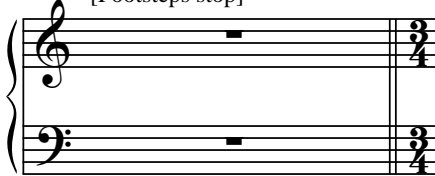
81 [Narrator and Pianist tap feet quickly, as if running... loudly at first then diminuendo to a quiet background behind the reading.]



**N:** The Rabbit got off to a quick start. He sped down the road, leaving the Tortoise far behind. Then, noticing his great lead, and being a boastful Rabbit, he said: “I am so far ahead, that the slow Tortoise will never catch up. I think that I shall stop here and take a little nap. That will show the Tortoise how much faster I am than him!”

**P2**

82 [Footsteps stop]



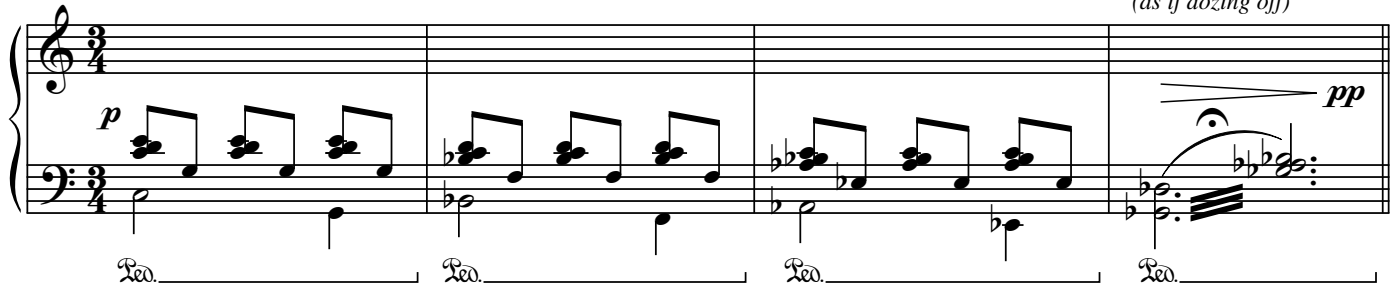
**N:** So, the Rabbit found a nice soft little spot of grass, and lay down for a nap...

**Q Moderate tempo**

83

*rit.*

*slowing tremolo  
(as if dozing off)*

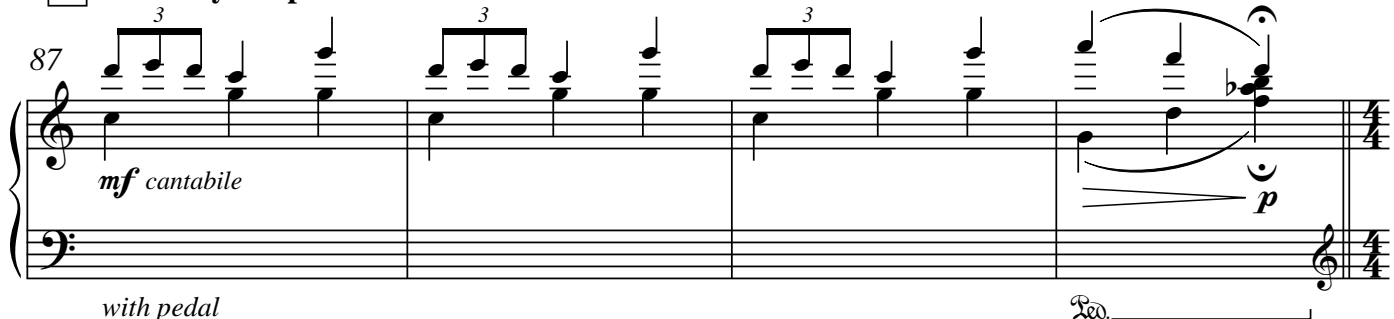


**N:** Meanwhile, the Tortoise was plodding down the road at his usual pace. Of course, he stopped to admire the beautiful lighthouse, casting its circle of light to the ships at sea.

**R Leisurely tempo**

87

*rit.*



*with pedal*

N: Of course, he stopped to listen to the birds singing in the trees overhead.

**R1** Leisurely tempo

91

*p as birds singing*

Or substitute the name of a local baseball team

N: Of course, he stopped to watch the children playing baseball in the park. [For, he was a Red Sox fan, and he knew a good game when he saw one!]

**R2** Leisurely tempo

92

*f*

\*LH tap ledge

N: And, of course, he waved “hello” to his neighbors as they sat on their porch.

**R3** Leisurely tempo

96

*p*

*f*

Red. \_\_\_\_\_

N: By now, he was nearly at the Finish Line. At just this time, Speedy Rabbit awoke from his nap.

**S**

98

*p*

\*to simulate the sound of a baseball hitting a bat. See footnote on page 2.

**N:** He looked around, but did not see the Tortoise behind him, as he had expected. Nor did he see the Tortoise close by him, as he had thought he might. Instead, to his horror, he thought he spotted the Tortoise off in the distance, just about the cross the Finish Line! The Rabbit raced down the road as fast as he could. Of course, he did not stop to admire the beautiful lighthouse, casting its circle of light out to the ships at sea.

**T** **Prestissimo**

99

*mf cantabile*

*p*

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

**N:** Of course, he did not stop to listen to the birds singing in the trees overhead.

**T1** **Prestissimo**

103

*p as birds singing*

**N:** Of course, he did not stop to watch the children playing baseball in the park (even though he was a Yankees fan, and knew a good game when he saw one!).

**T2** **Prestissimo**

Or substitute the name of a rival team

\*LH tap ledge

104

*f*

\*to simulate the sound of a baseball hitting a bat. See footnote on page 2.

**N:** He raced, and he raced. [Narrator becomes short of breath with exhaustion.] When he came to the neighbors sitting on their porch, he stopped to ask: “Have you seen the Tortoise? Has he passed this way?” The neighbors (who were surprised to hear from the Rabbit after all of these years) answered: “Oh yes, the Tortoise came by some time ago. He is just now crossing the Finish Line. Hooray Tortoise! (they shouted to each other) Hooray Tortoise! Let’s have a party to celebrate!”

**U** With energy      In celebration ♩ = 160

108

*f* *gliss.*

*Ped.*

**N:** The Rabbit sank down on his paws in shock. “Woe is me! Woe is me! I have lost the race to the Tortoise. And, what is worse, I have missed out all of the wonderful people and places along the way, all of these years! Woe is me!”

113 **V** Slowly, mournfully      *rit.*

*p* *gliss.*

*with pedal*

**N:** The neighbors comforted the Rabbit by saying: “Don’t worry, Rabbit. You can change your ways right now. Slow down! And, we will be your friends.” So, the neighbors threw a BIG party, and invited everyone. They celebrated the Tortoise winning the race, and they welcomed the Not-so-Speedy Rabbit as their new friend.

**W** Quickly ♩ = 144, with energy

117

*f* *gliss.*

*Ped.*

14

Narrator congratulates the Rabbit

**X** *a tempo* (♩ = 160)

121 *very joyfully*

Musical score for 'Narrator congratulates the Rabbit'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and contains a series of chords and a melodic line. The bass staff provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Narrator congratulates the Tortoise

125

Musical score for 'Narrator congratulates the Tortoise'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with some chords. The bass staff features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures and a piano (*p*) dynamic marking.

**Y** Everyone dances!

129

Musical score for 'Everyone dances!'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff has a melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an 8va marking. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

133 *loco*

**Z**

Musical score for 'Everyone dances!' (continued). It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff has a melodic line with a forte (*f*) dynamic, a *dim.* marking, and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *b8* marking. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

137

141

Narrator toasts the animals and the pianist (with juice!)

**Z1** Especially celebratory

145

149

Pianist and Narrator  
raise fists in the air  
as if celebrating  
winning a race.

12'00"

Piano version completed July 20, 2011  
Braintree, Vermont

## The Race

This is a story about a race. A road race between two animals. {FANFARE}

Once upon a time, there was a speedy animal. {A}

He was a sprinter. {A1}

He ran so quickly that the wind whistled as he went by! {B}

*(The Pianist exhales loudly imitating the wind whistling as the Rabbit rushes by.)*

He was a Rabbit. A Speedy Rabbit. {C}

In fact, he was always in such a rush, that he never slowed down to notice the beautiful lighthouse at the end of his road, casting its circle of light out to the ships at sea. {D}

He never heard the birds singing in the trees overhead. {D1}

He did not stop to watch the children playing baseball in the park. {D2}

*(Pianist mimes hitting a baseball and the Narrator catches it)*

And, he never waved “hello” to his neighbors sitting on their porch. {D3}

He was very speedy, and always rushed to where he was going. {E}

And then, there was the Tortoise. {F}

[A Tortoise is a VERY LARGE turtle!] {F1}

He was not speedy. In fact, he never ran at all. He plodded along at a leisurely pace, always stopping to admire the lighthouse at the end of his street, casting its circle of light out to the ships at sea. {G}

He always slowed down to listen to the birds singing in the trees overhead. {H}

And, he always stopped to watch the children playing baseball in the park. {I}

*(Pianist mimes hitting a baseball and the Narrator catches it)*

Of course, he always waived “hello” to his neighbors, sitting on their porch. {J}

He was a slow Tortoise, but he always got to where he was going...eventually! {K}

One day, the Rabbit {L}

(who was a boastful creature) said to the other animals: “I am the fastest animal of all. I am very speedy. Therefore, I challenge any of you to a race. See if you can catch me!” The other animals drew back in fear. They did not want to race the Speedy Rabbit. They knew that they could not catch him. But, the Tortoise {L1}

(brave Tortoise!) stepped forward and said: “Speedy Rabbit, I am not afraid of you. I will race you. I accept your challenge.” {M}

The Rabbit laughed and replied: “YOU?!? You will race me?!? Why, you are the slowest animal on the block. I can beat you on only one foot if I wanted!” {N}

The Tortoise replied slowly: “ That may be true. But you should save your boasting until after the race.” {O}

So, the Rabbit and the Tortoise changed into their running clothes. They put on their running shoes, and their running caps. {P} (*Narrator and Pianist may put on caps.*)

And, they lined up at the Starting Line. The Owl acted as Referee, and he said “Runners take your marks.....ready..... set.....GO!” (*Narrator claps hands loudly, to start the race.*) {P1} (*Narrator and Pianist tap feet quickly, as if running...loudly at first, then diminuendo to a quiet background behind the following reading.*)

The Rabbit got off to a quick start. He sped down the road, leaving the Tortoise far behind. Then, noticing his great lead, and being a boastful Rabbit, he said: “I am so far ahead, that the slow Tortoise will never catch up. I think that I shall stop here and take a little nap. That will show the Tortoise how much faster I am than him!”{P2}

So, the Rabbit found a nice soft little spot of grass, and lay down for a nap... {Q}

Meanwhile, the Tortoise was plodding down the road at his usual pace. Of course, he stopped to admire the beautiful lighthouse, casting its circle of light to the ships at sea. {R}

Of course, he stopped to listen to the birds singing in the trees overhead. {R1}

Of course, he stopped to watch the children playing baseball in the park. [For, he was a Red Sox\* fan, and he knew a good game when he saw one!] {R2}  
(*Pianist mimes hitting a baseball and the Narrator catches it*)

And, of course, he waved “hello” to his neighbors as they sat on their porch. {R3}

\*or substitute the name of a local baseball team

By now, he was nearly at the Finish Line. At just this time, Speedy Rabbit awoke from his nap. {S}

He looked around, but did not see the Tortoise behind him, as he had expected. Nor did he see the Tortoise close by him, as he had thought he might. Instead, to his horror, he thought he spotted the Tortoise off in the distance, just about the cross the Finish Line! The Rabbit raced down the road as fast as he could. Of course, he did not stop to admire the beautiful lighthouse, casting its circle of light out to the ships at sea. {T}

Of course, he did not stop to listen to the birds singing in the trees overhead. {T1}

Of course, he did not stop to watch the children playing baseball in the park (even though he was a Yankees\* fan, and knew a good game when he saw one!). {T2}

He raced, and he raced. (*Narrator becomes short of breath with exhaustion.*) When he came to the neighbors sitting on their porch, he stopped to ask: “Have you seen the Tortoise? Has he passed this way?” The neighbors (who were surprised to hear from the Rabbit after all of these years) answered: “Oh yes, the Tortoise came by some time ago. He is just now crossing the Finish Line. Hooray Tortoise! (they shouted to each other) Hooray Tortoise! Let’s have a party to celebrate!” {U}

The Rabbit sank down on his paws in shock. “Woe is me! Woe is me! I have lost the race to the Tortoise. And, what is worse, I have missed out all of the wonderful people and places along the way, all of these years! Woe is me!” {V}

The neighbors comforted the Rabbit by saying: “Don’t worry, Rabbit. You can change your ways right now. Slow down! And, we will be your friends.” So, the neighbors threw a BIG party, and invited everyone. They celebrated the Tortoise winning the race, and they welcomed the Not-so-Speedy Rabbit as their new friend. {W}

THE END!

\*or select a rival team