

GWYNETH WALKER

The Dying of the Light

*Musical Settings of the Poetry of Dylan Thomas
for Tenor Solo and String Quartet or Piano,
or Baritone Solo and String Orchestra or Piano*

The Hand that Signed the Paper
And Death Shall Have No Dominion
Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night

Piano/Vocal Score (Tenor Version)	No. 8329
Full Score (String Quartet and Tenor Version)	No. 8330
Parts (String Quartet and Tenor Version)	No. 8331
Piano/Vocal Score (Baritone Version)	No. 8332
→ Full Score (String Orchestra and Baritone Version)	No. 8333
Parts (String Orchestra and Baritone Version [4-4-3-2-1])	No. 8334

The Dying of the Light

Duration 10'10"

The poetry of Dylan Thomas (1914–1953) is characteristically Welsh and dark. Death is a common topic in his writings. Yet despite the somber imagery, there is often a strength and resilience. The journey of death is described, but not taken. Death is the adversary, not the ruler.

The Hand that Signed the Paper speaks of the often cruel and deadly power of a signed document—a document of taxation, of treaty or of counting casualties. The five fingers mark the dead, but do not soothe. “Hands have no tears to flow.” *And Death Shall Have No Dominion* expresses the triumph of the human spirit over death. “Though lovers be lost love shall not.” *Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night* represents the fight against death. “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

The musical expression of these poems places the voice in the low (dark) range. Tempi are slow, and minor keys are prevalent. Only occasionally are major tonalities presented. These passages combine with particularly uplifting phrases such as “Though they sink through the sea, they shall rise again” and “Wild men, who caught and sang the sun in flight...”

Near the end of the last song, the poet addresses his deceased father: “And you, my father, there on the sad height...” The voice stays on a constant pitch while the harmony lifts beneath (to the heights), in the Lydian (raised) mode. [One might hear the voice as “perched atop” the rising chords.] This is one of the most personal lines of Dylan Thomas’ poetry. As the poet speaks to his father, the climax of the song comes with the rising phrases of “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” The final chords are dissonant, marked “with determination and triumph.”

The Hand that Signed the Paper

The hand that signed the paper felled a city;
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;
These five kings did a king to death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,
The finger joints are cramped with chalk;
A goose’s quill has put an end to murder
That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,
And famine grew, and locusts came;
Great is the hand that holds dominion over
Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but do not soften
The crusted wound nor stroke the brow;
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven;
Hands have no tears to flow.

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
with the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean, and the
clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall
rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan’t crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails;
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced
in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with
blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears,
I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

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The Dying of the Light

for Baritone Solo and String Orchestra

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

Moderately slowly $\text{♩} = 80$

Baritone *mf*
The hand that signed the pa - per felled a

Violin 1 *p* *poco* *mp* *p*

Violin 2 *p* *poco* *mp* *p*

Viola *p* *poco* *mp* *p*

Violoncello *p* *poco* *mp* *p*

Contrabass *pizz.* *mp* *arco* *p*

6
Bar. *mf*
cit - y; — Five sov - ereign fin - gers taxed the breath, Dou - bled the globe of dead and halved a

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb. *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

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10

(mf)

Bar. *coun - try; These five kings did a king to death. The*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

14

Bar. *might - y hand leads to a slop - ing shoul - der, The fin - ger joints are cramped with*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

17

Bar. *chalk; ___ A goo - se's quill has put an end to mur - der ___ That put an end to ___*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *(non div.)*

Cb.

21 *f*

Bar. talk. The hand that signed the trea - ty bred a fe - - - ver, And

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. *div.*

Vlc.

Cb.

25

Bar. fam - ine grew, and lo - custs came; Great is the hand that holds do -

Vln. 1 *div.*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

28 *(f)*

Bar. min - ion o - ver Man by a scrib - bled name. The

Vln. 1 *p* *unis.* *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *f* *p*

Vla. *p* *unis.* *f* *p*

Vlc. *p* *f* *p*

Cb. *p* *f* *p*

32

Bar. five kings count the dead but do not soft - en The crust - ed wound nor stroke the

Vln. 1 *div.* *f* *unis.*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *div.* *f* *unis.*

Vlc. *f*

Cb. *f*

35

Bar. brow; A hand rules pit - y as a hand rules heav - en; Hands have no tears_ to

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Cb. *p*

39

Bar. flow. A hand rules pit - y as a hand rules heav - en; *rit.*

Vln. 1 *div.* *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *div.* *f* *unis.* *div.*

Vlc. *f*

Cb. *f*

* Cue-sized notes are an *ossia* if needed.

43 **Slower**

Bar. *mf* *p* *rit.* (*p*) * flow.

Hands have no tears_ to flow, flow.

Vln. 1 *unis.* *mf* *pp* *div.*

Vln. 2 *mf* *pp*

Vla. *unis.* *mf* *pp*

Vlc. *mf* *pp* *div.*

Cb. *mf* *pp*

2'30"

Transition to No. 2. *And Death Shall Have No Dominion*
 [Omit if performing No. 2 separately]

$\text{♩} = 100$ *rit.*

Bar.

Vln. 1 *unis.* *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *unis.* *p*

Cb. *pizz.* *p*

2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion

At a stately tempo ♩ = 100

f

And

Bar.

5

Bar.

9

Bar.

13 *smoothly* *p*

Bar. no do - min - ion, no do - min - ion, no do - min - ion, no do - min - ion.

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

Cb. *arco* *mf* *p*

17 *mf*

Bar. When their bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, They shall have

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

21 *f*

Bar. stars at el - bow and foot; Though they go mad they shall be sane, Though they

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

Cb. *f*

25

Bar. sink through the sea they shall rise a - gain; _____ Though

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

28

Bar. *poco rit.* *a tempo*
lov - ers be lost love shall not; And death shall have no do - min - ion. _____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

32

Bar. *poco accel.* *mf* Slightly faster ♩ = 108
And death shall have no do -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

36

Bar. min - ion. Un - der the wind - ings of the sea They

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

39

Bar. ly - ing long shall not die wind - i - ly; Twist - ing on racks when

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

43

Bar. sin - ews give way, Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break; Faith in their hands shall

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

47

Bar. *^ ^ ^ > > > ^*
 snap in two, And the u - ni - corn e - vils run them through; Split all ends up

Vln. 1 *arco > ^*

Vln. 2 *arco > ^*

Vla. *arco > ^*

Vlc. *div. arco unis. ^*

Cb. *arco > ^*

poco rit. *a tempo (♩ = 108)*

51

Bar. *^ ^ ^ ,*
 they shan't crack; And death shall have no do - min - ion.

Vln. 1 *snap pizz. arco 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

Vln. 2 *snap pizz. arco 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

Vla. *snap pizz. arco 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

Vlc. *snap pizz. arco 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

Cb. *snap pizz. arco 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3*

54 *Same tempo (♩ = 108)*

Bar. *^*
 — And death shall have no do - min - ion.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. *(non div.)*

Vlc. *(non div.)*

Cb.

57

Bar. No more may gulls cry _____ at their ears _____ Or

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

60

Bar. waves break loud on the sea - shores;

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

63 **More freely, recitative style**

Bar. *p* Where blew a flower may a flower no more Lift its head, Where blew a flower may a

Vln. 1 *gently p sost.*

Vln. 2 *gently p sost.*

Vla. *gently p sost.*

Vlc. *pizz. div.*

Cb. *p pizz.*

66

Bar. *flower no more Lift its head to the blows of the rain;*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *arco (div.)*

Cb. *arco*

unis.

69 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Bar. *Though they be mad and dead as nails; Heads of the char - ac - ters*

Vln. 1 *cresc. poco a poco*

Vln. 2 *cresc. poco a poco*

Vla. *cresc. poco a poco*

Vlc. *cresc. poco a poco*

Cb. *pizz.* *cresc. poco a poco* *arco*

cresc. poco a poco

72 *(cresc.)* *rit.*

Bar. *ham - mer through dai - sies; Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,*

Vln. 1 *(cresc.)* *(mf) cresc.*

Vln. 2 *(cresc.)* *(mf) cresc.*

Vla. *(cresc.)* *(mf) cresc.*

Vlc. *(cresc.)* *(mf) cresc.*

Cb. *(cresc.)* *(mf) cresc.*

76 *(rit.)* *(cresc.)* **Slower** *f grandly* *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Bar. *(cresc.)* *f* And death shall have no do - min - ion,

Vln. 1 *(cresc.)* *f*

Vln. 2 *(cresc.)* *f*

Vla. *(cresc.)* *f*

Vlc. *(cresc.)* *f*

Cb. *(cresc.)* *f*

79 *forcefully* *rit. to end*

Bar. and death shall have no do -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

83 *(rit.)* *p* [with head bowed, to honor the dead]

Bar. min - ion.

Vln. 1 *div.*

Vln. 2 *div.*

Vla. *div.*

Vlc.

Cb.

3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Solemn ♩ = 88, but with motion

Violin 1: *unis.*, *p*, *f*

Violin 2: *unis.*, *p*, *f*

Viola: *unis.*, *p*, *f*

Violoncello: *p*, *f*

Bassoon: *p*, *f*

7

Bar. *mf*
Do not go gen-tle in-to that good night, _____ Old age should burn and rave at close of day; _____

Violin 1: *mf*

Violin 2: *mf*

Viola: *p*, *mf*, *p*

Violoncello: *unis.*, *p*, *mf*, *p*

Bassoon: *p*, *mf*, *p*

12

Bar. *f* *p* *mf*
Rage, rage a- gainst the dy- ing of the light. _____

Violin 1: *(mf)*, *p*

Violin 2: *(mf)*, *p*

Viola: *mf*, *p*

Violoncello: *mf*, *div.*, *unis.*, *p*

Bassoon: *mf*, *p*

*Grace note precedes the beat.

16 (mf)

Bar. Though wise men at their end know dark is

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

Cb. *mf* *p*

19

Bar. right, Be - cause their words had forked no light - ning they

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *div.*

Cb. *pizz.* *arco*

21 *p* *mf*

Bar. Do not go gen - tle in - to that good night. Good men, the last wave

Vln. 1 *p* *mf* 3 3 3 3

Vln. 2 *mf* *p* *mf* 3 3 3 3

Vla. *mf* *p* *mf* 3 3 3 3

Vlc. *mf* *p* *mf* unis.

Cb. *mf* *p* *mf*

25 *lightly*

Bar. by, cry - ing how bright Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, —

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb. *pizz.*

28 *f* *p*

Bar. Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light. —

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *div.* *unis.* *div.*

Cb. *arco* *f* *p*

31 *accel.* *f* **Faster** ♩ = 100

Bar. Wild men who caught and sang the sun in —

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *unis.*

Cb. *f*

34

Bar. flight, _____ And learn, too late, they

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

37

Bar. grieved it _____ on its way, _____ Do not go gen - tle, _____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

40

Bar. do not go gen - tle in - to that good night. _____ *p* *rit.*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

43 $\text{♩} = 88$, recitative style *mf*

Bar. Grave men, near death, who see with blind - ing sight

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf* (col Baritone) *Solo*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf* *div.* *mf* *2 players, Soli*

Cb. *mf*

45 *accel.*

Bar. Blind eyes could blaze like me - teors and be gay, _____

Vln. 1 *Tutti, div.*

Vln. 2 *Tutti*

Vla. *Tutti*

Vlc. *Tutti, div.*

Cb. *Solo, pizz.* *Tutti, arco*

Faster $\text{♩} = 100$

48 *f*

Bar. Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing, _____

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *unis. f*

Cb. *f*

51 *non dim.* *p*

rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light.

Vln. 1 *unis.* *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Cb. *pizz.* *p*

55 *accel.*

Vln. 1 *p cresc.*

Vln. 2 *p cresc.*

Vla. *cresc.*

Vlc. *cresc.*

Cb. *cresc.* *arco*

58 **Quickly** ♩ = 108 *mf*

And you, my fath - er,

Vln. 1 *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *f* *p* *rolled pizz.*

Vla. *f* *p* *rolled pizz.*

Vlc. *f* *p*

Cb. *f* *pizz.* *p*

Same tempo (♩ = 108)

71

(p) *mp*

Bar. *Rage,* *rage,*

Vln. 1 *(p)* *mp*

Vln. 2 *(p)* *mp*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *mp pizz.*

Vcl. *pizz.* *arco* *mp pizz.*

Cb. *pizz.* *arco* *mp pizz.*

75

mf

Bar. *rage,*

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vcl. *arco* *pizz.* *mf* *div. arco* *arco*

Cb. *arco* *pizz.* *mf* *pizz.* *arco*

78

f *poco rit.*

Bar. *rage,* *rage* a - gainst the dy - ing of the

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vcl. *unis.* *f*

Cb. *f*

♩ = 100

rit.

Slower

81

Bar. light, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the

Vln. 1 *mf* *f* *p*, *pizz.*

Vln. 2 *mf* *f* *p*, *pizz.*

Vla. *mf* *f* *p*, *pizz.*

Vlc. *mf* *f* *p*, *pizz.*

Cb. *mf* *f* *p*, *pizz.*

a tempo (♩ = 100)

84

ossia

f

Bar. light.

Vln. 1 *arco* (*p*) *f*

Vln. 2 *arco* (*p*) *f*

Vla. *arco* (*p*) *f*

Vlc. *arco* (*p*) *f* *div.*

Cb. *arco* (*p*) *f*

with determination and triumph

4'00"

Total: 10'10"

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New Canaan, Connecticut

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit her Web site.
<<http://www.gwynethwalker.com>>

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