

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 Tenor Solo and String Quartet

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

Moderately slowly ♩ = 80

The musical score is written for Tenor Solo and String Quartet. It begins with a tempo marking of 'Moderately slowly' and a metronome marking of ♩ = 80. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 4. The Tenor part begins with a rest for three measures, followed by the word 'The' in measure 4. The string quartet (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello) enters in measure 1 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The strings play a melodic line with a 'poco' (poco ritardando) marking in measures 3 and 4. The second system covers measures 5 through 8. The Tenor part begins in measure 5 with the lyrics 'hand that signed the pa - per felled a cit - y; — Five sov - ereign fin - gers taxed the'. The string quartet continues with their melodic line, with 'poco' markings in measures 6 and 7.

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8

Tenor
breath, Dou - bled the globe of dead and halved a coun - try;

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

11

Tenor
These five kings did a king to death. The

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

(mf)

14

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

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

17

Tenor
8 chalk; _____ A goo - se's quill has put an end to mur - der _____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

20

Tenor
8 That put an end to _____ talk. *f* The

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

23

Tenor
8 hand that signed the trea - ty bred a fe - - - ver, And fam - ine grew, and lo - custs

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

36

Tenor *p* hand rules pit - y as a hand rules heav - en; Hands have no tears_ to flow.*

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

40

Tenor *f* *rit.* *Slower* A hand rules pit - y as a hand rules heav - en; Hands have no tears_ to

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

44

Tenor *mf* *p* *rit.* (p) flow, flow.

Vln. 1 *mf* *diminuendo* *pp*

Vln. 2 *mf* *diminuendo* *pp*

Vla. *mf* *diminuendo* *pp*

Vlc. *mf* *diminuendo* *pp*

*Cue-sized notes are an *ossia* if needed. Cue notes in the Cello should be played if the singer elects to perform the *ossia*.
Walker | *The Dying of the Light* | 1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

9

Tenor *8* shall be one _____ with the man in the wind and the west moon; _____

Vln. 1 *f p*

Vln. 2 *f p*

Vla. *f p*

Vlc. *f p*

13

Tenor *8* _____ *smoothly* no do - min - ion, no do - min - ion, no do - min - ion, no do - min - ion. *p*

Vln. 1 *mf p*

Vln. 2 *mf p*

Vla. *mf p*

Vlc. *mf p*

17

Tenor *8* *mf* When their bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, _____ They shall have

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

21 *f*

Tenor: stars at el - bow and foot; Though they go mad they shall be

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *f*

24

Tenor: sane, Though they sink through the sea they shall rise a - gain;

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

27 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

Tenor: — Though lov - ers be lost love shall not; And — death shall have no do -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

poco accel.

mf

And

31

Tenor

min - ion.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

35 **Slightly faster** ♩ = 108

Tenor

death shall have no do - min - ion. Un - der the wind - ings of the

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

38

Tenor

sea They ly - ing long shall not die wind - i - ly;

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

42

Tenor *8* Twist - ing on racks when sin - ews give way, Strapped to a wheel, yet they

Vln. 1 *p sost.*

Vln. 2 *p sost.*

Vla. *p sost.*

Vlc. *p sost.*

45 *f*

Tenor *8* shall not break; Faith in their hands shall snap in two, And the u - ni - corn e - vils

Vln. 1 *pizz.* (*f*)

Vln. 2 *pizz.* (*f*)

Vla. *pizz.* (*f*)

Vlc. *pizz.* (*f*)

49 *poco rit.* *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Tenor *8* run them through; Split all ends up they shan't crack; And_ death shall have no do -

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

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

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

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

Same tempo (♩ = 108)

53

Tenor min - ion. And death shall have no do -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

56

Tenor min - ion. No more may gulls cry at their ears

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

59

Tenor Or waves break loud on the sea - shores;

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. (col Tenor)

More freely, recitative style

62 *p*

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

Vln. 1 *gently, sost.*
p

Vln. 2 *gently, sost.*
p

Vla. *gently, sost.*
p

Vlc. *pizz.*
p

65

Tenor
Where blew a flower may a flower no more Lift its head to the blows of the rain;—

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc. *arco*

68 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Tenor
— Though they be mad and dead as nails;

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

71 *cresc. poco a poco*

Tenor
8 Heads of the char - ac - ters ham - mer through dai - sies;_____

Vln. 1
cresc. poco a poco

Vln. 2
cresc. poco a poco

Vla.
cresc. poco a poco

Vlc.
cresc. poco a poco

74 *(cresc.) rit. f grandly*

Tenor
8 Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,_____ And_

Vln. 1
mf (cresc.) f

Vln. 2
mf (cresc.) f

Vla.
mf (cresc.) f

Vlc.
mf (cresc.)

Slower

77 *a tempo (♩ = 108)*

Tenor
8 death shall have no do - min - ion,_____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.
f

80 *rit. to end*
forcefully
 Tenor and — death shall have no do -
 Vln. 1
 Vln. 2
 Vla.
 Vlc.

83 *(rit.)*
 Tenor min - ion.
 [with head bowed, to honor the dead]
p
 Vln. 1
 Vln. 2
 Vla.
 Vlc.

3'40"

3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Solemn ♩ = 88
but with motion

Musical score for strings (Violins 1 & 2, Viola, and Violoncello) in 4/4 time. The score begins with a dynamic of *p* (piano) and transitions to *f* (forte) at the end of the first system. Grace notes are marked with an asterisk (*) above the notes.

Musical score for Tenor and strings. The Tenor part begins at measure 6 with the lyrics "Do not go gen - tle in - to that good night,". The dynamic is *mf* (mezzo-forte). The string accompaniment includes Violins 1 & 2, Viola, and Violoncello, with dynamics ranging from *p* to *mf*.

Musical score for Tenor and strings. The Tenor part begins at measure 10 with the lyrics "Old age should burn and rave at close of day;". The dynamic is *mf*. The string accompaniment includes Violins 1 & 2, Viola, and Violoncello, with dynamics ranging from *p* to *mf*.

*Grace notes precede the beat.

13 *f* *p* *mf*

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

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

16 *(mf)*

Tenor *(mf)* Though wise men at their end know dark is

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

19

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

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

21

Tenor *p* *mf*
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

Vcl. *mf* *p* *mf*

25

Tenor *lightly*
by, cry - ing how bright Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, —

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

28

Tenor *f* *p*
Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light. —

Vln. 1 *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p*

Vcl. *f* *p*

accel.

Faster ♩ = 100

31 *f*

Tenor Wild men who caught and sang the sun in

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

34

Tenor flight, And learn, too late, they

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

37

Tenor grieved it on its way, Do not go gen-tle,

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

40 *rit.*

Tenor *p*
do not go gen - tle in - to that good night.

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

$\text{♩} = 88, \textit{recitative style}$

43 *mf*

Tenor *mf*
Grave men, near death, who see with blind - ing sight

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf* (col Tenor)

Vlc. *mf*

45 *accel.*

Tenor
Blind eyes could blaze like me - teors and be gay,

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Faster ♩ = 100

48 *f*

Tenor *f*
Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing, —

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

51 *non dim.* *p*

Tenor *non dim.*
rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light. —

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

55 *accel.*

Tenor

Vln. 1 *p cresc.*

Vln. 2 *p cresc.*

Vla. *cresc.*

Vlc. *cresc.*

58 **Quickly** ♩ = 108 *mf*

Tenor *mf* And you, my fath - er,

Vln. 1 *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p* rolled pizz.

Vlc. *f* *p* rolled pizz.

61

Tenor there on the sad height, _____ Curse, bless, me now with your

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. *arco* *rolled pizz.*

Vlc. *arco* *rolled pizz.*

64 *f*

Tenor fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gen-tle, _____

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *arco* *f*

Vlc. *arco* *f*

67

Tenor

do not go gen - tle in - to that good night.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

p

p

p

p

71

Same tempo (♩ = 108)

Tenor

Rage, rage,

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

p

mp

poco

p

mp

poco

mp

p

poco

mp

75

Tenor

rage, -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

mf

f

poco

mf

f

poco

mf

f

poco

mf

f

poco rit.

♩ = 100

rit.

mf

f

79

Tenor

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

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

a tempo (♩ = 100)

Slower

83

Tenor

a - gainst the dy - ing of the light.

p

ossia

f

with determination and triumph

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

f

p

(p)

f

f

p

(p)

f

f

p

(p)

f

f

pizz.

arco

rolled pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

4'00"

Total: 10'10"

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Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

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

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