

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 Piano

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

## 1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

Moderately slowly ♩ = 80

Piano

4

*mf*

The hand that signed the pa - per felled a cit - y; —

7

Five sov-ereign fin-gers taxed the breath, Dou-bled the globe of dead and halved a

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4

10

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

*Ped.*

13

*(mf)*

The might-y hand leads to a slop-ing shoul - - - der, The

*(Ped.)*                      *mf*

16

fin - ger joints are cramped with chalk; \_\_\_\_\_ A goo - se's quill has put an end to

*Ped.*                      *8vb*                      *Ped.*

19

mur - der \_\_\_\_\_ That put an end to \_\_\_\_\_ talk.                      The

*(Ped.)*                      *f*                      *Ped.*

23

hand that signed the trea - ty bred a fe - - - ver, And

*f*

Red.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 23 and 24. The vocal line (bass clef) has a melodic line with a slur over measures 23-24. The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in the first measure. The word 'Red.' is written below the bass line.

25

fam - ine grew, and lo - - custs came;

Red.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 25 and 26. The vocal line (bass clef) continues the melodic line. The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) maintains the rhythmic pattern. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in the first measure. The word 'Red.' is written below the bass line.

27

Great is the hand that holds do - min - ion o - ver Man \_\_\_\_\_ by a scrib - bled

*p* *f*

Red.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 27 and 28. The vocal line (bass clef) has a melodic line with a slur over measures 27-28. The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a complex texture with sustained chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings of *p* and *f* are present. The word 'Red.' is written below the bass line.

30

name. The five kings count the

*p* *f*

8vb

8vb

8vb

Detailed description: This system contains measures 30, 31, and 32. The vocal line starts with a whole note 'name.' followed by a half rest, then a quarter note 'The' (marked *f*), and continues with 'five kings count the'. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed at the beginning of the piano part, and *f* is placed at the start of measure 32. Pedal markings are present at the end of measures 30 and 32.

33

dead but do not soft-en The crust-ed wound nor stroke the brow; A

8vb

8vb

8vb

Detailed description: This system contains measures 33, 34, and 35. The vocal line begins with 'dead' followed by 'but do not soft-en' (with a triplet of eighth notes), 'The crust-ed wound nor stroke the brow;', and ends with 'A'. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Dynamic markings include *f* at the start of measure 33 and *p* at the start of measure 35. Pedal markings are located at the end of measures 33 and 35.

36

hand rules pit - y as a hand rules heav - en; Hands have no tears\_ to

*p* *p*

8vb

8vb

8vb

Detailed description: This system contains measures 36, 37, and 38. The vocal line starts with 'hand rules pit - y as a hand rules heav - en;', followed by 'Hands have no tears\_' and ends with 'to'. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamic markings of *p* are placed at the beginning of measures 36 and 38. Pedal markings are located at the end of measures 36 and 38.

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

$\text{♩} = 100$

*p* *rit.*

*with pedal*

## 2. And Death Shall Have No Dominion

At a stately tempo  $\text{♩} = 100$

*f*

*with pedal*

4

*f*

And death shall have no do-min-ion.

*p* *f*

*ped.*

8

Dead men na-ked they shall be one with the man in the wind and the

*p* *f* *p*

*ped.*

12

*smoothly*

west moon; no do-min-ion, no do-min-ion,

*ped.*

15

*p*

*mf*

no do-min-ion, no do-min-ion. When their

*ped.*

18

bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, They shall have

*ped.*

21

*f*

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

*ped.*

*with pedal*



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

Though lov - ers be lost love shall not; And\_

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

(Ped.)

death shall have no do - min - ion.

*Ped.* *Ped.*

*poco accel.* *mf* Slightly faster ♩ = 108

*poco accel.* And death shall have no do - min - ion.

*mf* Slightly faster ♩ = 108

*dim.* *mf*

*Ped.* *Ped.*

37

Un - der the wind-ings of the sea They ly - ing long shall not die

*ped.*

40

wind - i - ly; Twist - ing on racks when

*p throbbing*

*(ped.) with pedal*

43

sin-ews give way, Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;

*f*

46

Faith in their hands shall snap in two, And the u-ni-corn e - vils run them through;

50 *poco rit.* *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Split all ends up they shan't crack; And death shall have no do -

*poco rit.* *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

8<sup>vb</sup> loco 3

53 **Same tempo** (♩ = 108)

min - ion. And death shall have no do -

**Same tempo** (♩ = 108)

(f)

Reo. Reo.

56

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

Reo. Reo.

59

Or waves break loud on the sea - shores;

(Rec.)

62

**More freely, recitative style**

*p*

Where blew a flower may a flower no more Lift its head,

**More freely, recitative style**  
*gently pulsing*

(Rec.)

65

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

68 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

Though they be mad and dead as nails;

71 *cresc. poco a poco*

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

74 *(cresc.) rit. Slower f grandly*

Break in the sun till the sun breaks down, And

### 3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Solemn ♩ = 88  
but with motion

8va  
Ped.

6

*mf*

Do not go gen-tle in - to that good night, \_\_\_\_\_

*p* *mf*

(Ped.) Ped.

10

Old age should burn and rave at close of day; \_\_\_\_\_

*p* *mf*

Ped. Ped.

13

*f* *p* *mf*

Rage, rage a-against the dy-ing of the light. \_\_\_\_\_

*f* *mf* *p* *mf*

Ped.

16

(mf)

Though wise men at their end know dark is

*mf* *p*

(Ped.)

19

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

*mf* *p* LH *mf*

(Ped.)

21

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

*mf* *p*

(Ped.)

24

*mf*

Good men, the last wave by, cry - ing how

*mf*

(Ped.)

26 *lightly*

bright Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, —

*lightly*

*Rec.*

29

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

*f* *p* *accel.* *f*

*f* *mf* *p* *accel.*

*Rec.*

32

— men who caught and sang the sun in —

**Faster** ♩ = 100

*f* 3

*Rec.*

*Rec.*

34

flight, — And learn, too late, they

3

*Rec.*

*Rec.*



37

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

40

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

*p* *rit.*

♩ = 88, recitative style

43

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

*mf*

♩ = 88, recitative style

*mf* *pp* (barely audible)

*Leo.*

45

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

*accel.*

*accel.*

*Leo.*

20

Faster ♩ = 100

48

*f* >

Rage, rage a-against the dy-ing,—

Faster ♩ = 100

*f*

Reo.

51

*non dim.*

*p*

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

*(f)*

Reo.

54

*p*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*p*

*cresc. poco a poco*

Reo.

57 *accel.*

Quickly ♩ = 108

*mf*

*accel.*

Quickly ♩ = 108

*f*

And

Reo.

60

you, my fath - er, there on the sad height, —

*p* 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Reo. Reo.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 60 and 61. The vocal line in the bass clef has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 61. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a continuous eighth-note pattern and a left hand with a simple harmonic accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

62

— Curse, bless, me now with your

LH 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Reo. Reo.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 62 and 63. The vocal line continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment has a right hand with eighth-note patterns and a left hand with a simple accompaniment. A 'LH' marking is present above the piano part in measure 62. The key signature is three sharps.

64

fierce tears, I pray.

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Reo.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 64 and 65. The vocal line has a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with eighth-note patterns and a left hand with a simple accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps.

66

*f* Do not go gen - tle, — do not go gen - tle in - to that good

*f* 2/4 4/4 4/4

Detailed description: This system contains measures 66 through 69. The vocal line begins with a fermata and then continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment starts with a right hand playing chords and a left hand with a simple accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4.

*poco rit.*

79

rage a-against the dy-ing of the

*rit.*

*mf*

Slower

81

$\text{♩} = 100$

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

$\text{♩} = 100$

*rit.*

Slower

84

*a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 100$ )

*(p)*

*ossia*

*f*

light. ...

*with determination and triumph*

*a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 100$ )

*(p)*

*f*

4'00"  
 Total: 10'10"  
 July 6, 2011  
 Braintree, Vermont

**Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)**

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

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