

**Choral Settings of Two Sonnets  
by Edna St. Vincent Millay**

**by Robert Eison  
May 1995**

**Honors Thesis for Music Composition**

**Presented to Dr. Margaret Brouwer and the Washington and Lee  
University Music Department**

from **FATAL INTERVIEW**  
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

XVII

Sweet love, sweet thorn, when lightly to my heart  
I took your thrust, whereby I since am slain,  
And lie disheveled in the grass apart,  
A sodden thing bedrenched by tears and rain,  
While rainy evening drips to misty night,  
And misty night to cloudy morning clears,  
And clouds disperse across the gathering light,  
And birds grow noisy, and the sun appears--  
Had I bethought me then, sweet love, sweet thorn,  
How sharp an anguish even at the best,  
When all's requited and the future sworn,  
The happy hour can leave within the breast,  
I had not so come running at the call  
Of one who loves me little, if at all.

XXX

Love is not all; it is not meat nor drink  
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain;  
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink  
And rise and sink and rise and sink again;  
Love cannot fill the thickened lung with breath,  
Nor clean the blood nor set the fractured bone;  
Yet many a man is making friends with death  
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.  
It well may be that in a difficult hour,  
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,  
Or nagged by want past resolutions power,  
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,  
Or trade the memory of this night for food.  
It well may be. I do not think I would.

# Sweet Love, Sweet Thorn

Edna St. Vincent Millay

for SSAATTBB

by Robert Eison

May, 1995

# Sweet love, sweet thorn

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Andante freely, expressive

Robert Eison

*mp*  $\bullet = 84$  *p*

Soprano I  
Sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn,

Soprano II  
Sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn,

Alto I  
*p*  
sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn,

Alto II  
*p*  
sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn,

Tenor I  
*p*  
sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn,

Tenor II  
*p*  
sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn,

Bass I  
sweet love, sweet thorn,

Bass II  
1  
sweet love, sweet thorn,

piano reduction  
1



7 *mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

S I when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, where-by I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

S II when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, where-by I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

A I when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, where-by I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

A II when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, where-by I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

T I when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

T II when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

B I when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, I since am slain, and

*mp* *f* *dim* *mp*

B II when light-ly to my heart I took your thrust, I since am slain, and

7

S I *mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing be-drenched by tears be-drenched by

S II *mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing be-drenched by tears be-drenched by

A I *mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing bedrenched by tears be-drenched by

A II *mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing bedrenched by tears be-drenched by

T I *p mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing be-drenched by tears

T II *p mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing be-drenched by tears

B I *p mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing be-drenched by tears

B II *p mp*  
 lie di-shev - eled in the grass a - part, a sod-den thing be-drenched by tears

19 *mf* *dim* *p*

S I tears and rain, by tears and rain,

S II tears and rain, by tears and rain,

A I tears and rain, by tears and rain,

A II tears and rain, by tears and rain,

T I *mp* *p* *mp* 3 tears and rain, and rain, while rain-y eve-ning

T II *mp* *p* *mp* 3 tears and rain, and rain, while rain-y eve-ning

B I *p* *mp* 3 tears and rain, and rain, while rain-y eve-ning

B II *p* *mp* 3 tears and rain, and rain, while rain-y eve-ning

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25 *mp* *cresc* *mf*  
S I and mist - y night — to cloud-y morn-ing clears, —

25 *mp* *cresc* *mf*  
S II and mist - y night — to cloud-y morn-ing clears, —

25 *mp* *cresc* *mf*  
A I and mist - y night — to cloud-y morn-ing clears, —

25 *mp* *cresc* *mf*  
A II and mist - y night — to cloud-y morn-ing clears, —

3 *mp* *cresc*  
T I drips to mist - y night, and clouds dis - perse — a -

25 3 *mp* *cresc*  
T II drips to mist - y night, and clouds dis - perse a -

3 *mp* *cresc*  
B I drips to mist - y night, and clouds — dis - perse a -

25 3 *mp* *cresc*  
B II drips to mist - y night, and clouds — dis - perse a -

25 3 3

SI  
and birds— grow nois - y, and the sun ap - pears. Had— I be -

S II  
and birds— grow nois - y, and the sun ap - pears. Had— I be -

AI  
and birds grow nois - y, and the sun ap - pears.

A II  
and birds— grow nois - y, and the sun ap - pears.

TI  
cross— the gath - 'ring light, —

T II  
cross— the gath - 'ring light, —

BI  
cross— the gath - 'ring light, —

B II  
cross— the gath - 'ring light, —

32 *mf* *f* *mp* poco a poco cresc

32 *mf* *f* *mp* poco a poco cresc

32 *mf* *f*

32 *mf* *f*

32 *mf*

32 *mf*

32 *mf*

32 *mf*

32

32

39

S I thought me then, sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

S II thought me then, sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

A I *mp poco a poco cresc* me then, sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

A II *mp cresc* sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

T I *p poco a poco cresc* sweet love, sweet love, sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

T II *p poco a poco cresc* sweet love, sweet love, *mp cresc* sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

B I *mp cresc* sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

B II *mp cresc* sweet love, sweet thorn, how sharp an an - guish *ff*

39

39

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45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
S I e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap - py

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
S II e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap - py

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
A I e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap - py

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
A II e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap - py

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
T I e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap - py

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
T II e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap - py

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
B I e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap -

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*  
B II e - ven at the best, when all's re - quit - ed and the fu - ture sworn, — the hap -

45 *dim* *mf* *cresc*



51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
S I hour can— leave with - in the breast, I had not so come— run - ning—

51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
S II hour can— leave with - in the breast, I had not so come— run - ning—

51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
A I hour can— leave with - in the breast, I had not so come— run - ning—

51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
A II hour can— leave with - in the breast, I had not so come— run - ning—

8 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
T I hour can— leave with - in the breast, I had not so come run - ning

51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
T II hour can— leave with - in the breast, I had not so come run - ning

51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
B I py hour can leave with - in the breast, I had not so come— run - ning

51 *f* *dim* *mp* 3  
B II py hour can leave with - in the breast, I had not so come— run - ning

51 3



Love Is Not All  
Edna St. Vincent Millay

for SSAATTBB

by Robert Eison

January, 1995

# Love Is Not All

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Robert Eison

Andante freely, expressive

$\text{♩} = 60$

Love is not all; it is not

Love is not all; it is not

Love is not all; it is not

Love is not all; it is not

Love is not all;

*mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *rubato*

meat, not meat nor drink nor

meat, not meat nor drink nor

meat, not meat nor drink nor

meat, not meat nor drink nor

meat, not meat nor drink nor

meat, not meat nor drink nor

*dim.* *pp* *p*

slum - ber nor a roof a- gainst the rain; nor

slum - ber nor

slum - ber nor

slum - ber nor yet a

*p poco accel.*

11 *poco accel.* *mf* *p*

yet a spar to men that sink and

11 *mf* *p*

yet a spar to men that sink and

11 *mf* *p*

yet a spar to men that sink and

11 *mf* *p*

float - ing spar to men that sink and

11

14 *f* *p* *f dim.*

rise and sink and rise and

14 *f* *p* *f dim.*

rise and sink and rise and

14 *f* *p* *f dim.*

rise and sink and rise and

14 *f* *p* *f dim.*

rise and sink and rise and

14

17 *rit.* *pp* *mp* *mf*  
*accel.* *a tempo*

sink a - gain; Love can not fill

17 *pp* *ppp* *mp* *mf*

sink, sink a - gain Love can not fill

17 *rit.* *pp* *ppp* *mf*

sink, sink a - gain the

17 *pp* *mf*

sink a - gain the

20 *mf*

nor

20 *mf*

nor

20 *cresc.* *f* *mf*

thick-ened lung with breath

20 *cresc.* *f*

thick - ened lung with breath

23 *f*  
 clean the blood nor set the frac - tured

23 *f*  
 clean the blood nor set the frac - - tured - - -

23 *mf* *f*  
 clean the blood nor set the frac - tured

23 *mf* *f*  
 clean the blood nor set the frac - tured

25 *ff* *agitato*  
 bone yet many a man is mak - ing friends with death

25 *ff*  
 bone yet many a man is mak ing friends with death

25 *ff*  
 bone yet many a man is mak - ing friends with death

25 *ff*  
 bone yet many a man is mak - ingfriends with death

25  
 bone yet many a man is mak - ing friends with death



27 *dim.* *rit.*

27 *dim.* for lack of love a-lone

27 *dim.* for lack of love a-lone

27 *dim.* for lack of love a-lone

27 ev - en as I speak for lack of love a-lone

29 *a tempo mp cresc. mf*

29 *mp cresc.* it well may be that in a diff - i - cult hour

29 *mp cresc. mf* it well may be that in a diff - i - cult hour

29 it well may be that in a diff - i - cult hour

29 *mf*

29 *mf*

31 *f* *dim.* *mp*  
 pinned down by pain and moan ing for re - lease  
 31 *f* *dim.* *mp*  
 pinned down by pain and moan - ing for re - lease  
 31 *f* *dim.* *mp*  
 pinned down by pain *dim.* and moan - ing for re - lease  
 31 *f* *dim.* *mp*  
 pinned down by pain and moan - ing for re - lease

31  
 31

33 *cresc.*  
 or nagg'd by want past res - o - lu - tions pow'r  
 33 *cresc.*  
 or nagg'd by want past res - o - lu - tions pow'r  
 33 *cresc.*  
 or nagg'd by want past res - o - lu tions pow'r  
 33 *cresc.*  
 or nagg'd by want past res o lu tions pow'r

33  
 33



35 *dim.* *mp*  
 I might be driv - en to sell your love for peace or

35 *dim.* *mp*  
 I might be driv - en to sell your love for peace or

35 *dim.* *mp*  
 I might be driv - en to sell your love for peace or

35 *dim.* *mp*  
 I might be driv - en to sell your love for peace or

37 *dolce* *p*  
 trade the mem-ry of this night for food. It

37 *p*  
 trade the mem-ry of this night for food. It well maybe.

37  
 trade the mem-ry of this night for food.

37  
 trade the mem-ry of this night for food.

40 *rit. mp* *pp*

well may be. I do not

40 *p* *pp*

It well may be. I do not

40 *p* *pp*

It well may be. I do not

40 *p* *pp*

It well may be. I do not

40 *p* *pp*

It well may be. I do not

42 *p* *pp*

think I would.

42 *p* *pp*

think I would.

42 *p* *pp*

think I would.

42 *p* *pp*

think I would.

42 *p* *pp*

think I would.