

Shelley Settings

4 Love Poems 'To Jane' for SATB

The Fugitive for SSAA

Lament for TTBB

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Percy B Shelley 1792-1822

The first four SATB love songs '*To Jane*' form a set of their own. The latter two women's and men's choruses were composed at the same time because the words attracted me, but are not otherwise linked; and are included here for convenience.

In May 2022 I was reading Shelley in order to choose what to add to a poetry collection I was making for my third granddaughter, and became intrigued by numerous poems Shelley addressed 'Jane', either overtly or covertly.

From 1821 until his death at the age of 29 in July 1822 Percy Shelley and his wife Mary (Godwin) Shelley were living in the same house in Pisa as Edward and Jane Williams, a talented singer and guitarist. The two couples became close friends; but Percy's outpouring of intimate poetry dedicated to Jane became a source of tension. Not least to his wife Mary who nearly died of a miscarriage in June 1822.

Percy had had a history of impetuous relationships and several legitimate and illegitimate offspring, of whom only his son by Mary, Percy Florence Shelley, survived childhood. The emotional temperature of the poems is striking and leaves little doubt what was in Percy's mind; but the conclusion of historians is that the relationship did not go further than this. And that is confirmed by the fact that Mary and Jane continued to correspond for the rest of their lives.

A fortnight after Mary's miscarriage Percy took Edward sailing in a new yacht he had commissioned, but when a squall broke out, neither was a good enough sailor to manage the boat and it capsized, drowning both them and a cabin boy. The aftermath was tragic: Mary stayed on in Pisa caring for their son Percy in very straitened circumstances, while Jane returned to England and eventually found a new partner with whom she had two children.

My settings of these four passionate poems for four part acappella choir is intended to capture their vivid intimacy. In the final one I evoke the atmosphere of the words, expressing a beautiful evening's entertainment of the friends by Jane Williams.

The latter two poems are byproducts of leafing through my 19th C Collected Shelley. I first set *A Lament* for men's voices, before becoming wrapped up in the *To Jane* project. While composing one of these on a train journey to London my eye fell on the words of *The Fugitive*, and immediately sketched out a setting for SSAA, which I continued on the return journey.

MMS Tisbury, Jubilee Week 2022

To — (i)

Music, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory;
 Odours when sweet violets sicken,
 Live within the sense they quicken.
 Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
 Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
 And so by thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.

1821

To — (ii)

When passion's trance is overpast
 If tenderness and truth could last,
 Or live whilst all wild feelings keep

1821

To — (iii)

One word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it;
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it;
 One hope is too like despair
 For prudence to smother;
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.
 I can give not what men call love:
 But wilt thou accept not
 The worship the heart lifts above,
 And the Heavens reject not:
 The desire of the moth for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

1821

Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
 I should not weep, I should not weep !

It were enough to feel, to see,
 Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
 And dream the rest—and burn—and be
 The secret food of fires unseen –
 Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

After the slumber of the year
 The woodland violets re-appear;
 All things revive in field or grove,
 And sky and sea – but two, which move
 And form all others: life and love.

To Jane (iiii)

The keen stars were twinkling,
 And the fair moon was rising among them,
 Dear Jane:
 The guitar was tinkling,
 But the notes were not sweet till you sung them
 Again.
 As the moon's soft splendour
 O'er the faint cold starlight of heaven is thrown,
 So your voice most tender
 To the strings without soul had then given
 Its own.
 The stars will awaken,
 Though the moon sleep a full hour later,
 To-night
 No leaf will be shaken
 Whilst the dews of your melody scatter
 Delight.
 Though the sound overpowers.
 Sing again, with your dear voice revealing
 A tone
 Of some world far from ours
 Where music and moonlight and feeling
 Are one.

1822

The Fugitives

The white waters are flashing,
 The white hail is dashing,
 The lightnings are glancing,
 The hoar spray is dancing –
 Away!

The whirlwind is rolling,
 The thunder is tolling,
 The forest is swinging,
 The minster bells ringing –
 Come away!

The earth is like ocean,
 Wreck-strewn and in motion;
 Bird, beast, man, and worm
 Have crept out of the storm –
 Come away!

"Our boat has one sail,
 And the helmsman is pale.
 a bold pilot, I trow,
 Who should follow us now!"
 Shouted he.

And she cried: "Ply the oar;
 Put off gaily from shore!"
 As she spoke bolts of death
 Mixed with hail specked their path
 O'er the sea:

And from isle, tower and rock,
 The blue beacon-cloud broke:
 And, though dumb in the blast,
 The red cannon flashed fast
 From the lee.

And "fear'st thou?" and "fear'st thou?"
 And "seest thou?" and "hear'st thought?"
 And "drive we not free
 O'er the terrible sea,
 I and thou?"

One boat-cloak did cover
 The loved and the lover;
 Their blood beats one measure
 They murmur proud pleasure
 Soft and low –

While around the lashed ocean,
 Like mountains in motion,
 Is withdrawn and uplifted,
 Sunk, shattered and shifted
 To and fro.

In the court of the fortress
 Beside the pale portress,
 Like a bloodhound well beaten
 The bridegroom stands, eaten
 By shame.

On the topmost watch-turret
 As a death-boding spirit,
 Stands the grey tyrant father;
 To his voice the mad weather
 Seems tame;

And, with curses as wild
 As e'er clung to child,
 He devotes to the blast
 The best, loveliest, and last
 Of his name.

1821

A Lament

O world! O life! O time!
 On whom whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood before –
 When will return the glory of my prime?
 No more – oh never more!

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight:
 Fresh Spring, and Summer, Autumn, Winter hoar
 Move my faint heart with grief - but with delight?
 No more – oh never more!

1821

To — (i).

w. Percy B Shelley

1821

m. Michael Maxwell Steer

9/5/2022

I Reflectively

SA
TB

Mus- ic, when soft voices die, Vi- brates in the mem- or y;

O- dours, when sweet vio- lets sick- en, Live with- in the sense they

quick- en; Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, Are

quick- en;

II

heaped for the be- lov- ed's bed; And so thy thoughts, when

I4 *Rall* *Adagio*

thou art gone, Love it- self shall slum- ber on. slum- ber on.

To — (ii).

w. Percy B Shelley

1821

m. Michael Maxwell Steer

27-29/5/22

Springlike

S *mf* ⁼⁶⁴
When pass- ion's trance is ov- er- past
A
When pass- ion's trance is ov- er- past
T
If tend- er- ness and truth could
B
If tend- er- ness

4
Or live whilst all wild feel- ings keep
Or live whilst all wild feel- ings keep
8 last, Or live whilst all wild feel- ings keep Some
Or live whilst all wild feel- ings keep Some

7
Some mort- al slum- ber, dark and deep,
Some mort- al slum- ber, dark and deep, *espr* I should not
8 mort- al slum- ber, dark and deep,
mort- al slum- ber, dark deep,

10 *riten* 13 *a tempo*

weep! It were e-

weep, weep! It were e-

espr I should not It were e- nough to

I should not It were e- nough to

14

nough to feel, to see, Thy soft, soft eyes tend- er-

nough to feel, to see, Thy soft, soft eyes tend- er-

feel, to see, Thy soft, soft eyes tend- er-

feel, to see, Thy soft, soft eyes

17 *molto cresc e accel*

ly, And dream the rest - and burn, and

ly, And dream the rest - and burn, and

ly, And dream the rest - and burn, and

tend- er- ly, And dream the rest - and burn, and

f cresc e accel

20

be The sec- ret food of fires un- seen -

be The sec- ret food of fires un- seen -

be The sec- ret food of fires un- seen -

be The sec- ret food of fires un- seen -

23 *riten* ²⁵ *Come prima*

Aft- er the slum- ber of the

Aft- er the slum- ber of the

mf Couldst thou have been as thou hast been.

mf Couldst thou have been as thou hast been.

26

year

year

The wood- land vi- olets re- app- ear;

The wood- land vi- olets re- app- ear;

29

All things re- vive in field or grove, And sea and sky - but two,

All grove, sky - but two,

All sky - but two,

All things re- vive in field or grove, And sea and sky - but two,

32 *mf*

which move And form all oth- ers,

which move And form all oth- ers,

which move And form all oth- ers,

which form To - (ii) 3 oth- ers,

34

life and love.

life and love.

life and love.

life and love.

37

life and love.

life and love.

life and love.

life and love.

To — (iii).

w. Percy B Shelley

1821

m. Michael Maxwell Steer

13-17/5/2022

S 
One word is too oft pro-faned For me to pro-

A 
One word is too pro-faned For me to pro-

T 
too pro-faned For me to pro-

B 
For me to pro-

5 
fane it; One feel- ing's too false- ly dis- dained For

A 
fane it; One feel- ing's too false- ly dis- dained For

T 
fane it; One feel- ing's too false- ly dis- dained For

B 
fane it; One feel- ing's too false- ly dis- dained

9 
One hope is too like des- pair For

A 
thee to dis- dain it; One hope is too like des- pair For

T 
thee to dis- dain it; hope is too like des- pair For

B 
For thee to dis- dain it; One hope is too like des- pair For

13 << Trattenuto >> <<< --- Trattenuto --- >>>

prud- ence to smoth- er; And pit- y from thee more dear Than that

prud- ence to smoth- er; And pit- y from thee more dear Than that

8 prud- ence to smoth- er; And pit- y from thee more dear Than that

prud- ence to smoth- er; And pit- y from thee more dear Than that

17 $\text{♩} = 68$ *Come prima, poco f*

from an- oth- er. I can give not what men call

from an- oth- er. I can give not what men call

8 from an- oth- er. I can give not what men call

from an- oth- er. I can give not what men call

20 << --- Ritenuto --- >>

love: wilt thou acc- ept not The wor- ship the heart lifts a-

love: wilt thou acc- ept not The wor- ship the heart lifts a-

8 love: wilt thou acc- ept not The wor- ship the heart lifts a-

But wilt thou acc- ept not The wor- ship the heart lifts a-

23 $\text{♩} = 58$ $\text{♩} = 50$ $\text{♩} = 50$ $\text{♩} = 60$ Animato

bove, And Heav'n re- jects not? The des-

bove, And Heav'n re- jects not? The des-

8 bove, And Heav'n re- jects not? The des-

bove, And Heav'n re- jects not? The des-

25 molto $\text{♩} = 70$ Subito ritenuto $\text{♩} = 46$

ire of the moth for the star of the night for the

ire of the moth for the star night for the

ire of the moth for the star of night for the

ire of the moth for the star of night for

28 $\text{♩} = 65$ *Come prima, poco f*

morr-ow, The dev-otion some-thing a-far From the

morr-ow, The dev-otion some-thing far From the

morr-ow, some-thing far From the

morr-ow, From

31

sphere of our sorr-ow.

sphere of our sorr-ow.

sphere of our sorr-ow.

our sorr-ow.

To – (iiii).

w. Percy B Shelley

1822

m. Michael Maxwell Steer

22/5/22

*¹Lazily =100 *mf**

S The keen stars were

A

T *Hypnotically p*
tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

B *p*
tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

5

S twi- nkl- ing, And the fair moon was

A And the fair moon was

T tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

B tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

9

S ris- ing a- mong

A ris- ing a- mong

T tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

B tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

13

them, Dear

them, Dear

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

17

Lightly or trill

Jane:

Jane:

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

21

mp *mf*

la The gui- tar was

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

25

But the notes tink- l- ing, But the notes were

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

29

were not sweet till you

not were not sweet till you

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

33

sung them a- gain. As the

sung them a- gain.

quasi f mf

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

37

moon's soft splend- our O'er the

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

41

faint cold star- light of heaven

the faint cold

p cresc mp cresc

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

45

is thrown,

star-light of heaven is thrown,

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

49

quasi f

So your voice most tend-er

quasi f

So your voice most tend-er

quasi f

So your voice most tend-er

quasi f

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng - tng tng tng tng tng tng - tng tng tng tng tng tng - tng

53

To the strings with- out soul

f > mf

To the strings with- out soul

f > mf

To the strings with- out soul

f > mf

tng tng tng tng - tng tng tng tng tng - tng tng tng tng tng - tng

56

had then giv- en Its own.

had then giv- en Its own.

had then giv- en Its own. tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

To - (iiii) 4

60 V2 *mf*

The stars will a-

p tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

64

wak- en Tho the moon sleep a

Tho the moon sleep a

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

68

full hour a full

full hour a full hour

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

72

hour lat-

lat- er,

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

76

er,

To- night;

or trill

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

80

la

la

No leaf will be

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

84

dews

shak- en Whilst the dewes of

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

88

of your mel- o- dy scatt- er De-

your

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

tng tng tng

To - (iiii) 6

92 94

light. scatt- er De- light.

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

96

Tho the sound

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

100

ov- er- pow- ers, Sing a- gain, Sing a-

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

104

Sing a- gain, a- gain with your dear voice

gain, Sing a- gain

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

108 110

re-veal-ing A tone Of some

veal-ing A tone Of some

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng

112 *Allarg*

world far from ours

world far from ours

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

tng tng tng tng tng tng tng tng

Where Where

116 $\text{♩} = 90$ *pp* $\text{♩} = 78$

Where music and moon-light and feel-ing Are

Where music and moon-light and feel-ing Are

mus-ic and moon-light and feel-ing Are

mus-ic and moon-light and feel-ing Are

120 *pppp* *or trill* $\text{♩} = 61$ *pppp*

one. Are one.

one. Are one.

one. Are one.

one. Are one.

The Fugitives

w. Percy B Shelley

1821

m. Michael Maxwell Steer

9-15/5/2022

$\text{♩} = 81$

Sr The wat- ers are flash- ing, The white hail is dash- ing, The

S2 A- way! A-

A1 The white hail is dash- ing, The

A2 The

4

light- ning is glan- cing, The hoar spray is dan- cing:- A- way! A- way! A-

way! A- way! A- way! A-

light- ning is glan- cing, The hoar spray is dan- cing:- A- way! A- way! A-

light- ning is glan- cing, The hoar spray is dan- cing:- A- way! A- way! A-

7

way! The whirl- wind is roll- ing, The thun- der is toll- ing The

way! A- way! A-

way! The thun- der is toll- ing The

way! The thun- der is toll- ing The

10

for- est is swing- ing The min- ster bells ring- ing:-

way! A- way! A- way! A-

for- est is swing- ing The min- ster bells ring- ing:- The for- est is

for- est's ring- ing:- The for- est is

12

Come a- way! Come a- way!

way! A- way! A- way! A-

swing- ing Come a- way! Come a- way!

swing- ing Come a- way!

15

A- way! The earth is like the o- cean,

way!

Come a- way! Come a- way!

Come a- way! Come a- way!

The earth is like the o- cean,

18

Wreck- strewn and in

Come a- way! Come a- way! Come a- way!

Come a- way! Come a- way! Come a- way!

Wreck- strewn and in

The Fugitives 2

17 May 2022

21

mo- tion; Bird, beast, man,

Come a- way!

mo- tion; Bird, beast, man,

23

and worm, Have crept out

Come a- way! Come a- way! Come a- way! Come Come Come ComeCome

Come a- way! Come a- way! Come a- way! Come Come Come ComeCome

and worm, Have crept out

25

of the storm:- A- way! A- way! A- way!

ComeCome Come Come Come Come Come A- way! A- way! A- way!

ComeCome Come Come Come Come Come A- way! A- way! A- way!

of the storm:- A- way! A- way! A- way!

29

CANON *f* *fp*

'Our boat has one sail, And the helms- man is pale.

f *fp*

'Our boat has one sail,

33

mf A bold pi- lot I trow, who should foll- ow us now!" Shout- ed

And the helms- man is pale. A bold pi- lot I trow,

f 'Our boat has one sail, *fp* And the helms- man is pale.

mf 'Our boat has one sail,

37

he. Shout- ed he. *ff* Shout- ed he.

mf who should foll- ow us now!" Shout- ed he. *f* Shout- ed he.

A bold pi- lot I trow, *mf* who should foll- ow us now!" Shout- ed

And the helms- man is pale. A bold pi- lot I trow,

41 *poco f intenso*

And she

ff Shout- ed he.

he. Shout- ed he. *ff* Shout- ed he.

mf who should foll- ow us now!" *f* Shout- ed he. Shout- ed

44

cried: 'Ply the oar; Put off gai- ly from shore!' As she

poco f intenso And she cried: 'Ply the oar; Put off gai- ly from

poco f intenso And she cried: 'Ply the oar;

he. *ff* Shout- ed he. *poco f intenso* And she

47

rfz

spoke, bolts of death, Mixed with hail, specked their
 shore!'

As she spoke, bolts of death,
 Put off gai-ly from shore!'

As she
 cried: 'Ply the oar; Put off gai-ly from

49

mp

path O'er

Mixed with hail, specked their path
 spoke, bolts of death, Mixed with hail, specked their
 shore!'

As she spoke, bolts of death,

51

mf

the sea: O'er the

mp O'er the sea: O'er

path O'er the

Mixed with hail, specked their path O'er

54

ff

sea: the sea: And from isle, tower, and rock,

the sea:

mf sea: O'er the sea:

f the sea:

56

f

58 *mf* *cresc*
 The blue bea- con- cloud broke: And,
 And from isle, tower, and rock, The
 And from isle, tower, and rock,

62 *cresc* *f*
 though dumb in the blast,
 blue bea- con- cloud broke: And though dumb in the
mf *cresc*
 The blue bea- con- cloud broke: And
 And from isle, tower, and rock, The

66 *quasi f, cresc, intenso*
 The red cann- on Flashed *Fast* The red
 blast, *quasi f, cresc, intenso* The red cann- on Flashed
 though dumb in the
cresc
 blue bea- con- cloud broke: And though

68
 cann- on Flashed Fast fast fast
 Fast The red cann- on flashed fast fast fast
 blast, The red cann- on Flashed Fast The red cann- on flashed fast
 dumb in the blast, The red cann- on Flashed Fast The red
quasi f, cresc, intenso *f*

71

f From the lee!

f From the lee!

fast fast

f From the lee!

cann- on flashed fast fast fast *ff* From the lee!

75 78

ff From the lee! And

ff From the lee! From the lee!

ff From the lee! And "fear- est thou?"

From the lee!

79

"fearestthou?" And "Drive we not free O'er the

And "hear- est thou?" O'er the

And "see- est thou?"

83

terr- i- ble sea I & thou?"

terr- i- ble sea I & thou?"

cresc I & thou? I & thou?

cresc I & thou?

quasi f

One boat- cloak did cov- er The lov- èd and lov- er; Their blood

One boat- cloak did cov- er The lov- èd and lov- er; Their blood

One boat- cloak did cov- er The lov- èd and lov- er; Their blood

lov- èd and lov- er; Their blood Their

90

Their blood beats in one meas- ure They

Their blood beats in one meas- ure They

Their blood beats in one meas- ure They

blood Their blood one meas- ure

93

mur- mur proud pleas- ure Soft and

mur- mur proud pleas- ure Soft and

mur- mur proud pleas- ure Soft and

— proud pleas- ure Soft and

96

low; - While all a- round the lashed o- cean,

low; - While all a- round the lashed o- cean,

low; - While all a- round

low; -

100

Like mount- ains in mo- tion, Is with- drawn

Like mount- ains in mo- tion, Is with- drawn

Like mount- ains in mo- tion, Is with- drawn and up-

Like mount- ains in mo- tion, Is with- drawn and up-

103

105 *ff*

and up- lift- ed, Sunk, shatt- ered, and

and up- lift- ed, Sunk, shatt-

lift- ed, up- lift- ed, Sunk, shatt- ered, and

lift- ed, up- lift- ed, Sunk, shatt-

106

shift- ed To and fro, To & fro, To &

ered, and shift- ed To and fro, &

shift- ed To and fro, To &

ered, and shift- ed To and fro, To & fro,

110

112 =84 *accel p.a.p.*

ff *quasi f - gruffly*

fro, In the

ff In the court of the

ff In the court of the

To & fro, In the court of the

114

court of the fort-ress be-side a pale port-ress Like a
 fort-ress be-side a pale port-ress Like a
 fort-ress be-side a pale port-ress Like a
 fort-ress be-side a pale port-ress Like a

118

blood-hound well beat-en The bride-groom stands eat-en by shame. Up-
 blood-hound The bride-groom eat-en
 blood-hound The bride-groom eat-en
 blood-hound The bride-groom eat-en

121 *vivace e cresc*

on the top-most watch-turret, as a
 the turret as a
 the top-most watch-turret, as a
 the watch turret as a

125

death-bod-ing spir-it, stands the
 death-bod-ing spir-it, stands the grey tyr-ant
 death-bod-ing spir-it, stands the
 death-bod-ing spir-it, stands the

129 *fff* *f cresc molto*

grey tyr- ant fath- er: To whose voice

grey tyr- ant fath- er: To whose voice

grey tyr- ant fath- er: To whose voice

grey tyr- ant fath- er: To whose voice

132 *fff* *f cresc molto*

the mad weath- er seems tame;

the mad weath- er seems tame; And with curs- es as wild as

the mad weath- er seems tame; curs- es as wild as

the mad weath- er seems tame;

136 *fff* *sub f*

He de- votes to the blast

e'er clung to child, The best

e'er clung to child, The best

e'er clung to child, The best

140 *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *sadly*

and the love- li- est, and the last of his

and the love- li- est, and the last of his

and the love- li- est, and the last of his

and the love- li- est, and the last of his

The Fugitives 11

17 May 2022

Lament

w. Percy B Shelley

1821

m. Michael Maxwell Steer

11/5/2022

T
B

8 O World! O Life! O Time! On whose last steps I

7 climb, Trem- bling at that where I'd stood be- fore - When will re- turn the

13 glor- y of your prime? No more - oh nev- er nev- er more!

20 Out of the day and night A joy has tak- en, flight: Fresh Spring, and

27 Summ- er, Aut- umn, and Win- ter hoar Move my faint heart with grief -

34 but with de- light No more - oh nev- er nev- er more!