Piano/Vocal Reduction

## Toward a Time of Renewal

for chorus, solo voices and orchestra

## Joelle Wallach

based on poems by **Denise Levertov** 

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#### Music by Joelle Wallach

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#### based on poems by Denise Levertov

#### I

#### Living

The fire in leaf and grass so green it seems each summer the last summer.

The wind blowing, the leaves shivering in the sun, each day the last day.

A red salamander so cold and so easy to catch, dreamily

moves his delicate feet and long tail. I hold my hand open for him to go. Each minute the last minute.

#### II

#### Midnight Gladness

The pleated lampshade, slightly askew, dust a silverish muting of the lamp's fake brass.

My sock-monkey on the pillow, tail and limbs asprawl

•

Gleams of water in my bedside glass, miraculous water so peacefully waiting to be consumed.

The day's crowding arrived at this abundant stillness. Each thing given to the eye before sleep, and water at my lips....

#### The Fountain

Don't say, don't say there is no water to solace the dryness at our hearts. I have seen

the fountain springing out of the rock wall and you drinking there. And I too before your eyes

found footholds and climbed to drink the cool water.... Don't say, don't say there is no water. That fountain is there among its scalloped ...stones,

it is still there and always there with its quiet song and strange power to spring in us, up and out through the rock.

#### III

#### The Batterers

A man sits by the bed of a woman he has beaten, dresses her wounds, gingerly dabs at bruises. Her blood pools about her, darkens.

Astonished, he finds he's begun to cherish her. He is terrified. Why had he never seen, before, what she was? What if she stops breathing?

Earth, can we not love you unless we believe the end is near? Believe in you life unless we think you are dying?

#### The Altars in the Street

On June 17th, 1966, The New York Times reported that, as part of the Buddhist campaign of non-violent resistance, Vietnamese children were building altars in the streets of Saigon and Hue, effectively jamming traffic.

Children begin at green dawn nimbly to build topheavy altars, overweighted with prayers, thronged each instant more densely....

Where tanks have cracked the roadway the frail altars shake; here a boy

with red stumps for hands steadies a corner, here one adjusts with his crutch the holy base. The vast silence of Buddha overtakes

and overrules the oncoming roar... it blocks the way of pedicabs, police, convoys.

The hale and maimed together hurry to construct for the Buddha a dwelling at each intersection. Each altar

made from whatever stones, sticks dreams are at hand,

is a facet of one altar; by noon the whole city in all its corruption,

all its shed blood... has become a temple, fragile, insolent, absolute.

#### IV

#### The Open Sentence

To look out over roofs of a different city —

steaming tiles, chimney pots, mansards, the gleam on distant spires after a downpour —

To look out... and say to oneself, *Today*...

#### **Beginners**

But we have only begun to love the earth.

We have only begun to imagine the fulness of life.

How could we tire of hope?
— so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?
— we have only begun

...to envision how it might be...

Surely our river cannot already be hastening into the sea of nonbeing?

Surely it cannot drag in the silt, all that is innocent?

Not yet, not yet there is too much broken that must be mended,

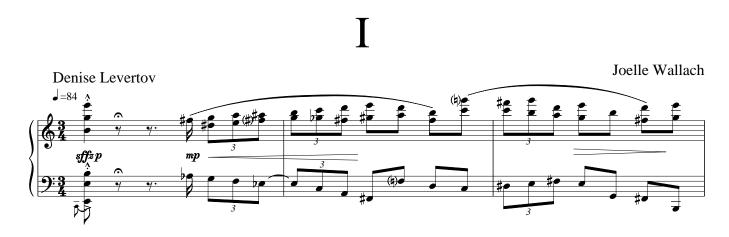
too much... that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know the power that is in us if we would join our solitudes in the communion of struggle.

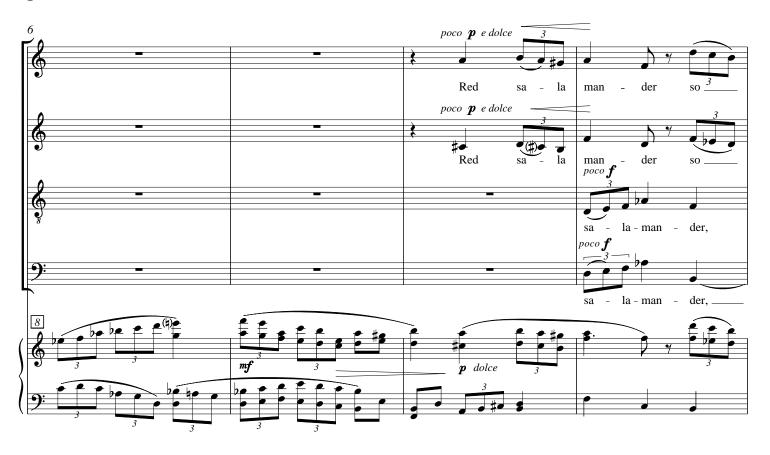
So much is beginning, so much is in bud.

## Toward a Time of Renewal

Composed to commemorate the 35th Anniversary Season of the New York Choral Society





















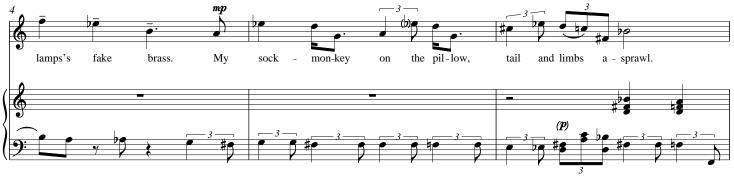


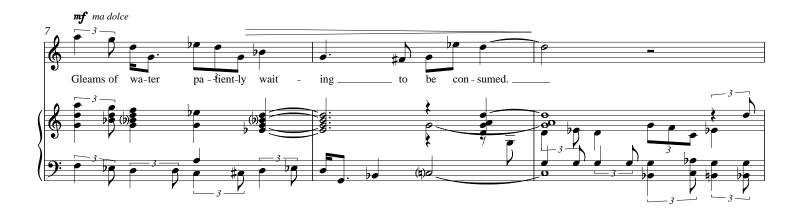


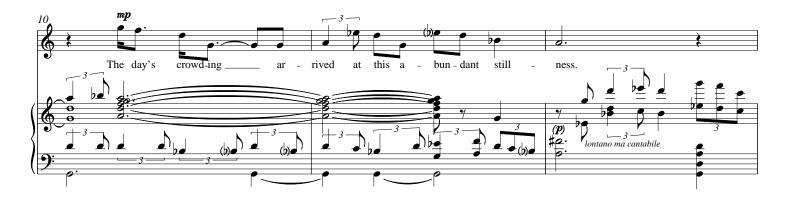


### H



























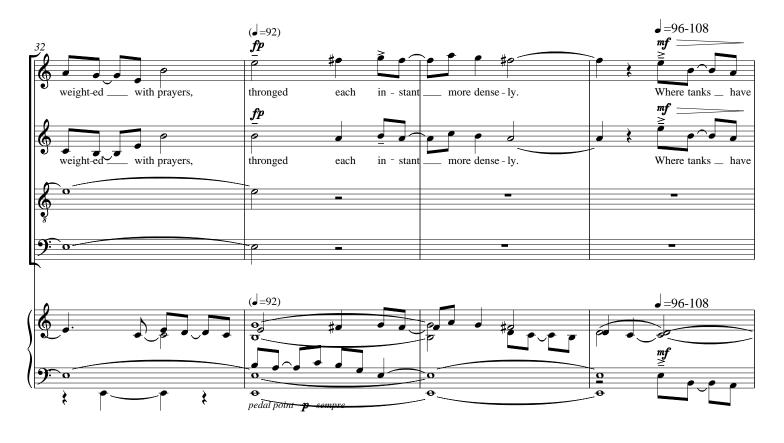


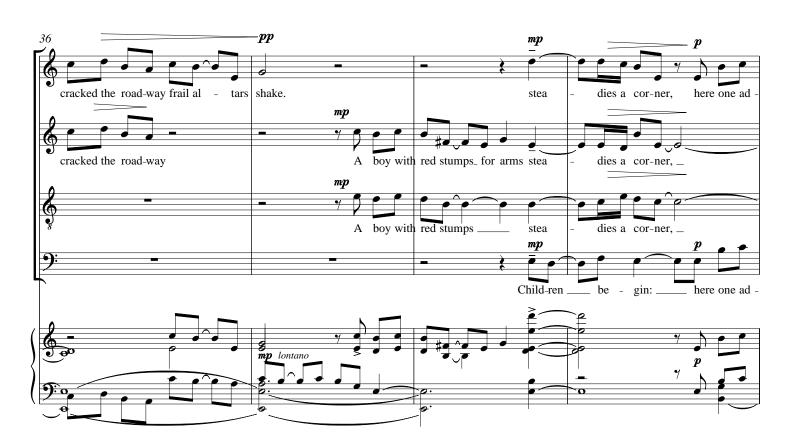
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tenor solo, then chorus (with small soprano solo)



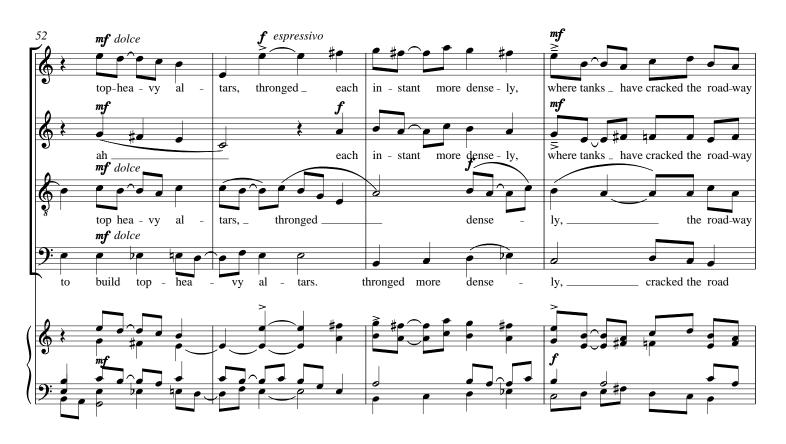




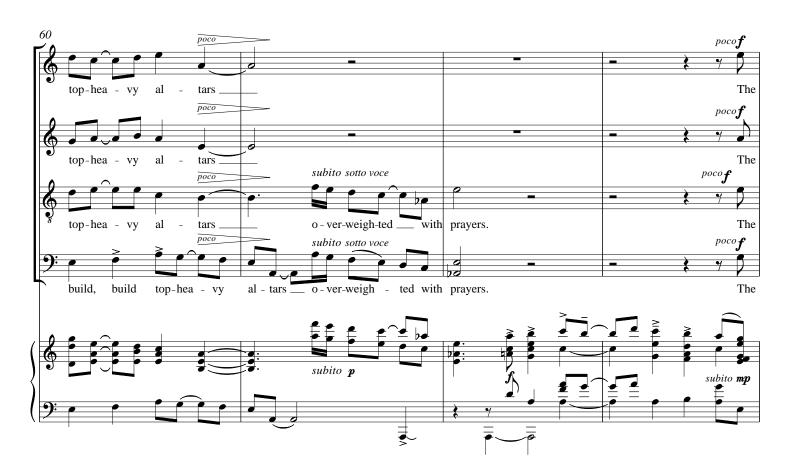


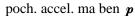
















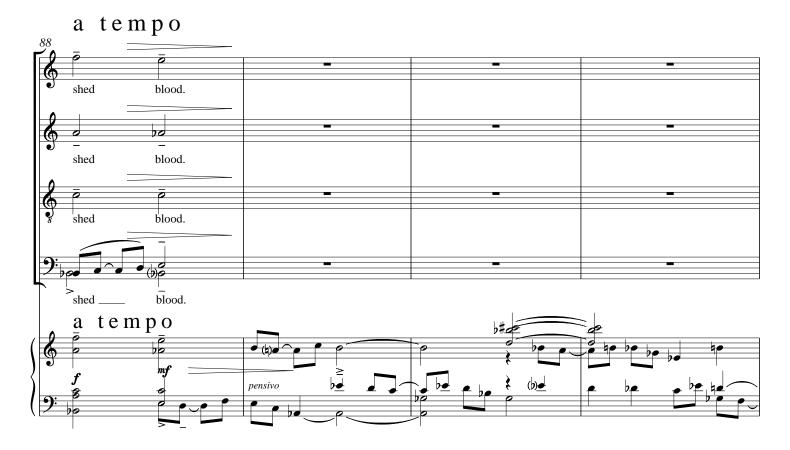












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# IV

for chorus and soloists

