

The burning Babe
Inspection copy

not for
Words by St Robert Southwell

reproduction
Music by Brian Collins

Text

As I in hoarie Winters night stooode shivering in the snow,
Surpris'd I was with sodaine heate, which made my hart to glow;
And lifting up a fearefull eye, to view what fire was neare,
A pretty Babe all burning bright did in the ayre appeare;
Who scorchèd with excessive heate, such floods of teares did shed,
As though his floods should quench his flames, which with his teare were fed:
Alas (quoth he) but newly borne, in fierie heates I frie,
Yet none approach to warme their harts or feel my fire but I;
My faultlesse breast the furnace is, the fuell wounding thornes:
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoake, the ashes, shame and scornes;
The fewell Justice layeth on, and Mercie blowes the coales,
The metall in this furnace wrought, are mens defiled soules:
For which, as now on fire I am to worke them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath, to wash them in my blood.
With this he vanisht out of sight, and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I callèd unto minde, that it was Christmasse day.

Although Southwell's poem is well enough known to have been reproduced in several anthologies, the spellings and punctuation here are taken from *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (ed. Christopher Ricks, 1999).

There should be a minimum of four voices on each line but preferably more. Although this was originally envisaged as being sung by women, there is no reason why it should not be sung by men. And "similar voices" could be interpreted in different ways.

The trick in bars 8-9 is to add voices subtly so that a sense of *crescendo* is created right through to the *forte*. One way to do this could be to omit the consonantal start to a syllable and enter on the vowel-sound.

The metrical stress changes constantly; one 8/8 bar does not necessarily subdivide the same way as another, for example. The grouping of quavers (8th notes) is therefore given at the start of each bar except where consecutive bars are the same or when the grouping is obvious. And, in bars 36 onwards the rhythms should follow normal verbal stresses even across barlines (which applies throughout the piece anyway).

The burning Babe

for 4-part choir of similar voices

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Contemplative but not too slow (♩ = 88)

1 4+4 *one voice* 3+4 4+3+2

p As I in hoar - ie Win - ters night stoode shi - ver - ing in the snow, Sur - pris'd I was with so - daine

one voice

p Sur - pris'd I was with so - daine

one voice

p Sur - pris'd I was with so - daine

(rehearsal only)

5

4+4

2 new voices 2+3+3

4+4

add voices until

heate, which made my hart to glow; *mf* And lift - ing up a feare - full eye, to view what fire was

heate, which made my hart to glow; *mf* And lift - ing up a feare - full eye, to view what fire was

one voice 2 new voices

heate, which made my hart to glow; *mf* And lift - ing up a feare - full eye, to view what fire was

heate, which made my hart to glow; *mf* And lift - ing up a feare - full eye, to view what fire was

add voices until

add voices until

add voices until

add voices until

p *mf*

9

molto

all voices

4+2+4

4+4

2+2+2+4

p

neare, A pret - ty Babe all burn - ing bright did in the ayre ap - peare; Who scor - ched with ex - ces - sive heate, such

neare, A pret - ty Babe all burn - ing bright did in the ayre ap - peare; Who scor - ched with ex - ces - sive heate, such

all voices *molto* *p*

neare, A pret - ty Babe all burn - ing bright did in the ayre ap - peare; Who scor - ched with ex - ces - sive heate, such

neare, A pret - ty Babe all burn - ing bright did in the ayre ap - peare; Who scor - ched with ex - ces - sive heate, such

molto *p*

13 4+4 4+3+3 4+4 one voice

floods of teares did shed, As though his _____ floods should quench his flames, which with his teares were fed: _____ *mf* A -

floods of teares did shed, As though his _____ floods should quench his flames, which with his teares were fed: _____

floods of teares did shed, As though his _____ floods should quench his flames, which with his teares were fed: _____

floods of teares did shed, As though his _____ floods should quench his flames, which with his teares were fed: _____

floods of teares did shed, As though his _____ floods should quench his flames, which with his teares were fed: _____

floods of teares did shed, As though his _____ floods should quench his flames, which with his teares were fed: _____

16 3+3+2 all voices

las _____ (quoth he) but new - ly borne, in fier - ie heates I frie, Yet none ap - proach to

mf (quoth he) but new - ly borne, in fier - ie heates I frie, Yet none ap - proach to

mf (quoth he) but new - ly borne, in fier - ie heates I frie, Yet none ap - proach to

mf (quoth he) but new - ly borne, in fier - ie heates I _____ frie, Yet none ap - proach to

warme their harts or feele my fire but ___ I; *pp* My fault - lesse breast the fur - nace is, the

warme their harts or feele my fire but ___ I; *pp* My fault - lesse breast the fur - nace is, the

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fu - ell wound - ing *p* thornes: *pp* Love ___ *p* is the fire, and sighs the smoake, the ash - es, shame and

fu - ell wound - ing *p* thornes: *p* is the fire, and sighs the smoake, the ash - es, shame and

fu - ell wound - ing *p* thornes: *p* is the fire, and sighs the smoake, the ash - es, shame and

fu - ell wound - ing thornes: *p* is the fire, and sighs the smoake, the ash - es, shame and

25 3+2+2+2 3+5 3+2+2+2

mf scores; The few - ell Jus - tice lay - eth on, and Mer - cie blowes the coales, The met - tall in this fur - nace

mf scores; The few - ell Jus - tice lay - eth on, and Mer - cie blowes the coales, The met - tall in this fur - nace

mf scores; The few - ell Jus - tice lay - eth on, and Mer - cie blowes the coales, The met - tall in this fur - nace

mf scores; The few - ell Jus - tice lay - eth on, and Mer - cie blowes the coales, The met - tall in this fur - nace

mf

28

wrought, are men's de - fi - lèd soules: _____ *mf* For which, as now on

wrought, are men's de - fi - lèd soules: _____ *mf* For which, as now on

wrought are mens de - fi - lèd soules: _____ *mf* For which, as now on

wrought are men's de - fi - lèd soules: _____ *mf* For which, as now on

mf

31

3 + 4

pp (short)

fire I am to worke them to their good, So will I melt in - to a bath, to wash them in my blood.

fire I am to worke them to their good, So will I melt in - to a bath, to wash them in my bloo ood.

fire I am to worke them to their good, So will I melt in - to a bath, to wash them in my blood.

fire I am to worke them to their good, So will I melt in - to a bath, to wash them in my blood.

35

reproduction

mf With this he van - isht out of sight, *p* and swift - ly shrunk a - way, And straight I call - - - èd un - to

mf With this he van - isht out of sight, *p* and swift - ly shrunk a - way, And straight I call - èd un -

mf With this he van - isht out of sight, *p* and swift - ly shrunk a - way, And straight I call - èd

mf With this he van - isht out of sight, *p* and swift - ly shrunk a - way, And

minde, I call - èd un - to minde, And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, that it was Christ - - - masse
 to minde, And straight I call - èd un - to minde, And straight I cal - - - lèd un - to minde,
 un - to minde, And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, that
 straight I cal - - - lèd, straight I call - èd un - to minde, And straight I cal - - - lèd

Christmasse: consider making the "i" of the first syllable long, as in "kind" or, indeed, "minde". It's probably easier to sing, too.

day. And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, that it was Christ - - - masse day, And straight I cal - - - lèd un - to
 that it was Christ-masse day, that it was Christ - - - masse day. And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, that it was Christ -
 it was Christ-masse day, that it was Christ - masse day. And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, that it was Christ-masse
 un - to minde, that it was Christ - masse day. And straight I cal - lèd un - to minde, that it was Christ-masse

rit. ----- *molto*

minde, that it was Christ - masse day, that it was Christ - masse day, was Christ - masse day.
 masse day, _____ that it _____ was Christ - masse day, was Christ - masse _____ *day.
 day, I _____ cal - lèd un - - to minde, that it was Christ - masse day.
 day, I _____ cal - lèd un - - to minde, that it was Christ - masse day.

(Duration: 3¼ minutes approx.)

* One voice only on the upper part

reproduction