

Into the Present Light

Carson P. Cooman

in memoriam
Shirley Cooman Holtman
(1930–2012)

Into the Present Light

Carson P. Cooman





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Into the Present Light

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Preface

*We sing of an unfailing love,
and tell of heavenly might,
of all the good things done for us
who struggled in the night,
of God who brought us through the gloom
into the present light.*

—John Core

The title of this collection is drawn from the final line of a text by John Core and reflects an important part of my general compositional aesthetic and style. My music most often tends to be about a progression towards light: and not always from darkness; sometimes just from lesser light to greater light.

This collection contains all of my hymn tunes that were previously unpublished as well as tunes that have appeared in other Selah multi-composer collections. A previous anthology of my tunes entitled *At Dawn of Grace* is available from Wayne Leupold Editions (#WL800023). These two collections together represent nearly all of my hymn tunes as of 2013.

The majority of the tunes were composed during 2001–03, a period during which I was particularly active in writing tunes. Since then, hymns have appeared much more sporadically when need and occasion warranted.

I am consistently inspired by the wonderful practitioners of this “miniature art form,” and most especially by Alfred V. Fedak and David Ashley White, who I believe represent the very best in serious hymn tune composition today.

The musical style employed in these tunes draws upon a number of elements. The influences of traditional and contemporary hymnody/common practice writing are of course present, but also the harmonies and sounds of contemporary concert music (and sometimes pop music), and especially the idiosyncratic voice leading and parallel sounds of colonial American music, which have been a part of my musical world for many years. I have often tried to (within a more contemporary harmonic language) duplicate the affect (even if not the specific sound) of the early American style: with its unusual parallels and doublings, and rich, solid motion.

Special thanks are due to the three authors whose texts appear most frequently in this collection: Mary Louise Bringle, John Core, and Richard Leach. Mel, John, and Richard have been a continual inspiration—not only with their superb texts, but also their personal friendship.

Many tunes in this collection were composed in the normal manner, in response to the inspiration of a specific text. However, others followed the reverse procedure. When I first began working with Mel Bringle in 2002, she told me that her writing preference was to work “tune first.” I thus began producing textless tunes for her use, and most (though not all) of the settings of her texts in this collection were written in this manner. This “reverse” procedure occasionally had bleedthrough to other authors as well. *MORGAN CREEK*, for example, was written textless, and I asked Richard Leach to supply its words. Working in this way was a distinct change of pace from the manner in which classically-trained composers normally approach text setting, but it allowed in some cases for me to think about the connections that my hymn tunes had with my instrumental music.

Thanks are also due to my dear friend Matthew Burt, whose work with me on the editorial committee of the *Harvard University Hymn Book* provided consistent and thought-provoking dialogue about hymnody. Thanks to David and Virginia Schaap of Selah Publishing for their support and effort with this collection. And special thanks also to Sandra Gay without whose initial encouragement none of my hymns would exist.

—Carson Cooman
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Easter 2013

75 WORDLESS LIGHT • The Sun Was Silent

1 The sun was si - lent in its grief two days a - go;
 2 The em - pire sealed and guar - ded grief, two days a - go.
 3 The ta - ble was made bare by grief, not long a - go.

but Christ is ri - sen, and the sun is sing - ing now:
 But Christ is ri - sen, and the seal is bro - ken now.
 But Christ is ri - sen, and the feast is wait - ing now.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, sings the word - less
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, break the seal on
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, see the ta - ble

light. God met hu - man wrong and made it right.
 praise! Ho - ly love de - fies our hope - less ways.
 spread; bea - ring, like a crown, the wine and bread.

76 WYERS POINT • They Also Praise

1 They al - so praise who, when the cym - bals' clang - ing fades a -
 2 They al - so serve who, when the crowd's loud tu - mult pass - es
 3 They al - so love who, when the first fierce flame of pas - sion's
 4 They wit - ness, too, who, in their serv - ing, lov - ing, and their

way like sun - light ebb - ing from the once - bright day, face
 on to oth - er fan - cies, fame and watch - ers gone, yet
 spent still prac - tice pa - tience, cease - less - ly in - vent a
 praise, pass un - re - marked through un - pre - ten - tious days, un -

twi - light's an - xious sha - dows, yet re - joice: who say A -
see small hurts and an - swer to their need: who show their
ten - sile bond not ev - en death can part: who live their
til at last they see God face to face and wor - ship

men in trust - ing with a qui - et voice.
care in se - cret with a qui - et deed.
dai - ly lov - ing with a qui - et heart.
there in won - der with a qui - et grace.

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- ANGEL AND STAR (2002) — A short and simple carol; originally used as a Christmas introit for children's choir.
- ANIMAL PLANET (2010) — John Core's delightful text inspired this perky and vigorous tune which should be sung with great delight and good humor.
- ASPEN MOUNTAIN (2007) — Composed while in residence at the Aspen Music Festival and dedicated to Alan Fletcher, my former teacher and President/CEO of the Festival.
- BRATTLE STREET (2002) — Named for a street in Cambridge, Massachusetts; text and tune written in the months following the September 11 attacks and the lead-up to the Iraq War; dedicated to Marisa Green
- CLIFF BEACH (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts; dedicated to composer David Ashley White
- COATUE (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to poet Richard Leach; Emma Lou Diemer composed a set of organ variations on this tune (Zimbel Press #80101139).
- COBALT BLUE (2002) — Inspired by the sunset one spectacular evening while in Waterville, Maine, at the Richner-Strong Institute of Church Music
- CONANT (2008) — Composed for the evening student service at The Memorial Church at Harvard University; dedicated to Jonathan Conant Page, then Epps Fellow (undergraduate chaplain)
- CROP OF PEACE (2010) — Refrain composed in 2007, remainder of the tune written in 2010 for use at a service at The Memorial Church at Harvard.
- DASCHA (2002) — Composed at the request of the poet for a book he was editing; tune named for David Schaap, president of Selah Publishing
- DAUSTIN (2007) — Named for Dorothy Austin, former associate minister at The Memorial Church at Harvard.
- DESERT ROCK (2007) — Composed in Aspen, Colorado; dedicated to John Core
- DOLMEN CREEK (2002) — Named for an imaginary place; a "dolmen" is a Celtic megalithic portal tomb; the tune is quoted in the chamber work *Dark December: Ignis Dei* (2002) for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, vibraphone, and piano
- DOVER GLORIA PATRI (2012) — Commissioned by the Dover Church (Dover, Massachusetts) in celebration of its 250th anniversary.
- DUNSTER CAROL (2001) — Named for one of the residential houses of Harvard College; dedicated to Daniel Pinkham and Andrew Paul Holman
- EASTON STREET (2002) — Named for a street on Nantucket
- EEL POINT (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket
- FERKO (2002) — Named for composer Frank Ferko
- FLAP AWAY (2001) — Dedicated to composer Al Benner
- FRASER (2002) — Named for dear friend Matthew Fraser Burt
- GUTHRIE (2009) — Named for Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman, then seminarian at The Memorial Church at Harvard
- HEART SEARCHER (2007) — Dedicated to Nancy Granert, director of finance at The Memorial Church at Harvard
- HILDEGARD'S FORCE (2002) — Mary Louise Bringle's text was inspired by Hildegard von Bingen's "greening force"
- HOICKS HOLLOW (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to composer Jane Marshall; the tune alludes to an observation Marshall once made, saying how she didn't like tunes with a refrain in major but the verse in minor
- HYANNIS (2003) — The tune name (after the village on Cape Cod, Massachusetts) was requested by the poet Richard Leach in honor of his inlaws, Jane and Louis Demarkles, to whom it is dedicated.
- JACKSON POINT (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to Sally Ann Morris, whose own vibrant tunes inspired it
- LONG JOSEPH'S POINT (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket

- LOWELL CAROL (2001) — Named for one of the residential houses of Harvard College; dedicated to Hinako Fujihara Hovhaness, widow of the composer Alan Hovhaness; I wrote a totally different setting of this text as a choral anthem (Selah #405-275).
- LOWEST HIGHEST (2003) — Composed as a Christmas present for composer and good friend Sandra Gay
- MIACOMET KYRIE (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket and the “Have mercy” nature of the text
- MONOMOY (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to composer Peter Dickinson
- MORGAN CREEK (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket
- NETHWYG (2002) — Tune name is an anagram of the first name of composer and good friend Gwyneth Walker, to whom it is dedicated; it is in the spirit of an early American (particularly Shaker) music, one of Gwyneth’s great musical loves. The tune is quoted in *Folk Fantasies* (2005), my euphonium concerto.
- NOBADEER (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to composer James Woodman
- OLD SOUTH WHARF (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to composer Lynn Job
- PALM KING (2002) — Dedicated to Marisa Green
- PETER FOLGER (2007) — Named for one of Nantucket’s prominent 17th century settlers; dedicated to composer Dan Locklair
- PETER’S EMMAUS (2011) — Written in memory of Peter J. Gomes, longtime senior minister at The Memorial Church at Harvard. Despite being one of the most famous preachers of his generation, Peter primarily composed tunes, not texts. He wrote this text for his own tune, which unfortunately was never notated and is thus lost. I tried to compose a tune in the spirit of his own hymns.
- POCOMO (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to Marisa Green
- PORTOLA VALLEY (2007) — Written for Christ Episcopal Church, Portola Valley, California
- PROSPECT HILL (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket
- RASIMA (2002) — Dedicated to Marisa Green; the tune name is an anagram of her first name
- RIBENIAL (2002) — Named for the members of poet Richard Leach’s family: RIchard, BEverly, NIcholas, and ALEXander
- RHINECLIFF (2002) — Named for a street in Rochester, New York
- ROSNER (2007) — Named for composer Arnold Rosner
- SANKATY (2001) — Named for one of Nantucket’s three lighthouses
- SARO (2009) — An American folk tune adapted and arranged by the composer
- SEILOU (2002) — Composed as a birthday present for poet Mary Louise Bringle on July 31, 2002; the tune name is an anagram of Louise
- SESACHACHA (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket
- SLICK STEWARD (2007) — Dedicated to Jan Randolph, retired pastoral associate at The Memorial Church at Harvard
- SMITH POINT (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket; a “seasonal Sanctus” with a verse for specific use in each liturgical season
- SULAK (2012) — Written at the request of John Core; an anthem version of this tune (titled “Every Generation”) is available from Selah
- SQUAM (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket
- SPECKLED WREN (2007) — Dedicated to Kent Montgomery French, former Epps Fellow at The Memorial Church at Harvard
- SURFSIDE (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to Lew and Dot Wallace, the composer’s grandparents. The tune is written and harmonized in the idiosyncratic style of early American composer Supply Belcher
- STONE RIPPLES (2001) — Dedicated to Bill, Donna, and Sonja Gasset; an anthem version of this tune is available from Selah (#405-483)

- STORROW DRIVE (2008) — Named for a street in Cambridge, Massachusetts
- TALEA RUTILA (2007) — Written for Marisa Green and St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; the tune name is one possible Latin rendering of Baton Rouge
- TAWPOOT (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated to poet Mary Louise Bringle
- UNFAILING LOVE (2007) — Dedicated to composer Frederick Frahm
- VARINNA (2002) — Named for a street in Rochester, New York
- WANNACOMET (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket
- WARDMAN PARK (2010) — Composed at the request of All Saints Company for the second edition of their Music for Liturgy hymnal, a volume containing entirely unaccompanied material; named for the region of Washington, D.C. in which it was written
- WARREN LANDING (2001) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated in memory of Richard Boutros
- WARRINGTON (2002) — Named for a street in Rochester, New York
- WAVE GLISTENS (2002) — Dedicated to Peggy Krewson, then organist at First Congregational Church, Nantucket, Massachusetts
- WHALING MUSEUM (2002) — Named for the Nantucket Historical Society's principal facility; composed at the request of the poet for *And Jesus Said: Parables in Song* (Selah #125-360)
- WHEAT AND WEEDS (2002) — Composed at the request of the poet for *And Jesus Said: Parables in Song* (Selah #125-360)
- WINTHROP HOUSE (2001) — Named for one of the residential houses of Harvard College
- WOOD BEARER (2007) — Dedicated to Christine Whiteside, special events coordinator at The Memorial Church at Harvard
- WORDLESS LIGHT (2001) — Dedicated to composer Al Fedak
- WYERS POINT (2002) — Named for a place on Nantucket; dedicated in memory of the composer's grandfather

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