

Echo

for SSAATTBB voices

Christopher Churcher

(2022)



Composed in August 2022 for Voces8
First performance: 13th October 2022 by Voces8 Scholars at St. Bride's Church, London

Echo

for SSAATTBB voices

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose waking should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again tho' cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

~ Christina Rossetti ~

Total duration: **ca. 7'**

Originally written for VOCES8 (but equally suited to SSAATTBB voices), *Echo* sets Christina Rossetti's poignant eponymous poem, meditating on an aching longing to reunite with a lost loved one. The three stanzas are set as individual verses; each with sensitivity to the tonal shifts throughout the poem. The intimate third verse invites the voice of the persona to speak directly through three solo voices, accompanied by hushed mourning in the lower voices. The original soloists were Hannah Littleton (s1), Ailsa Campbell (s2), and Jonathan Darbourne (a1)—the alto solo was originally intended for countertenor, but a flexible combination of voice-types is appropriate.

Christopher Churcher

for VOCES8

Christopher Churcher

b.2004

pp-

7

mp *p cresc.* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p*

S. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

mp *p cresc.* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p*

A. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

mp *p cresc.* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p*

A. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

mp *p cresc.* *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

T. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

p *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

T. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

p *p cresc.* *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

B. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

p *p cresc.* *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

B. night; come in the speak - ing si - lence of a dream;

13

cresc. *mf* *pp* *p*

S. come with soft roun-ded cheeks and eyes as bright as

cresc. *mf* *pp* *p*

A. come with soft roun-ded cheeks and eyes as bright as

cresc. *mf* *pp* *p*

T. come with soft roun-ded cheeks and eyes as bright as

cresc. *mf* *pp* *p*

B. come with soft roun-ded cheeks and eyes as bright as

come with soft roun-ded cheeks and eyes

18

mf *pp* *p* *rit.* *mp* *pp*

S. sun-light on a stream; come back in tears,

mf *pp* *p* *mp* *pp*

A. sun-light on a stream; come back in tears,

mf *pp* *p* *mp* *pp*

T. sun-light on a stream; in tears,

mf *pp* *p* *pp*

B. sun-light on a stream; tears,

mf *pp* *mp* *pp*

on a stream; tears,

24 *A Tempo* *p dolce* *rit.* *A Tempo* *p softly*

S. *p dolce* O me-mo-ry hope love of fin-ished years *oh* *p softly*

A. *p dolce* O me-mo-ry hope love of fin-ished years *oh* *p*

T. *p dolce* O hope love *oh* *p*

B. *p dolce* O hope love *oh* *p*

Oh dream how sweet too sweet, too bit-ter sweet whose wa-ke-

30 *p* *pp* *p*

S. *mp* *pp* *mp* *p cresc.*

A. *mp* *mp cresc.* *p cresc.*

T. *p* *mp cresc.* *mp cresc.*

B. *p* *mp cresc.*

Oh dream how sweet too sweet, too bit-ter sweet whose wa-ke-

36

mp cresc. *mf* *p*

S. in Pa - ra - dise oh

mp *mf* *p*

A. ning should have been in Pa - ra - dise

mp *mf* *p*

A. ning oh in Pa - ra - dise

p *mp cresc.* *mf* *p*

T. oh in Pa - ra - dise

p *mp cresc.* *mf* *p*

T. oh in Pa - ra - dise

p *mp cresc.* *mf* *p*

B. oh in Pa - ra - dise

mp cresc. *mf*

B. in Pa - ra - dise

43

mp sempre cresc.

S. ah

p *espress.* *mf* *mp* *mp sempre cresc.*

S. Where souls brim - ful of love meet ah

p *espress.* *mf* *mp* *sempre cresc.*

A. Where souls brim - ful of love a - bide and meet where

p *espress.* *mf* *sempre cresc.*

A. Where souls brim - ful of love a - bide and meet where

p *mp* *sempre cresc.*

T. love a - bide and meet where

p *mp* *sempre cresc.*

T. love a - bide

mp resc.

B. where

mp sempre cresc.

B. a - bide where

48

f *rit.* *ff*

ah

f *ff* *sub. p*

long - ing eyes eyes watch

f *ff* *sub. p*

thir - sting long - ing eyes long - ing watch

f *ff* *sub. p*

thir - sting long - ing eyes long - ing eyes watch

f cresc. *ff* *sub. p*

thir - sting long - ing eyes long - ing eyes watch

f *ff* *sub. p*

thir - sting long - ing eyes long - ing eyes watch

f cresc. *ff* *sub. p*

thir - sting long - ing eyes long - ing eyes watch

f cresc. *ff* *sub. p*

thir - sting long - ing eyes long - ing eyes watch

53

A Tempo *p* *rit.*

watch the slow door

p semplice

that op - en - ing let - ting in lets out no

p *p semplice*

the slow door that op - en - ing let - ting in lets out no

p *p semplice* *pp*

watch the slow door op - en - ing let - ting in

p semplice *pp*

mm mm

p *p semplice* *pp*

ah mm let - ting in

p *p semplice* *pp*

ah mm mm

$\equiv$ [illegible]

69

S. *mp* live my ve - ry tho' cold in death. *mf espress.* *mp*

A. that I may live my ve - ry life a - gain tho' cold in death. *mf* *p*

T. may live my ve - ry tho' cold in death. *mp* *p*

B. *mm* *mp* *p* *mm*

76

S. *mp wistful* come back to me in dreams, *p cresc.* that I

A. *pp* *mm* *oh*

T. *pp* *mm* *oh* *oh*

B. *pp* *mm* *oh* *oh*

82

f *rit.* *p* *pp*

S. may give breath for breath

f *mp* *p*

may give pulse for pulse breath

f *mp* *p* *pp*

A. that I may give pulse for pulse,

mp *p* *pp*

oh oh

mp *p* *pp*

T. oh oh

mp *p* *pp*

oh oh

mp *p* *pp*

B. oh oh

mp *p* *pp*

oh oh

88 *A Tempo*

p *longing*

S. speak low,

p *longing*

speaking low, lean low,

pp

A. *mm* *mm*

mm

T. *mm*

mm

B. *mm*

mm

92 rit.

S. *p*
as long a - go my love how long a -

A. *pp* *mm* *mm*

T. *pp* *mm* *mm*

B. *pp* *mm* *mm*

98 A Tempo

S. *tutti pp* *p* *pp*
go

A. *tutti p* *pp* *pp*

T. *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *ah*

B. *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *ah*