

Nightfall

for SSAATTBB voices

Christopher Churcher

(2025)



Composed in September 2025 for Tenebrae

First performance: *tbc*

Nightfall

for SSAATTBB voices

Let me sleep. The day is past,
And the folded shadows keep
Weary mortals safe and fast.
Let me sleep.

I am all too tired to weep
For the sunlight of the Past
Sunk within the drowning deep.

Treasured vanities I cast
In an unregarded heap.
Time has given rest at last.
Let me sleep.

Robert Fuller Murray

Total duration: **ca. 5'**

Robert Fuller Murray's poem imagines sleep as a force that meets us at the end of the day and does battle on our behalf against the pain we have carried from the day. Where sunlight illuminates and exposes, throwing every wound into sharp relief, night comes to dissolve them, drawing the weary self down into the "drowning deep".

My setting takes fragments of melody, threaded through the texture like gossamer threads, delicate and half-formed. These interweaving lines ebb and flow with the sense of the text, tightening where the poem strains against its pain, loosening where it begins to yield. By the close, the music has surrendered argument altogether. What remains is a simple, repeating figure — chant-like, and almost liturgical — circling on itself as though in prayer. It is here that the piece finds its rest: the mind's vanities cast aside, and the body given over to sleep.

Christopher Churcher

Nightfall

Robert Fuller Murray (1863-1894)

for Tenebrae

Christopher Churcher
b.2004

Still, contemplative ♩ = 52

Soprano

pp
The day is past,
pp
The day is past,

Alto

Solo, ad lib.
p very gentle
Let me_ sleep. Let me_ sleep.
pp
The day is past,

Tenor

Bass

7

the day is past, — the day is past, the day is past, —

the day is past, — the day is past, the day is past, —

Tutti

day is past, — the day is past, the day is past, —

the day *ppp* *mm* is past, —

ppp *mm*

ppp *mm*

ppp *mm*

ppp *mm*

pp possible

ah

13 *mp* *p* *mf* *rit.* *p*

the day is past,

the day is past,

the day is past, and the

is past,

8

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 3, containing measures 13 through 16. The music is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) and includes piano accompaniment. The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are 'the day is past, and the is past,'. The score includes dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *rit.* (ritardando). The piano part consists of a simple harmonic accompaniment. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Perusal score for performance' is overlaid across the entire page.

Musical score for "The Folded Shadows" by John Williams. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of vocal and piano parts. The vocal part is written in treble clef, and the piano part is written in bass clef. The tempo is marked "Andante". The score includes the following lyrics:

fol - ded_ sha - dows_ keep_ the_ fol - ded_ sha -
 the fol - ded_ sha - dows
 fol - ded_ sha - dows the fol - ded_
 the_ the
 fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded_
 the fol - ded the

The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *pp sempre* (pianissimo throughout), and articulation markings such as *sim.* (simile). The score is marked "not for performance" in large, diagonal, semi-transparent letters.

23

p clear

The day

p

day—

- dows keep— the_ fol - ded sha - dows keep— the_

the_ fol - ded sha - dows keep— the_ fol - ded sha -

— sha - dows— the_ fol - ded sha - dows keep—

fol - ded sha - dows keep— the_

pp

sha - dows the fol - ded the fol - ded the

sim.

fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded sha - dows—

28

is past, _____

_____ is _____ past, _____

fol - ded sha - dows keep _____ the_ fol - ded sha - dows keep _____

_____ - dows keep _____ the_ fol - ded sha - dows keep _____ the_

_____ the_ fol - ded sha - dows keep _____ the_ fol -

8 fol - ded sha - dows keep _____ the fol - ded the fol -

fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded sha - dows _____

_____ the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the

33 *p poco cresc.* *mf*

and the fol - - -

p poco cresc.

and the fol - - -

the fol - ded sha - dows keep the fol - ded sha -

fol - ded sha - dows keep the fol - ded sha - dows keep

- ded sha - dows keep the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol -

ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded sha - dows

the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded

fol - ded the fol - ded sha - dows the fol - ded the

38 *p*

- ded sha - dows

mf *p*

- ded sha - dows

p

- dows keep the fol - ded sha - dows keep the

p

the fol - ded sha - dows keep the fol - ded sha -

p

ded the fol - ded the fol - ded sha - dows keep

pp

keep the fol - ded sha - dows the

p

sha - dows the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the

p

fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded the fol - ded fol - ded