

Seth Houston, choral composer

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Hope is the thing with feathers

for SSAATTBB chorus a cappella

Seth Houston

www.sethhouston.com

2008

Hope is the thing with feathers

Emily Dickinson

(1830-1886)

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

About the Composer

Seth Houston is a choral director, composer, and performer living in Boulder, Colorado. Currently completing a master's degree in choral conducting at the University of Colorado, Houston also holds degrees in composition and religion from Oberlin College. Houston has been teaching middle school and high school choirs in Waldorf schools since 2001, and also founded and directed the youth chorus *Big Sky*. Houston's choral compositions are widely performed and have been featured on *A Prairie Home Companion*, in *Sing Out!* magazine, and in the choral collection *Northern Harmony*.

5

mp-pp (subito)

S 1 per - ches in the soul, And sings the tune with -

mp-pp (sub.)

S 2 per - ches in the soul, sings the tune with -

mp-pp (sub.)

A 1 per - ches in the soul, sings the tune with -

mp-pp (sub.)

A 2 hope in the soul, sings the tune with -

mp-pp (sub.)

T 1 per - ches in the soul, sings the tune with -

mp-pp (sub.)

T 2 per - ches in the *div.* soul, sings the tune with -

mp-pp (sub.)

B 1 per - ches in the soul, sings the tune with -

p *mp-pp (sub.)*

B 2 Hope in the soul, sings the tune with -

mp-pp (subito)

5

8

S 1
out the words, And ne - ver stops at all,

S 2
out the words, ne - ver stops, stops at

A 1
out the words, And ne - ver stops at all,

A 2
out the words, And ne - ver stops at all,

T 1
8 out the words, And ne - ver stops at all, stops at

T 2
8 out the words, ne - ver stops at all,

B 1
out the words, And ne - ver stops at all, at

B 2
out the words, And ne - ver stops at all, at

8

8

Hope is the thing with feathers

A

11

S 1
And sweet - est in the

S 2
all, Sweet - - - est in the

A 1
And sweet - est, sweet - est in the

A 2
And sweet - est, and sweet - est in the

T 1
8 all, And sweet - est, in the

T 2
8 And sweet - - - est, sweet - est, sweet - est in the

B 1
all, Sweet - - - - -

B 2
all, Sweet - - - - - est

11

A

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for the poem 'Hope is the thing with feathers'. The score is written for a choir with Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), Bass 1 (B1), and Bass 2 (B2), along with a piano accompaniment. The music is in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'And sweet - est in the all, Sweet - - - est in the And sweet - est, sweet - est in the And sweet - est, and sweet - est in the all, And sweet - est, in the And sweet - - - est, sweet - est, sweet - est in the all, Sweet - - - - - all, Sweet - - - - - est'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like '11' (fortissimo). A rehearsal mark 'A' is placed above the first staff. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

14 *mf* *f*

S 1 gale is heard; And sore must be the

S 2 gale is heard; And sore must be the

A 1 gale is heard; And sore must be the

A 2 gale is heard; And sore must be the

T 1 gale is heard; And sore must be the

T 2 gale is heard; And sore must be the

B 1 - - est in the gale is heard; And sore must be the

B 2 in the gale is heard; And sore must be the

14 *mf* *f*

14

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for the poem 'Hope is the thing with feathers'. The score is for SATB choir and piano accompaniment. It begins at measure 14. The vocal parts (Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, Bass 2) all sing the lyrics 'gale is heard; And sore must be the'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The score is written in a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C).

poco rit.

17 *p*

S 1 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma - ny

S 2 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma - ny

A 1 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma - ny

A 2 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma - ny

T 1 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma - ny

T 2 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma - ny

B 1 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma-ny

B 2 storm That could a-bash the lit-tle bird That kept so ma-ny

17 *p*

17 *poco rit.*

Hope is the thing with feathers

a tempo **B** *piu mosso* (♩ = c. 112)

S 1
warm. *pp* solo
Hope, I've heard it in the chill-est land, And

S 2
warm. *pp*

A 1
warm. *pp* solo
Hope, I've heard it in the chill-est land, And

A 2
warm. *pp*

T 1
warm. *pp* solo
I've heard it in the chill-est land, And

T 2
warm. *pp*

B 1
warm. *pp* solo
I've heard it in the chill-est land, And

B 2
warm. *pp*

21 *a tempo* **B** *piu mosso* (♩ = c. 112)

Hope is the thing with feathers

rit. poco a poco

2-5 voices per part

tutti

27 *pp* *ppp*

S 1 on the stran-gest sea; Yet, ne-ver, in ex-tre-mi-ty, It

S 2

A 1 *pp* *ppp*

A 2

T 1 *pp* *ppp*

T 2

B 1 *pp* *ppp*

B 2

27 *pp* *ppp*

rit. poco a poco

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and piano. The title is 'Hope is the thing with feathers'. The page number is 8. The score is for Soprano 1 (S 1), Soprano 2 (S 2), Alto 1 (A 1), Alto 2 (A 2), Tenor 1 (T 1), Tenor 2 (T 2), Bass 1 (B 1), Bass 2 (B 2), and Piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'rit. poco a poco'. The dynamics range from piano (pp) to pianissimo (ppp). The lyrics are: 'on the stran-gest sea; Yet, ne-ver, in ex-tre-mi-ty, It'. The piano part includes a triplet in the right hand. The score is numbered 27 at the beginning of the vocal and piano staves.

Hope is the thing with feathers

31 *tempo primo rit.* C *a tempo*

S 1 asked a crumb of me. Hope is the thing with

S 2 *tutti ppp* Hope,

A 1 asked a crumb of me. Hope,

A 2 *tutti ppp* crumb of me. Hope,

T 1 ₈ asked a crumb of me. Hope,

T 2 *tutti ppp* ₈ asked a crumb me. Hope,

B 1 asked a crumb of me. Hope, *tutti ppp*

B 2 me. Hope,

31 *tempo primo rit.* C *a tempo*

31 *3*

35

S 1 fea-thers That per-ches in the soul, *mp-pp (sub.)*

S 2 hope, hope, *mp-pp (sub.)*

A 1 hope, *mp-pp (sub.)*

A 2 hope, hope, *mp-pp (sub.)*

T 1 hope, hope, hope, *mp-pp (sub.)*

T 2 hope, *mp-pp (sub.)*

B 1 *mp-pp (sub.)*

B 2 hope, hope, hope, *mp-pp (sub.)*

35

35

mp-pp (sub.)

poco rit. *a tempo*

45

S 1
- ver stop at all, hope, hope.

S 2
hope, hope.

A 1
hope, hope.

A 2
hope.

T 1
8 hope, hope.

T 2
8 hope, hope.

B 1
hope, hope, hope.

B 2
hope, hope.

45 *poco rit.* *a tempo*