

Ode to Emily

By C. L. Elliott

*Dedicated to the
lovers of Emily Dickinson's
poetry*

1. In This Short Life

*That only lasts an hour
How much — how little — is
Within our power*

*2. Look back on time with kindly eyes
He doubtlessly did his best;
How softly sinks his trembling arm
In human nature's West!*

This work was inspired by the sense of expansiveness in the succinct simplicity of Dickinson's short poems. While they may not last long, the impact their words provide leaves our brains reverberating for a great deal of time, creating countless tendrils of idea spinning out from one small source of thought.

Conductor's notes

- Semiquavers should be sung as smoothly as possible, in a manner similar to a very controlled vibrato
- Each line should be sung through bar lines, so semiquavers overlap, creating continuity
- Demisemiquavers should be as light as possible
- Glissandi should be as long held as possible
- Accents should be short and punctuated

Moderato, ♩ = 85

The musical score consists of seven staves, each with a vocal part label on the left. The top two staves are for Soprano, the next two for Alto, and the bottom three for Tenor and Bass. The music is in 6/4 time, with a 2/4 time signature change in the second measure of each staff. The lyrics are: "In this short life, Life, that on-ly mere-ly lasts an hour_". The Soprano parts end with a double bar line and repeat dots. The Alto and Tenor parts have a fermata over the word "life,". The Bass part has a fermata over "life," and then continues with a triplet of eighth notes for "that on-ly mere-ly lasts an hour_". Dynamics include *p* (piano), *gliss.* (glissando), and *ff* (fortissimo). The Bass part also includes *mp* (mezzo-piano) and triplet markings.

Soprano
In this short life, Life,

Soprano
In this short life, Life,

Alto
In this short life, (ff)

Alto
In this short life, (ff)

Tenor
In this short life, (ff)

Tenor
In this short life, (ff)

Bass
In this short life, *mp* that on-ly mere-ly lasts an hour_

Bass
In this short life,

S.

Life,

S.

Life,

A.

How — much, how lit- tle,

A.

How — much, how lit- tle,

T.

"mere- ly!" mere- ly, mere- ly, How much

T.

"mere- ly!" mere- ly, mere- ly, How much

B.

How much

B.

How much

12

S. *mp* (ah) _____

S. *mf* Look back _____ on time with

A. is with-in our power.

A. is with-in our power.

T. power.

T. power.

B. power.

B. power.

17

S. *gliss.*
 (ah) _____

S.
 kind - - ly (ah) _____

A. *mf*
 Look back _____ on time with kind - ly

A. *mf*
 Look back _____ on time with kind - ly

T. *mf*
 8 eyes.

T. *mf* *p (whisper)*
 8 eyes. In this life

B.

B. *mf*
 Look _____ back,

20

S. *mp gliss.*
 (ah)_____ (ah)_____

S. *gliss.* *gliss.*
 (ah)_____ (ah)_____ (ah)_____

A. eyes, look_____ back_____ on time with kind-ly

A. eyes, look_____ back_____ on time with kind-ly

T. *p*
 8 (ah)_____

T.

B. *mp*
 Look back_____ on time with kind - ly

B.

23

S. *gliss.*

S.

A. eyes, (ah)

A. eyes,

T. 4 (ah)

T. *p* (ah)

B. eyes

B. eyes, *p (whisper)* In this life

25

S.

S.

A.

A.

T.

T.

B. *mp*

B. *mp*

S. *f* he — doubt - less - ly

S. *mf* he doubt-less-ly did his best,

A. (ah)

A.

T. *mf* he doubt-less-ly did his best,

T. *mf* he doubt-less-ly did his best, (ah)

B. best, he doubt - less - ly

B. *f* best, he doubt-less-ly did his

30

S. *ff* 3
 did his best, (ah) (ah)

S. *f* 3 *ff* 3
 he doubt-less-ly did his best, (ah)

A. *f* 3 *ff* 3
 he doubt-less-ly did his best, (ah)

A. 3 3 3 *ff* 3
 (ah) (ah)

T. *f* *ff* 3
 (ah) (ah)

T. *ff* 3
 (ah)

B. *ff* 3
 did his best, (ah) (ah)

B. *ff* 3
 best, (ah) (ah)

34

This musical score page contains eight staves for vocal parts, labeled S., S., A., A., T., T., B., and B. from top to bottom. The music is written in treble clef for the upper parts and bass clef for the lower parts, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).
- The first Soprano (S.) staff begins with a treble clef and a sharp sign. It contains a half note G4, a half note A4, and a whole rest.
- The second Soprano (S.) staff begins with a treble clef and a sharp sign. It contains a half note G4, followed by a sixteenth-note triplet of G4, A4, B4, and another sixteenth-note triplet of G4, A4, B4, ending with a repeat sign.
- The first Alto (A.) staff begins with a treble clef and a sharp sign. It contains a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The final measure has a slur over a triplet of G4, A4, B4 and a fifth-note triplet of G4, A4, B4, with the vocalization "(ah)" written below.
- The second Alto (A.) staff is identical to the first Alto staff.
- The first Tenor (T.) staff begins with a treble clef and an 8va sign. It contains a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The final measure has a slur over a triplet of G4, A4, B4 and a fifth-note triplet of G4, A4, B4, with the vocalization "(ah)" written below.
- The second Tenor (T.) staff is identical to the first Tenor staff.
- The first Bass (B.) staff begins with a bass clef and a sharp sign. It contains a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3.
- The second Bass (B.) staff begins with a bass clef and a sharp sign. It contains a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3, with a long slur underneath spanning all three measures.

37 *mf*

The musical score consists of eight staves. The top two staves are for Soprano (S.), the next two for Alto (A.), the next two for Tenor (T.), and the bottom two for Bass (B.).

- Soprano (S.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, *mf* dynamic, eighth-note runs. Measure 38: Treble clef, rests. Measure 39: Treble clef, rests. Measure 40: Treble clef, *mf* dynamic, quarter-note triplet runs.
- Alto (A.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, rests. Measure 38: Treble clef, rests. Measure 39: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin, *p* dynamic, half note. Measure 40: Treble clef, half note, *p* dynamic.
- Tenor (T.):** Measure 37: Treble clef, eighth notes, *mf* dynamic, eighth-note runs. Measure 38: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin, *p* dynamic, half note. Measure 39: Treble clef, quarter notes, crescendo hairpin, *p* dynamic, half note. Measure 40: Treble clef, eighth-note runs, *p* dynamic.
- Bass (B.):** Measure 37: Bass clef, rests. Measure 38: Bass clef, rests. Measure 39: Bass clef, rests. Measure 40: Bass clef, rests.

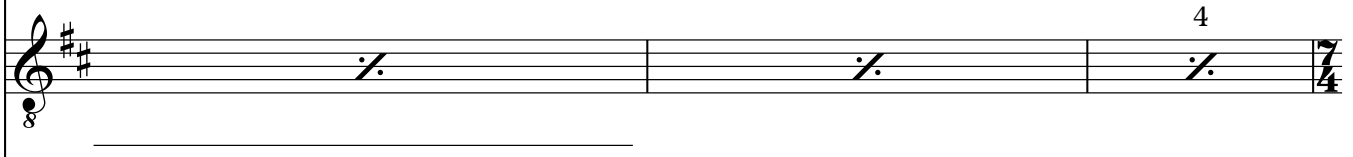
Lyrics: (ah) (ah) (ah) (ah)

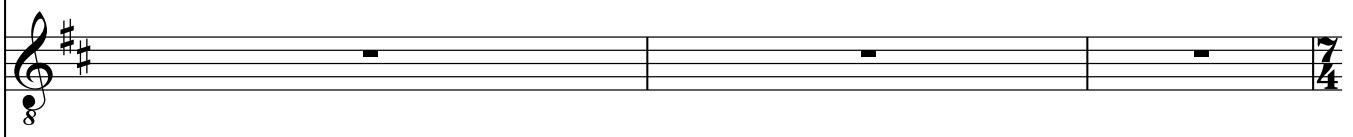
S. *mp* he doubt-less-ly did his best,

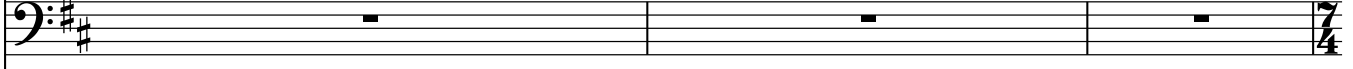
S. *mp* he doubt-less-ly did his best

A. *mp* he doubt-less-ly did his best

A. 

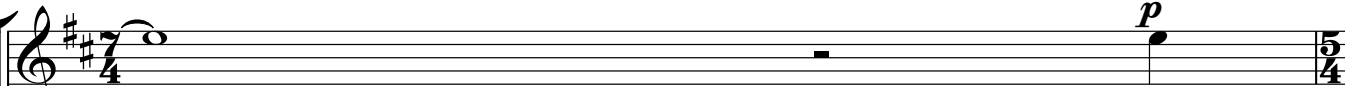
T. 

T. 

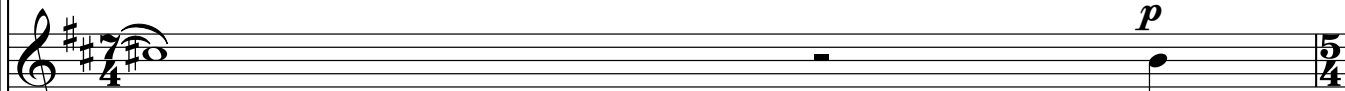
B. 

B. 

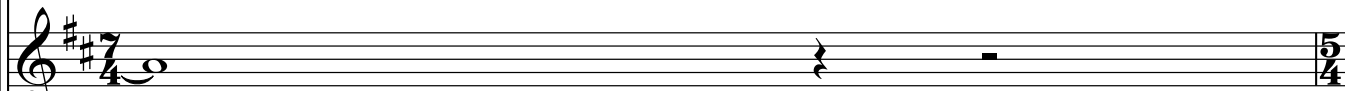
43

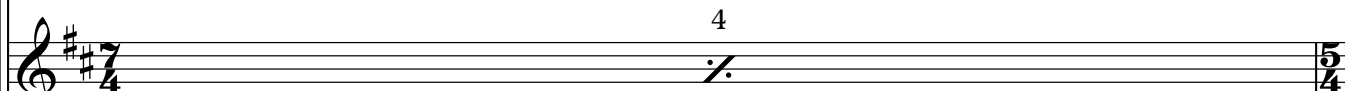
S.  *p* he

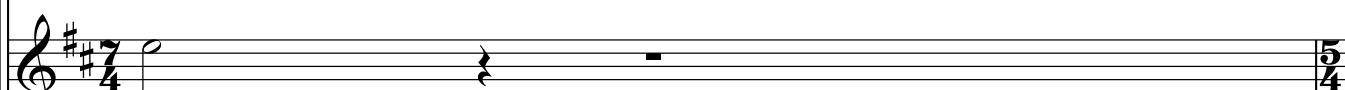
— he

S.  *p* he

— he

A. 

A.  4

T. 

T.  *p*

(ah) _____


B.  *mp*


Look back on time with kind - ly

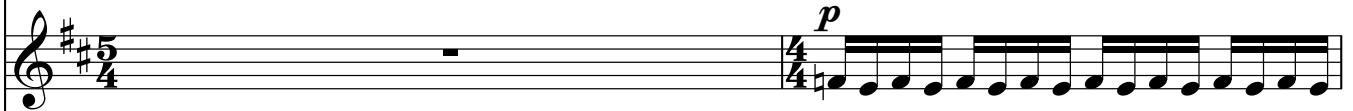
B. 

Look back on time with kind - ly

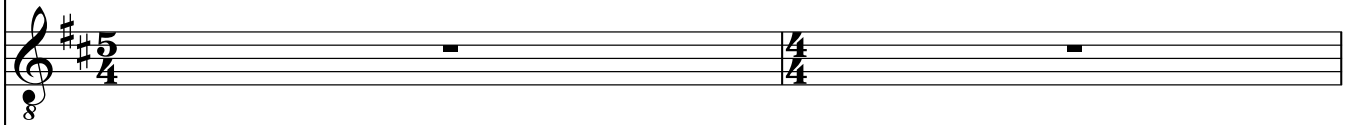
44

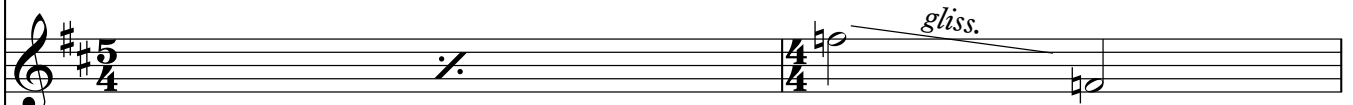
S. 
 doubt - less - ly did his best,

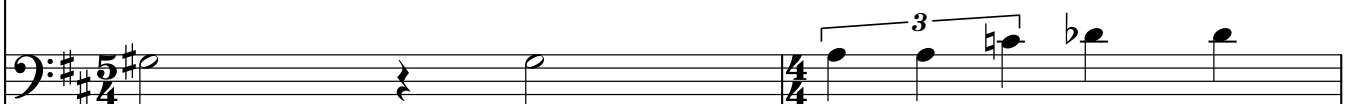
S. 
 doubt - less - ly did his best, (ah)_____

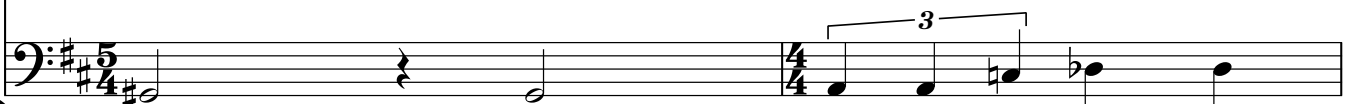
A. 
p

A. 

T. 

T. 
gliss.
 (ah)_____

B. 
 eyes, he doubt - less - ly did his

B. 
 eyes, he doubt - less - ly did his

46

mp

S.

Look back,

S.

A.

A.

T.
 8 Look back on time

T.
 8 on time

B.
 best Look back on

B.
 best Look back on

A tempo

S.

S.

A. *pp*
How soft-ly, How

A. *pp*
Look back, How soft-ly, How

T. *pp*
(mm) How soft-ly, How

T. *pp*
(mm) How soft-ly, How

B. *pp*
time, How

B. *pp*
time, How

rit.

53

fp

S. tre - - - mbling sun in hu-man

S. tre - - - mbling sun in hu-man

A. soft-ly sinks his tre(m) - - - mbling sun in hu-man

A. soft-ly sinks his tre(m) - - - mbling sun in hu-man

T. soft-ly sinks his tre(m) - - - mbling sun in hu-man

T. soft-ly sinks his tre(m) - - - mbling sun in hu-man

B. soft-ly sinks his tre(m) - - - mbling sun in hu-man

B. soft-ly sinks his tre(m) - - - mbling sun in hu-man

57 *f*
 S. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f
 S. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f
 A. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f
 A. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f
 T. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f
 T. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f
 B. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West! *a niente*

f (optional octave up) *a niente*
 B. na - ture's west, in hu - man na - ture's West!