

Please note that not all pages are included. This is purposely done in order to protect our property and the work of our esteemed composers.

If you would like to see this work in its entirety, please order online or call us at 800-647-2117.

The Dying of the Light

Duration 10'10"

The poetry of Dylan Thomas (1914–1953) is characteristically Welsh and dark. Death is a common topic in his writings. Yet despite the somber imagery, there is often a strength and resilience. The journey of death is described, but not taken. Death is the adversary, not the ruler.

The Hand that Signed the Paper speaks of the often cruel and deadly power of a signed document—a document of taxation, of treaty or of counting casualties. The five fingers mark the dead, but do not soothe. “Hands have no tears to flow.” *And Death Shall Have No Dominion* expresses the triumph of the human spirit over death. “Though lovers be lost love shall not.” *Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night* represents the fight against death. “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

The musical expression of these poems places the voice in the low (dark) range. Tempi are slow, and minor keys are prevalent. Only occasionally are major tonalities presented. These passages combine with particularly uplifting phrases such as “Though they sink through the sea, they shall rise again” and “Wild men, who caught and sang the sun in flight...”

Near the end of the last song, the poet addresses his deceased father: “And you, my father, there on the sad height...” The voice stays on a constant pitch while the harmony lifts beneath (to the heights), in the Lydian (raised) mode. [One might hear the voice as “perched atop” the rising chords.] This is one of the most personal lines of Dylan Thomas’ poetry. As the poet speaks to his father, the climax of the song comes with the rising phrases of “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” The final chords are dissonant, marked “with determination and triumph.”

The Hand that Signed the Paper

The hand that signed the paper felled a city;
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;
These five kings did a king to death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,
The finger joints are cramped with chalk;
A goose’s quill has put an end to murder
That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,
And famine grew, and locusts came;
Great is the hand that holds dominion over
Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but do not soften
The crusted wound nor stroke the brow;
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven;
Hands have no tears to flow.

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
with the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean, and the
clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall
rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan’t crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails;
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced
in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with
blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears,
I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

“The Hand The Signed the Paper” By Dylan Thomas,
from THE POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS,
Copyright © 1939 by New Directions Publishing Corp.
Used with permission of New Directions Publishing.

“And Death Shall Have No Dominion” By Dylan Thomas,
from THE POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS,
Copyright © 1943 by New Directions Publishing Corp.
Used with permission of New Directions Publishing.

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” By Dylan Thomas,
from THE POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS,
Copyright © 1952 by New Directions Publishing Corp.
Used with permission of New Directions Publishing.

Catalog No. 8329

The Dying of the Light

for Tenor Solo and Piano

Dylan Thomas (1914–1953)

Gwyneth Walker

1. The Hand That Signed the Paper

Moderately slowly ♩ = 80

Piano

4

mf

The hand that signed the pa-per felled a cit-y;—

p

p

7

Five sov-ereign fin-gers taxed the breath, Dou-bled the globe of dead and halved a

3

“The Hand The Signed the Paper” By Dylan Thomas, from THE POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS,
Copyright © 1939 by New Directions Publishing Corp. Used with permission of New Directions Publishing.

4

10

coun - try; These five kings did a king to death.

13

(mf)

The might-y hand leads to a slop-ing shoul - - - der, The

8^{va} (RH only)

mf

16

fin - ger joints are cramped with chalk; A goo - se's quill has put an end to

8^{va}

8^{vb}

Ped. *Ped.*

19

mur - der That put an end to talk. *f* The

Ped. *Ped.*

23

8 hand that signed the trea - ty bred a fe - - - - ver, And

f

Red.

This system contains measures 23 and 24. The vocal line starts with a treble clef, a key signature of three flats, and a common time signature. The lyrics are "hand that signed the trea - ty bred a fe - - - - ver, And". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line with a forte (*f*) dynamic. A repeat sign is present at the end of the system.

25

8 fam - ine grew, and lo - custs came;

Red.

This system contains measures 25 and 26. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "fam - ine grew, and lo - custs came;". The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and has a more active bass line. A repeat sign is present at the end of the system.

27

8 Great is the hand that holds do - min - ion o - ver Man _____ by a scrib - bled

p *f*

Red.

This system contains measures 27 and 28. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Great is the hand that holds do - min - ion o - ver Man _____ by a scrib - bled". The piano accompaniment features a sustained chord in the right hand and a bass line with a dynamic shift from piano (*p*) to forte (*f*). A repeat sign is present at the end of the system.

Transition to No. 2. *And Death Shall Have No Dominion*

[Omit if performing No. 2 separately]

$\text{♩} = 100$ *rit.*

p

with pedal

2. *And Death Shall Have No Dominion*At a stately tempo $\text{♩} = 100$

f

with pedal

4 *f*

And death shall have no do-min-ion.

p

f

Red.

8

Dead men na-ked they shall be one with the man in the wind and the

p

f

p

Red.

12 *smoothly*

west moon; _____ no do-min-ion, no do-min-ion,

f *mf*

Ped.

15 *p* *mf*

no do-min-ion, no do-min-ion. _____ When their

p *mf*

Ped.

18

bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, _____ They shall have

mf

Ped.

21 *f*

stars at el-bow and foot; Though they go mad they shall be

f

Ped. *with pedal*

10

24

sane, Though they sink through the sea they shall rise a - gain;

27

Though lov - ers be lost love shall not; And

poco rit. *a tempo*

loco *poco rit.* *a tempo*

30

death shall have no do - min - ion.

34

poco accel. *mf* Slightly faster ♩ = 108

And death shall have no do - min - ion.

poco accel. Slightly faster ♩ = 108

dim. *mf*

3. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Solemn ♩ = 88
but with motion

p

f

8^{va}-----

6 *mf*

Do not go gen-tle in - to that good night,

8^{va}-----

p *mf*

10

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

p *mf*

8^{va}-----

13 *f* *p* *mf*

Rage, rage a-gainst the dy-ing of the light.

f *mf* *p*

16 *(mf)*
Though wise men at their end know dark is

mf *p*
(Ped.)

19 right, Be-cause their words had forked no light - ning they

mf *p* *mf*
(Ped.)

21 Do not go gen - tle in - to that good night.

mf *p*
(Ped.)

24 Good men, the last wave by, cry - ing how

mf
(Ped.)

18

26

lightly

Rec.

29

Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light. _____ Wild _____

Rec.

32

Faster ♩ = 100

_____ men who caught and sang the sun in _____

34

flight, _____ And learn, too late, they

Rec.

Rec. 3