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## CONTENTS

1. Vigil	3
2. In the Dark	6
3. A Dream	10
4. At Dusk	14
5. Lullaby	15

### PROGRAM NOTES

Either a male or female singer can perform this set. The poems are by the Indiana poet, James Whitcomb Riley (1849–1916). I took some liberties with his material as the songs evolved. None of the five poems were used exactly as they were written. Some verses were left out to make the storytelling more succinct. I also removed or tweaked an occasional line, and plucked out or replaced the odd word here and there. These are the things one sometimes does to make words and music sit well together. However, the intent, imagery, cadence, and the soulful message are all Riley's, and I have altered none of that.

As to performance, these songs should be performed in a continuous manner, with no pauses between songs (beyond a natural breath) so that one unfolds seamlessly into the next.

—Steven Mark Kohn, 2011

### AVAILABLE EDITIONS

High Voice and Piano	8669
Medium Voice and Piano	8670

## TEXTS

### Vigil

Close the book and dim the light,  
I shall read no more tonight.  
I know you are not sleepy, dear.  
I will not go, sit by me here.  
In the darkness and the silence of the watch I keep,  
something in your presence so soothes me,  
as when I first felt your hand touch my brow.  
I've no other wish than you should fold your eyelids now.  
Think not of sigh or tear,  
as if God were sitting here.

### In the Dark

In the depths of midnight,  
what fancies haunt the brain,  
when even the sigh of the sleeper  
sounds like a sob of pain.  
The old clock down in the parlor,  
like a sleepless mourner grieves.  
And the seconds drip into the silence,  
as the rain drips from the eaves.  
And I think of the hands there  
that signal the hours in the gloom,  
and wonder what angel watchers wait  
in my darkened room.  
And I think of the smiling faces  
that used to watch and wait,  
till the click of the clock was answered  
by the click of the opening gate.  
They are not there now in the evening, no!  
Nor morning, nor noon, not there!  
Yet I know that they are waiting,  
waiting for me somewhere.

### A Dream

I dreamed I was a spider, a big fat hungry spider.  
And my limbs were dangled as I watched three wretched  
flies tangled in my web.  
And their buzzing wings were strangled.  
And I mocked them like a demon who delights to be a  
demon for the sake of sin alone!  
And I wove my laces 'round their terror-stricken faces till  
I muffled every groan!  
And I experienced a pleasure so intoxicating, that I drank  
it in like wine!  
And my soul engages that all through the ages, no other  
spider has felt so divine.  
And my victims were dying. They said "we are dying!"  
Their earthly course had been run.  
And the scene was so impressing, that I breathed a  
special blessing,  
and devoured them one by one.

### At Dusk

Voices of the children seem  
to come to us as from a dream  
of some long-vanished yesterday  
when we were young as they.

### Lullaby

The maple strews the embers of its leaves  
o'er the swallows nestled 'neath the eaves.  
And the moody cricket falters in his cry  
and the lid of night is falling o'er the sky, baby bye,  
the lid of night is falling o'er the sky.  
The rose is lying pallid by the cup  
where the frosted lily folded up.  
And the breezes through the garden gently sigh  
o'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie, baby bye,  
o'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie.  
Yet, baby, oh my baby, for your sake,  
this heart of mine is ever wide awake.  
My love will never close a drowsy eye  
till your own are wet above me when I die, baby bye,  
till your own are wet above me when I die.

# Lullabies and Dreams

*for Medium Voice and Piano*

James Whitcomb Riley (1849–1916)  
Adapted by Steven Mark Kohn

Steven Mark Kohn

## 1. Vigil

With great delicacy, not too slowly ♩ = 58

Piano

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes with a melodic line, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The piece begins in 4/4 time and changes to 3/4 time at the end of the first measure. The dynamic is marked *pp*. Pedal markings are present: *Ped.* under the first, second, and third measures, and *with Ped. always* for the remainder of the introduction.

4 *pp* tenderly

Close the book and dim the light, I shall read no more to -

The first system of the vocal line starts at measure 4. The vocal line is in 3/4 time. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand has a melodic line, and the left hand has a bass line. The dynamic is *pp* and the instruction is *tenderly*.

7

night. I know you are not sleep - y, dear. I will not go \_\_\_\_\_

*pp* very calmly and smoothly

The second system of the vocal line starts at measure 7. The vocal line continues in 3/4 time. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand has a melodic line, and the left hand has a bass line. The dynamic is *pp* and the instruction is *very calmly and smoothly*. Pedal markings are present: *Ped.* under the first and third measures.

10

— sit by me here. In the dark - ness and the si - lence of the

*Red.*

This block contains the musical notation for measures 10, 11, and 12. It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4. The lyrics are: "— sit by me here. In the dark - ness and the si - lence of the". A dynamic marking of *Red.* is present at the start of measure 11.

13

watch I keep, some - thing in your pres - ence so soothes me,

This block contains the musical notation for measures 13, 14, and 15. It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "watch I keep, some - thing in your pres - ence so soothes me,".

16

as when I first felt your hand touch my brow.

*rit.* *a tempo*

*rit.* *a tempo*

This block contains the musical notation for measures 16, 17, and 18. It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "as when I first felt your hand touch my brow.". There are two tempo markings: *rit.* (ritardando) above measure 17 and *a tempo* above measure 18, and another pair of *rit.* and *a tempo* markings above measure 18.

## 2. In The Dark

James Whitcomb Riley (1849–1916)  
Adapted by Steven Mark Kohn

Steven Mark Kohn

With quiet brooding intensity ♩ = 56

*pp*

In the depths of mid - night, what

With quiet brooding intensity ♩ = 56

*pp* very smooth and dreamy

with  $\text{Ped}$  throughout

4

fan - cies haunt the brain. When e - ven the sigh of the sleep - er

7

sounds like a sob of pain. The old clock down in the

10

par - lor, like a sleep - less mourn - er grieves. \_\_\_\_\_ And the

13

sec - onds drip \_\_\_\_\_ in - to the si - lence, as the rain drips

16 rit.

A bit faster ♩ = 60

building gradually

from the eaves. And I think of the hands there \_\_\_\_\_ that

19

sig - nal the hours \_\_\_\_\_ in the gloom, \_\_\_\_\_ and won - der \_\_\_\_\_ what an - gel watch - ers wait

### 3. A Dream

James Whitcomb Riley (1849–1916)  
Adapted by Steven Mark Kohn

Steven Mark Kohn

**Freely, with sadistic playfulness** **In tempo** ♩ = 108  
*f* *mp*

I dreamed — I was a spi - der, a big fat hun - gry

**Freely, with sadistic playfulness** **In tempo** ♩ = 108  
*f* *mp*

spi - der. And my limbs were dan - gled as I watched three wretch - ed flies — tan - gled in my

4 *sfz*

8 *p sub.* *molto*, *p spoken freely* *contented sigh*, *pp*  
web. And their buzz - ing wings were strangled. And I

*pp sub.* *molto* *p*



12 **A bit slower**

*accel. poco a poco*

mocked them like a de - mon who de - lights to be a de - mon for the sake of sin

**A bit slower** *accel. poco a poco*

*pp* *sfz*

15

*mp sub.*

a - lone! And I wove my lac - es 'round their ter - ror strick - en fac - es till I

*mp sub.*

18

**f**

*rit. molto*

*a tempo*

muf - fled ev - ery groan!

*rit. molto* *a tempo*

*f* *ff* *mp*

23

*rit. poco*

**p**

And I experienced... a

*rit. poco*

*p very calmly*

# 4. At Dusk

James Whitcomb Riley (1849–1916)  
Adapted by Steven Mark Kohn

Steven Mark Kohn

**Delicately, as at first** ♩ = 58 *p*

Voic - es of the chil - dren seem to

**Delicately, as at first** ♩ = 58

*mf* *p*

with *Ped.*

4

come to us as from a dream of some long - van - ished yes - ter - day

*pp* very calmly and smoothly

*Ped.*

7

**Slowly, freely** **In tempo** ♩ = 54

when we were young as they.

**Slowly, freely** **In tempo** ♩ = 54

*pp*

with *Ped.* segue

# 5. Lullaby

James Whitcomb Riley (1849–1916)  
Adapted by Steven Mark Kohn

Steven Mark Kohn

Very misty and tranquil, not too slow ♩ = 54 *rit.* *a tempo*  
*pp*

The ma - ple strews the

Very misty and tranquil, not too slow ♩ = 54 *rit.* *a tempo*  
*mp* *pp* *legato sempre*

em - bers of its leaves o'er the swal - lows nes - tled 'neath the

4

7

eaves. And the mood - y crick - et fal - ters in his cry and the

with *Ped.* throughout

10 *più p*

lid of night is fall - ing o'er the sky, ba - by bye, the

12 *rit.* *a tempo*

lid of night is fall - ing o'er the sky.

*rit.* *a tempo*

15 *mp*

The rose is ly - ing pal - lid by the cup where — the frost - ed

18

lil - y fold - ed up. And the breez - es through the gar - den gent - ly