THE SCARED HARP

choral arrangements of filk songs

first edition July 2003

available on the World Wide Web at

http://www.mewsic.com/TheScaredHarp

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Dedicated to all who love to sing, especially those who've been told they shouldn't.

Preface

I have always loved choral singing. When I first began to lead choral singing workshops at filk conventions in the late 1990's, I was particularly struck by those participants who had never done any choral singing before, and by how much they enjoyed it. As time went on, the feeling grew in me that choral singing in the filk community should not be limited to the stage, but belonged in the filk circle as well. There was no reason, I thought, that simple choral arrangements could not be sung with success in a filk circle.

I have always loved hymns, too, especially the old German tunes such as "Lasst uns Erfreuen", "Lobe den Herren", "Nun Danket", and "Kremser". And Christmas carols, of course. It always disappointed me that there was such a dearth of good hymn texts expressing non-Christian spirituality. Fannish hymns do actually exist: "Hope Eyrie" and "Acts of Creation" are two of the best. There just hasn't been much in the way of easy, accessible four-part arrangements – until now.

The tradition of Sacred Harp singing features the most powerful and stirring hymn singing I've ever heard. It also has a consistent history of emphasizing participation over performance. I fell in love with it the first time I heard it, in spite of texts which did not reflect my own personal spirituality. I have longed to hear such singing in filk circles, and so I have set five songs to music from *The Sacred Harp*, plus one additional arrangement in that style. When singing them, keep in mind that the melody is always in the Tenor part. The Soprano (called Treble in *The Sacred Harp*) and Tenor parts are traditionally sung by both men and women (in their proper octaves), creating an effect of six-part harmony.

When not explicitly marked otherwise, the melody is in the Soprano. The parts and staves are arranged in the traditional order. I have used two staves where I could do so in a readable manner; the Soprano is in the upper staff with stems pointing up, the Alto is in the top staff with stems pointing down, the Tenor and Bass are in the lower staff with stems pointing up and down, respectively. When the four parts were too complex to be easily readable on two staves, I used four staves, with the Soprano (or Treble) on top, followed by Alto and Tenor, and Bass on the bottom. When four staves are used, I have provided a two-staff keyboard reduction for rehearsal purposes.

At the beginning of each song I have notated the vocal ranges as small solid note heads without stems. I have included chord symbols on those songs which I felt most lent themselves to accompaniment, though all of them are intended to work *a capella* (unaccompanied).

In selecting songs for this collection, I considered hundreds of possibilities, both "true" filk songs and folk songs that are (or ought to be) often heard in filk circles. Some, while fine songs in their own right, are simply not well suited to easy four-part arrangements. Others eluded my attempts at arranging. My original goal was a dozen songs. From a list of over seventy candidates, I chose thirty of my favorites, leaving the rest to future contributors.

It is my fervent hope that this collection will be embraced by the filk community as one of the standard "Filk Hymnals". To encourage its dissemination I have made it available on the World Wide Web at "http://www.mewsic.com/TheScaredHarp". I also hope that others will take up this torch and try arranging other filk songs — or even re-arranging those that appear here. I welcome submissions for a future new edition of *The Scarèd Harp*.

Edward L. Stauff, June 2003

Some Tips on Vocal Arranging

One of the best aspects of the filk community is its tradition of encouraging beginners. In the spirit of that tradition, I offer the following tips on vocal arranging. Give it a try! Take your arrangement to a filksing and get three other people (or more) to try it out. As with all things, be prepared to take criticism and learn from mistakes.

Anything like a full treatment of harmony, counterpoint and voice-leading is well beyond the scope of this book; indeed, many entire books are devoted to the subject. The information given here should get you started on the right track. In the interest of space, I have only listed the rules, and not the music theory that lies behind them.

Elementary keyboard skills are extremely useful if you're going to try your hand at arranging. However, with the availability of a variety of music editing software that can play back your music, keyboard skills are no longer a strict requirement.

A hymnal is a great resource for learning by example. Churches often have old ones that they no longer use.

Vocal Ranges

Try to keep the four parts within the following ranges. Keep in mind that you're writing for untrained voices. The more you exceed these limits, the harder it will be to sing.



Step by Step

Start with the melody. Write it down or enter it into your score editing program, and make sure it's in a key that keeps it within the Soprano range. If you wait until later to transpose it into range, your other parts may be moved out of their ranges.

The next step is to rough out the harmony by selecting chords for the major beats, as if you were going to accompany the song on guitar or piano. I generally do this at the same time that I write the Bass part (the next step), but if you're not comfortable putting chords to a song, then do this as a separate step.

Once you have an idea as to the basic harmony (chords), write the Bass part. The Bass part is the second most important part, after the melody (Soprano). As such, it should follow the rules even more closely than the other parts. Stepwise motion (explained below) is particularly good in the Bass part. Play the Bass part together with the Soprano part, and make sure they sound good before going on. The fifth of a chord is the weakest note to use in the bass (e.g. the G in a C chord), and only works in certain circumstances. The third of a chord (e.g. the E in a C chord) is nearly as good as the root (e.g. the C in a C chord) in the bass, but does not give a sense of finality or arrival, so don't use the third at the end of a phrase. The seventh can be used in the bass (e.g. the F in a G7 chord), but only if it resolves downward to the third of the next chord; for example, a G7 chord with an F in the bass should be followed immediately by a C (or C minor) chord with an E (or E) in the bass.

After writing the Bass part, add the inner parts (the Alto and Tenor). You'll generally have to do the two of them together. This is the most difficult step, as you'll find as you try to satisfy all the rules at once. Be prepared to modify your Bass part if necessary.

The Rules

Within a single part, stepwise motion (moving up or down to the next adjacent note) is preferable to larger intervals. The larger the interval (the distance between two notes), the harder it is to sing.

In general, prefer contrary motion over parallel motion. That is, two parts should move in the opposite direction: if one part goes up, the other part should go down. In particular, you should never have all the parts moving in the same direction at once.

Try to keep one part stationary (on the same note) between two adjacent chords. This provides harmonic continuity.

Within a single part, avoid repeating the same note too many times. It's very common to end up with an Alto or Tenor part that does this. It makes for a boring part.

Since most chords are defined by three notes, and you're writing in four parts, most of the time one note in the chord will be doubled. Doubling the 3rd of the chord is the least desirable. Avoid doubling more than one note, which results in an incomplete chord; if you must, then omit the 5th, not the root or 3rd.

Do not write parallel fifths or octaves. Doing so will get you an instant "F" in any music theory course.

Avoid writing parallel dissonant intervals (2nds and 7ths).

Avoid crossing of parts. This is when a part which is normally higher than another part goes below it (or vice versa). You can find an example of this in the last measure of the first page of "Hope Eyrie". Part crossing is particularly undesirable when it involves the Bass and Soprano parts.

Musical Styles

The rules given above apply to traditional Western harmony, dating back to the Baroque period and before. The vast majority of mainstream hymns follow these rules. There are, however, other styles which intentionally violate one or more of these rules. Feel free to break the rules if you're trying to achieve a particular effect – but understand them before you break them!

While traditional Western harmony is based on thirds, the harmony in *The Sacred Harp* is based on fourths and fifths. Thirds are often omitted altogether, and parallel fifths and octaves are common.

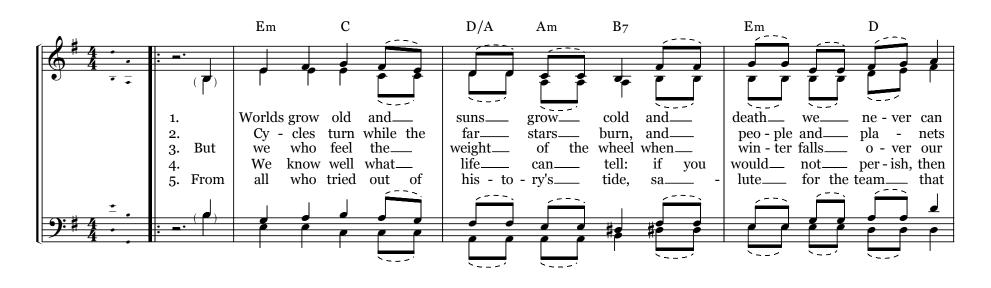
Writing in three parts is actually more difficult than writing in four parts, because it's harder to fill all the notes of each chord while following the rest of the rules.

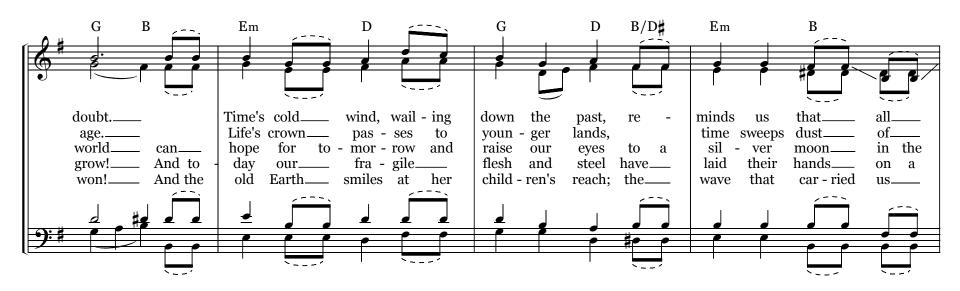
About half of the songs in this collection are harmonized using the rules of traditional hymnody. Consult the Index of Musical Styles at the back of this book.

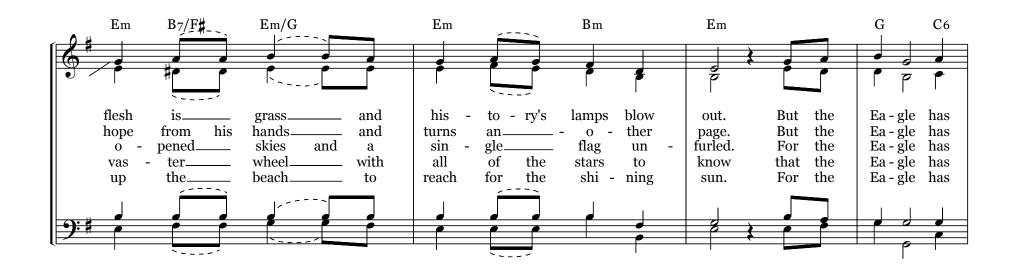
How Can I Keep From Filking?



Hope Eyrie



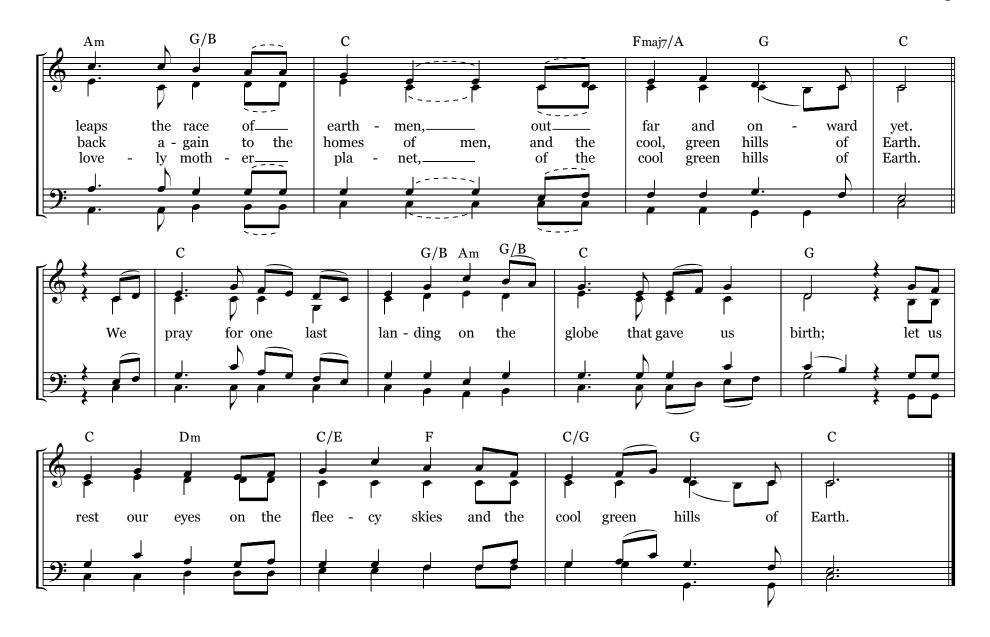






The Green Hills of Earth





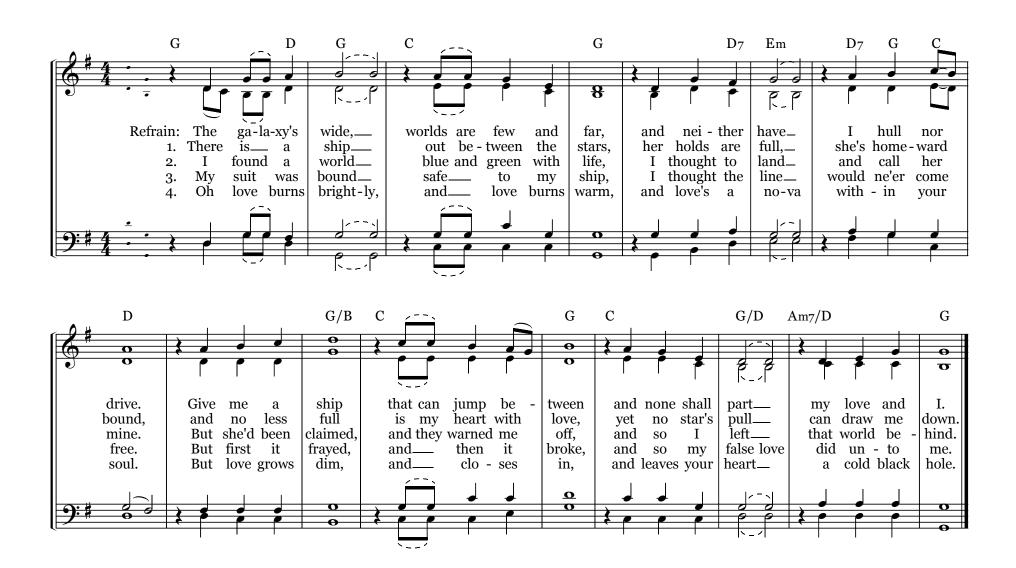
The Word of God





[CMD] words and music © 1994 by Catherine Faber; harmonization © 2003 by Edward L. Stauff [rev. 7 July 03]

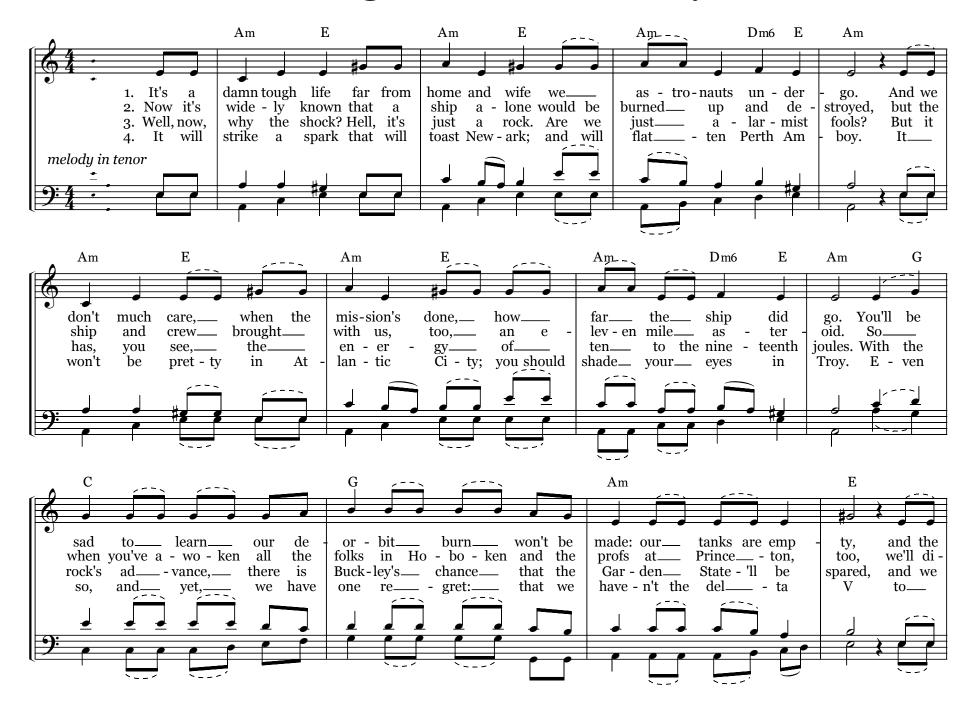
The Galaxy's Wide





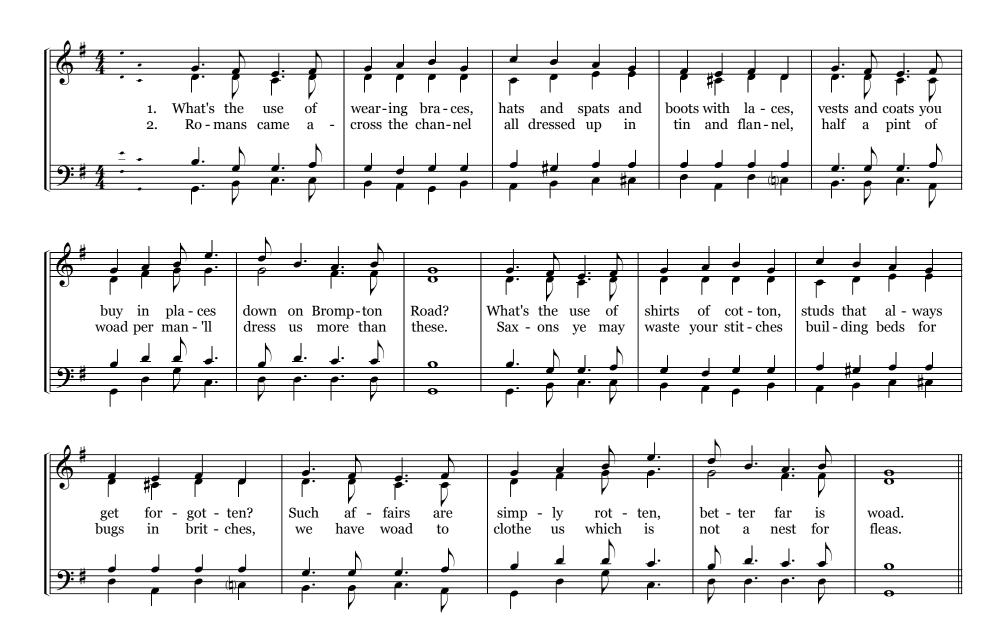
[CMD] words © by Kate Holly-Clark; tune "The Ploughboy's Dream" ("Forest Green"), trad. English; harmonized by Ralph Vaughan Williams [rev. 7 July 03]

Falling Down on New Jersey





Woad Woad





[irr.] words of unknown origin, attr. to Flanders & Swann or Colin Douthwaite; music "Men of Harlech", traditional; harmonization © 2002 by Edward L. Stauff [rev. 7 July 03]

14 Code





[irr] words © 1986 by Bob Kanefsky, www.songworm.com; tune "Men of Harlech", traditional; harmonization © 2003 by Edward L. Stauff [rev. 7 July 03]

Who Sings for the Engineer?





Vampire's Lullabye





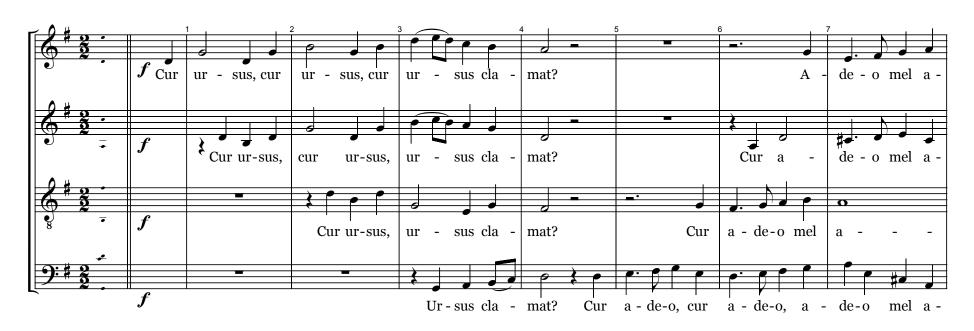
On Monday, when the sun is hot / I wonder to myself a lot: / "Now is it true, or is it not, / "That what is which and which is what?"

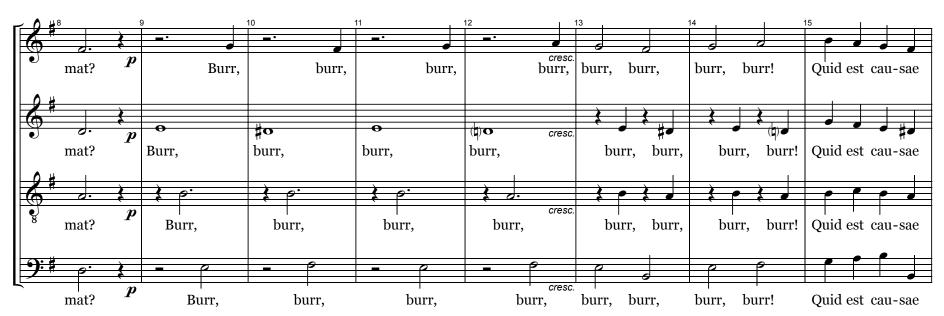
On Tuesday, when it hails and snows, / The feeling on me grows and grows / That hardly anybody knows / If those are these or these are those.

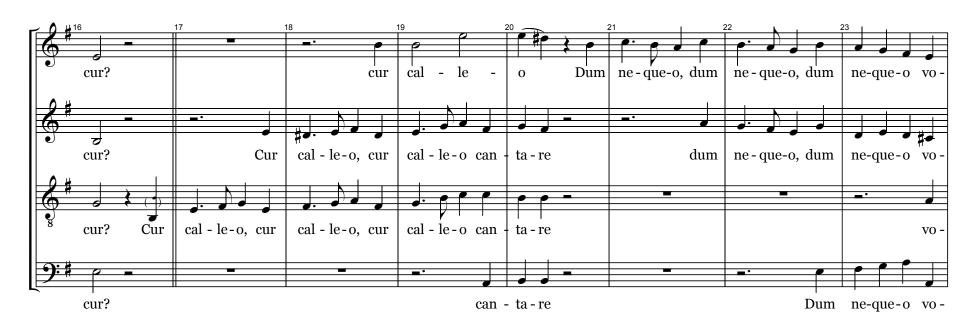
On Wednesday, when the sky is blue, / And I have nothing else to do, / I sometimes wonder if it's true / That who is what and what is who.

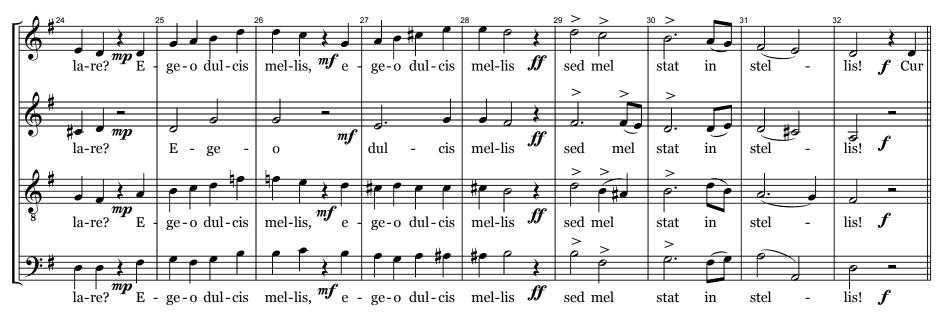
On Thursday, when it starts to freeze / And hoar-frost twinkles on the trees, / How very readily one sees / That these are whose -- but whose are these?

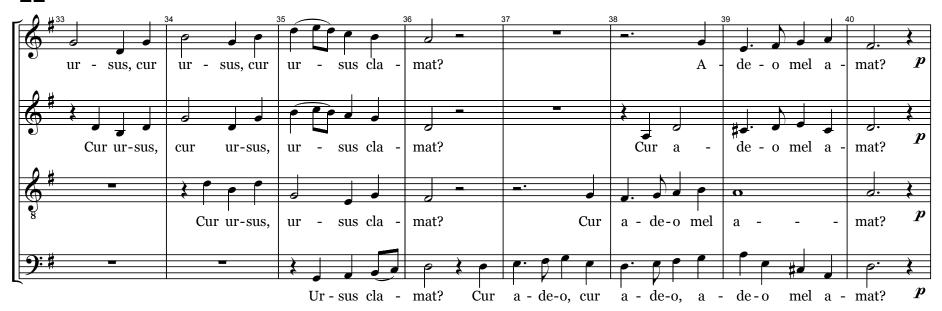
Cur Ursus Clamat?

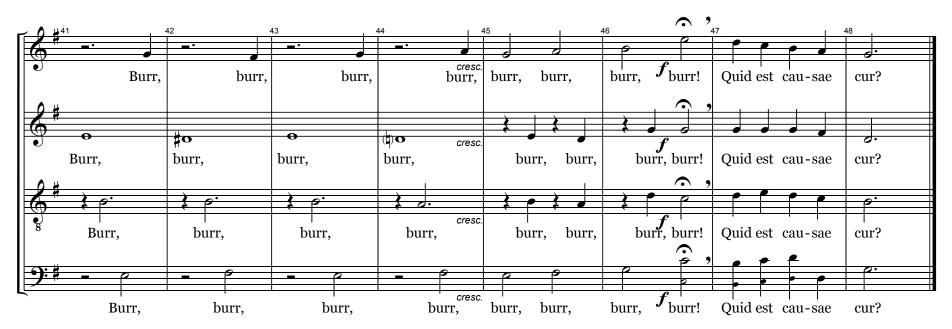












Isn't it funny / How a bear likes honey / Buzz! Buzz! A I wonder why he does? It's a very funny thought that, if Bears were Bees / They'd build their nests at the bottom of trees And that being so (if the Bees were Bears), / We shouldn't have to climb up all these stairs

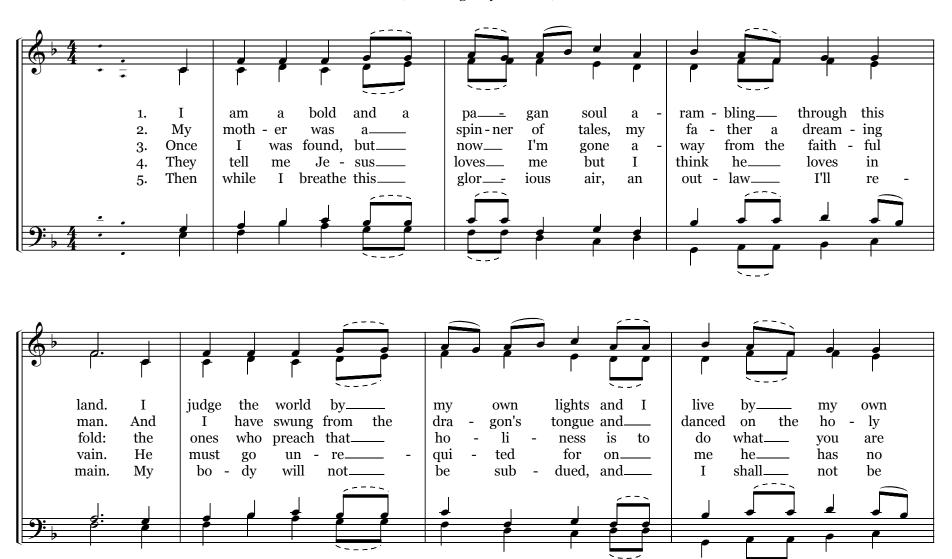
Cur Ursus Clamat?

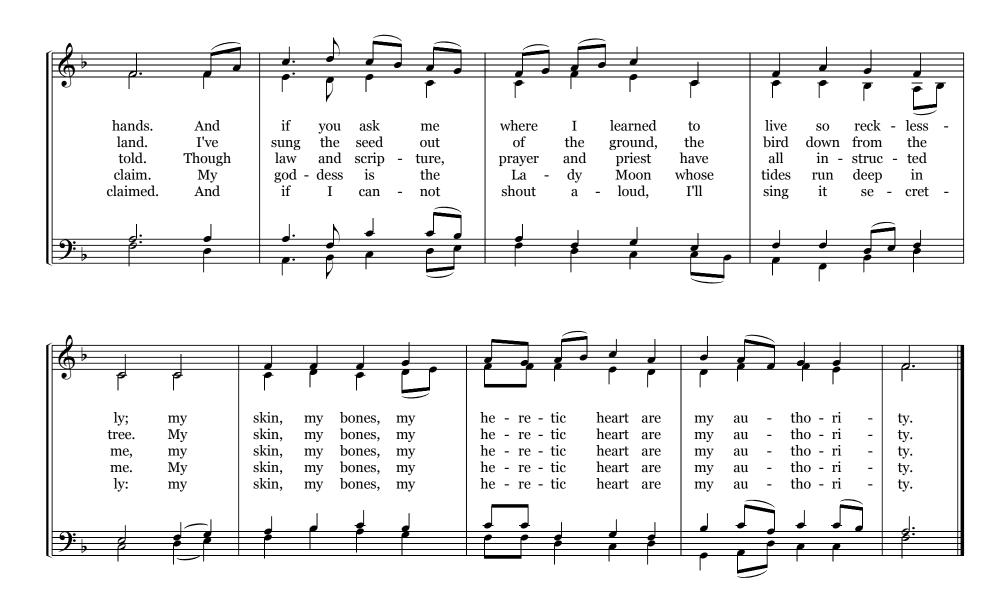
(keyboard reduction for rehearsal)



The Heretic Heart

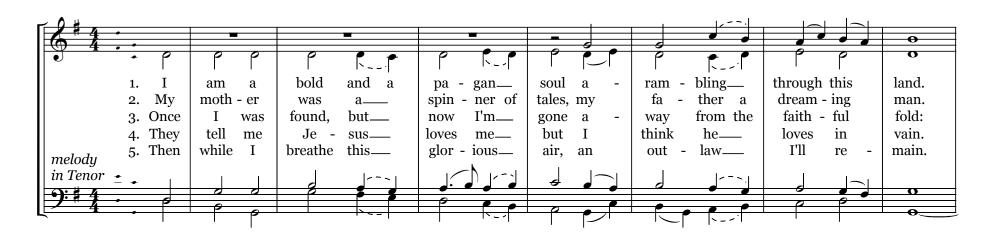
(The Ploughboy's Dream)

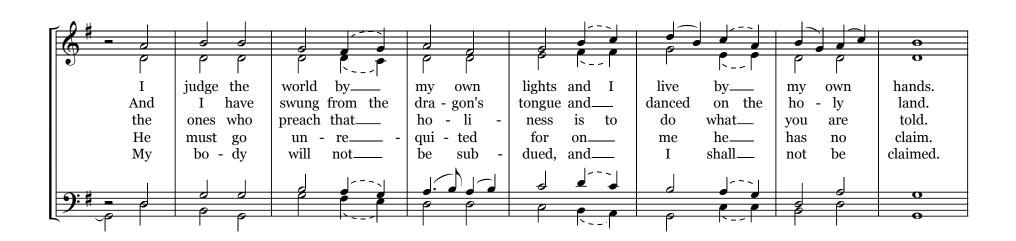


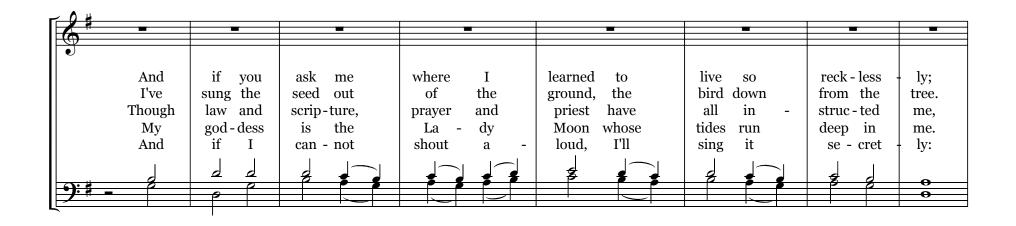


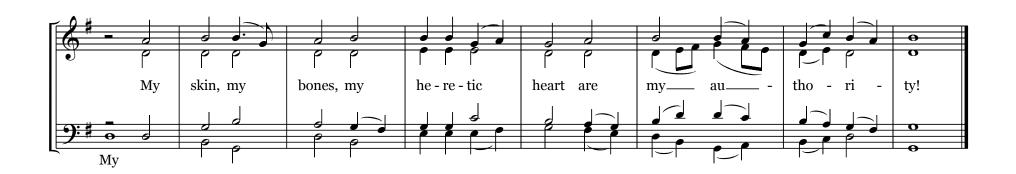
The Heretic Heart

(Jordan)









Web of Love





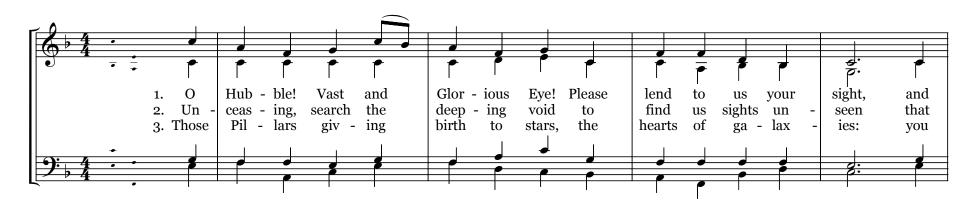
Hymn

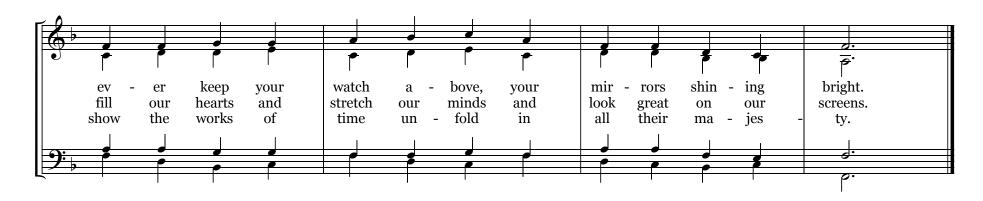
(All My Songs Home to You)



Hymn to Hubble

(original tune)





Hymn to Hubble

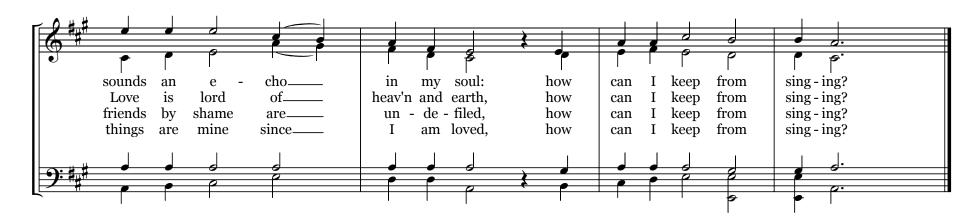
(Northfield)





How Can I Keep From Singing?





The origin of this song is not known with any certainty. Various claims have been made by various sources, including the following:

- The words and music were written by Robert Lowry (1826-1899).
- It was a traditional Quaker hymn which predates Lowry.
- It was first published in 1869 by Robert Lowry.
- Lowry was himself a Quaker.
- · Lowry was a Baptist preacher.
- It was written by Ann Warner, a folk song collecter from the 1950's.
- The lyrics appeared in a 19th century Christian novel by Anna Bartlett Warner or her sister Susan.
- Doris Plenn wrote the "When tyrants tremble" verse. (This claim is better documented than others.)
- Lowry wrote only the tune.
- · Lowry wrote only the lyrics.

The lyrics of this very popular song have, in the best tradition of the folk process, evolved over the years, and the lyrics given here are but one of many variants. An early version, possibly the original, was much more explicitly Christian.

Acts of Creation



A Psalm of Life



- 3. Art is long, and Time is fleeting, And our hearts, though stout and brave, Still, like muffled drums, are beating Funeral marches to the grave.
- 4. In the world's broad field of battle, In the bivouac of Life, Be not like dumb, driven cattle! Be a hero in the strife!
- 5. Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant! 7. Footprints, that perhaps another, Let the dead Past bury its dead! Act, — act in the living Present! Heart within, and God o'er head!
- Sailing o'er life's solemn main, A forlorn and shipwrecked brother, Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let Insects Specialize



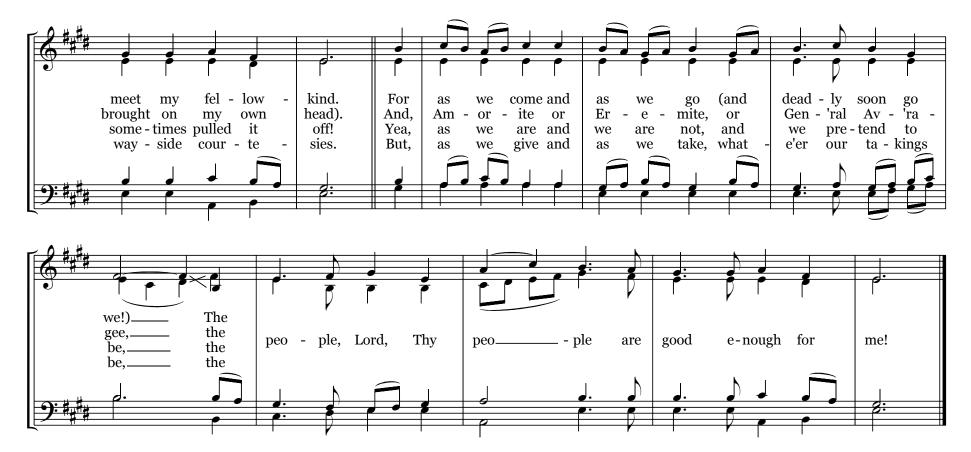
[&]quot;A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, design a building, write a sonnet, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, solve equations, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects."

— Lazarus Long (Robert A. Heinlein)



A Pilgrim's Way





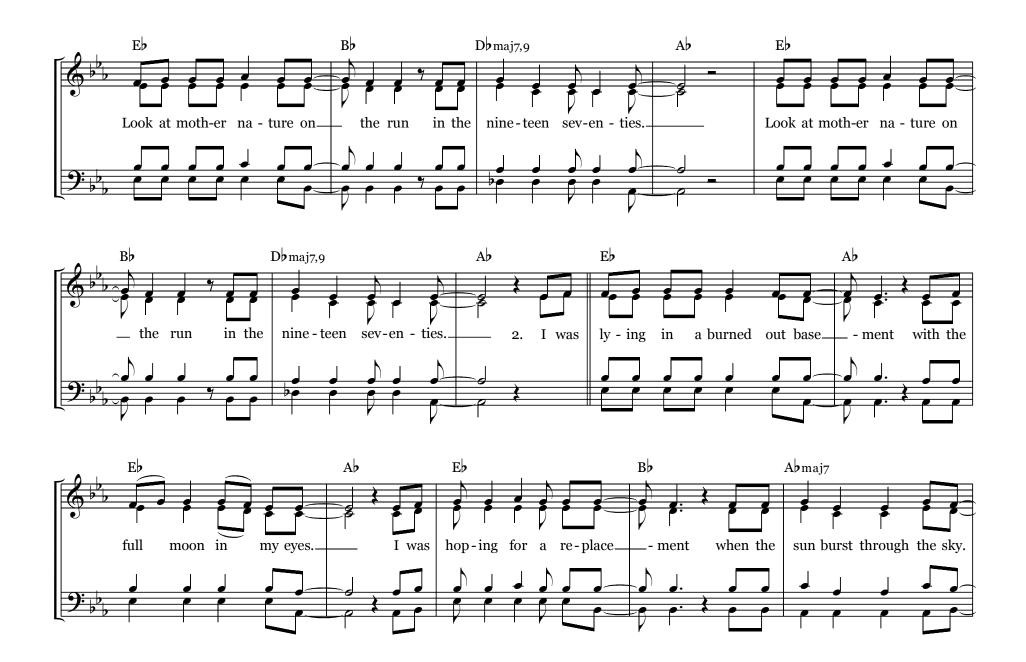
- 5. But when I meet with frantic folk who sinfully declare
 There is no pardon for their sin, the same I will not spare
 Till I have proved that Heaven and Hell which in our hearts we have
 Show nothing irredeemable on either side the grave.

 For as we live and as we die if utter Death there be -
 - For as we live and as we die if utter Death there be The people, Lord, Thy people are good enough for me!

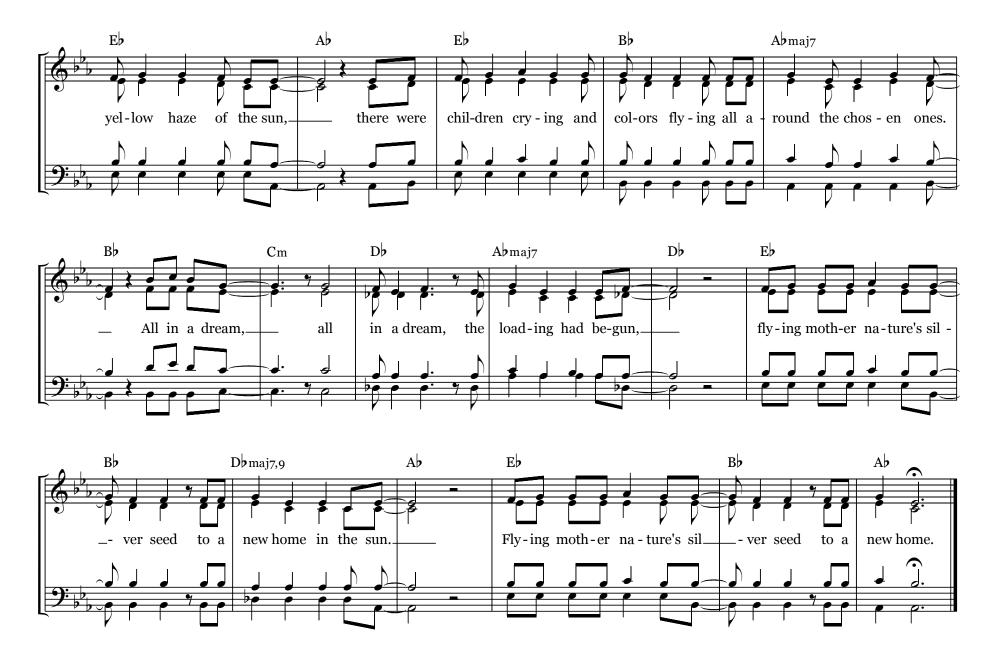
- 6. Deliver me from every pride the Middle, High or Low That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride he show. And purge me from all heresies of thought and speech and pen That bid me judge him otherwise than I am judged. Amen! [short verse; ends at double bar line]
- 7. That I may sing of Crowd or King or road-borne company,
 That I may labour in my day, vocation and degree,
 To prove the same by deed and name, and hold unshakingly
 (Where'er I go, whate'er I know, whoe'er my neighbor be)
 This single faith in Life and Death and to Eternity:
 "The people, Lord, Thy people are good enough for me!"

After the Gold Rush









[irr.] words and music by Neil Young, © 1970 Cotillion Music / Broken Arrow Music (BMI); harmonized by Edward L. Stauff [rev. 6 July 03]

Babylon Is Fallen



[8.7.8.7 D] words © 2003 by Edward L. Stauff; music "Babylon Is Fallen" by W. E. Chute 1878, from The Sacred Harp [rev. 9 July 03]

The Last Frontier







did not write this

tune. The

com-po-ser was

A Short Treatise on the History of Filk



Hass - ler who's tur-ning in his

tomb

be

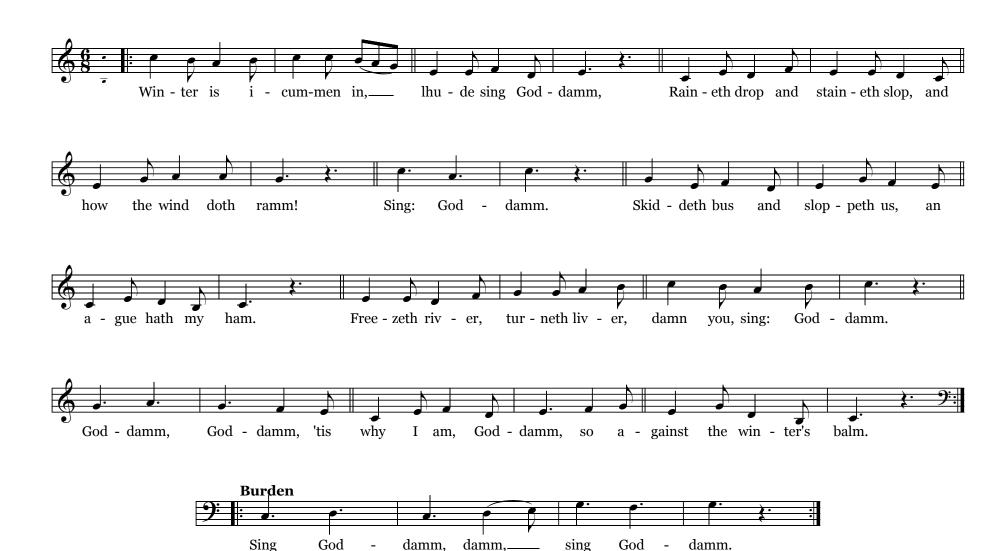
cause some folks think



[7.6.7.6 D] words © 1988 by Valerie Housden & Anne Whitaker; tune by H. L. Hassler (1564-1612); harmonization by J. S. Bach (1685-1750) [rev. 9 July 03]

Winter Is Icummen In

(round)





[LMD] words by Rudyard Kipling; music © 1993 by Leslie Fish, assigned to Random Factors, used by permission; harmonization © 2002 by Edward L. Stauff [rev. 7 July 03]



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