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# Three Seasons (Claude McKay Poems)

for SATB chorus, English horn/oboe,  
viola, cello, and harp

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Jonathan Santore

## Instrumentation

SATB chorus

English horn (doubling oboe)

viola

cello

harp

## Program note:

Claude McKay (1889-1948), a native of Jamaica, was one of the leading early figures of the Harlem Renaissance. Early in his life, before settling in New York to become editor of *The Liberator*, McKay worked as a janitor and houseman for a fraternity and hotel located near Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. The poems set in this work come from this period in McKay's life (1915-1916), and were first published in his book *Spring in New Hampshire*.

“But my attitude was not very different from what it was in 1916 when I applied for a job as a houseman in a hotel in New Hampshire. The manager told me that he could only engage me temporarily because all the other workers (about 25) were white men and women and perhaps they would object to my working with them because I am a Negro. I went into that hotel to work with the full knowledge that I was not merely an ordinary worker, but that I was also a Negro, that I would not be judged on my merits as a worker alone, but on my behavior as a Negro. Up there in that little inn, nestling among the New Hampshire hills, the Negro (as in thousands of other places in America) was on trial not as a worker but as a strange species. And I went into that hotel to work for my bread and bed and also for my race. This situation is forced upon every intelligent Negro in America. In a few weeks I had won over the little hostile minority among the hotel workers; they all made demands on my company.”

-- Claude McKay, letter to Max Eastman, 4/3/1923

“... the reviewer was mistaken when he said I was a student at Dartmouth. I worked as a janitor and houseman at the D.K.E. House and the Hanover Inn from 1915 until the spring of 1916, and my only connection with the college was that I used to go to the library at night sometimes to read.”

-- McKay, letter to Harold Rugg, librarian at Dartmouth, 1921

Written for the New Hampshire Master Chorale  
Dan Perkins, Music Director

# Three Seasons (Claude McKay Poems)

Claude McKay

Jonathan Santore

## I. Spring in New Hampshire

Freely; mysteriously (♩ = c. 60) Joyously (♩ = 80)

The score is for a choral setting of 'Spring in New Hampshire'. It features vocal parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, and instrumental parts for English Horn, Viola, Cello, and Harp. The piece is in 4/4 time and consists of three measures. The first measure is in 4/4, the second in 3/4, and the third in 4/4. The vocal parts enter in the third measure with a joyful melody. The English Horn part features a melodic line with triplets and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Harp part has a bass line with triplets and a dynamic marking of *p*. The bottom of the score shows a bass line with notes  $D\flat$ ,  $C$ ,  $B\flat$ ,  $E\flat$ ,  $F\flat$ ,  $G\flat$ ,  $A\flat$  and dynamic markings *sfz*.

Soprano  
Alto

Tenor  
Bass

English Horn\*

Viola

Cello

Harp

*mp*

*p*

*f*

*sfz*

*sfz*

*sfz*

*f* Too

$D\flat$   $C$   $B\flat$  |  $E\flat$   $F\flat$   $G\flat$   $A\flat$

\*) The English horn part is untransposed in the score.

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5

S  
A

T  
B

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

green the spring - ing Ap - ril grass, Too

*mf*  
(non pizz.)

*f*

D $\flat$  F $\flat$

7

S  
A

T  
B

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

blue the sil - ver speck - led sky For

*f*

G $\sharp$

32 *mp* (non dim.)

S  
A  
T  
B

Wear - ied, ex - haus - ted, dul - - - - ly

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Hp. *p*

34

S  
A  
T  
B

sleep - - - - ing

E.H. *mp*

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

36

E.H.

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

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## II. Summer Morn in New Hampshire

Numbly ( $\bullet = 60$ )

unis. *mp*

Soprano Alto

All yes - ter-day it poured, and all night long — I could not sleep; —

div. *mf*

Tenor Bass

unis. *mp*

div. *mf*

Oboe

Viola

Cello

Harp

$D\flat C B \mid E F G\sharp A$

3

Angrily; obsessively ( $\bullet = 82$ )

(non dim.)

S

A

(non dim.)

T

B

Ob.

*f*

1)

3 3

1) These percussive pops or squeaks should be produced by whatever means will interfere least with the performance of the ongoing melodic pattern.

6

Ob.

Vla.

Vlc.

9

S  
A

T  
B

Ob.

Vla.

Vlc.

12

S  
A

T  
B

Ob.

Bleakly (♩ = 66)  
the rain,

*mp* the rain, the

*mp* the rain, the

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*mf* > *mp*  
Up on, sop. div.

rain un - ceas - ing beat

*(mf)* Up - on the shin - gled roof like a weird song,

song, Up -

sub. *mf* >

sub. *mf* >

(non dim.)

- 2) The oboist should repeat mm.7-10 steadily at ♩=84 until the chorus arrives at m.24.  
At that point, the oboist should complete the current repetition and proceed to m.25.



55

Ob.  
Vla.  
Vlc.  
Hp.

This system contains measures 55, 56, and 57. The Oboe part features a continuous eighth-note pattern with dynamic markings. The Viola and Violin parts play sustained chords with some movement. The Harp part includes a tremolo in measure 55 and a melodic line in measure 57. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.

58

Ob.  
Vla.  
Vlc.  
Hp.

This system contains measures 58, 59, and 60. The Oboe part has a triplet in measure 58 and continues with eighth-note patterns. The Viola and Violin parts have sustained chords. The Harp part has a tremolo in measure 58 and a melodic line in measure 60. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4.

61

Ob. *(non dim.)*

Vla. *pp*

Vlc. *pp*

Hp.

64

Ob.

Hp.

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7 *mp*

S  
A

*mp* Sweet life! how love - ly to be here And feel the soft sea - la - den

T  
B

E.H.

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

10

S  
A

breeze Strike my flushed face, the spruce's fair Free limbs to see, the les - ser trees' Bare hands to

T  
B

E.H.

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

26 Tenderly; with waxing hope (♩ = 52)

48

S  
A

T  
B

E.H.

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

*(mp)*

And yet, and yet This ve-ry wind, the win-ter birds The

*(mp)*

*(p)*

*(p)*

*(p)*

sim.

A♭ E♭

52

S  
A

T  
B

E.H.

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

glo - ry of the soft sun set, Come there to me in words.

*(mp)*

*(mp)*

D♯ E♯

molto rall. -----

56

S  
A

T  
B

E.H.

Vla.

Vlc.

Hp.

*p* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

unis.

Sweet life! how love-ly to be here! Sweet life! how love-ly to be here...

9/21/2007  
Plymouth, NH