

my father moved through dooms of love

for SATB chorus, solo violin, and piano

By Kyle Gann
(2005-6)

Based on a poem by E.E. Cummings

My father moved through dooms of love

When James Bagwell asked me for a new choral work, I already knew my father didn't have long to live. I always associated my father with choral music, for he sang in church choruses much of his life, and even once with the Dallas Opera. I was in the mood to steep myself in E.E. Cummings, and was immediately drawn to his "My father moved through dooms of love." Whether a text appeals to me for musical uses has little to do with content and everything to do with the rhythm and feel of the words. Cummings' poem was perfect in this respect, and I started setting phrases of it even before I learned that he wrote it in 1926 after his own father, a prominent scholar and minister was killed by a train hitting his car. The poem seemed to have chosen me more than I it.

Since the piece was to be both celebratory and funereal (as I hope it turned out), it would have seemed wrong, too personal, I thought, to include a vocal soloist – but I wanted a wordless presence to stand apart in the place of the father, and a violin solo seemed like just the thing. I dedicate the piece to my good friend James Bagwell, who lost his father the year before I lost mine.

My father moved through dooms of love was commissioned by director James Bagwell for the Dessoff Choir. The work was premiered March 10, 2007, at Merkin Hall in New York City by the Dessoff Choir, James Bagwell conducting, with violinist Rachel Handman and pianist Steven Ryan.

Kyle Gann

my father moved through dooms of love
through same of am through have of give,
singing each morning out of each night
my father moved through depths of height

this motionless forgetful where
turned at his glance to shining here;
that if(so timid air is firm)
under his eyes would stir and squirm

newly as from unburied which
floats the first who, his april touch
drove sleeping selves to swarm their fates
woke dreamers to their ghostly roots

and should some why completely weep
my father's fingers brought her sleep:
vainly no smallest voice might cry
for he could feel the mountains grow.

Lifting the valleys of the sea
my father moved through griefs of joy;
praising a forehead called the moon
singing desire into begin

joy was his song and joy so pure
a heart of star by him could steer
and pure so now and now so yes
the wrists of twilight would rejoice

keen as midsummer's keen beyond
conceiving mind of sun will stand,
so strictly (over utmost him
so hugely) stood my father's dream

his flesh was flesh his blood was blood:
no hungry man but wished him food;
no cripple wouldn't creep one mile
uphill to only see him smile.

Scorning the Pomp of must and shall
my father moved through dooms of feel;
his anger was as right as rain
his pity was as green as grain

septembering arms of year extend
yes humbly wealth to foe and friend
than he to foolish and to wise
offered immeasurable is

proudly and (by octobering flame
beckoned) as earth will downward climb,
so naked for immortal work

his shoulders marched against the dark

his sorrow was as true as bread:
no liar looked him in the head;
if every friend became his foe
he'd laugh and build a world with snow.

My father moved through theys of we,
singing each new leaf out of each tree
(and every child was sure that spring
danced when she heard my father sing)

then let men kill which cannot share,
let blood and flesh be mud and mire,
scheming imagine, passion willed,
freedom a drug that's bought and sold

giving to steal and cruel kind,
a heart to fear, to doubt a mind,
to differ a disease of same,
conform the pinnacle of am

though dull were all we taste as bright,
bitter all utterly things sweet,
maggoty minus and dumb death
all we inherit, all bequeath

and nothing quite so least as truth
-i say though hate were why men breathe-
because my Father lived his soul
love is the whole and more than all

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for James Bagwell

my father moved through dooms of love

E. E. Cummings

Kyle Gann
2005-6

$\text{♩} = 44$

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Violin

Piano

p

my fa - ther moved through dooms of love through

6

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln.

Pno.

p

3

sing - ing each mor - ning out of each night

sing - ing each mor - ning out of each night

sames of am through haves of give,

11 *mf*

S. my fa-ther moved through depths of height

A. my fa-ther moved through depths of height

T. my fa-ther moved through depths of height, My fa-ther moved through dooms of

B. my fa-ther moved through depths of height My fa-ther moved

Vln.

Pno. *mf*

16 *mp*

S. for-get-ful where turned at his

A. that mo-tion less for-get-ful where for-get-ful where

T. love that mo-tion- less for-get-ful where turned at his

B. through dooms of love that mo-tion- less for-get-ful where turned at his

Vln.

Pno. *mp*

f

my father moved through dooms of love

21

S. *mf* glance to shin-ing here; — that if (so ti-mid air is firm) *mp* un-der his

A. *mf* — — — — — *mp* un-der his

T. *mp* that if (so ti-mid air is firm) — un-der his

B. *mp* glance to shin-ing here; — so ti-mid air — is firm

Vln. *f*

Pno.

26

S. eyes would stir and squirm

A. eyes would stir and squirm

T. *mp* un-der his eyes would stir and squirm

B. *p* would stir and squirm my fa-ther moved through dooms of love

Vln. *mp* *f*

Pno. *quasi f*

my father moved through dooms of love

31

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln.

Pno.

36

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln.

Pno.

mp

mp *3*

mp *3*

mp *3*

mp

mp

floats the first who, — his ap - ril touch drove

new - ly as from un - bu - ried which floats the first who, — his ap - ril touch drove

new - ly as from un - bu - ried which floats the first who, — his ap - ril touch drove

new - ly as from un - bu - ried which drove

my father moved through dooms of love

41

S. *mf*
sleep - ing selves _____ to swarm their fates

A. *mf* and
sleep - ing selves _____ to swarm _____ their fates and

T. *mf*
sleep - ing selves _____ to swarm their fates woke drea - mers to their ghost - ly roots

B. *mf*
sleep - ing selves to swarm their fates woke drea - mers to their ghost - ly roots

Vln. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

46

S. *p*
should some why com - plete - ly weep my fa - ther's fin - gers brought her sleep

A. *p*
should some why com - plete - ly weep my fa - ther's fin - gers brought her sleep vain - ly no smal - lest

T. *mf* *p*
my fa - ther's fin - gers brought her sleep vain - ly no smal - lest

B. *mf*
my fa - ther's fin - gers brought her sleep vain - ly no smal - lest

Vln. *p*

Pno. *p*

my father moved through dooms of love

51

S. *p* *3* Lift - ing the val - leys of -

A. *p* *3* Lift - ing the val - leys of -

T. *p* Lift - ing the val - leys of -

B. *p* lift - ing the val - leys

— voice might cry for he could feel the moun - tains grow lift - ing the val - leys

— voice might cry for he could feel the moun - tains grow lift - ing the val - leys

Vln.

Pno.

56 *intensifying slightly*

S. — the sea my fa - ther moved through griefs — of joy

A. — the sea my fa - ther moved through griefs — of joy, my fa - ther moved

T. of the sea my fa - ther moved through griefs — of joy, my fa - ther moved

B. — of the sea — my fa - ther moved

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

61

S. *mf* *3* *mp* *3*

A. *mf* *3* *mp* *3*

T. *3*

B. *mp* *3*

Vln.

Pno.

prais - ing a fore - head called the moon sing - ing de - sire

through griefs of joy prais - ing a fore - head called the moon sing - ing de - sire

through griefs of joy sing - ing de - sire

66

S.

A.

T. *p*

B. *p*

Vln.

Pno.

in - to be - gin

in - to be - gin

My fa - ther moved through griefs of joy

in - to be - gin My fa - ther moved through griefs of joy

my father moved through dooms of love

71

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln.

Pno.

75

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln.

Pno.

f $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ joy was his song and joy so pure a heart of star__

f $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ joy was his song and joy so pure a heart of star__

f $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ joy was his song and joy so pure a heart of star__

f $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ joy was his song and joy so pure a heart of star__

f joy was his song and joy so pure a heart of star__

my father moved through dooms of love

80

S. — by him could steer and pure so now and now so yes the wrists of twi-light would

A. — by him could steer and pure so now and now so yes the wrists of twi-light would

T. — by him could steer and pure so now and now so yes the wrists of twi-light would

B. — by him could steer and pure so now and now so yes the wrists of twi-light would

Vln.

Pno.

85

S. re-joyce *p* 3 con-ceive-ing mind of sun will

A. re-joyce keen as mid-summer's keen be-yond con-ceive-ing mind of sun will

T. re-joyce keen as mid-summer's keen be-yond con-ceive-ing mind of sun will

B. re-joyce keen as mid-summer's keen be-yond con-ceive-ing mind of sun will

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

90

S. *mp* stand, so strict-ly *mp* stood my fa-ther's *f*

A. stand o-ver ut-most him so huge-ly so *mp*

T. will stand *mp* o-ver ut-most him so huge-ly so *mp*

B. will stand o-ver ut-most him so huge-ly so

Vln. *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mp*

95

S. dream his flesh was flesh his blood was blood no

A. strict-ly stood my fa-ther's dream his flesh was flesh his blood was

T. strict-ly stood my fa-ther's dream his flesh was flesh his blood was blood his

B. strict-ly stood my fa-ther's dream his flesh was flesh his

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

99

S. *f* hun - gry man but wished him food

A. blood his flesh was flesh his blood was blood, no hun - gry man but wished

T. *f* flesh was flesh his blood was blood no hun - gry man but wished

B. blood was blood his flesh was flesh no hun - gry man but wished

Vln.

Pno.

103

S.

A. him food *f*

T. *f* him food no crip - ple would - n't creep one mile up - hill

B. him food up - hill

Vln. *mf*

Pno. *f*

my father moved through dooms of love

108

S. *mp* $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ scorn-ing the Pomp of must and shall my fa-ther

A. *mf* *mp* $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ on - ly see him smile scorn-ing the Pomp of must and shall my fa-ther

T. *mp* $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ to on - ly see him smile scorn-ing the Pomp of must and shall my fa-ther

B. *mp* $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ to on - ly see him smile scorn-ing the Pomp of must and shall my fa-ther

Vln. *mp* $\overbrace{\text{3}}$

Pno.

114

S. moved through dooms of feel his an - ger was as right as rain

A. moved through dooms of feel his an - ger was as right as rain

T. $\overbrace{\text{3}}$ moved through dooms of feel his an - ger was as right as rain

B. moved through dooms of feel his an - ger was as right as rain

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

119

p

S. *his pi-ty was as green as grain*

A. *his pi-ty was as green as grain*

T. *his pi-ty was as green as grain*

B. *his pi-ty was as green as grain my fa-ther*

his pi-ty was as green as grain

Vln.

Pno.

124

S.

A. *sep - tem - ber - ing arms of year*

T. *moved through dooms of love sep - tem - ber - ing*

B. *My fa - ther moved through dooms of love*

Vln.

Pno.

p

my father moved through dooms of love

128

S. *3*
 sep - tem - ber - ing arms of year — ex tend

A. *3*
 yes hum - bly

T. *8*
 arms of year, — of year — ex - tend

B. *8*
 of year — ex tend

Vln. *3*

Pno.

132

S. *3*
 yes hum - bly wealth to foe and friend

A. *3*
 wealth to foe and friend than

T. *8*
 to foe and friend

B. *8*
 yes hum - bly wealth to foe and friend

Vln. *3*

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

136

S.
 A.
 T.
 B.
 Vln.
 Pno.

140

S.
 A.
 T.
 B.
 Vln.
 Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

144

S. — oc - to - ber - ing flame bec - koned) — *p* as earth will downward

A. — as earth will downward climb,

T. — (by oc - to - ber - ing flame bec - koned) as earth will downward climb,

B. — oc - to - ber - ing flame bec - koned) as earth will

Vln.

Pno.

149

S. climb, for im - mor - tal work his shoul - ders marched a gainst

A. so na - ked for im - mor - tal work his shoul - ders marched a gainst

T. so na ked for im - mor - tal work his shoul - ders marched a gainst

B. down - ward climb na - ked for im - mor - tal work his shoul - ders marched a gainst

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

153 *crescendo* *mf*

S. — the dark his sor - row was as true as bread: *mf* no li - ar looked.

A. the dark his sor - row was as true as bread: *mf* no li - ar looked.

T. the dark his sor - row was as true as bread: *mf* no li - ar looked.

B. — the dark his sor - row was as true as bread: *mf* no li - ar looked.

Vln. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

157 *f*

S. — him in the head; *f* if ev' - ry friend be - came his foe he'd

A. — him in the head; *f* if ev' - ry friend be - came his foe he'd

T. — him in the head; *f* if ev' - ry friend be - came his foe he'd

B. — him in the head; *f* if ev' - ry friend be - came his foe he'd

Vln. *f*

Pno. *f*

my father moved through dooms of love

161

S. laugh and build a world with snow.

A. laugh and build a world with snow.

T. laugh and build a world with snow. *mp*

B. laugh and build a world with snow. *mp*

Vln.

Pno.

164

S. *f*

A. *mf* *crescendo* (and ev' - ry

T. *crescendo* sing - ing each new leaf out of each tree (and ev' - ry

B. fa - ther moved through theys of we, sing - ing each new leaf out of each tree (and ev - ry

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

169 *crescendo*

S. child was sure that spring danced when she heard my fa-ther sing then

A. child was sure that spring danced when she heard my fa-ther sing

T. child was sure that spring danced when she heard my fa-ther sing then

B. child was sure that spring danced when she heard my fa-ther sing

Vln.

Pno.

173

S. let men kill which can - not share let blood and flesh

A. then let me kill which can - not share be blood and mire

T. let men kill which can - not share let blood and flesh be blood and mire

B. let blood and flesh be blood and mire

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

177 *mf*

S. schem - ing i - ma - gine pas - sion willed free - dom a drug that's bought and sold

A. *mf* schem - ing i - ma - gine pas - sion willed free - dom a drug that's bought and sold

T. *mf* free - dom a drug that's bought and sold

B. *mf* pas - sion willed

Vln.

Pno.

181 *poco*

S. free - dom a drug that's bought and sold giv - ing to steal and

A. *poco* free - dom a drug that's bought and sold giv - ing to steal and

T. *poco* free - dom a drug that's bought and sold giv - ing to steal and

B. *poco* free - dom a drug that's bought and sold giv - ing to steal and

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

185

S. cru - el kind, to doubt a mind,

A. cru - el kind a heart to fear to doubt a mind to dif-fer

T. a heart to fear to

B. cru - el kind a heart to fear to doubt a mind, to dif - fer

Vln.

Pno.

190

S. con - form con - form con -

A. a dis - ease of same con - form

T. dif-fer a dis-ease of same

B. a dis - ease of same

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

crescendo gently

194

S. form con - form the pin - nac - le the pin - nac - le of

A. con - form con - form the pin - nac - le of

T. con - form con - form the pin - nac - le of

B. con - form con - form the pin - nac - cle of

Vln.

Pno.

198

S. *mp* am though dull were all we taste as bright, bit - ter all

A. *mp* am though dull were all we taste as bright, bit - ter all

T. *mp* am though dull were all we taste as bright bit - ter all

B. *mp* am though dull were all we taste as bright, bit - ter all

Vln.

Pno.

mp *p*

subito p

my father moved through dooms of love

rit. . . . a tempo

203

S. ut - ter - ly things — sweet

A. ut - ter - ly things — sweet, bit - ter all ut - ter - ly things sweet mag - go - ty

T. ut - ter - ly things — sweet bit - ter all ut - ter - ly things sweet , pp 3

B. ut - ter - ly things — sweet, bit - ter all ut - ter - ly things sweet mag - go - ty mi - nus

Vln. rit. . . . a tempo

Pno. *quasi f*

208

S. mag - go - ty mi - nus and dumb death all we in - he - rit, all be - queath

A. mi - nus and dumb death all we in - he - rit, all be queath all we in -

T. mag - go - ty mi - nus and dumb death all we in - he - rit, all be - queath

B. and dumb death all we in - he - rit, all be - queath all we in - he - rit,

Vln. *p*

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

213

S. all we in - he - rit, all be - queath all we in - he - rit, all be - queath all we in -

A. he - rit, all be - queath all we in - he - rit, all be - queath all we in -

T. all we in - he - rit, all be - queath all we in - he - rit, all be - queath, all we in -

B. all be - queath all we in - he - rit, all be - queath all we in -

Vln. *f*

Pno.

218

S. he - rit, all be - queath, all we in - he - rit, all be - queath

A. he - rit, all be - queath, all we in - he - rit, all be queath

T. he - rit, all be - queath, all we in - he - rit, all be queath

B. he - rit, all be - queath, all we in - he - rit, all be - queath

Vln.

Pno. *mf* *p*

223

Vln.

Pno.

229

Vln.

Pno.

234

Vln.

mp *p*

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

238

S. *hushed*

A. *p*
and no-thing quite so least

T. *p*
and no-thing quite so least

B. *p*
and no-thing quite so least

Vln. *pp*

Pno.

243

S. *p*
I say though hate were why men breathe

A. as truth I say though hate were why men breathe

T. as truth I say though hate were why men breathe

B. as truth I say though hate were why men breathe

Vln. *p*

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

248 *poco*

S. be - cause my fa - ther lived his soul love is the whole and more than

A. be - cause my fa - ther lived his soul love is the whole be -

T. be - cause my fa - ther lived his soul love is the whole and more than

B. be - cause my fa - ther lived his soul be -

Vln.

Pno.

253

S. all love is the whole

A. cause my fa - ther lived his soul love is the whole and more than all

T. all love is the whole

B. cause my fa - ther lived his soul love is the whole and more than all

Vln.

Pno.

my father moved through dooms of love

258

S. _____ and more than all _____ love is the whole and

A. _____ love is the whole and more than all

T. _____ and more than all _____ love is the whole and more than all

B. _____ love is the whole and more than all

Vln. _____
p

Pno. _____

263

S. more than all _____

A. _____ love is the whole and more than all

T. _____ love is the whole and more than all

B. _____

Vln. _____

Pno. _____