

Commissioned by and for The Master Singers of Lexington,  
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# TEMPLE OF NATURE

*Organic life beneath the shoreless waves, was born and nursed in Ocean's pearly caves.  
First forms minute unseen by spheric glass move on the mud or pierce the wat'ry mass.  
These, as successive generations bloom new pow'rs acquire, and larger limbs assume;  
whence countless groups of vegetation spring and breathing realms of fin, and feet and wing.*

Text from "Temple of Nature" by Erasmus Darwin  
(1731 - 1802)

Music by Patricia Van Ness (1951)  
Score rev. 30 August 2024

*Sempre molto legato; sempre grazioso; senza vibrato.*  
Dynamic range *p - mf*, using natural dynamics.

♩ = 40 approx.

The musical score is written for five vocal parts: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1 & 2, Tenor, and Bass. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is 2/2. The tempo is marked as approximately 40 beats per minute. The score includes lyrics for each part, with some words in parentheses indicating optional phrasing. Dynamics are indicated by *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The Soprano 1 part has a melodic line with a *mf* dynamic. The Soprano 2 and Alto 1 & 2 parts have a more rhythmic, accompaniment-like line with a *mp* dynamic. The Tenor and Bass parts have a simple, harmonic line with a *p* dynamic.

SOPRANO 1  
life waves

SOPRANO 2  
*mp*  
Or - gan - ic life be-neath the shore - less waves,

ALTO 1 & 2  
*mp*  
Or - gan - ic life be-neath the shore-less waves,

TENOR  
*p*  
(Or life 'neath (shore waves,

BASS  
*p*  
(Or life 'neath (shore waves

Van Ness, Temple of Nature

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S 1 \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ forms \_\_\_\_\_ (un \_\_\_\_\_

S 2 \_\_\_\_\_ was born and nursed O - cean's caves. First forms \_\_\_\_\_ un -

A 1 & 2 \_\_\_\_\_ was born and nursed in O - cean's caves. First forms min - ute \_\_\_\_\_ un -

T \_\_\_\_\_ was born nursed (O \_\_\_\_\_ caves. First forms un -

B \_\_\_\_\_ born \_\_\_\_\_ caves. First \_\_\_\_\_ forms min - ute un -

18

S 1 \_\_\_\_\_ glass \_\_\_\_\_ move \_\_\_\_\_ pierce \_\_\_\_\_ mass; *mp*

S 2 \_\_\_\_\_ seen glass \_\_\_\_\_ move \_\_\_\_\_ pierce \_\_\_\_\_ mass; *mp*

A 1 & 2 \_\_\_\_\_ seen spher ic glass \_\_\_\_\_ move on the mud, or pierce the wat - 'ry *mp*

T \_\_\_\_\_ - seen by spher ic glass \_\_\_\_\_ move \_\_\_\_\_ pierce \_\_\_\_\_ wat - 'ry *p*

B \_\_\_\_\_ seen \_\_\_\_\_ glass \_\_\_\_\_ move \_\_\_\_\_ pierce \_\_\_\_\_ mass; *mp*

A

♩ = 80

25

S 1  
lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu lu lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu \_\_\_\_\_

S 2  
\_\_\_\_\_ *p* lu lu lu lu lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu lu

A 1 & 2  
mass; *p* lu lu lu lu lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu lu lu lu lu

T  
mass;

B  
\_\_\_\_\_



35

♩ = 40 approx. *mf* B

S 1  
lu \_\_\_\_\_ lu \_\_\_\_\_ bloom \_\_\_\_\_

S 2  
lu \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* bloom

A 1 & 2  
lu \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* These, as suc - ces - sive \_\_\_\_\_ bloom

T  
*mp* These \_\_\_\_\_

B  
*mp* as suc - ces - sive \_\_\_\_\_

42

S 1  
new whence

S 2  
bloom newpow'rs ac - quire limbs (sume, *f*)

A 1 & 2  
bloom newpow'rs ac-quire, and lar-ger limbs as-sume,

T  
gen - er - a - tions bloom newpow'rs ac-quire larg - er (sume,

B  
bloom new pow'rs (quire (sume,

50

S 1  
groups and realms

S 2  
count - less groups (ta spring, and breathing realms

A 1 & 2  
count-less groups groups veg - e - ta - tionspring, and breathingrealms of fin, and

T  
(count groups (ta spring, and realms of fin and

B  
count - less groups groups of veg - e - ta - tion spring, and realms of fin

59

S1 wing. *mp* lu lu lu lu lu

S2 wing. lu lu lu lu lu

A1 & 2 feet and wing; *mp* lu lu lu lu lu

T feet and wing; *p* lu lu lu lu lu

B wing. *p* lu lu lu lu



67 Stagger breathing as needed for a seamless sound.

S1 lu lu lu lu

S2 lu lu lu lu lu

A1 & 2 lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu

T lu lu lu lu lu lu lu lu

B lu lu lu lu lu lu

C ♩ = 70 approx.

stagger breathing as needed to end

*mp*

74

S 1 lu \_\_\_\_\_ Whence \_\_\_\_\_ count - less  
stagger breathing as needed to end

S 2 lu \_\_\_\_\_ Whence \_\_\_\_\_ count - less  
stagger breathing as needed to end

A 1 & 2 lu \_\_\_\_\_ Whence \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_ Whence \_\_\_\_\_ count - less  
stagger breathing as needed to end

B lu \_\_\_\_\_ Whence \_\_\_\_\_ count - less count - less  
stagger breathing as needed to end

*p*

80

S 1 groups \_\_\_\_\_ of veg - e - ta - tion spring, \_\_\_\_\_ and breath -

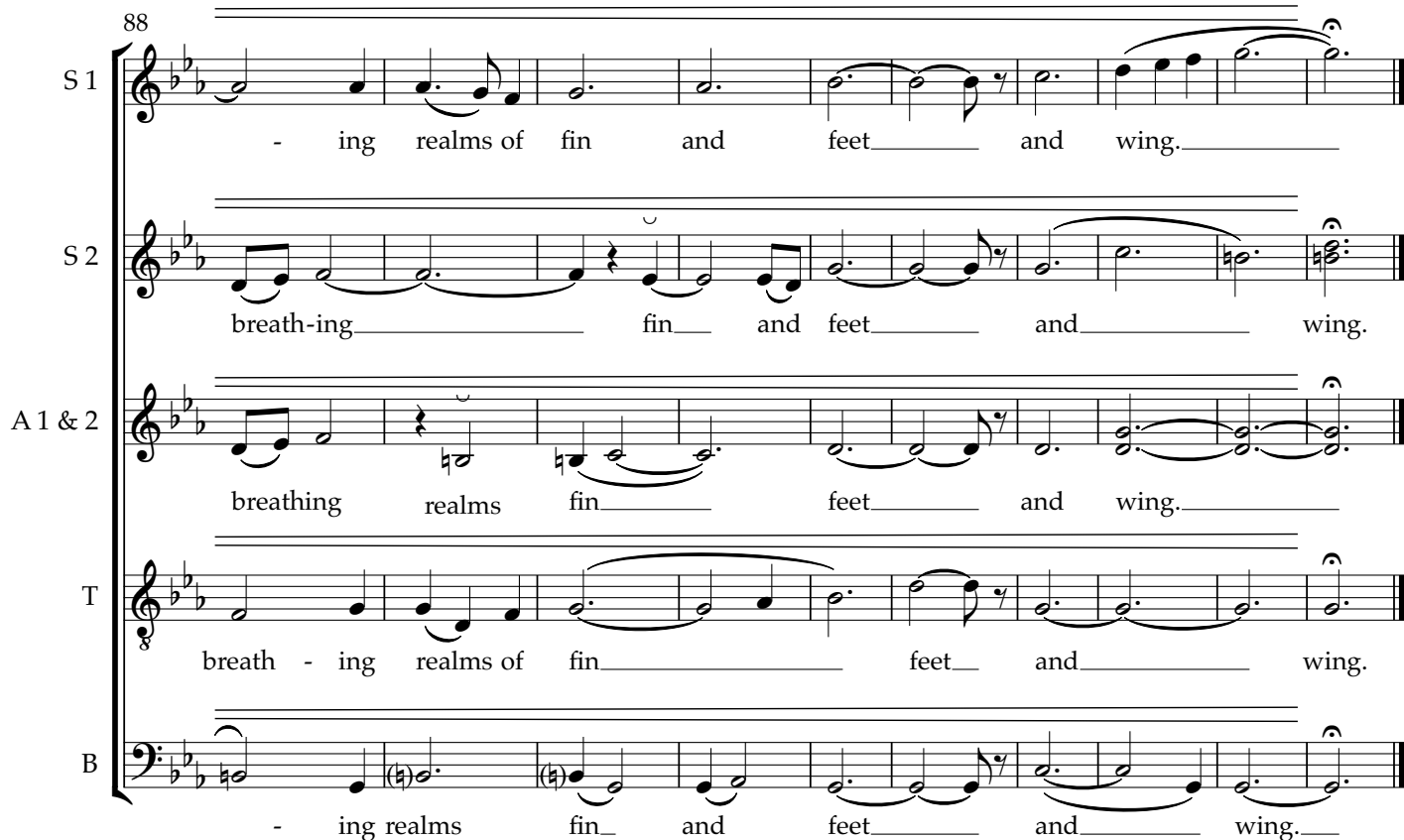
S 2 groups \_\_\_\_\_ of veg - e - ta - tion spring, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

A 1 & 2 groups \_\_\_\_\_ veg - e - ta - tion spring \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_ groups \_\_\_\_\_ spring, \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_ groups \_\_\_\_\_ spring, \_\_\_\_\_ breath -

88



S 1  
- ing realms of fin and feet and wing.

S 2  
breath-ing fin and feet and wing.

A 1 & 2  
breathing realms fin feet and wing.

T  
breath - ing realms of fin feet and wing.

B  
- ing realms fin and feet and wing.