

*Commissioned by the Univox Choir, Toronto*

Patrick Murray

# Hilltop Song

for choir SSAATBB

*Text by Charles G. D. Roberts*

*Hilltop Song* interleaves two poems by Canadian "Confederation" poet Sir Charles G.D. Roberts: the titular "Hilltop Song," and "Monition," the latter written during Roberts' time living in New York City. The themes of the two poems are complimentary and inform much of Roberts' work. "Hilltop Song" celebrates the sacred in nature and the simple life, while "Monition" explores the impersonal and transitory experience of the modern metropolis.

This piece concludes a phase in my composition where I have been drawn to folk-like tunes, simple harmony, and materials that seem to be "discovered" rather than composed. I hope, as in many of my choral pieces over the past two years, that this simple hymn sounds as though it has always existed - a part of the folklore we tell of this great country, given new life through singing together.

My heartfelt thanks go to all the members of the Univox Choir and Music Director Dallas Bergen, for whom I wrote this piece during my time as Composer in Residence from 2013-2014. Thank you for all your time and talent spent to bring my music to life. - P.M.

### **Hilltop Song II**

When the lights come out in the cottages  
 Along the shores at eve,  
 And across the darkening water  
 The last pale shadows leave;  
 And up from the rock-ridged pasture slopes  
 The sheep-bell tinklings steal,  
 And the folds are shut, and the shepherds  
 Turn to their quiet meal;  
 And even here, on the unfenced height,  
 No journeying wind goes by,  
 But the earth-sweet smells, and the home-sweet sounds,  
 Mount, like prayer, to the sky;  
 Then from the door of my opened heart  
 Old blindness and pride are driven,  
 Till I know how high is the humble,  
 The dear earth how close to heaven.

### **Monition**

A faint wind, blowing from World's End,  
 Made strange the city street.  
 A strange sound mingled in the fall  
 Of the familiar feet.  
 Something unseen whirled with the leaves  
 To tap on door and sill.  
 Something unknown went whispering by  
 Even when the wind was still.  
 And men looked up with startled eyes  
 And hurried on their way,  
 As if they had been called, and told  
 How brief their day.

-Charles G. D. Roberts

*\*\*Note that the text in the piece differs slightly in a few places, mostly to facilitate text setting.*

Commissioned by the Univox Choir, Toronto

## Hilltop Song

Charles G. D. Roberts

Patrick Murray

**Andante Moderato** ♩=80

Soprano *p dolce*

When the lights go out\_ in the cot-ta - ges\_ All a-long the\_ shores at eve, \_

**poco rit.**

S. *mp*

And a-cross the dark-ening wa- ter\_ The\_ last pale\_ sha-dows leave; \_

S. *mp*

And up from the rock- ridged\_ pas-ture slopes\_ The sheep bell\_ tink-lings steal,

A. *mp*

And up from the rock ridged pas-ture slopes\_ The sheep-bell tink-lings steal,

**poco rit.**

S. *mp*

And the folds are shut, and the shep- herds\_ Turn to their\_ qui-et meal; \_

A. *mp*

And the folds are shut, and the shep - herds Turn to their qui-et\_ meal; \_

T. *mp*

And the folds are shut, and the shep - herds Turn to their qui-et meal; \_

B. *mp*

Turn to their\_ qui-et meal; \_

Pno. (rehears.) *poco rit.*

21 **a tempo**

S. *f* *meno f*  
 — And e-ven here, on the un-fenced height, No jour - ney-ing wind goes by,—

A. *f* *meno f*  
 — And e-ven here, on the un-fenced height, No jour - ney-ing wind goes by,—

T. *f* *meno f*  
 — And e-ven here, on the un-fenced height, No jour - ney-ing wind goes by,—

B. *f* *meno f*  
 — And e-ven here, on the un-fenced height, No jour - ney-ing wind goes by,—

Pno. *a tempo* *f* *meno f*

26 *f* *poco a poco dim.*

S. *f* *poco a poco dim.*  
 — But the earth-sweet smells,— and the home-sweet sounds,— Mount, like

A. *f* *poco a poco dim.*  
 — But smells, and the home-sweet sounds,— Mount, like

T. *f* *poco a poco dim.*  
 — But the earth sweet smells, and the home-sweet sounds,— Mount, like

B. *f* *poco a poco dim.*  
 — But smells, and the home-sweet sounds,—

Pno. *f* *poco a poco dim.*

30 **poco rit.** **meno mosso**

S. prayer, \_\_\_\_\_ to the sky; *p* *mm*

A. prayer, \_\_\_\_\_ to the sky; *p* *mm*

T. prayer, \_\_\_\_\_ to the sky; *p* *mm*

B. Mount, like prayer, \_\_\_\_\_ to the sky; *p* *mm*

Pno. *poco rit.* *P meno mosso*

**Piu animato**

*mf*

36

S.

A faint wind, blow - ing from Worlds' End, \_\_\_\_\_ Made strange the

A faint wind, blow - ing from Worlds' End, \_\_\_\_\_ Made strange

A.

A faint wind, blow - ing from Worlds' End, \_\_\_\_\_ Made strange the

A faint wind, blow - ing from Worlds' End, \_\_\_\_\_ Made strange

T.

faint wind from \_\_\_\_\_ Worlds' End, \_\_\_\_\_ Made strange the

B.

faint wind from \_\_\_\_\_ Worlds' End, \_\_\_\_\_ Made strange the

Pno.

*mf*

*piu animato*

41

S. ci - ty street. A strange sound min - gled in the fall Of fa - mi -  
\_ the ci - ty street. A strange sound min - gled in the fall Of fa - mi -

A. ci - ty street. A strange sound min - gled in the fall Of fa - mi -  
\_ the ci - ty street, A strange sound min - gled in the fall Of fa - mi -

T. ci - ty street, A strange sound in the fall Of fa - mi -

B. ci - ty street, A strange sound in the fall Of fa - mi -

Pno.

The musical score is for a vocal quartet and piano. It features five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/2. The lyrics are: 'ci - ty street. A strange sound min - gled in the fall Of fa - mi -' for Soprano and Alto; 'ci - ty street, A strange sound min - gled in the fall Of fa - mi -' for Alto; 'ci - ty street, A strange sound in the fall Of fa - mi -' for Tenor; and 'ci - ty street, A strange sound in the fall Of fa - mi -' for Bass. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands.

46 *p poco piu agitato mp*

S. - liar feet. For some-thing un - seen moved with the leaves

*p poco piu agitato mp*

A. - liar feet. For some-thing un - seen moved with the leaves,

*p poco piu agitato mp*

T. - liar feet. For some-thing un-seen moved with the leaves

*p poco piu agitato mp*

B. - liar feet. For some-thing un-seen moved with the leaves,

Pno. *p poco piu agitato mp*



51

*p* To tap on door and sill. And some-thing un - known went whis - pering *mf*

*p* To tap on door and sill. And some-thing un - known went *mf*

*p* To tap on door and sill. And some-thing un - known went whis-pering *mf*

*p* To tap on door and sill. And some-thing un - known went *mf*

*p* To tap on door and sill. And some-thing un - known *mf*

*p* To tap on door and sill. And some-thing un - known *mf*

Pno. *mf*

56

*p* *mp*

S. by — E-ven when the wind was still. And men looked up with star -

whis-pering by — E-ven when — the wind was still. And men looked up with

A. by E-ven when — the wind was still. — And men looked up with star -

whis-pering by — E-ven when — the wind was still. And men looked up with

T. — E-ven when the wind was still. men with

B. — E-ven when the wind was still. men with

*p* *mp*

Pno.

60 *mf* *mp*

S. - tled eyes\_ And hur - ried on their way, As\_ if they had\_

star - tled eyes\_ And hur - ried on their way, As\_ if they

A. - tled eyes And hur - ried on their way,\_ As if they had\_

star - tled eyes\_ And hur - ried on their way, they

T. star - tled eyes\_ hur - ried way,

B. star - tled eyes\_ hur - ried way,

Pno. *mf* *mp*

65

**S.**  
... been called, and told How brief their day,

**A.**  
had been called, and told How brief their day,

**A.**  
... been called, and told How brief their

**T.**  
had been called and told How brief their

**T.**  
had been told How brief their day,

**B.**  
had been told How brief their day,

**Pno.**  
*f* *sempre f*

69

*piu f* *molto rit.* *mf*

S. How\_ brief\_ their day.

A. day, How brief\_ their day.

T. How\_ brief\_ their day.

B. How\_ brief\_ their day.

Pno. *piu f* *molto rit.* *mf*

74 **Meno mosso**

*mp*

S. Then e - ven from the door of my o - pened heart Old blind - ness and

*p*

A. *mm*

T. *p* *mm* *mp* Old blind - ness and

B. *p* *mm* *mp* Old blind - ness and

Pno. *p* *meno mosso*

79

*mf* *f*

S. pride are driven, Till we know how high is the hum - ble, The dear earth\_

*mf* *f*

A. Till we know how high is the hum - ble, The dear earth\_

*mf* *f*

T. pride are driven, Till we know how high is the hum - ble, dear earth\_

*mf* *f*

B. pride are driven, Till we know how high is the hum - ble, The dear earth\_

Pno. *mf* *f*

85 **Lento**

S. *p* *mm*

A. *p* how close to heaven. *mm*

T. *p* *mm*

B. *p* *mm*

Pno. **Lento** *p*

92 *rit.*

S. *piu p* *mm*

A. *piu p* *mm*

T. *piu p* *mm*

B. *piu p* *mm*

Pno. *piu p* *rit.*