

His Love Whom I Love

Composer's Note

Walt Whitman's very personal "Calamus" poems, from his *Leaves of Grass*, are widely regarded as being his clearest and most passionate expressions of his feelings of homosexual love. One of these, "Not heat flames up and consumes," paints a lush vignette on a timeless theme that can be found in much of heterosexual love poetry and, indeed, vocal music as well: "burning," "consuming" love. But then, Whitman lifts and lightens the theme, characterizing the (male) speaker as "wafted in all directions" "through the open air" for (and, implicitly, because of) his male lover.

Text

Not heat flames up and consumes,
Not sea-waves hurry in and out,
Not the air delicious and dry, the air of ripe summer, bears lightly
 along white down-balls of myriads of seeds,
Wafted, sailing gracefully, to drop where they may;
Not these, O none of these more than the flames of me, consum-
 ing, burning for his love whom I love,
O none more than I hurrying in and out;
Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never give up? O I
 the same,
O nor down-balls nor perfumes, nor the high rain-emitting clouds,
 are borne through the open air,
Any more than my soul is borne through the open air,
Wafted in all directions O love, for you.

Walt Whitman's poetry was first published before 1923. Therefore, it is now in the public domain by copyright expiration.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1891/poems/45>

<http://www.public-domain-poetry.com/walt-whitman/hours-continuing-long-864>

<https://copyright.cornell.edu/publicdomain>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calamus_\(poems\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calamus_(poems))

Dreamy, rubato ♩ = 58

f *pp*

B

whom _____ I love, _____

Pno.

p *pp*

* *rit.* * *rit.* * simile

Aleatoric cell #2:

O none more than I hurrying in and out;
 Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never give up? O I
 the same.
 O nor down-balls nor perfumes, nor the high rain-emitting clouds,
 are borne

9

B

Continue painting the text through improvisation, gradually rising in intensity towards the peak.
 In this cell, some airier qualities and more gleeful expression may be appropriate.
 If some pitches sound that aren't in this note-set, that is acceptable in this cell; it should feel very vocally free.

Pno.

Again, accelerando and crescendo, starting soft, but note that with less text for the vocalist in this cell,
 the accelerando and crescendo should be more accelerated to reach the peak more quickly.
 Pedal again kept held down.

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Liberated, overflowing $\text{♩} = 112$ *molto rit. poco a poco*

f *f*

B

10

through the o - pen air, A - ny-more

Pno.

ff *molto rit. poco a poco*

3 3

3 3

Ped.
Again, new pedal hold.

The note-values should again be treated as a guide for an atmospheric *molto ritardando*; however, this time, once the eighth-note chords begin, the rhythm needs to be metrical, in line with the vocalist.

B

13

than my soul is borne through the o - pen

Pno.

13

mp *p*

3 3 3 3

* *Ped.* * *Ped.* * simile

Tempo II ($\text{♩} = 58$)

ff *p*

B

16

air,

Pno.

16

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*

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4

19

B

mf

Waf - ted in all di -

Pno.

p

ped. * *ped.* * simile

22

B

mp *rit.*

rec - tions O love, _____

Pno.

rit.

25

B

p *pp*

for _____ you. _____

Pno.

pp

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* *