KIAN RAVAEI

A LITANY IN TIME OF PLAGUE

for SATB a capella chorus



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for SATB a capella chorus

(2020)

ÆI edition

COMPOSER'S NOTE

It is astonishing how aptly this poem by Thomas Nashe, written over 400 years ago, speaks to the condition of humanity in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Suddenly, we all find ourselves imploring the invisible enemy to "have mercy on us." This piece aims to mourn the countless dead, echo the existential fear of the living, and offer, with utmost sincerity, hope for the future.

—Kian Ravaei

A Litany in Time of Plague

by Thomas Nashe (1592)

Adieu, farewell, earth's bliss; This world uncertain is; Fond are life's lustful joys; Death proves them all but toys; None from his darts can fly; I am sick, I must die. Lord, have mercy on us!

[Rich men, trust not in wealth, Gold cannot buy you health; Physic himself must fade. All things to end are made, The plague full swift goes by; I am sick, I must die. Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye.
I am sick, I must die.
Lord, have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave, Worms feed on Hector brave; Swords may not fight with fate, Earth still holds open her gate. "Come, come!" the bells do cry. I am sick, I must die. Lord, have mercy on us.]

Wit with his wantonness
Tasteth death's bitterness;
Hell's executioner
Hath no ears for to hear
What vain art can reply.
I am sick, I must die.
Lord, have mercy on us.

Haste, therefore, each degree, To welcome destiny; Heaven is our heritage, Earth but a player's stage; Mount we unto the sky. I am sick, I must die. Lord, have mercy on us.

A LITANY IN TIME OF PLAGUE











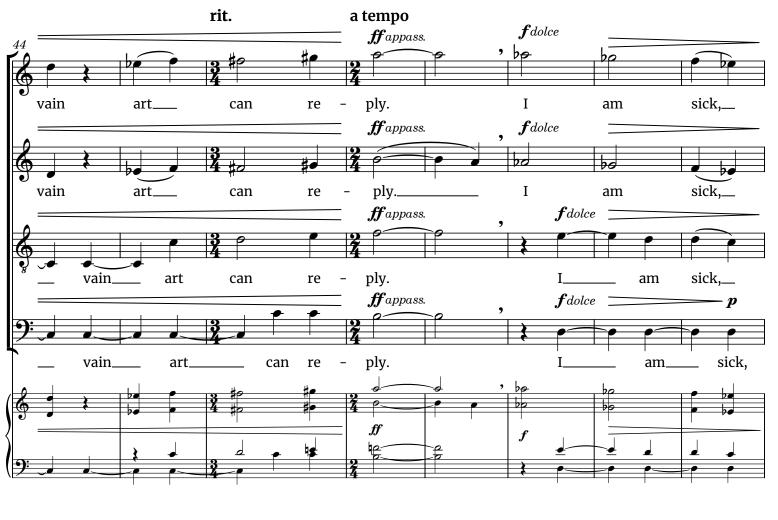
Hath_____ no ears

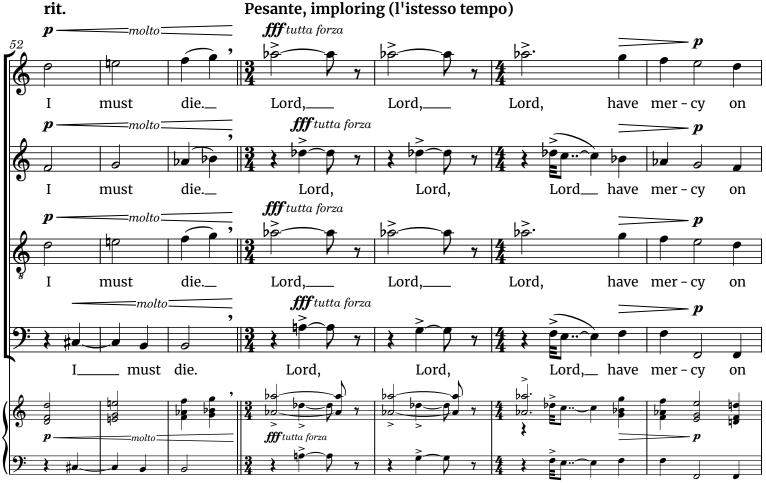
for to

hear

What

-cu - tion - er_







^{*)} Ossia: Half of each section hums from mm. 60-69.



