



KIAN RAVAEI

**A LITANY
IN TIME OF
PLAGUE**

for SATB a capella
chorus

ÆI edition

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(2020)

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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

duration ca. 5'

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.

to the memory of those who have died during the COVID-19 pandemic

A LITANY IN TIME OF PLAGUE

Thomas Nashe

Kian Ravaei
(2020)

Cantabile con rubato ♩ = ca. 112

f

Soprano
A - dieu, fare - well, earth's bliss;

f

Alto
A - dieu, fare - well, earth's bliss; This

f

Tenor
A - dieu, fare-well, earth's bliss;

f

Bass
A - dieu, fare - well, earth's

(for rehearsal only)

f

4

This world un - cer - tain **ff** ,

world un - cer - tain **ff** ,

This world un - cer - tain **ff** ,

bliss; This world un - cer - tain **ff** ,

ff

9 *pp sub.* *f* *p* *f*

is; Fond are life's lust - ful joys; Death proves them

pp sub. *f* *p* *f*

is; Fond are life's lust - ful joys; Death proves them

pp sub. *f* *p* *f*

is; Fond are life's lust - ful joys; Death proves them

pp sub. *f* *p* *f*

is; Fond are life's lust - ful joys; Death proves them

pp sub. *f* *p* *f*

is; Fond are life's lust - ful joys; Death proves them

13 *p* *rit.* *a tempo* *ff appass.* *f dolce*

all but toys; None from his darts can fly; I

p *ff appass.* *f dolce*

all but toys; None from his darts can fly; I

p *ff appass.* *f dolce*

all but toys; None from his darts can fly; I

p *ff* *f dolce*

all but toys; None from his darts can fly; I

p *ff* *f*

20 *p* *fp* *pp sub.*

am sick, I must die.

p *fp* *pp sub.* *pp*

am sick, I must die. Wit

p *fp* *pp sub.*

am sick, I must die.

p *fp* , *mf like plainchant*

am sick, I must die. Lord, have mer - cy on us!

p *fp* *mf* *pp*

29 *pp*

Wit_ with_ his_ wan - ton - ness_ Tast - - eth

with his_ wan - - ton - ness Tast - - - - eth

pp

Wit_ with his_ wan - ton - - ness_ Tast - eth

pp

Wit with_ his wan - ton - ness Tast - eth

rit.

a tempo

33 *f* *ff* *appass.*

death's bit - ter - ness; Hell's ex - e -

death's bit - ter - ness; Hell's ex - e -

death's bit - ter - ness; Hell's ex - e -

death's bit - ter - ness; Hell's ex - e -

f *ff* *appass.*

f *ff* *appass.*

f *ff* *appass.*

rit.

a tempo

39 *poco* *f* *ff* *poco* *f* *p*

-cu - tion - er Hath no ears for to hear What

poco *f* *ff* *poco* *f* *p*

-cu - tion - er Hath no ears for to hear What

poco *f* *ff* *poco* *f* *p*

-cu - tion - er Hath no ears for to hear What

poco *f* *ff* *poco* *f* *p*

-cu - tion - er Hath no ears for to hear What

poco *f* *ff* *poco* *f* *p*

-cu - tion - er Hath no ears for to hear What

rit. a tempo

ff *appass.* *f* *dolce*

44

vain art can re - ply. I am sick, —

vain art can re - ply. I am sick, —

vain art can re - ply. I am sick, —

vain art can re - ply. I am sick, —

ff *appass.* *f* *dolce* *p*

rit. Pesante, imploring (l'istesso tempo)

p *molto* *fff* *tutta forza* *p*

52

I must die. Lord, Lord, Lord, have mer - cy on

I must die. Lord, Lord, Lord, have mer - cy on

I must die. Lord, Lord, Lord, have mer - cy on

I must die. Lord, Lord, Lord, have mer - cy on

p *molto* *fff* *tutta forza* *p*

Molto largamente, tranquillo (poco meno mosso)* ♩ = ca. 50

59 *pp* *ppp sotto voce*

us. Haste, there - fore, each deg - ree, To wel - come des - ti-

us. Haste, there - fore, each deg - ree, To wel - come des - ti-

us. Haste, there - fore, each deg - ree, To wel - come des - ti-

us. Haste, there - fore, each deg - ree, To wel - come des - ti-

pp *ppp sotto voce*

65

-ny; Hea - ven is our her - i - tage, Earth but a

-ny; Hea - ven is our her - i - tage, Earth but a

-ny; Hea - ven is our her - i - tage, Earth but a

-ny; Hea - ven is our her - i - tage, Earth but a

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

69

play - er's stage; Mount we un - to the sky. I am sick,

play - er's stage; Mount we un - to the sky. I am sick,

play - er's stage; Mount we un - to the sky. I am sick,

play - er's stage; Mount we un - to the sky. I am sick,

74

ppp sotto voce $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

I must die. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

ppp sotto voce *p* like plainchant, cantando

I must die. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

ppp sotto voce *p* like plainchant, cantando

I must die. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

ppp sotto voce *p*

I must die. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

molto rit. al fine

(♩ = ca. 40)

79 *p* like plainchant, cantando *pp* serious *dolciss.*

Lord, have mer - cy on us, have mer - cy on us _____ on us.

mer - cy on us. _____ Lord, have mer - cy on us _____ on us.

us. _____ Lord, have mer - cy on us _____ on us.

_____ Lord, have mer - cy on us _____ on us.

pp *dolciss.*