

**Gerald Cohen**

*Adonai Ro'i*

(Psalm 23)

version for solo voice  
(or unison chorus) and piano

(1992)

*Adonai Ro'i* was originally written, on the loss of a friend, as a solo a cappella melody. I am a cantor, and a dear friend and congregant died of cancer at the age of 42 in 1989. Her husband asked me to sing at her funeral, and I decided to write a setting of Psalm 23, which is traditionally sung at Jewish funerals and memorial services. This was indeed one of those cases of a piece of music just writing itself, in the course of perhaps 30 minutes, as I was filled with the emotions of my friend's death.

As I started singing the piece at other services, I received a very strong response to it, and decided to make a piano accompaniment. This was published in 1995, and soon was used by cantors all over the country, as well as in churches and other services and concerts. It is a very curious thing for a composer: I write many pieces of music of all kinds, and it is hard to know exactly why one particular piece captures people's emotions so strongly, but that is what happened with this particular piece.

I was soon asked by the Zamir Chorale of Boston to write a version for SATB chorus, and that version has also been widely performed. I have also arranged it for solo voice and orchestra, and chorus and orchestra; these versions have been performed by such ensembles as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the San Diego Symphony.

I just have to assume that the piece somehow taps into the strong emotions that I felt as I was writing it (I had also lost my father about 8 years before, so I am sure that loss is present as well), and that this then communicates itself to performers, listeners, and mourners. In 2003, I had the sad but powerful experience of singing the piece at my mother's funeral.

I am grateful that this piece has become a way for so many to express deep and delicate feelings. I hope that, if it is a piece that is meaningful to you, that you will feel free to contact me about your experience with it.

—Gerald Cohen

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In memory of Marcia Scharf

## Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar

(Psalm 23)

Gerald Cohen

Gently flowing ♩ = 92-100

*p*

A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, bin - ot

*p*

with ped.

6

de - she yar - bi - tzei - ni, al mei m'-nu - chot, al mei m'-nu - chot y' -

13

na - ha - lei - - - ni. Naf - shi y'-sho - veiv, y'-sho -

*sempre legato*

19

veiv, \_\_\_\_\_ yan - chei - ni b' - mag - lei \_\_\_\_\_

This system contains measures 19 through 22. The vocal line begins with a half note 'veiv', followed by a half rest, then a half note 'yan', a quarter note 'chei', a half note 'ni', a quarter note 'b'', a half note 'mag', and a half note 'lei' with a half rest. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a half-note pattern in the left hand.

23

tse - dek, yan - chei - - - ni b' - mag - lei

*simile (sustain)*

This system contains measures 23 through 26. The vocal line starts with a half note 'tse', a half rest, a half note 'dek', a half rest, a half note 'yan', a quarter note 'chei', a half rest, a half note 'ni', a quarter note 'b'', a half note 'mag', and a half note 'lei'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern in the right hand and half-note pattern in the left hand. A 'simile (sustain)' instruction is placed below the piano part at the start of measure 25.

27

tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an \_\_\_\_\_ sh' - mo. \_\_\_\_\_

This system contains measures 27 through 30. The vocal line begins with a half note 'tse', a half rest, a half note 'dek', a half rest, a half note 'l'', a quarter note 'ma', a half rest, a half note 'an', a quarter note 'sh'', and a half note 'mo.' with a half rest. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a half-note pattern in the left hand.

32 *mp*

\_\_\_\_ Gam — ki ei - leich b' - gei tsal - ma - vet, lo i -

37

ra ——— ra ki a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

42 *poco allarg.* *f*

cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu -

PERUSAL SCORE

48 *rit. --- a tempo*

*p*

ni. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa - nai

53

shul - chan ne - gedtso - r' - rai, di -

58 *poco cresc.*

shan - - - ta va - she - men ro - shi ko -

*poco cresc.*

*simile (sustain)*

PERUSAL SCORE

62

si — r' - va - - - ya. — Ach —

*p*

66

A little slower,  
with rubato

tov va - che-sed — yir - d' - fu - - - ni kol y' -

*p*

70

a tempo

mei — cha - yai, kol y' - mei — cha - yai, v' - shav - - -

75 *poco allarg.* *f*

ti b' - veit A - do - nai l' - o - - rech ya - mim.

81 *rit. --- a tempo* *p* *pp*

A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, A - do -

87 *rit. al fine* *ppp*

nai ro - i lo ech - - sar.

*ppp* *ppp*

*Red.* *Red.*