

Gerald Cohen

Adonai Ro'i
(Psalm 23)

version for SATB chorus and piano

(1999)

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 1996 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, the version that is presented in this sheet music, 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

Adonai ro'i, lo achsar
binot deshe yarbaleyni,
al mey m'nachot y'nahaleyni.
Nafshi y'shoveyv,
yanchevni v'nagley tsedek,
l'mean sh'mo.
Gam ki yleych b'gey tsalmavet,
lo irani ki ata imadi,
shivt'cha v'mishantecha heyma y'nachamuni.
Taaroach l'fanay shulchan neged tsor'ray,
dishanta vashemen roshi,
kosi r'vaya.
Ach tov vachased yird'funi
kol y'mey chayai,
v'shavti b'veit adonai l'orech yamim.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He gives me repose in green meadows.
He leads me beside the still waters.
He revives my spirit;
He guides me on the right path,
for that is His nature.
Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no harm, for You are with me,
Your staff and your rod comfort me.
You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes,
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and kindness shall be my portion
all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

In memory of Marcia Scharf

This arrangement for SATB chorus was commissioned by
the Zamir Chorale of Boston and its conductor, Joshua Jacobson

Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar (Psalm 23)

Gerald Cohen

Gently flowing ♩ = 100-108

Soprano *p*
A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, bin ot de - she yar - bi -

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano
p
with ped.

7
S. tzei - ni, al mei m' - nu - chot, al mei m' - nu - chot y' - na - ha -

A.

T.

B.

7

14

S. lei - - - ni. *p* Naf - shi y' - sho - veiv, y' - sho - veiv, - - -

A. *p* Naf - shi y' - sho - veiv, y' - sho - veiv, - - -

T. *p* Naf - - - shi y' - sho -

B. *p* Naf - - - shi y' - sho -

14

20

S. yan - chei - ni v' - mag - lei - tse - dek, yan - chei - - -

A. yan - chei - ni v' - mag - lei - tse - dek, yan - chei - - -

T. *p* veiv, - - - yan - - - chei - ni mag - lei tse - - - dek, yan -

B. *p* veiv, yan - - - - - chei - - - ni v' - mag - - -

20

sempre legato

simile
(sustain)

26

S. ni v'-mag-lei tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an sh' -

A. ni v'-mag-lei tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an sh' -

T. 8 chei - ni mag - lei tse - dek l' - ma - an sh' -

B. lei tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an sh' -

26

31

S. mo. *p sotto voce* Lu - lu *simile* lu - lu

A. mo. *p sotto voce* Lu - lu *simile* lu - lu

T. 8 mo. *mp cantabile* Gam ki ei - leich b' - gei

B. mo. *mp* Gam ki ei - leich b' - gei tsal - ma -

31

mo. Gam ki ei - - -

Note: From the upbeat to m.33 through m.40, several 2nd altos may sing the tenor part, and several 2nd sopranos may sing the alto part, so that the soprano line can be light, and the tenor line can be prominent but not strained.

36

S. *mp*
lu—lu, lu—lu lu—lu a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

A. *mp*
ma - vet, lo i - - ra ra a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

T. *mp*
8 vet, lo i - ra - - ra ki a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

B. *mp*
leich, a - - - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

36

mp

42

S. *poco allarg. a tempo f*
cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu - - ni, *mp*

A. *f*
cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu - - ni, ah. *mp*

T. *f*
8 cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - - - - ma, ah. *mp*

B. *f*
cha u mi - shan - te - cha hei - - - - ma, ah. *mp*

42

poco allarg. a tempo f
cha u mi - shan - te - cha hei - - - - ma, ah. *rit.*

rit.

49 *a tempo*

p *rit.* *p*

S. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai shul -

A. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai shul - - -

T. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa - nai shul - chan

B. Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa - nai shul - chan

49 *rit.* *a tempo*

p

55 *poco cresc.*

S. chan ne ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va -

A. chan ne ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va -

T. ne - ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va - she - men ro -

B. ne - ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va - she - men ro -

55 *sempre legato*

simile
(sustain)

Note: The melody in the tenors and basses should remain the most prominent voice in mm.58-65.

61 Sop. solo: *p* *sweetly* **A little slower, with rubato**

Ach tov *pp* *poco* va -

S. she - men, ko - si r' - va - ya.

A. she - men, ko - si r' - va - ya.

T. shi ko - si r' - va - ya.

B. shi ko - si r' - va - ya.

Ach tov *p* *poco*

Ach tov *pp* *poco*

Ach *pp* *poco*

61 **A little slower, with rubato**

p

67

che - sed yir - d' - fu - ni kol y' - mei cha - yai, kol y' - mei cha -

S. *poco* *simile*

A. che - sed yir - d' - fu - ni y' - mei cha - yai cha -

T. che - sed yir - d' - fu - ni y' - mei cha - yai cha -

B. tov che - sed y' - mei cha -

67 *poco* *simile*

67 tov che - sed y' - mei cha -

73 **a tempo (Tempo I)** **poco allarg.** **a tempo**

S. 73 yai, **f**

A. yai, v' - shav - - - ti b' - veit a-do - nai l' - **f**

T. yai, shav - - - ti a - do - nai l' - **f**

B. 8 yai, v' - shav - ti a - do - nai l' - **f**

73 yai, shav - - - ti a - do - nai l' - o - - - **poco allarg.** **a tempo**

a tempo (Tempo I)

79 **rit.** **a tempo** **p**

S. rech ya - mim. A-do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, **p**

A. rech ya mim, ah. **mp** **p**

T. 8 rech ya - mim, ah. **mp** **p** **p** **p**

B. rech ya - mim, ah. **mp** **p** **p** **p**

79 rech ya - mim, ah. **rit.** **a tempo** **p**

p

