

Gerald Cohen

And yet the light returns

for SSATTB solo ensemble
or chorus a cappella

Perusal Score

And yet the light returns was composed for the Western Wind Ensemble, in response to their commission for a new piece appropriate for Chanukah, with an emphasis on the theme of light. I chose a text of Rami Shapiro, from his poem “Chanukah” from *Accidental Grace*; Rami graciously allowed me to rework the text to create a poem for this musical setting. The word “light” is passed around the chorus at the beginning and end of the piece, building chords of shifting colors. The overall structure is A-B-A; with the outside sections in long-phrased melodies focusing on the return of light, and the middle section, more agitated, on the forces in life that “threaten to smother our light.”

And yet the light returns was commissioned for The Western Wind Vocal Ensemble by Francine M. Gordon, through the Zamir Choral Foundation’s Mandell Rosen Fund for New Music. It was given its premiere in New York City in December 2019.

—Gerald Cohen

Text, by Rami Shapiro and Gerald Cohen

*And yet the light returns
From within or from without,
At the moment of greatest dark,
light returns.*

*Time and events flow beyond our control,
sweeping us swiftly on a surging tide.
Our fears, our distress, threaten to smother our light,
leaving us alone with our demons and the dark.*

*And yet—
From an inner vision or an oft-told tale,
from an act of will or the strong arm of a friend,
from a heartfelt cry or a lover’s kiss—
light returns.*

Text: Rami Shapiro
and Gerald Cohen

And yet the light returns

Music: Gerald Cohen

Moderato $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$ *p*

Soprano 1
Soprano 2
Alto
Tenor 1
Tenor 2
Bass

Note: In patterns such as in mm. 1-6, the chords should feel as a melody passed and then sustained among all the voices. The lyric "(l)ight" means that that voice should begin with the vowel of the word "light", leaving out the initial "l", and then finishing the word with the diphthong and consonant as usual.

Note: Breath marks in parentheses are optional. In a performance by 6 solo singers, these are to be taken only if needed. In a performance by a larger chorus, staggered breathing is preferred rather than taking these optional breaths.

S 1
S 2
A
T 1
T 2
B

10

S1 *mp* And yet the light re - turns

S2 *p* ah,

A *p* ah,

T1 *p* ah,

T2 *p* ah,

B *mp* And yet the light re -

15

S1 *mf* From with-in or from with-out, At the moment of

S2 *mf* ah, At the moment of

A *mp* ah, *mf* At the

T1 *mp* ah, ah,

T2 *mp* ah, *mf* At the

B turns From with-in or from with-out,

21

S1 great - est dark, (l)ight, *p*

S2 great - est dark, (l)ight *p*

A great - est dark, (l)ight *p*

T1 great - est dark, Light, *p*

T2 great - est dark, Light, *p*

B *mf* At the mo - ment of great - est dark, *p*

27

S1 light re - turns. *mp* *p*

S2 (l)ight, light light *mp*

A (l)ight, light ah *p*

T1 (l)ight light light *mp*

T2 (l)ight light ah *p*

B *p* light light ah *p*

accel.

34

S1

S2
ah light re - turns

A
ah, ah

T1
ah light re - turns

T2
light re - turns

B

With more motion, agitated $\text{♩} = 80$
mp

41

S1
Time and e - vents flow be - yond our con - trol,

S2
Time and e - vents flow be - yond our con - trol,

A
ah, ah, ah,

T1
Time, Time,

T2
Time, ah, ah, ah,

B
Time, Time,

Note: In such figures as T1 in m. 41 and T2 in m.42, it will be necessary of course to have a slight glottal stop and reattack on the second beat. It should be done without hiding it, but not emphasized.

46 *mf*

S1 sweep-ing— us swift-ly on a surg - ing tide. Our fears,— our dis-

S2 sweep-ing— us swift-ly on a surg - ing ah, ah, ah,

A

T1 *mp* *mf* tide, tide, ah ah, ah, Our fears,

T2 tide, tide, fears,

B tide, tide, fears,

52 (C#)

S1 tress, threa-ten— to smo-ther— our light,

S2 Our fears, our dis-tress, threa-ten— to smo-ther— our light,

A tress, fears, dis-tress, threa - ten ah, ah,

T1 our dis-tress, smo-ther light, ah, ah,

T2 Our fears, our dis-tress, threa - - - ten light,

B threa - - - ten light,

58

S1
leav - ing us a - lone with our de - mons and the

S2
lone and the

A
ah, leav - ing us a - lone with our de - mons and the

T1
ah, Leave, a - - - lone,

T2
lone, lone,

B
lone,

64

S1
dark. And yet—

S2
dark. And yet— And yet—

A
dark. And yet—

T1
ah, ah, ah, ah, And yet— And yet—

T2
ah, ah, ah, ah, And yet—

B
dark. And yet— And yet—

mf *dim.* *rit.*

mf *dim.*

mf *dim.*

mf *dim.*

mf *dim.*

(rit.)
72 *mp* Tempo I ♩ = 92

S1 From an in-ner vi - sion from an

S2 From a vi - - - sion, oft - told tale, an

A From a vi - - - sion, oft - told tale, an

T1 From a vi - - - sion, oft - told tale, an

T2 From a vi - - - sion, oft - told tale, an

B or an oft - told tale,

79 *mf*

S1 act of will from a heart-felt cry or a

S2 act will, a strong from a heart-felt cry or a

A act will, a strong from a heart-felt cry or a

T1 act will, a strong friend, a heart-felt cry

T2 act will, a strong friend, a heart-felt cry

B or the strong arm of a friend, a heart-felt cry

84 *p* *poco rit.*

S1 lo - - - - - ver's kiss—

S2 lo - - - - - ver's kiss—

A lo - - - - - ver's kiss—

T1 or a lo - - - - - ver's from lo - - - - - ver's kiss—

T2 or a lo - - - - - ver's kiss—

B or a lo - - - - - ver's

89 *A tempo* *mp* *mf*

S1 (l)ight, light light re -

S2 (l)ight, (l)ight, (l)ight, re -

A (l)ight, (l)ight, (l)ight, light

T1 Light, (l)ight, (l)ight, light

T2 Light, (l)ight, Light,

B

93

S1 turns, light re - turns, light,

S2 turns, light re - turns, light,

A re - turns, light, light, (l)ight,

T1 re - turns, light, light. (l)ight,

T2 Light,

B Light,

p

(F nat)

99

S1 re - - - turns, light.

S2 (l)ight, re - turns, light, light.

A re - turns, light, light.

T1 light.

T2 light.

B light.

pp