

A Posie



A song for baritone with
harp accompaniment

Music (2020) by Art Eschenlauer

Poetry: "Life" (1633)
by George Herbert (1593-1633)

A Posie

Text: "Life" (1633) by
George Herbert (1593-1633)

A meditation on humility

Tune: POSIE, and
harp arr. (2020) by
Art Eschenlauer

$\text{♩} = 95$
Andante

p ————— *mp* > *p* *mp* < *mf* > *mp*

Baritone

rit. I made a po-sie, while the day ran by: here

Harp

mf > *rit.* *p* *a tempo* *pp* < *mp* *rit.*

9

mf < *mp* < *mf* < *mp* < *mf*

Bar.

a tempo *più veloce* *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo*
will I smell my rem-nant out, and tie my life with-in this band. But Time did beck-on

Hrp.

a tempo < *mf* > *mp* *a tempo* *mf* *rit.* *p* *a tempo*

15

mp < *mf* < *mp* < *mf* > *mp*

Bar.

più veloce *a tempo*
to the flow'rs, and they, by noon, most cun-ning-ly did steal a-way, and

Hrp.

mf *più veloce*, *p* *mp* < *mf* *a tempo* *mp*

21

p < *pp* *p* < *mp* > *p* < *mp* > *p* *mp*

Bar.

rit. *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo*
with-ered in my hand. My hand was next to them, and then my heart: I took, with -

Hrp.

p *rit.* *pp* *p* *a tempo* *rit.* *mp* *a tempo*

28 *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Bar. *più veloce* *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo*
 out more think - ing, in good part Time's gen - tle ad - mo - ni - tion: who did (so sweet -

Hrp. *più veloce* *mf* *a tempo* *mp* *rit.* *mf* *mp* *a tempo* *p*

34 *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

Bar. *rit.* *a tempo* *più veloce* *a tempo* *rit.*
 ly) death's sad taste con - vey, mak - ing my mind to smell my fat - al day; yet sug' - ring the sus - pi -

Hrp. *mp* *rit.* *a tempo* *più veloce* *mf* *a tempo* *mp* *rit.*

41 *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Bar. *a tempo* *più veloce* *a tempo* *più veloce*
 cion. Fare - well (dear flow'rs) sweet - ly your time ye spent, fit (while ye liv'd) for smell or -

Hrp. *f* *a tempo* *mf* *più veloce* *f* *a tempo* *mf* *più veloce* *f* *più veloce*

48 *mp* *mf*

Bar. *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo* *più veloce* *a tempo*
 or - na - ment, and (af - ter death) for cures. I fol - low straight, with - out com - plaints

Hrp. *a tempo* *mp* *rit.* *a tempo* *mf* *più veloce* *a tempo*

54 *mp* *p* *pp* *p*

Bar. *rit. poco a poco*
 or grief, since if my scent be good, I care not, if it be as short as yours.

Hrp. *mp* *rit. poco a poco* *p* *pp* *p*

The Text: "Life" by George Herbert

"Life" by George Herbert was published posthumously in 1633 in "The Temple".

¶ Life.

I Made a posie, while the day ran by:
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band.
But time did becken to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And wither'd in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart:
I took, without more thinking, in good part
Times gentle admonition:
Who did so sweetly death's sad taste convey,
Making my minde to smell my fatal day;
Yet fugging the suspicion.

Farewell deare flowers, sweetly your time ye spent,
Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament,
And after death for cures.
I follow straight without complaints or grief,
Since if my fent be good, I care not, if
It be as short as yours.

George Herbert was taken by tuberculosis at age 39. His poem "Life" takes a hopeful perspective: although life may be short, it may be lived beautifully and humbly. I find poet's mention of the physical senses of smell and taste to be suggestive of thoughts that are deeply sensed rather than intellectually abstract; he does not merely think these thoughts, he senses and fully experiences them. Note also that:

- "posy" can mean either a bouquet of flowers or an inscription on the inside of a ring
- dried flowers were used for "cures", *i.e.*, herbal medicine.

For more notes and interpretations regarding this poem, see:

- <http://eschenlauer.com/wp/blog/2020/01/24/life-george-herbert/>
- https://web.archive.org/web/20200124143129/http://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/archives/selected_work_43.html

Images

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text: <https://archive.org/details/temple sacredpoe09herbgoog/page/n114/mode/2up>