

A Poisie



A song for baritone with
harp accompaniment

Music (2020) by Art Eschenlauer

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

The Text: "Life" by George Herbert

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

¶ Life.

I Made a poise, while the day ran by:
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band.
But time did beckon 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 fall day;
Yet sugring 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 lent 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 poets 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

cover: "Bowl with sunflowers, roses, and other flowers" by Vincent van Gogh,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vincent_Willem_van_Gogh_123.jpg

text: <https://archive.org/details/templatesacredpoe09herbgoog/page/n14/mode/2up>

A Posie

A meditation on humility

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

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

♩ = 95
Andante

Baritone

Harp

rit. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*

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

9

Baritone

Harp

mf *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

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-

15

Baritone

Harp

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

più veloce *a tempo*

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

21

Baritone

Harp

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

rit. *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo*

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

28

Baritone

Harp

mf *mp* *mf* *mp*

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-

34

Baritone

Harp

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

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-

41

Baritone

Harp

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

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-

48

Baritone

Harp

mp *mf*

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

54

Baritone

Harp

mp *p* *ppp*

rit. poco a poco

or grief, since if my scent be good, I care not, if it be as short as yours.