

SEA-FEVER

*For low voice
with piano accompaniment*



by
Vanessa McClintock

Copyright © 2024 by Vanessa McClintock

SEA-FEVER

*For low voice
with piano accompaniment*

Musical Setting of Poem by
John Masefield

by
Vanessa McClintock

Copyright © 2024 by Vanessa McClintock

SEA-FEVER

The origins of this musical piece set to the poem of John Masefield's poem escapes me. However, I think it has something to do with my interest in poems and songs related to the sea—this stemmed from my rendition of Allan Cunningham's poem *Our Heritage the Sea* (also known by its first line, "A WET sail and a flowing sea," which got its start in 1970 (see notes accompanying that song).

It was in the fall of 2023 that I read a few online articles that articulated the differences 'twixt "sea songs" and "sea shanties" and stumbled upon this poem—I think.

The basic melody and harmony came quickly—but with a caveat. While doing some casual background of the poem I happened upon a splendid recording on YouTube of the poem set to music by English composer and teacher John Ireland, performed by Jonathan Lemalu.

Immediately I heard the similarities to my own rendition and set about re-writing the melody (keeping the premise of harmony rather much intact).

The more traditional approach to the poem seems to be that of an eager, still virile sailor longing to return to life on the sea. In the beginning the accompaniment is set in constant motion and continues through the three verses. But then, near the end, it returns to the first verse with a different attitude. The music is marked "plaintively" and then "wistfully."

The conclusion becomes that of an aged sailor looking back on his life nostalgically while realizing his final years will be, inevitably, moored on the mainland, with sentimental daydreams of what can never again be.

John Masefield was an English poet and writer living from June 01, 1878, to May 12, 1967.

May 2024

Vanessa McClintock, Composer

SEA-FEVER

John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted
knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

SEA-FEVER

for low voice

Poem: John Masefield

Music: Vanessa McClintock

$\text{♩} = 60$

Vocal

Piano

p

Tenuto_NP $\text{♩} = 90$

mf

mf

5

mf

9

I must go down to the seas a - gain, to the lone - ly sea and the

sky, And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her

13

17

$\text{♩} = 66$

by; And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's

21

$\text{♩} = 99$

shak - ing, And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn

25

$\text{♩} = 60$

break - ing. _____

mf

29

p *mf*

33

37

41

45

nied; And all I ask is a win - dy day with the

49

white clouds fly - ing, And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the

53

sea - gulls cry - ing.

57

I must go down to the seas a - gain, to the

61

65

va - grant gyp - sy life, To the gull's way and the whale's way where the

69

wind's like a whet - ted knife; And all I ask is a

73

mer - ry yarn from a laugh - ing fel - low - ro - ver, And qui - et

77

sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's

mf

o - ver. ____

mf

81

rallentando $\text{♩} = 90$ *mp*

I must go down to the

mp

85

rall. *mp* *plaintively* *a tempo*

seas a-gain, to the lone - ly sea and the sky, ____ And all I ask is a tall ____ ship and a

89

$\text{♩} = 60$

star to steer her by; And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the

94

98

♩ = 99

white sail's shak - ing, And a grey mist on the sea's face, and the

102

rall.

grey dawn break - ing. — And all I ask is a

♩ = 84 dolce mp

p

106

wistfully

tall — ship — and a star to steer her by.

rit.

♩ = 99