



Jonathan Dove

The Passing of the Year Song cycle for double chorus and piano

1. Invocation
2. The narrow bud opens its beauties to the sun
3. Answer July
4. Hot sun, cool fire
5. Ah, Sun-flower!
6. Adieu! Farewell earth's bliss!
7. Ring out, wild bells

The seven poems that I have set in *The Passing of the Year* make up three 'movements'. The first looks forward to summer, beginning with a line from Blake ('O Earth, O Earth return!'). 'The narrow bud' comes from Blake's *To Autumn*, but is a description of summer; the rapid questions of 'Answer July' suggest the quickening senses, the excitement of everything bursting into life, and summer's triumphant arrival.

The second section follows the passing of summer. It begins in sultry heat, with a song from the opening scene of *David and Bethsabe* ('Hot sun, cool fire'): a girl bathing in a spring feels the power and danger of her beauty. The section ends with the sense of mortality the Autumn brings: 'Adieu! Farewell earth's bliss', from *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, heralds the death of summer. The cycle ends in winter, on New Year's Eve with a passage from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

This song cycle is dedicated to the memory of my mother, who died too young