

# ABBIE BETINIS

## *The Clan of the Lichens*

*Five Poems by Opal Whiteley*

*~ For high voice and piano ~*

- I. *All Things Live*
- II. *Night and the Little Failures*
- III. *The Prayer Wind*
- IV. *A Tale for Children (and taller ones)*
- V. *The Clan of the Lichens*

*Commissioned by Jennifer Kult and Jocelyn Hagen,  
and dedicated to them with love*

## *The Clan of the Lichens*

Opal Whiteley (1897-1992), child literary prodigy and acclaimed naturalist, was famous for her bestselling childhood diary (1920), but also wrote much poetry. These poems, from her collection *The Flower of Stars*, were written when Opal was in her early 20's. Abbie dedicates this piece (with love) to Jennifer and Jocelyn.

### **I. All Things Live**

*All things live;  
The innermost thoughts of a man's soul  
Walk the highway of the universe  
And are seen by all the pilgrims  
Who have gone before.*

### **II. Night and the Little Failures**

*Night took up the web of life  
And wove a star thereon  
Of amethyst and silver glimmering.*

*From her rosary she drew a pearl  
And gave its holding to this star  
Lest coldness come to her heart  
With forgetting of sorrow's old tears  
In the midst of unfolding years.*

*Also, Night took from her girdle, a rose  
And caught in its petals the hour glimmering  
That this star might be a flower  
To shed its fragrance on earth fields.*

*So wove she into beauty  
The little failures of man,  
But his successes  
She cast to earth again.*

### **III. The Prayer Wind**

*There was quiet in the garden,  
Save for the music  
From the harp of stars,  
When to its playing  
Came the Prayer Wind  
Wearing rose petal slippers  
And twining for-get-me-nots  
In her hair.*

*There was quiet in the garden  
While the Prayer Wind  
Dropped her for-get-me-nots  
From twining in her hair.  
They fell to earth  
With the low sweet notes  
From the harp of stars*

*They gently drifted down  
And homes were gladder that day –  
Nobody knew why, only  
There were more blue-eyed children.*

### **IV. A Tale for Children and Taller Ones (partial)**

*There is a little comet  
That whirls around the world.  
Sometimes,  
He is seen nearing earth,  
But, mostly, he is seen  
Dancing and prancing up and down  
The high hall of heaven.*

*He goeth quickly,  
Yet may be always with us.*

*He sparkles a song  
Like a ribbon  
Have you heard him sing?*

*"I'm so weary and lonely  
Most people think me  
A comet only...  
My tail can be very big with light  
But I'd like to go to bed at night.  
I'll come with patter light  
At latter light..."*

### **V. The Clan of the Lichens**

*We will be gray  
For the dumbness of old things  
And we will be  
Without form  
As are old longings.  
And we will be like petals  
As are new yearnings.*

*And we will be  
Gray with a little green  
As are old hopes  
That live on with a foreseeing  
And a dream.*

*And we will cling  
That no wind may part us  
As old friends.*

*We will be a symbol  
Of things grown old  
And the beauty that yet is  
When youth glory sleeps.*

# The Clan of the Lichens

## III. The Prayer Wind

OPAL WHITELEY

ABBIE BETINIS

Fluidly,  $\text{♩} = 46$

*p*

There was qui - et in the

Piano

*pp*

3 *mp* *mp*

gard - en, Save for the mu - sic From the harp of stars,

Pno.

*mp* *pp*

5 *mp* *rit.* 6

Pno.

4

6 *A tempo* *mp* *cresc.*

When\_\_ to its play - ing\_\_ Came the

Pno. *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

8 Prayer\_\_ Wind\_\_

Pno. *mf* *p*

9 Ah\_\_

Pno. *mf* *p*

11 *p* *delicately* 2 *molto*

Wear - - - ing rose - - - pet - al slip - pers And -

Pno. *delicately* *molto*

13 *mf* *rit.* *p*

twin - - - ing for - get - me - nots. In her

Pno. *mf* *pp*

14 *A tempo* (*p*)

hair. There was qui - et in the

Pno. *A tempo* (*pp*)

16 *mf*

gard - en \_\_\_\_\_ While \_\_\_\_\_ the Prayer Wind \_\_\_\_\_ Dropped \_\_\_\_\_ her for -

Pno. *mp*

18 *sub. p*

get - me - nots \_\_\_\_\_ From

Pno. *sub. p*

19 *f* *poco rit.*

twin - - - - - ing \_\_\_\_\_ in her hair.

Pno. *f* *poco rit.*

21 *mf*

They fell, they fell to

Pno. *p* *mf* *sub. p*

*ped.*

23 *p* *poco rit. --- Slower*

earth With the low sweet

Pno. *pp*

25 *accel. f*

notes From the harp of stars

Pno. *accel.*

26 *Tempo Primo*

Pno.

26 *Tempo Primo*

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

28 *pp espressivo*

They gent - ly drift - ed down,

28 *pp* repeat notes at random, as a windchime

*ff* *pp* repeat notes at random, as a windchime

$\frac{1}{2}$  *Rec.* -----

29 *p* *pp*

down And homes were glad - der that day No -

29

Pno.

The image shows a musical score for piano accompaniment. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 26-27) features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and a crescendo, moving to a forte (f) dynamic. It includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The second system (measures 28-29) includes a vocal line with the lyrics 'They gently drifted down,' and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a piano (pp) dynamic and is marked 'espressivo'. It includes a section where notes are repeated at random, described as 'as a windchime'. The third system (measures 29-30) includes a vocal line with the lyrics 'down And homes were gladder that day No -' and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a piano (p) dynamic and ends with a piano-pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics, articulation marks, and performance instructions.

31 *p*

bod - y knew why, on - ly There were more

Pno. *poco* *p* *8va*

*almost still*

33 *ppp*

blue - - - - - eyed

*almost still*

Pno. *ppp* 5 5

*Tempo Primo, misterioso*

34 *p*

child - - - - - ren.

*Tempo Primo, misterioso*

Pno. *pp*