

adapted from the SSA version commissioned by Tapestry Women's Choir, Colfax, WA

# Shepherd's Song at Christmas

for Soprano or Tenor Solo, SATB Chorus (*divisi*) and Piano

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

Gwyneth Walker

Flowing ♩ = 120

Piano

*p* very gently, as stars in the distance

*Red.*

*(Red)*

*(Red)*

Solo

**A**  
Solo (Tenor or Soprano)  
*mf*

1. Look out there at the
2. Watch out for my

*(Red)*

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10

Solo

star! I, a - mong the least, will a -  
flocks, do not let them stray. I am

(Ped.)

13

Solo

rise and take a jour - ney to the East. \_\_\_\_\_  
go - ing on a jour - ney far, far a - way. \_\_\_\_\_

S  
A

T  
B

*pp unobtrusively*  
Hmm, \_\_\_\_\_

*pp unobtrusively*  
Hmm, \_\_\_\_\_

(Ped.)

16 B

Solo

S  
A

T  
B

*unis. mf*

*p* Ah, \_\_\_\_\_

1. But what shall I bring \_\_\_\_\_ as a  
 2. But what shall I bring \_\_\_\_\_ as a

(Ped.) \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

19

S  
A

T  
B

1. King? \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Child? \_\_\_\_\_

pres - ent \_ for the King! What shall I  
 pres - ent \_ for the Child? What shall I

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

22 Look there at the star!

S A *p* Look there at the

T B bring to the man - ger? \_\_\_\_\_  
bring to the man - ger? \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

*p*

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

25 Look there at the star! **C** (Soloist join Tutti) *f espr.*

S A star! Look there... I will bring a song, a  
I will bring a lamb,

T B Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ I will bring a song, a  
Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ I will bring a lamb, \_\_\_\_\_

*(p)* *f espr.*

*f*

*Ped.* *Ped.*

29

S  
A

song that I will sing, a song for the King in the  
gen - tle, meek, and mild, a lamb for the Child in the

T  
B

song that I will sing, a song for the King in the  
gen - tle, meek, and mild, a lamb for the Child in the

33

S  
A

man - ger.  
man - ger.

T  
B

man - ger.  
man - ger.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

37

S  
A

*Tutti S* **D** 3. Look there at the  
(Soloist tacet) *mf*

*p* **D**

Ped.

40 *(mf)*

Solo *(mf)* I'm just a shep - herd child,\*

S A *mf* star! Look there at the star! *unis. (p)* just a shep - herd

*(Ped.)*

43

Solo ver - y poor I am

S A child...\* ver - y poor I

*(Ped.)*

46

Solo But I know there is a King in Beth - le -

S A am... a

*(Ped.)*

\* The word "child" has been substituted for the word "boy" which appears in the original poem.

49

Solo

hem. \_\_\_\_\_

S  
A  
King in Beth - le - hem... \_\_\_\_\_

T  
B  
*unis. mf*  
What shall I bring \_\_\_\_\_

**E**

(Ped.) \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

52 (Soloist tacet)

S  
A  
Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ Him? \_\_\_\_\_

T  
B  
\_\_\_\_\_ as a pres-ent \_\_\_\_\_ just for Him?

(p)

Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_ Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

55 *mf*

S What shall I bring to the man - ger? \_\_\_\_\_

A What shall I bring to the man - ger? \_\_\_\_\_

T What shall I bring to the man - ger? \_\_\_\_\_

B What shall I bring to the man - ger? \_\_\_\_\_

59 **F** (*Soloist join Tutti*)  
*f espr.*

S A I will bring my heart and give my heart to Him.

T B I will bring my heart \_\_\_\_\_ and give my heart to Him. \_\_\_\_\_

**F**



63

S  
A

T  
B

I will bring my heart to the man - ger. \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring my heart to the man - ger, man - ger. \_\_\_\_\_

67 **G**

Solo *Solo f*

my heart... \_\_\_\_\_

S  
A

T  
B

I will bring my heart I will and give my heart to

I will bring my heart \_\_\_\_\_ and give my heart to

**G**

70

Solo

my heart...

S  
A

Him. I will bring my heart to the

T  
B

Him. I will bring my heart to the

(Ped.) Ped. Ped. Ped.

73

Solo

my heart...

S  
A

man - ger. Look there at the star!

T  
B

man - ger. Look there at the

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*dim.*

*mf*

77 *rit. to the end*  
*p*

Solo  
 — Look there at the star! Look there at the

S  
 A  
*mp* star! *mp* Look there at the star! *p* Look there at the

T  
 B  
*p* Look there *rit. to the end*

Ped.

80 *(rit.)*

Solo  
 star! *pp*

S  
 A  
*p* star! *pp*

T  
 B  
*unis.* *pp*

at the star! *pp*

*(rit.)*

Ped.

## Shepherd's Song at Christmas

Look there at the star!  
I, among the least,  
Will arise and take  
A journey to the East.  
*But what shall I bring  
As a present for the King?  
What shall I bring to the Manger?*

I will bring a song,  
A song that I will sing,  
A song for the King  
In the Manger.

Watch out for my flocks,  
Do not let them stray.  
I am going on a journey  
Far, far away,  
*But what shall I bring  
As a present for the Child?  
What shall I bring to the Manger?*

I will bring a lamb,  
Gentle, meek, and mild,  
A lamb for the Child  
In the Manger.

I'm just a shepherd boy.  
Very poor I am –  
But I know there is  
A King in Bethlehem.  
*What shall I bring  
As a present for Him?  
What shall I bring to the Manger?*

I will bring my heart  
And give my heart to Him.  
I will bring my heart  
To the Manger.

—Langston Hughes

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### Composer's Notes

The poem *Shepherd's Song at Christmas* is found in a collection of children's Nativity poems by Langston Hughes. The "voice" in this poem is a shepherd child who wonders what he (or she) can bring to the Child in the Manger. He is just a poor shepherd child. What can he offer?

The answers are: a song (which he can sing); a lamb (which he can bring) and his heart (which he can give). These are his gifts to the King in Bethlehem.

—Gwyneth Walker

### Publisher's Note

*Shepherd's Song at Christmas* is available in three other versions:  
soprano or tenor solo, SATB chorus (*divisi*) and organ (Catalog No. 7437)  
soprano solo, SSA chorus (*divisi*) and organ (Catalog No. 7439)  
soprano solo, SSA chorus (*divisi*) and piano (Catalog No. 7440)

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit her Web site. <[www.gwynethwalker.com](http://www.gwynethwalker.com)>

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