

Notes

The text is a mysterious and beautiful poem by Christina Rossetti—at times dark and fathomless, and at others energetic, earth-based, and universal in its affirmation of light over darkness, and of the spirit-life out beyond what Rossetti—or any of us—can know. The piano is an integral part of expressing this wonderful text and is intricately woven into the texture of the voices; it can be seen in dual roles as both a dark underpinning to the entire work and at the same time the sparks of light within the implied vast darkness.

Strange voices sing among the planets which
Move on forever; in the old sea's foam
There is a prophecy; in Heaven's blue dome
Great beacon fires are lighted; black as pitch
Is night, and yet star jewels make it rich;
And if the moon lights up her cloudy home-
The darkness flees, and forth strange gleamings roam
Lighting up hill and vale and mound and ditch.
Earth is full of all questions that all ask;
And she alone of heavy silence full
Answereth not: what is it severeth
Us from the spirits that we would be with?
Or is it that our fleshly ear is dull,
And our own shadow hides light with a mask?

Christina Rossetti