

Program Notes (the poem makes it long—it is only there if you need or want it for the program)

Echo, for SSAA Choir and Piano, is a setting of the poem by Christina Rossetti. The text is a beautiful and haunting metaphoric reflection on communicating with a lost love through dreams. The last line of the poem reflects the whole essence of the musical setting—“As long ago, my love, so long ago.” The three-stanza poem falls easily into a ternary form through the calling forth of the lost lover at the beginning of the first and third stanzas. Although the words “come” and “dream(s)” are repeated several times, the echo theme in the text is often a metaphorical reflection of how our memory works, and how love—and the images we associated with love—echo in our dreams and memories. The music paints the words in repeated colors rather than literal echoing musical techniques, at least until the last lines that are set using imitation in the coda.

ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope and love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again tho' cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

Christina Rossetti