

# IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI  
(1830–1894)

BECKY McGLADE  
(b 1974)

**Lento** ♩ = 74

*mp*

SOPRANO

1. In the bleak mid - win - ter Fro - sty wind made moan,

ALTO

*mp*

6

Earth stood hard as ir - on, Wa - ter like a stone,

11 *mf*

Snow had fall - en snow on snow, Snow on snow,

*mf*

15 *p*

In the bleak mid - win - ter Long a - go.

*p*

★ see Composer's Note for ossia for all bars containing low Fs

20

*mf*

2. Our God, Heav'n can-not hold Him, Nor earth sus-tain;\_

*mf*

25

Heav'n and earth shall flee a-way When He comes to reign;\_

30

sta - ble-

In the bleak mid-winter A sta-ble-place suf-ficed The

34

*mp*

Lord God Al-migh-ty Je-sus Christ.

*mp*

39 *pp*

3. What can I give Him, Poor as I am?\_

*pp*

44

If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb, \_

49 *mp*

If I were a wise man I would do my part, -

*mp*

53

Yet what I can I give Him, Give my heart, \_

56

give my heart, I give my heart. \_

*mf* *f* *rit* *p*

*mf* *f* *p*

## Composer's note

*In the bleak midwinter* is a setting for four-part upper-voice choir, based on the original SATB version, of the famous poem by Christina Rossetti. This poem came to mind when I was walking down a Cornish lane on a cold, bleak November day, and I began to put the words to music as I walked. I was a little hesitant to write a setting of this text in the light of other much loved versions, but I felt inspired so decided to go for it!

An atmosphere of cold, winter stillness is conveyed in this piece with its gentle dissonances and slow, homophonic movement, and the music follows the natural rhythm of the words, resulting in frequent changes of bar-length. Each verse is set to the same music, but in the final verse the music responds to the climax of the poem, with the words 'give my heart' repeated three times, rising in intensity but then falling away again to finish as the piece began, in quiet stillness. A natural shape and line to each phrase should be led by the text, with subtle shading off and no hurrying at the end of lines. Likewise, the poem's punctuation should guide breathing. Overall, a sense of space should prevail but without the tempo dragging.

Also available for SATB a cappella (ISMN 979-0-060-13275-9).

Duration: c4 minutes

The below may be used as ossia to avoid low Fs for second altos in the indicated bars:

The image shows musical notation for two ossia options. The first option is for measures 5, 24, and 43, showing Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts. The second option is for measures 13, 32, and 51, showing Alto (A) parts. The third option is for measures 16, 35, and 54, showing Alto (A) parts. The fourth option is for measures 55 and 58, showing Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts. The Soprano part in measure 55 includes the lyrics 'heart,'.

Published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd  
Aldwych House  
71-91 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN

[www.boosey.com](http://www.boosey.com)

© Copyright 2016 by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd  
This arrangement © copyright 2020 by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd

ISMN 979-0-060-13728-0  
ISBN 978-1-78454-602-1

First impression 2020

Printed by Halstan:  
Halstan UK, 2-10 Plantation Road, Amersham, Bucks, HP6 6HJ. United Kingdom  
Halstan DE, Weißliliegasse 4, 55116 Mainz. Germany

Music setting derived from the composer's original by Anna Williams

## Text

In the bleak midwinter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone,  
Snow had fallen snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter  
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When He comes to reign:  
In the bleak midwinter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty  
Jesus Christ.

What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part, –  
Yet what I can I give Him,  
Give my heart.

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

## Becky McGlade



Becky was born in 1974 and grew up in Cornwall. She studied music at Royal Holloway, University of London, and after graduating, returned to Cornwall where she now leads a busy musical life as a composer, cellist, and piano and cello teacher. Becky developed a love of singing at an early age and her interest in sacred choral music grew during her time as a member of the Royal Holloway Chapel Choir. She now composes mainly choral music and draws much of her inspiration from her Christian faith. Her works, which include psalm settings, carols, and settings of other texts, biblical and secular, are written in a recognisable, engaging and personal style. Becky's setting of Christina Rossetti's poem *In the bleak midwinter* has become very widely performed following its premiere recording by Truro Cathedral Choir, broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and publication by Boosey & Hawkes. She has also written numerous songs for solo voice and works for string ensembles.