

# October Songs

Don Freund

"A Birthday" by Christina Georgina Rossetti  
"Unity" by Violet Jacob  
"Sister Maude" by Christina Georgina Rossetti



Don Freund:  
October Songs  
for Woman's Voice and Piano  
(2020)

Duration: ca. 12 minutes

"A Birthday" by Christina Georgina Rossetti  
"Unity" by Violet Jacob  
"Sister Maude" by Christina Georgina Rossetti

Composer's program note:

***October Songs*** is a sequel (written 18 years and 11 months later) to my 2002 set entitled *November Songs*. For *October Songs*, I chose two poems by Christina Georgina Rossetti to surround "Unity" by Violet Jacob. Rossetti's "A Birthday" bubbles over with personal exuberance, while Jacob's poem takes a cosmic perspective — set in a soundscape of floating through space and feeling the impact of galaxies exploding light years away. "Sister Maude" returns to a vernacular music style for a "chanson noire" ballad of murder and betrayal.

## A Birthday

by Christina Georgina Rossetti

My heart is like a singing bird  
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;  
My heart is like an apple-tree  
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;  
My heart is like a rainbow shell  
That paddles in a halcyon sea;  
My heart is gladder than all these  
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;  
Hang it with fur and purple dyes;  
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,  
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;  
Work it in gold and silver grapes,  
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;  
Because the birthday of my life  
Is come, my love is come to me.

## Unity

by Violet Jacob

I dreamed that life and time and space were one,  
And the pure trance of dawn;  
The increase drawn  
From all the journeys of the travelling sun,  
And the long mysteries of sound and sight,  
The whispering rains,  
And far, calm waters set in lonely plains,  
And cry of birds at night.

I dreamed that these and love and death were one,  
And all eternity,  
The life to be  
Therewith entwined, throughout the ages spun;  
And so with Grief, my playmate; him I knew  
One with the rest, -  
One with the mounting day, the east and west -  
Lord, is it true?  
Lord, do I dream? Methinks a key unlocks  
Some dungeon door, in thrall of blackened towers,  
On ecstasies, half hid, like chill white flowers  
Blown in the secret places of the rocks.

## **Sister Maude**

by Christina Georgina Rossetti

Who told my mother of my shame,  
Who told my father of my dear?  
Oh who but Maude, my sister Maude,  
Who lurked to spy and peer.

Cold he lies, as cold as stone,  
With his clotted curls about his face:  
The comeliest corpse in all the world  
And worthy of a queen's embrace.

You might have spared his soul, sister,  
Have spared my soul, your own soul too:  
Though I had not been born at all,  
He'd never have looked at you.

My father may sleep in Paradise,  
My mother at Heaven-gate:  
But sister Maude shall get no sleep  
Either early or late.

My father may wear a golden gown,  
My mother a crown may win;  
If my dear and I knocked at Heaven-gate  
Perhaps they'd let us in:  
But sister Maude, oh sister Maude,  
Bide *you* with death and sin.

*All texts are in the public domain.*

# October Songs

Don Freund

## A Birthday

"A Birthday" by Christina Georgina Rossetti

♩ = 116

My heart is like a sing-ing bird

Whose nest is in a watered shoot; My heart is like an ap-ple-tree Whose

boughs are bent with thick-set fruit; My heart is like a

13

rain-bow shell That pad - dles in a hal - cy - on sea; My heart is

*f* *p*

Ped. Ped.

17

♩ = 92

♩ = 116

glad - der than all these Be - cause my love is come to me.

*mp* *p, warm* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

22

Raise me a da - is of silk and down;

*mf*

Ped.

25

Hang it with fur and pur - ple dyes; Carve it in doves, and

*p*

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

28

pom - e - gran - ates, And pea - cocks with a hun - dred

*mf* *8va*

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

30

eyes; Work it in gold and sil - ver grapes, In

*p*

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



33

leaves, and sil - ver fleurs - de - lys; Be - cause the

*f* Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

36

Birth - day of my life Is come, rit.....

*mf* *f* *mf* Ped. Ped.

39 ♩ = 92

my love is come to me.

*p* *mf* *mp* Ped.

43 ♩ = 116

*mf* *f* (Ped.) Ped.

# Unity

## "Unity" by Violet Jacob

♩ = 50

Musical score for measures 1-5. The piece is in 4/4 time. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand, starting with a *sfz* dynamic that gradually softens to *p*. The left hand has a sustained bass line with an *8va* marking. The vocal line is silent in these measures. Pedal markings are present at the bottom.

6

Musical score for measures 6-10. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "I dreamed that life and time" in measure 7. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. Dynamics include *sfz* for the vocal entry and *p* for the piano accompaniment. An *8va* marking is present in the bass line. Pedal markings are present at the bottom.

11

Musical score for measures 11-15. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "and space were one, And the pure". The piano accompaniment features a more complex texture with sustained chords in the left hand. Dynamics include *sfz* for the vocal line and *p* for the piano accompaniment. An *8va* marking is present in the bass line. Pedal markings are present at the bottom.

trance of dawn; The in-crease

(Ped.) *p* *mf* Ped.

drawn From all the jour-neys of the trav-ling sun,

(Ped.) *p* *ff* Ped.

And the long mys-ter-ies of sound and

(Ped.) *p* *ffz p* Ped.

sight, The whis-per-ing rains, And

(Ped.) *(p)* Ped.

far, calm wa - - ters set in lone - - ly plains,

(8)

(Ped.)

And cry <sup>15ma</sup> of birds

*p* *ffz* *ffz* *f*

(Ped.) *p* Ped.

at night. I dreamed that these

*p* *p* *ffz p*

Ped.

and love and death were one,

*f* *f p* *ffz p*

(Ped.) Ped.

53

And all e - ter - - ni - ty, The

*8va*  
*p*  
*sfz*  
*sfz p*  
*sfz*

(Ped.)

58

life to be There - with en - twined, through - out the

(Ped.) Ped. Ped.

63

ag - - es spun; And so with

*f* *p* *p* *ff*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

67

Grief, my play - mate; him I knew One with the rest, One with the

*sfz* *mf* *p*

(Ped.) Ped. Ped. Ped.

70

♩ = 76

mount - ing day, the east and west Lord, is it true?

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

74

♩ = 50

Lord, do I dream?

*sfz* *p*

(Ped.) Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

77

I think

(Ped.)

78

a key un -

(Ped.)

79

-locks Some dun - geon door, in

(Ped.) Ped.

81

thrall of black - ened tow - - ers,

(Ped.)

83

On ec - sta - sies, half

*ff* *p* *sfz p* Ped.

86

hid, like chill white flow - ers

*p* *sfz p* Ped.

90

Musical score for measures 90-91. The vocal line (top) has a rest in measure 90 and a note in measure 91. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom) features a complex texture with triplets and a *8va* marking. A slur with a '3' is placed over the vocal line in measure 91, with the word "Blown" written below it. Pedal markings are present at the beginning and end of the system.

91

Musical score for measures 91-92. The vocal line (top) contains the lyrics "in the se - cret plac - es". The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom) continues with triplets and includes a *5* marking in the bass line. Pedal markings are present at the beginning and end of the system.

93

Musical score for measures 92-93. The vocal line (top) contains the lyrics "of the rocks." and features a time signature change from 3/4 to 4/4. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom) includes a *sfz p* marking and a time signature change from 3/4 to 4/4. Pedal markings are present at the beginning and end of the system.



# Sister Maude

"Sister Maude" by Christina Georgina Rossetti

♩ = 88

Piano introduction in 4/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with chords, starting on a G major chord and moving through several chords. The left hand plays a simple bass line of eighth notes. Dynamics include a forte (f) marking and a piano (p) marking. Pedal markings are present at the beginning and end of the introduction. An 8va marking is shown in the bass line.

5

Vocal line: Who told my moth - er of my shame,  
Piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern. Dynamics range from piano (p) to forte (f). An 8va marking is present in the bass line.

7

Vocal line: Who told my fa - ther of my dear? Oh who but Maude,  
Piano accompaniment continues. Dynamics range from piano (p) to forte (f). An 8va marking is present in the bass line.

10

Vocal line: my sis - ter Maude, Who lurked to spy and peer.  
Piano accompaniment continues. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). An 8va marking is present in the bass line.

13

Cold he lies, as

*f* *pp, dark*

(8)

15

cold as stone, With his clot-ted curls\_ a -

*mf* *p* *8ba* 5 2

17

- bout his face: The come-li'est corpse in all the world And

*mf* *8ba* *8ba*

20

wor-thy of a queen's em-brace.

*mf* *p* *f* *8ba* Ped.

23

You might have spared his soul, sis - ter, Have spared my soul, your

*p* *mf*

26

own soul too:\_\_\_\_\_ Though I had not been

*p* *f*

29

born at all, He'd nev - er have looked at you.

*p* *mf*

32

rit..... a tempo

*p* *ff*

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

34

My fa-ther may sleep in Par - a - dise, My

*f* *p*

8 8ba

37

moth - er at Heav - - en - - gate:

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

39

But sis - ter Maude shall get no sleep Ei - ther ear - ly or

*f* *mf*

42

late. My fa - ther may wear a gold - en gown, My

*p* *mf*

Ped. Ped. Ped. 8ba Ped.

45

moth - er — a crown may win; If my dear and I

48

knocked at Heav - en - gate Per - haps they'd let us in:

51

But sis - ter Maude, oh — sis - ter Maude, Bide you with death and

54

sin.

*molto rit.*.....