A Light exists in Spring

based on the poem by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Christopher Lee Fraley

unaccompanied mixed voices

SATB

My name is Chris Fraley. I’m a composer from Kona, Hawaii (previously from the less sunny Seattle area). I need your help! I am looking for choirs to partner with—either as a composer-in-residence, to commission new pieces, or simply to perform music I’ve already written. Please check out my website www.FraleyMusic.com, call my cell 425-829-9654, or email me at Chris@FraleyMusic.com to discuss possibilities. Thank you!
Instrumentation
SATB (a cappella)

Performance Time
approximately 3'30"

A Light exists in Spring

A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period—
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad
On Solitary Fields
That Science cannot overtake
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,
It shows the furthest Tree
Upon the furthest Slope you know
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step
Or Noons report away
Without the Formula of sound
It passes and we stay—

A quality of loss
Affecting our Content
As Trade had suddenly encroached
Upon a Sacrament.

— Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)
A Light exists in Spring

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Moderately, but with forward momentum (ca. $\dot{=}$ 100)

Christopher Lee Fraley

(F 177)

S. Lombardo

A light, a light, a light exists in Spring not present

A light, a light, a light, light exists in Spring not present

T. L. Taviani

A light not present on the

B. F. F. Barefield

A light not present on the

7. A. G. A. Barnum

poco rit. a tempo

at any other period a color

when March is scarcely here a color

year a color

year a color

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This score is licensed only for evaluation purposes.
stands abroad on solitary fields that Science cannot over-
take, but Human Nature, Human Nature feels. Oh, Human Nature feels, but

poco rall.        a tempo

Human, Human Nature feels. A light, a light, a light exists in Spring;

Human Nature feels. A light, a light, light exists in

Human Nature feels.

It
It waits...
Lawn, tree,

Spring: It waits up-on the lawn, tree,

It waits... Lawn, it shows the furthest tree,

waits... Lawn, tree up-on the furthest

(Opt. solo; tutti otherwise)

Tempo I poco accel.

slopes you know you
Then as ho-ri-zons step,

slopes you know you

slopes you know you

slopes you know you

molto rall. a tempo

without the For-mu-la of Sound, it pass-es, and we

noons re-port a-way,
A quality of loss, affecting our content,

Loss, content, as if

A quality of loss affecting our content,

Loss, content,

Trade had encroached upon a Sacramento.

Trade had encroached

.encroached a Sacramento.

(tutti) molto rit.

(A light...)

(A light...)

Sacramento.

(A light...)

Sacramento.
Program Note

On the surface, “A Light exists in Spring” captures Emily Dickinson’s feelings during an ephemeral experience of Nature—that particular light that is unique to early Spring. But there is a wonderful depth in her writing, including insights about how Nature moves us to feel, the relationship between contentment and Nature, and our experience of the passing of the intangible.

My SATB choral setting of the poem uses a major second (a whole step) to represent the “Light”—such harmonies sound “bright” to our ears. The opening of the piece is filled with this color, and the music at “A Color stands abroad” has harmonies rich with major seconds. Interestingly, resolving this harmonic interval as a suspension produces a particular emotional response—I use this to evoke the line “But Human Nature feels” throughout the entire piece, as a major theme of the poem is our emotional response to the Light and how it colors everything we experience. So too, these suspensions color the music... until “it passes and we stay”.

Dickinson hints, though, that the experience stays with us even through its loss—it is felt as an absence, affecting us yet again. Being an optimist, however, I suggest that this loss—the mundane encroaching on the sacred—does not completely prevail: our memory of those mysteries persists. Thus, my setting ends with a persistent hint of the Light—our memory of its impact on us.

Performance Notes

All tempos are approximate.

If necessary, the \( \frac{3}{8} \) triplet rhythms may be simplified to \( \frac{1}{4} \) throughout the piece (mm 8, 16, 37, 39, 41, 50, 59-63).

The tenuto marks in measures 27-29 (S), 38 (A), 40 (T), 42 are intended to have a “leaned into” feel. The tenuto marks in measures 27-29 and 42 may include a slight lengthening as well, if desired.

The bass divisi in measure 28 may be simplified to just the G, if necessary.

The \( sfp \) marks in measures 34-40 are intended to be a bell-like effect and should be light (rather than a heavy-handed accent).

There is an optional soprano solo at the end of measure 43 through measure 47. When a soloist is used, the passage may be sung freely, with the tutti joining on “you” (downbeat of measure 46). Note the choir will have to be very careful not to accent “you”.

When no solo is desired, either the entire soprano section or any fraction thereof may sing the stem up notes, with the entire section joining at “you”, being careful not to accent the word.

“Oo” (mm 48-54) is the IPA vowel [u]: a pure, non-diphthong, Italian “u”.

Be careful not to place any accent on the “-la” syllable of “Formula” in measure 53.

When a soloist is used, the optional soprano solo in measures 67 (beat 3) - 71 may be sung freely.

The tenor and bass lines in measures 69 through 80 is best sung by an even division of voices: half the tenors and basses on the “tenor” line, and half the tenors and basses on the “bass” line.

The duration of measure 79 may be rendered shorter than notated—please feel free to intuit the right duration for your performance.
## Choral Music

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>F. 155</td>
<td>Missa Brevis</td>
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<td>20:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 156</td>
<td>An End</td>
<td>SSATBB</td>
<td>10:00</td>
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<td>F. 170</td>
<td>Break, Break, Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 166</td>
<td>Reminiscence</td>
<td>SATB, Piano</td>
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<td>F. 163a</td>
<td>Hine Ma Tov</td>
<td>SATB, Piano</td>
<td>4:20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SSA &amp; a cappella also available)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 162</td>
<td>Aus alten Märchen</td>
<td>SATB</td>
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<td>F. 154</td>
<td>The Plains</td>
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<td>Wistful Wind</td>
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<td>Golden Stars</td>
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<td>F. 145</td>
<td>Requiescat</td>
<td>Tenor solo, SATB</td>
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<td>F. 164</td>
<td>Famine Song</td>
<td>SATB, Drum</td>
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<td>F. 140</td>
<td>Flanders Field</td>
<td>SATB, Piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 139</td>
<td>I Shall Not Care</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>2:40</td>
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## Art Song

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F. 157b</td>
<td>Lost Delight</td>
<td>Voice, Piano, Flute</td>
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<td>F. 142</td>
<td>Wind of the Western Sea</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
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<td>F. 141</td>
<td>Remember or Forget</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 151</td>
<td>To Sarah</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
<td>2:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 143</td>
<td>Last Flower</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
<td>3:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 118</td>
<td>A Lonely Offering Never Ends</td>
<td>Harp, Voice</td>
<td>3:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 111</td>
<td>Only You</td>
<td>Cello, Guitar, Voice</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. 108</td>
<td>The Crossing</td>
<td>String Quartet, Horn, Voice</td>
<td>3:14</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 106</td>
<td>A Thought for Your Penny</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
<td>1:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 104</td>
<td>Nursing Home</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
<td>2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. 101</td>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>Voice, Piano</td>
<td>2:45</td>
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## Christmas / Sacred

<table>
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F. 165</td>
<td>Let All Mortal Flesh</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>3:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 160</td>
<td>Let Us Be Merry (Billings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 159</td>
<td>Cradle Hymn (Parker)</td>
<td>SATB, Piano</td>
<td>3:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 153</td>
<td>Now Thank We All Our God</td>
<td>SATB, Organ, Trumpet</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 144</td>
<td>Reborn by Living Water</td>
<td>SATB, Piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 138</td>
<td>In the Shadow of the Son</td>
<td>SATB, Organ or</td>
<td>6:00</td>
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<td>Violin, Clarinet, Bassoon, &amp; Cello</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. 112</td>
<td>Psalm 25</td>
<td>Organ, Voice</td>
<td>3:30</td>
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</tbody>
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...as well as orchestral and chamber music