

# **Travels with Queen Victoria**

## **for soprano and piano**

Words by Dorothy Louise

Music by John Carbon

## Travels with Queen Victoria

Lyrics by Dorothy Louise; Music by John Carbon

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The song cycle, "Travels with Queen Victoria," is excerpted from an as yet unproduced (hope springs eternal) full-length opera, *Disappearing Act*, that centers upon the skeptic Houdini's quest to reach his dead mother courtesy of the mediumship of spiritualist advocate Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Partly because Queen Victoria longed to reach her dead Albert beyond the grave, partly because Houdini gave his mother an unworn dress made for the queen, Victoria inhabits the opera as a model and a caution. In the song cycle, she journeys from grieving widow to working monarch to the dying woman who will finally be united with her husband in death. The work was premiered at the Diller-Quaile School of Music, which commissioned the song cycle, on May 11, 2007, sung by soprano Kathy Yiannoudis, accompanied by pianist Steven Graff.

### I. We wish to send a letter.

[QUEEN VICTORIA takes in the view from Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.]

QUEEN VICTORIA

We wish to send a letter  
Throughout the Empire:  
From the collieries of Wales ....  
To the cloud-capped peaks of Africa,  
Breaking our seclusion here on the island,  
Where we remember our dear Albert,  
Untimely snatched.  
Since we cannot sleep with him,  
What harm sleeping with his nightshirt?  
Our dear Albert!  
Our well of tears is boundless as the sea.

We wish to resume our public duty  
But the spirit is feeble.  
And the heart is faint.  
Tomorrow.  
We shall dictate a message, ...  
A message.  
Tuck it into a bottle  
And our faithful retainer  
Will heave it into the breaking waves.

(Holds up a miniature, facing out.)

Look, Albert -- a cloudless day.

All the way east to Brighton.  
All the way west to Land's End.  
Tomorrow.  
Tomorrow we shall have a bottle brought.

## **II. Pursuing the elasticity required to return to the world**

[Being lowered into the sea.]

Some sneer  
At my bathing machine.  
We welcome all the more  
The bracing sea air.  
Immersing, then emerging.  
We do not say swimming,  
Pursuing the elasticity  
Required to return to the world.  
We must relinquish ourselves  
To be reeled in. (Fading out)  
Some sneer  
At my bathing machine.  
We welcome all the more  
The bracing sea air.  
Pursuing elasticity -- returning to the world.

## **III. Spring now is everywhere**

[In her bedroom at Osborne House.]

At last the snowdrops poke their heads up,  
Unfolding whiteness against the snow,  
Stretch their necks and claim their privilege  
Of heralding spring's awakening.  
On the wane, then gone.

Yet the light now,  
Spreading ever earlier,  
Lingers ever longer on the garden wall.  
Crocus, and daffodil,  
Narcissus and hyacinth –  
The primrose,  
Spendthrift spectrum, overdoing it.

Spring now is everywhere --  
Nearly – nearly everywhere --

For the mourning dove reminds me,  
One land stands locked in winter chill:  
My heart.

Can it ever warm again,  
When I've lost you?  
I am a snowdrop  
Bereft of daring;  
I am a primrose  
Stripped of hue:  
Choking on the stone of grief,  
I am a mourning dove  
Muted into silence.

Albert? Are you there, dear?  
Help me resume my duty;  
Live not as widow, but as queen.  
My love, my prince, with your spirit at my side,  
I must resume. I will.

#### **IV. These are some questions**

[At her desk in Buckingham Palace.]

Who is this Jack the Ripper?  
I've telegraphed Salisbury  
To light those courts.  
Are they searching the boats?  
Providing night surveillance?  
These are a few of the questions  
That occur to the Queen.

#### **V. I'm coming**

[On her deathbed.]

I have waited. I have done my duty.  
And now, it is finally,  
Finally  
Time to go.

Finally, I am allowed to go.

Readiness and ripeness and rest.  
Albert! My love!  
I'm coming! At last! I'm coming!

# Travels with Queen Victoria

for Kathleen Yiannoudes and Steven Graff

Lyrics by Dorothy Louise

John Carbon (2006)

## I. We wish to send a letter

$\text{♩} = 63$   
**Majestically** (QUEEN VICTORIA takes in the view from Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.) *mp*

Queen Victoria

Piano

6

Q.V.

Pno.

11

Q.V.

Pno.

We wish  
to send a let - ter  
Through-out the Em - pire:

16 *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

Q.V. From the colli-er-ies of Wales... To the cloud-capped peaks of—

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf*

20 *f* *mp*

Q.V. A - fri - ca, Break-ing our se - clu - sion here—

Pno. *cresc.* *f* *mp*

24 *mf*

Q.V. on this is - land, Where we re-mem—

Pno. *mf*

29 *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Q.V. ber our\_ dear\_ Al - bert, Un - time-ly snatched. Since we can

Pno. *f* *mf* *cresc.* *f* *mf*

34 *mp*

Q.V. not sleep with him, What harm sleep-ing with his night shirt?

Pno. *mp*

39 *p*

Q.V. Our\_ dear\_ Al - bert!

Pno. *p*

42 *f* *ff* *f*

Q.V. Our\_ well\_ of tears is\_ bound\_ less as\_ the sea.

Pno. *mf* *f* *ff*

46 *mf*

Q.V. We\_ wish to re-

Pno. *f* *dim.* *mf*

50  $\text{♩} = 72$   
a tempo  
With a sense of urgency

Q.V. sune\_ our\_ pub-lic du - ty\_

Pno. *mp*

54 *f* *mp*

Q.V. But the spi - - rit is\_ fee - - ble.

Pno. *f* *mp*

56 *mf* *mp*

Q.V. And the heart\_ is\_ faint.

Pno. *mf* *p*



58

Q.V.

Pno.

*mp*

*cresc.*

*mf*

60

Q.V.

Pno.

*f*

*cresc.*

To - - - - -

61

Q.V.

Pno.

*ff*

*f*

- mor - - - - - row. To - mor - row

63

Q.V.

Pno.

We shall dic - - - - - ate a mes - sage, -

65 *ff*

Q.V.

Pno. *ff*

66 rit. . . . .

Q.V.

Pno. *f*

68

Q.V. *mf*

A 3 mes - sage.

Pno. *mf*

70

Q.V. *mp*

Tuck it in - to a bot -

Pno. *mp*

73 *p* *mf* *f*

Q.V. *p* *mf* *f*

tle. And our faith - ful re - tain - - er Will heave it in - to the

Pno. *p* *mf* *sfz* *f*

78 *mp* *p rit.* *mf* **♩=63 Hopefully** (Holds up a miniature, facing out.)  
**A tempo**

Q.V. *mp* *p rit.* *mf*

break - ing waves. Look, Al - bert.....

Pno. *mp* *p* *pp* *mf*

84

Q.V.

a - noth - er cloud - less day.....

Pno.

87 *mp* *mf*

Q.V. You can see all the way east to Brighton.

Pno. *mp* *cresc.* *mf*

91 *mp*

Q.V. All the way west to Land's End.

Pno. *mp*

94 *p* *mp*

Q.V. To - mor - row. To - mor -

Pno. *p* *mp*

97

Q.V. - row we shall have a

Pno.

99

Q.V. *rit.* *p*

bot - - - tle brought.

Pno. *p*

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the Violin (Q.V.) and the lower staff is for the Piano (Pno.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. Measure 99 is marked with a '99' above the staff. The Q.V. part begins with a half note G4, followed by a dotted quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The lyrics 'bot - - - tle brought.' are written below the notes. A 'rit.' marking is placed above the staff, and a 'p' dynamic is indicated. The Pno. part features a series of triplets in both hands. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a triplet of eighth notes (B4, A4, G4). The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) and a triplet of eighth notes (A4, G4, F4). A 'p' dynamic is marked above the right hand. A 'Ped.' marking is at the bottom of the piano part. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

## II. Pursuing the elasticity required to return to the world

[Being lowered into the sea.]

♩=46

**Gently Rolling**

Queen Victoria

Piano

*mp*

107

Q.V.

Pno.

*mf*

111

Q.V.

Pno.

*f*

**Intrepidly**  
**L'istesso tempo**

115

Q.V.

Pno.

119

Q.V.

*f*

Some sneer at my ba - thing ma - chine.

Pno.

123

Q.V.

We wel - come all the more The bra - cing sea\_ air.

Pno.

126 **More urgently**

Q.V.

Pno.

129

Q.V. *mf*

Im - mer - sing, — then e - mer - ging. We do not say

Pno. *mf*

132

Q.V. *f*

swim - ming, — Pur - su - ing — the el - as - ti - ci - ty

Pno. *f*

135

Q.V. *ff* *f*

Ne - ces - sar - y to — re - turn to the world. We must re - lin - quish

Pno.



138 *mf* *f*

Q.V. our - selves To be reel - ed in. Some sneer at my

Pno. *mf* *f*

141

Q.V. bath - ing ma - chine. We wel - come

Pno.

144

Q.V. all the more The bra - cing sea\_ air. Pur -


Pno.

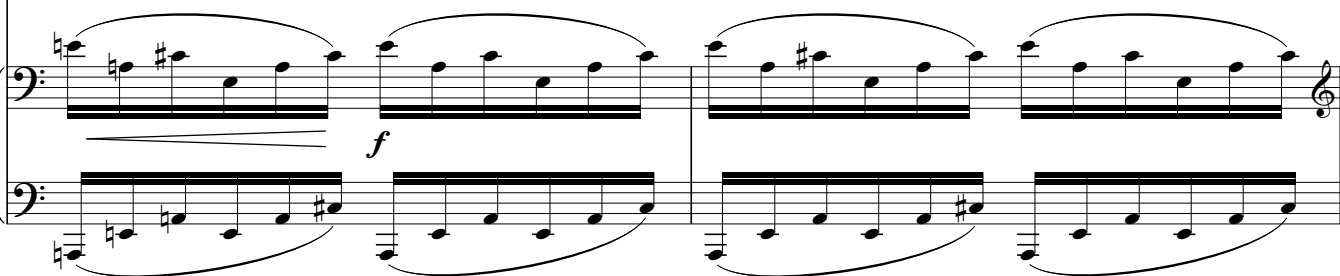
147

Q.V. su - ing el - as - ti - ci - ty... re -

Pno. *mf*

151

Q.V.  turn - ing to the world.

Pno.  *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 151 and 152. The vocal line (Q.V.) is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with a long note on 'turn' and a phrase 'ing to the world.' The piano accompaniment (Pno.) consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth-note chords, and the left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed between the staves.

rit. . . . .

153

Q.V.  rit. . . . .

Pno.  *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measure 153. The vocal line (Q.V.) is in treble clef and shows a long note followed by a rest, with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking below it. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth-note chords, and the left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed between the staves. The system concludes with a double bar line and a 3/4 time signature.

### III. Spring now is everywhere

[In her bedroom at Osborne House, April.]

♩=46 rit. . . . . A tempo

**Mournfully** *mp* 3

Queen Victoria

rit. . . . . A tempo

♩=46 **Mournfully** *mp* *p* *mp* 3 3

Piano

At last

160

Q.V.

the snow drops poke their heads up, Unfold-ing white

Pno.

163

Q.V.

ness a gainst the snow, Stretch their necks and

Pno.

*mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

166 *mf* *mp*

Q.V. claim their pri - vi - lege. Of her - al - ding spring's <sup>3</sup> a -

Pno. *mf* *mp*

168 *p*

Q.V. wa-ken - ing. On the wane, <sup>3</sup> then

Pno. *p*

171 *mp*

Q.V. gone. Yet the <sup>3</sup> light now, Sprea-ding

Pno. *mp*

174 *mf*

Q.V. *mf* *mp*

e ver ear - li - er, Lin - gers e - ver long - er

Pno. *mf* *mp*

177 *p* *mp* *f* *mf*

Q.V. on the gar-den wall. Cro - cus, and daff - o - dil,

Pno. *p* *mp* *f* *mf*

180 *f* *mp* *mf*

Q.V. Nar - cis - sus and Hy - a - cinth... The

Pno. *f* *mp*

184

Q.V. *mp*

prim - rose, Spend-thrift spec - trum, o-ver do-ing it.

Pno. *mf* *mp*

187

Q.V. *f* *mf*

Spring now is e-ver-y where...

Pno. *f* *mf*

189

Q.V.

Pno. *f*

191 *p*

Q.V. *Near - ly... near - ly e - ver-y\_\_ where...*

Pno. *p* 6 6 6 *pp* 3 6 6 6

194 *rit.* ..... *A tempo*

Q.V. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. 3 *A tempo* *mp*

198 *mp*

Q.V. *The mourn-ing dove. re - minds me, One\_*

Pno. 3 3 3

202

Q.V.

land stands locked in win - ter's chill: My

Pno.

*mf*

205

Q.V.

heart.

Pno.

*mp*

3

209

Q.V.

Pno.

*f*

3



212

Q.V.

*mf*

Can\_ it e - ver\_ warm\_ a -

Pno.

216

Q.V.

- gain, When I've lost you?

*mp*

Pno.

*mp*

*p*

220

Q.V.

Pno.

*mp*

*f*

223

Q.V. *mp*

I am a snow-drop

Pno. *mf* *mp* *p*

229

Q.V.

Be-reft of dar - ing;

Pno.

234

Q.V. *mp* *f* *ff*

I am a Prim - rose Stripped of hue: Cho -

Pno. *mp* *f* *ff*

237 *f* *mp* rit. . . . .

Q.V. king on the stone of grief,

Pno. *f* *mp* *f*

$\text{♩} = 46$  A tempo rit. . . . .

241 *p* *pp*

Q.V. I am a mourn-ing dove Mu - ted in-to

Pno. *p* *pp*

$\text{♩} = 56$  Poignantly rit. . . . .

247 - *mp* *p*

Q.V. si - lence. Al- bert? Are you lis-ten- ing?

Pno. *ppp* *mp*

253 *mf* *ff*

Q.V. Al - bert? Are you there, dear?

Pno. *f mp ff*

*♩=56*

*8<sup>va</sup>*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*

259 *f mp*

Q.V. Help me re - sume my du - ty;

Pno. *f mp*

*♩=56*

*8<sup>va</sup>*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*

265 *mf*

Q.V. Live not as

Pno. *f mp*

*♩=56*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*

270 = *f* *mp*

Q.V. wi - dow, but as queen. My—

Pno. *f* *mp* *p*

(8).....

275 *p* *mp* *p*

Q.V. love, Al - bert, my prince, with your spi - rit

Pno. *pp* *p* *pp*

280 *mp* *p*

Q.V. by my side, I

Pno. *p*

rit. . . . .

283 *pp*

Q.V. must re - sume. I will.

rit. . . . .

Pno. *pp*

Ped. \* Ped. \*

The image shows a musical score for a vocal soloist (Q.V.) and piano (Pno.). The vocal line is in treble clef and contains the lyrics "must re - sume. I will." with a *pp* dynamic marking. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and includes a *pp* dynamic marking, a triplet in the bass line, and a *Ped.* instruction. The score is marked with a *rit.* (ritardando) at the beginning and end of the passage. The page number 283 is indicated at the start of the vocal line.

## IV. These are some questions

$\text{♩} = 76$   
**Resolutely** [At her desk in Buckingham Palace.]

Queen Victoria

Piano

294

Q.V.

*mf*

Who is this Jack the Rip-per?

Pno.


*mf*


303

*Qua*

The musical score is set in 2/2 time with a tempo of quarter note = 76. It begins with a vocal line for Queen Victoria, which is mostly silent in this section. The piano accompaniment starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the bass and chords in the treble. There are several triplet markings (3) in the piano part. The score is divided into systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment from measure 294. The second system shows the vocal line for Queen Victoria (Q.V.) starting at measure 299 with the lyrics 'Who is this Jack the Rip-per?' and the piano accompaniment. The piano part has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The third system shows the piano accompaniment starting at measure 303, with a *Qua* marking above the treble staff.

306

Q.V.  I've tel - e-graphed Salis - bur - y To

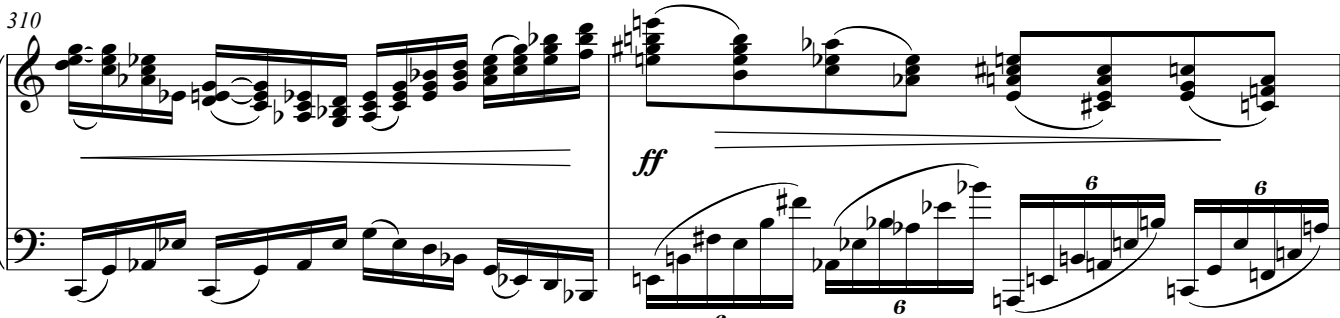
Pno. 

308

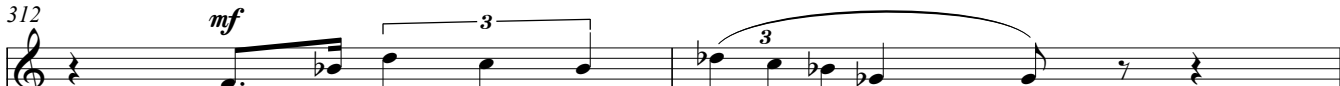
Q.V.  light those courts.


Pno. 

310

Pno.  *ff*

312

Q.V.  *mf* Are they search - ing the boats?

Pno.  *mf*



314 *mp*

Q.V. Pro - vi - ing night sur - veil - ance? These are a few ques - tions\_

Pno. *mp*

317

Q.V. That oc - cur to the Queen.

Pno.

*rit.* . . . . .

(SEGUE)

[On her deathbed.]

V. I'm coming!

321  $\text{♩} = 76$

Q.V. *p* I have wait -

Pno. *pp* *cresc.* *p*

326 *mp* *mf*

Q.V. - ed. I have done\_ my du - ty. And

Pno. *mp*

331 *f*

Q.V. now, it is fi - nal - ly, Fi - nal-ly time\_ to

Pno. *mf* *f*

335 *mp*

Q.V. go. Fi-nal-ly, I am al-lowed to go. Read - i -

Pno. *mp*

340 *mf* *mp*

Q.V. ness And\_ ripe - ness And\_ rest.

Pno. *mf* *mp*

345 *mf* *mp*

Q.V. Al - bert!

Pno. *mf* *mp*

349 *mf*

Q.V.

Pno. *mf* *8va*

352 *mf* *f*

Q.V. My love! Al - - bert!

Pno.

355 *mf* *cresc.*

Q.V. My love! I'm

Pno.

357 *f* *ff*

Q.V. com - - ing at last!

Pno.

rit.

359 *mf*

Q.V. Oh, Al - bert, I'm com - ing, my love!

Pno. *mf*

361  $\text{♩} = 63$  *mp* *p* *mp*

Q.V. Oh, Al - bert! I'm com - ing,

Pno. *mf* *mp*

364 *mf*

Q.V. Al - bert! At last I'm com - ing,

Pno.

