## IN THE MIDDLE

Bass & Piano Text by Barbara Crooker



## IN THE MIDDLE

of a life that's as complicated as everyone else's, struggling for balance, juggling time. The mantle clock that was my grandfather's has stopped at 9:20; we haven't had time to get it repaired. The brass pendulum is still, the chimes don't ring. One day I look out the window, green summer, the next, the leaves have already fallen, and a grey sky lowers the horizon. Our children almost grown, our parents gone, it happened so fast. Each day, we must learn again how to love, between morning's quick coffee and evening's slow return. Steam from a pot of soup rises, mixing with the yeasty smell of baking bread. Our bodies twine, and the big black dog pushes his great head between; his tail, a metronome, 3/4 time. We'll never get there, Time is always ahead of us, running down the beach, urging us on faster, faster, but sometimes we take off our watches, sometimes we lie in the hammock, caught between the mesh of rope and the net of stars, suspended, tangled up in love, running out of time.

-Barbara Crooker, from *Radiance*.

Barbara Crooker's poem "In the Middle" describes our need to connect in the rush of ordinary life. In this setting, the piano serves as an unreliable time-keeper, ebbing and flowing as our perception of time does. The word "time" itself occurs over and over within the piece, serving as a sort of refrain, a reminder to slow down. It is so easy to forget, in the context of everyday life, that time will ultimately catch up with all of us. There's no antidote, but in the meantime, we should "take off our watches" more often, finding ourselves "tangled up in love" with another or just with this life, and granting time permission, if not to stop, then to slow.

In the Middle was commissioned as a choral piece by the Young New Yorkers' Chorus (Michael Kerschner, director), won the first ACDA Brock Competition for Professional Composers, and was performed at the 2019 ACDA National Conference by The Aeolians of Oakwood University (Jason Max Ferdinand, conductor). This piece is also featured on Choral Arts Initiative's album *How to Go On: The Choral Works of Dale Trumbore*.

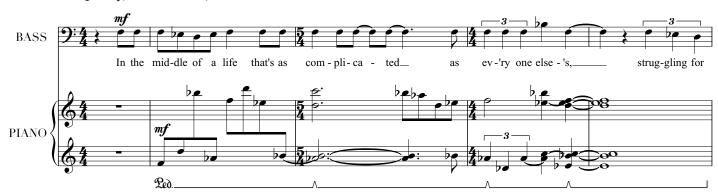
The solo vocal arrangement of this piece was premiered by Jennifer Rea, soprano and Diana Umali, piano.

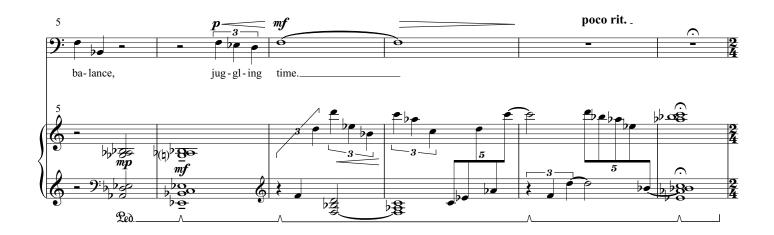
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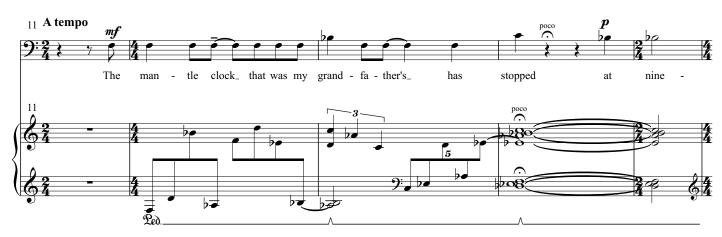
for Bass & Piano

Text by Barbara Crooker

Music by Dale Trumbore









<sup>\*</sup>When two or more notes are present, either one is preferable; the singer may choose the upper or lower line in any phrase.







