

BRITISH MUSIC INFORMATION CENTRE,  
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A  
JOHN CLARE  
SONGBOOK

for high voice and piano

Trevor Hold

*Front-cover drawing by Sue Hold*

Thames Publishing

*Trade distribution by William Elkin Music Services*


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Duration: c.27 minutes



These songs form a songbook rather than a songcycle, which means that they are not inextricably linked together but can be performed as separate items. However, as the careful observer will notice, they are composed in such a way that they can be performed as a sequence.

Though most of the songs can be sung by either soprano or tenor, one or two are inappropriate for a female singer. These are indicated by a  clef. Clearly, however, if the work is to be performed in its entirety, this can only be done by a tenor.

*A John Clare Songbook* was given its first performance at a recital at the University of Leicester on 24th February 1982 by John Potter and the composer.

# A JOHN CLARE SONGBOOK

John Clare

Trevor Hold

## 1. Break of Day

Brightly :  $\text{♩} = \text{c} = 112$

piano

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, starting with a forte (f) dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Pedal markings (Ped., Ped. #, Ped., \*Ped.) are placed below the left hand staff. Dynamics include f, sf, and sf.

voice

The lark he ri-ses ear-ly And the

piano

The first system of the song features a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The voice line begins with the lyrics "The lark he ri-ses ear-ly And the". The piano accompaniment starts with a forte (sf) dynamic and includes a "slight dim." marking. The piano part has a complex texture with many chords and moving lines.

ploughmen goes a-way Be fore it's morn-ing fai-ly At the quest-ing break of day; The

The second system continues the song. The voice line has the lyrics "ploughmen goes a-way Be fore it's morn-ing fai-ly At the quest-ing break of day; The". The piano accompaniment continues with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic.

cresc.

fields lie in the dawn-ing, And the valley's hid in gold, At the pleas-ant time of

mf cresc.

The third system of the song. The voice line has the lyrics "fields lie in the dawn-ing, And the valley's hid in gold, At the pleas-ant time of". The piano accompaniment includes a "cresc." marking and ends with a forte (f) dynamic and a "Ped." marking.

morning when the shepherd goes to fold.

*f* *Red.* *\* Red.*

The maiden laughs and hollers when she

*mf* *dim.* *mp*

sees the feeding crows; They swing their tails and follow when she can't get o-ver sloughs; I

*mp*

love the gentle dawning, And the valleys hid in gold, At the pleasant time of morn-ing when the

*cresc.* *fff* *hold back slightly* *cresc.* *f* *Red.* *Red.*

in time

shep- herd goes to fold.

(w)

(cleanly!)

mf

ped.

\*

ped.

\*

with a

v

## 2. Country Letter

Very quick:  $d = c 108$

piano

mf

short: no pedal

(mark)

voice

piano

Musical score for the first system, featuring a piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *cresc.*, *sf (dim.)*, and *mf*. The system ends with a *Red.* marking and an asterisk.

*mf*

1. Dear brother Robin, this comes from us all With our kind love, and could Crisp write and all  
 2. Fine still is yours till you come back a-gen And ne'er so much as looks at other men And

Musical score for the second system, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp*. The system ends with a repeat sign and a fermata.

though but a dog he'd have his (sic) to spare, For still he knows and by your corner cheer The  
 Ned the woodman every week comes in And asks a-bout you kindly as our kin And

Musical score for the third system, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment.

*rall.*

moment he comes in he lies turr down And seems to fan-cy you are in the town.  
 he with this and Goochy Trumper sends Re-mem-bran-ces with those of all our friends.

Musical score for the fourth system, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *sf*. The system ends with a *Red.* marking and an asterisk.

1st *mp* conversationally (*parlando*)

This leaves us well in health, thank God for that! For old ac-quin-tance

Slower: *Recit.*

*mp* well-marked

*fast*

*Recit.*

(1st)

She has kept your hat which mo-ther brush-es ere she lays it by ———— And

*mp* *mf (mark)*

*fast*

\* *Recit.*

(1st) | 2nd *mp* conversationally

e-very Sun-day goes up-stairs to cry. ———— Fa-ther with

Original speed *short* Slower: *Recit.*

*dim.* *mp* *mf*

*Original speed* *short* *Slower: Recit.*

*Recit.*

us sends love which he hears ———— And mother she has nothing but her tears, Yet

*mp* well-marked

*fast*

*Recit.*

wishes you like us in health the same ———— And long to see a

(Ped.) *mf* *mf* *dim.* *scat.* \* - Ped.

letter with your name, ———— *mf* so, loving brother, don't for-get to write.— Old

*Original speed.* *short*

(Ped.) \* *short*

Gip lies on the hearth-stove every night; Mother can't bear to turn him out of doors And

ne-ver noi-see now of dirty floors;— Fa-ther will laugh but lets her have her way, And

*cresc.* (Ped.)



Grip for kind-ness gets a double pay. So, Robin, write and let us quickly see You  
 slight rall. ----- Hold back a while, but in strict time

don't for-get old friends no more than we, Nor let my mo-ther have so much to blame To

in time  
 go three jour-neys ere you letter came.

### 3. The Dying Child

Not fast:  $\text{♩} = c. 72$

piano

Red. \* Red. \* Red. (anti.)

voice

He could not die when trees were green For he

piano

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is for the voice, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics 'He could not die when trees were green For he' are written below the staff. The bottom staff is for the piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a key signature of one flat. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes.

loved the time too well. His little hands, when flowers were

Detailed description: This system contains the second two staves of music. The voice staff continues with the lyrics 'loved the time too well. His little hands, when flowers were'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and single notes.

seen, were held for the blue-bell, As he was carried o'er the

Detailed description: This system contains the third two staves of music. The voice staff continues with the lyrics 'seen, were held for the blue-bell, As he was carried o'er the'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and single notes.

green.

2 (sing)

Red. \*Red. \*Red. \*Red. (cresc.)

Detailed description: This system contains the final two staves of music. The voice staff has the lyric 'green.' followed by a long horizontal line. The piano staff features a melodic line with slurs and a dynamic marking '2 (sing)'. Below the piano staff, there are five dynamic markings: 'Red.', '\*Red.', '\*Red.', '\*Red.', and '(cresc.)'.

His eye glanced at the white-nosed bee; He

knew those children of the spring: ———— When he was well and on — the

lea He held one in his hands to sing, ———— which filled his little heart with hold back — —

glee. He held his hands for dai-sies white, And then for In time [OVER]

vi-o-lets blue, \_\_\_\_\_ And took them all \_\_\_\_\_ to bed at night that in the

*p* *cresc.*

green fields grew, As childhood's sweet \_\_\_\_\_ de- light.

more on slightly

*mp* *gradually dim.*

And then he shut his little eyes, And flowers would no- tice

*p*

not; Birds' nests and eggs made no sur- prise, Nor any

blossoms got: All met with plain - tive

dim.

sighs. When winter came and

slightly slower

pp

ped. # ped.

short pp

ped.

bleats did sigh, And care was plain and tree, As he for

\* ped. \* ped. (sim.)

ped.

ease in bed did lie His soul seemed with the free,

(pp) dim.

dim.