

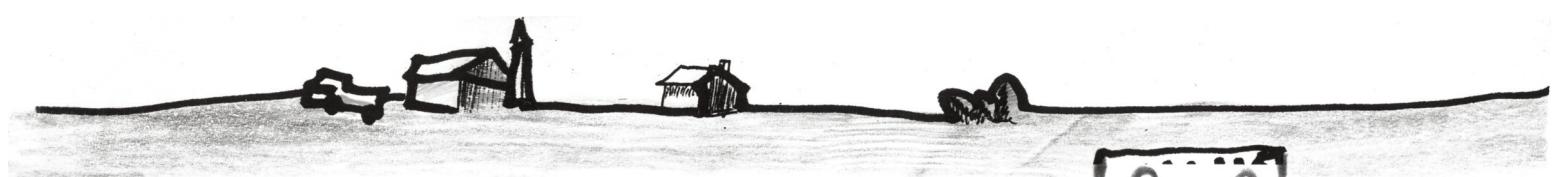
DONALD COBB

FIDDLER JONES

Songs on Poetry of Edgar Lee Masters

Tom Beatty, Eugenia Todd, Fiddler Jones, Light of Lights

for voice and piano



Donald Cobb was born in 1936 in Oakland, California. His music-making began in the family home, and at age fifteen in a hotel summer band. He studied with composers Richard Donovan, Leon Kirchner and Darius Milhaud. He has taught and led musical ensembles in many schools and colleges, including Mills College, the Athenian School, Wildshaw School in San Francisco and Friendsville Academy in Tennessee. Community and traditional song has been an abiding study. In the 1970's, he was musical director of the Oakland Museum Spring Concerts, highlighting music of American and California composers.

Finding musical expression in poetic language and the contours and rhythms of our spoken language led the composer first to the Irish poet W. B. Yeats, and his *Crazy Jane Poems*, and followed over years to the possibilities for song in the work of admired American poets, including Walt Whitman, Vachel Lindsay, Robinson Jeffers, whose poems are the basis for *Boats in a Fog*, and Gary Snyder, whose translation of *Cold Mountain Poems* by Han Shan is the basis of *Cold Mountain Songs*.

In this publication, *Fiddler Jones*, songs *Tom Beatty* and *Eugenia Todd* were written years ago in rural East Tennessee, influenced by hymn qualities. *Light of Lights* was also written years ago but in a different spirit and in a suburban setting in Northern California. *Fiddler Jones* was composed in 2007.

Edgar Lee Masters (1868–1950) grew up in several small towns in the Sangamon and Spoon River areas of Illinois, which had been settled by people of distinctly different traditions. Near the Sangamon, where Masters had lived with his grandparents, the people were descendants of Kentuckians and Virginians; in Lewiston, near Spoon River, the people were of New England stock.

He read law in his father's office in Lewiston and moved to a successful law firm in Chicago in 1892. In 1903 he went into practice with Clarence Darrow and in 1911 set up his own practice.

There was a great flowering of the arts in the Chicago region at that time, with people from small towns a significant part of that flowering. Masters associated with some of the leading lights, including Dreiser, Sandburg and free verse writers for Chicago's Poetry Magazine. Other notable figures in the region were Sinclair Lewis, Louis Sullivan, Harriet Monroe and Sherwood Anderson. Masters wrote biographies of Vachel Lindsay, a contemporary he admired, and of Abraham Lincoln, both from Springfield.

In 1914 Masters began a series of poems about his boyhood experiences in western Illinois, expressing through gravestone epitaphs the hidden lives of the citizens. *Spoon River Anthology*, which he finished in 8 months, was published in 1915 and was a sensational success, becoming one of the most widely known works in American literature. In 1920 he gave up law and moved on to a literary career in New York City, but no subsequent work ever enjoyed the popularity of *Spoon River Anthology*.

FIDDLER JONES

BY DONALD COBB:

CRAZY JANE SONGS *
Six songs on poems of W. B. Yeats
for voice and piano

CONFUCIAN ODES
Translations by Ezra Pound
Three SATB choruses, unaccompanied

COLD MOUNTAIN SONGS *
Poems by Han Shan, translation by Gary Snyder
for voice, violin and piano

THE TOWN OF AMERICAN VISIONS
THE SPRINGFIELD OF THE FAR FUTURE
Poetry of Vachel Lindsay
for SATB chorus, with piano

COME, SAID THE MUSE *
Three songs on poetry of Walt Whitman
for voice and piano

FIVE ORCHESTRAL SONGS
for orchestra

CHILDREN'S SONGS *
On poetry of Vachel Lindsay, James Stephens, Christina Rossetti,
James Hogg, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Whitcomb Riley
for voice and piano

PATHS
A four movement work for orchestra

REMNANTS
9 pieces, for violin, clarinet, double bass and piano

BOATS IN A FOG *
Songs on the poetry of Robinson Jeffers
for voice and piano

SEVEN SONGS *
*Billy Boy, The Curtains of Night, The Old Ship of Zion,
Colorado Trail, A Life on the Ocean Wave, Brave Wolfe, Polly Wolly Doodle*
Arranged for voice and piano

IN COUNTRYSIDE
A set of seven pieces – for clarinet, trumpet, trombone and piano

PASTORAL AND OTHER SONGS
On poetry of Thoreau, Melville, Masters, cummings,
Frost, Sandburg and Williams
for voice and piano

FIDDLER JONES *
Four songs on poetry of Edgar Lee Masters
for voice and piano

* Engraved song publications available from the composer.

CHILDREN'S SONGS illustrated by Josy Cobb,
CRAZY JANE SONGS and COME, SAID THE MUSE illustrated by Diane Cobb,
SEVEN SONGS with illustrations by Thomas Eakins

Donald Cobb P. O. Box 1300, Willits, California 95490 dcsongsheaves@gmail.com

DONALD COBB

FIDDLER JONES

Songs on Poetry of Edgar Lee Masters

for voice and piano

SONGSHEAVES
Willits, California

Music Copyright © 2012 by Donald Cobb

“Tom Beatty”, “Eugenia Todd” and “Fiddler Jones” are from
Edgar Lee Masters
SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY
New York, The Macmillan company, 1915

“Light of Lights” is from
Edgar Lee Masters
TOWARD THE GULF
New York, Macmillan, 1918

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN:
Stevens Van Strum

COVER ILLUSTRATION:
Josy Cobb

NOTATION BY:
Simcich Music Notation
smnpress@sbcglobal.net (510) 222-0564

PRINTED BY:
Black Ribbon
blackribbonprinting.com

Tom Beatty	5
Eugenia Todd	10
Fiddler Jones	13
Light of Lights	19
<i>Texts of Lyrics</i>	2

TOM BEATTY

I was a lawyer like Harmon Whitney
 Or Kinsey Keene or Garrison Standard,
 For I tried the rights of property,
 Although by lamp-light, for thirty years,
 In that poker room in the opera house.
 And I say to you that Life's a gambler
 Head and shoulders above us all.
 No mayor alive can close the house.
 And if you lose, you can squeal as you will;
 You'll not get back your money.
 He makes the percentage hard to conquer;
 He stacks the cards to catch your weakness
 And not to meet your strength.
 And he gives you seventy years to play:
 For if you cannot win in seventy
 You cannot win at all.
 So, if you lose, get out of the room –
 Get out of the room when your time is up.
 It's mean to sit and fumble the cards,
 And curse your losses, leaden-eyed,
 Whining to try and try.

EUGENIA TODD

Have any of you, passers-by,
 Had an old tooth that was an unceasing discomfort?
 Or a pain in the side that never quite left you?
 Or a malignant growth that grew with time?
 So that even in profoundest slumber
 There was shadowy consciousness or the phantom of thought
 Of the tooth, the side, the growth?
 Even so thwarted love, or defeated ambition,
 Or a blunder in life which mixed your life
 Hopelessly to the end,
 Will like a tooth, or a pain in the side,
 Float through your dreams in the final sleep
 Till perfect freedom from the earth-sphere
 Comes to you as one who wakes
 Healed and glad in the morning!

FIDDLER JONES

The earth keeps some vibration going
 There in your heart, and that is you.
 And if the people find you can fiddle,
 Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.
 What do you see, a harvest of clover?
 Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
 The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
 For beeves hereafter ready for market;
 Or else you hear the rustle of skirts
 Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.
 To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
 Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;
 They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
 Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."
 How could I till my forty acres
 Not to speak of getting more,
 With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
 Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
 And the creak of a wind-mill - only these?
 And I never started to plow in my life
 That some one did not stop in the road
 And take me away to a dance or picnic.
 I ended up with forty acres;
 I ended up with a broken fiddle -
 And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
 And not a single regret.

LIGHT OF LIGHTS

When the sea has devoured the ships,
 And the spires and the towers
 Have gone back to the hills.
 And all the cities
 Are one with the plains again.
 And the beauty of bronze,
 And the strength of steel
 Are blown over silent continents,
 As the desert sand is blown -
 My dust with yours forever.

Tom Beatty

Edgar Lee Masters

Donald Cobb

Moderato ♩ = ca. 160

f

Voice

I was a law-yer like Har-mon Whit-ney Or Kin-sey Keene or

with voice

Gar-ri-sion Stan-dard. For I tried the rights of prop-er-ty, Al-though by lamp-light,

for thir-ty years, In that pok-er room

Slower

— in the op - 'ra house.

Tempo I

And I say to you that Life's a gam - bler Head and shoul -

ders a - bove us all. No mayor a - live can close the house. And if you lose,

ders a - bove us all. No mayor a - live can close the house. And if you lose,

you can squeal as you will; You'll not get back your mon - ey.

you can squeal as you will; You'll not get back your mon - ey.

Slower

Remain slower
f(legato)

He makes the per-cent - age

hard to con - quer;

He stacks the cards_____ to catch your weak - ness And

not to meet_____ your strength.

rall.

And he gives you sev-en-ty years to play:
For if you can-not win in sev-en-ty

Tempo I *rall.*

You can-not win at all.

a tempo

Slower

Tempo I

So, if you lose, get out of the

room— Get out of the room when your time is up.

It's mean to sit and fumble the cards, And curse your losses,

lead-en-eyed, Whining to try and try.

Eugenia Todd

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. 60}$

Have an - y of you, — pass-ers - by, Had an old tooth_ that

mp

was an un-ceas-ing dis - com - fort? Or a

mf

pain in the side that nev - er quite left you? Or a ma - lig-nant growth

mp

that grew with time? So that e - ven in

mp

pro-found - est slum - ber There was sha - dow-y con-scious-ness or the

phantom of thought Of the tooth, the side, the growth?

E - ven so thwart-ed love,

or de-feat-ed am - bi - tion, Or a blun - der in life, which mixed your

life Hope-less-ly to the end, Will, like a tooth, or a

mp *mf* *mp*

pain in the side, Float through your dreams in the fi - nal sleep Till

mf *3* *legato*

per - fect free - dom from the earth - sphere Comes to you as one who wakes

3 *mf*

ritard.

Healed and glad in the morn- ing!

f *f* *mf*

Fiddler Jones

 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. 72}$

4

The earth keeps some vi - bra - tion go - ing

f

mp

There in your heart, and that is you. And if the peo - ple find you can fid - dle, Why,

P

P

fid - dle you must, for all your life, What do you see, a har - vest of clo - ver? Or a

f

f

mf

mea-dow to walk through to the riv - er? — The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands for beeves here-

af - ter rea-dy for mar - ket. — Or

else you hear the rus - tle of skirts Like the girls when dan-cing at

Lit - tle Grove. —

perky

To Coo-ney Pot-ter a

legato

rall. *a tempo*

pil-lar of dust Or whirl-ing leaves meant ru-inous drouth; They looked to

me like Red-Head Sam-my Step-ping it off, to "Toor-a-loor."

mf

briskly

f

Broadly

How could I till my for - ty a - cres Not to speak of get - ting more, With a

less f

med - ley of horns, bas-soons and picc - o - los Stirred in my brain by crows and rob - ins And the

poco rall. *a tempo*

creak of a wind- mill— on - ly these? And I nev - er start-ed to plow in my life That

some one did not stop in the road and take me a - way to a dance or pic - nic.

Broadly, with flourish

bro - ken laugh, and a thou-sand mem-'ries, And not a sin - gle re - gret.

Tempo I

mf *briskly*

f

Broadly

ff *f*

Light of Lights

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. 60}$

When the sea has de - vour - ed the ships,
And the

spi - res and the tow - ers Have gone back to the hills. And all the

cit - ies are one with the plains a - gain.

Dynamics: p (piano), mp (mezzo-piano), f (forte), mf (mezzo-forte), pp (pianissimo).

And the beau - ty of bronze, and the strength of steel

are blown o - ver si - lent con - ti-nents, as the des - ert

Freer *rit.*

sand is blown— My dust with yours for - ev - er. _____

mf

with voice

mp

*How could I till my forty acres
Not to speak of getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a wind-mill – only these?
And I never started to plow in my life
That some one did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres;
I ended up with a broken fiddle –
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.*