

PROGRAMME NOTES: I have always admired this beautifully meditative poem which Samuel Crossman wrote in 1664, and which in recent times has been widely sung to the famous hymn melody that John Ireland matched to it. In setting this text as a 'scena' song for voice and organ, I have allowed myself the scope to treat its dramatic contrasts and poetic nuances with a broad variety of musical expression and harmonic language.

Text:

1. My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O, who am I,
That for thy sake
My Lord should take
Frail flesh and die.

2. He came to his blest throne,
Salvation to bestow:
But me made strange, and none
The longed-for Christ would know.
But O, my Friend,
My Friend indeed,
Who at my need
His life did spend!

3. Sometimes they strew his way,
And his sweet praises sing:
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify!'
Is all their breath,
And for his death
They thirst and cry.

4. They rise, and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they save,
The Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful he
To suffering goes,
That he his foes
From thence might free.

5. Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
He gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!

Yet they at these
Themselves displease,
And 'gainst him rise.

6. Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like thine!
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Could gladly spend.