

# AN IRISH AIRMAN FORESEES HIS DEATH

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Seán Doherty

2017

TTBB a cappella

TEXT

An Irish Airman foresees his Death

I know that I shall meet my fate  
Somewhere among the clouds above;  
Those that I fight I do not hate,  
Those that I guard I do not love;  
My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,  
No likely end could bring them loss  
Or leave them happier than before.

Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,  
A lonely impulse of delight  
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;  
I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
The years to come seemed waste of breath,  
A waste of breath the years behind  
In balance with this life, this death.

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

PROGRAMME NOTE

Flying a plane is all about balance: the balance of each wing, of the nose to the tail. Yeats's famous poem is, fittingly, all about balance: hate is balanced with love; the future with the past; life with death. The idea of balance is central to his musical setting: the melody is symmetrical around a central axis; the reflective mood of the start is matched its return at the end; violence is followed by a meditative calm.

Performance Time: *c.* 3 mins

commissioned by 4 in a Bar  
**An Irish Airman foresees his Death**

W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Seán Doherty (b.1987)

**Adagio** ♩ = 60

TENOR I *p subdued*  
 I shall meet my fate

TENOR II *p subdued*  
 I shall meet my fate

BASS I *mf subdued*  
 I know that I shall meet my fate

BASS II *p subdued*  
 I shall meet my fate

5  
 a - mong the clouds a - bove;  
 Some - where a - mong the clouds a - bove;  
 a - mong the clouds a - bove;  
 a - mong the clouds a - bove;

9 *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *p* (40)  
 Those that I fight I do not hate those that I guard I do not love;  
*mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*  
 Those that I fight I do not hate those that I guard I do not love;  
*mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*  
 Those that I fight I do not hate those that I guard I do not love;  
*mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*  
 Those that I fight I do not hate those that I guard I do not love;

14

*mp* *mf*

My coun - try is Kil - tar - tan Cross, My coun - try - men Kil - tar - tan's poor,

*f*

My coun - try is Kil - tar - tan Cross, My coun - try - men Kil - tar - tan's poor,

*mp* *mf*

My coun - try is Kil - tar - tan Cross, My coun - try - men Kil - tar - tan's poor,

*mp* *mf*

My coun - try is Kil - tar - tan Cross, My coun - try - men Kil - tar - tan's poor,

18

*f* *mp* *p*

No like-ly end could bring them loss Or leave them hap-pier than be - fore.

*f* *mp* *p*

No like-ly end could bring them loss Or leave them hap-pier than be - fore.

*f* *mp* *p* *frisoluto*

No like-ly end could bring them loss Or leave them hap-pier than be - fore. Nor

24

*f*

law, du - ty, pub - lic men,

*f*

law, du - ty, pub - lic men,

*f*

law, du - ty, pub - lic men,

law, bade me fight, nor du - ty bade me fight, nor pub - lic men

29

cheer - ing\_\_ crowds, lone - ly  
 cheer - ing\_\_ crowds, lone - ly  
 cheer - ing\_\_ crowds, lone - ly  
 bade me fight, nor cheer - ing\_\_ crowds, bade me fight, A lone - ly

**Presto** ♩ = 140

34

*mp* *delicato*  
 im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse,  
*mp* *delicato*  
 im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse,  
*mp* *delicato*  
 im-pulse of de-light, im-pulse of de-light, im-pulse of de-light,  
*mp* *delicato*  
 im-pulse, bade me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight,

37

im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse,  
 im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse,  
 im-pulse of de-light, of de-light, of de-light, of de-light,  
 bade me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight, bade

40

im-pulse, im-pulse, A

im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im -

of de-light, of de-light, of de-light, of de-light,

me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight, bade

43

lone-ly im-pulse of de-light Drove

pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im -

of de-light, of de-light, of de-light, of de-light,

me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight, bade

*più agitato* *cresc.*

*più agitato* *cresc.*

*più agitato* *cresc.*

*f* *gliss.*

46

to this

pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse,

of de-light, of de-light, of de -

me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight,

48

tu - - - mult in the  
 im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, im-pulse, Drove to this tu-mult in the  
 light, of de-light, of de-light, Drove to this tu-mult in the  
 bade me fight, bade me fight, bade me fight, Drove to this tu-mult in the

52

clouds;  
 clouds, the  
 clouds, the clouds,  
 clouds, the clouds,

56

clouds;  
 the clouds;  
 the clouds;

Largo ♩ = 50

61 *p* falsetto (if possible) *ord.*

I ba - lanced all, brought all to\_\_\_ mind,

*mp* falsetto (if possible) *ord.*

I ba - lanced all, brought all to\_\_\_ mind,

*p* falsetto (if possible) *ord.*

I ba - lanced all, brought all to\_\_\_ mind,

*p* falsetto (if possible) *ord.*

I ba - lanced all, brought all to\_\_\_ mind,

65 *mp* *mf* *mp*

The years to come seemed waste of breath, A waste of breath the years be - hind

*p* *mp* *p*

The years to come seemed waste of breath, A waste of breath the years be - hind

*mp* *p*

The years to come seemed waste of breath, A waste of breath the years be - hind

*mp* *p*

The years to come seemed waste of breath, A waste of breath the years be - hind

69 *p* *rit.* *pp*

In ba - lance with this life, this\_\_\_ death.

*mp* *pp*

In ba - lance with this life, this\_\_\_ death.

*p* *pp*

In ba - lance with this life, this\_\_\_ death.

*p* *pp*

In ba - lance with this life, this\_\_\_ death.