



# the sea is calm tonight...

SATB chorus  
text by Matthew Arnold

Katherine Saxon

3 minutes

The sea is calm tonight.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits; — on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!  
Only, from the long line of spray...

from "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold

In his novel *The Demolished Man* Bester arranges the words Arnold's poem in a puzzle that implies multiple sentences and phrases. Likewise, the polyphony creates an new orderings and meanings not present in the original text and portrays the constant motion that is ever present in the ocean, even when it is calm. This cyclical and repetitive motion of the sea is also mirrored in the form: at the end of the piece the material cycles back to the beginning, but with the various phrases stirred up and switched about. Ultimately, though, it is a song about loss and the transient nature of life.

# the sea is calm tonight...

words adapted from "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold

Katherine Saxon

gently rocking (♩ = c.82)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

The sea is calm to-night, The tide is full, the moon lies

*p* *mp*

The sea is calm to-night, The

The

6

S

A

T

B

*mf*

*mp* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf*

The sea is calm to-night, The

fair Up - on thestraights, the moon lies fair Up - on thestraights; The sea is

tide is full, the moon lies fair Up - on the straights; the moon lies

*mf* *mf*

sea is calm to-night, The tide is full, the moon lies

the sea is calm tonight

2

10

S  
tid e is full, the moon lies fair Up - on thestraights, the moon

A  
calm to-night, The tide is full, the moon lies fair Up -

T  
fair Up - on thestraights, The sea, the sea is calm to -

B  
fair Up - on thstraights, The sea, the sea is calm to - night,

14

S  
lies fair Up - on the straights, Up - on the straights;

A  
on the straights, the straights;

T  
night, the moon lies fair Up - on the straights; on the French coast light

B  
the moon lies fair Up - on the straights;

18

S

A *mp*  
on the French coast light Gleams and is gone, \_\_\_\_\_ and is

T *p* *mp*  
Gleams and is gone, \_\_\_\_\_ is gone, \_\_\_\_\_ is gone,

B *mp*  
on the French coast light

24

S *mp* *f* *sub. p* *mf*  
on the French coast light Gleams and is gone, and is gone; the

A *mf* *sub. p*  
gone, light Gleams and is gone, and is gone, and is gone;—

T *mf* *sub. p*  
light Gleams and is gone, and is gone, and is gone;

B *sub. p*  
Gleams and is gone, \_\_\_\_\_ is gone; [n] \_\_\_\_\_

\* Close to an [n]

\*

the sea is calm tonight

4

29

*rit.* -----

*p* *mf* *p* *mp* *mp* *p*

S cliffs of Engandstand, Glimmer-ing and vast, out in the tran-quil bay.

*mf* *p* *mf* *p*

A cliffs of Eng - land stand, Glim - mer - ing and vast, in the bay.

*mf* *p* *mf* *p*

T [n] the cliffs of Engandstand, Glimmer - ing and vast, out in the tran - quil bay.

\* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

B cliffs of Eng - land stand, Glim - mer-ing and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Brightly  
a tempo

34

*f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

S Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air.

*f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*

A Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air. O

*f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

T Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air.

*f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

B Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air.

\* Close to an [n]

38 *f* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

S Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air, so sweet

A *ff* *mf* *fp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

A Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air, sweet

T *f* *ff* *fp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

T Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air, sweet

B *f* *ff* *fp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

B Come to the win - dow, sweet is the night air, sweet

42 *rit.* *p* *mp* *pp* *pensive* (♩ = c.72)

S is the night air. On-ly, from the long line of spray...

A is the night air. long line of spray...

T is the night air. On-ly, from the long line of spray...

B is the night air. The sea is calm to -

the sea is calm tonight

6

47

S *p* *mp* *p* *mp*  
The sea is calm tonight, The tide is full, the moon lies fair Up - on the

A *p* *mp* *p* *mp*  
The sea is calm to - night, the moon lies fair Up - on the

T *p* *mp* *p* *mp*  
The sea is calm to - night, The tide is full, the cliffs stand,

B *mp* *pp* *mp*  
night, The tide is full, The tide is full, the cliffs stand,

51

S *>p* *p* *p*  
straights; The sea is calm to-night, the moon light

A *>p* *mp* *p*  
straights; Glim-mer-ing and vast, on the French coast light

T *p* *pp* *p*  
Glim-mer-ing and vast, out in the tran - quil bay. on the French

B *p* *pp* *p*  
Glim-mer-ing and vast, out in the tran - quil bay. the



55 *mp* *mf* *p*

S  
Gleams and is gone; and is gone;

A  
*mp* *mf* *p* *mp*  
Gleams and is gone; Gleams and is gone; Gleams and

T  
*mp* *mf* *mp* *p*  
coast light Gleams and is gone; Gleams and is gone;

B  
*mf* *p* *mp*  
moon light Gleams and is gone; and is gone; Gleams

60 *p* *pp* *n* *rit.*

S  
[n] Gleams and is gone; [n]

A  
*pp* *p* *pp* *n*  
is gone; and is gone; [n]

T  
*pp* *n*  
[n] is gone; [n]

B  
*pp* *pp* *n*  
and is gone; [n] is gone; [n]