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# American Songs Sacred and Profane

*Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus, and Piano or Orchestra*

Steven Sametz (b. 1954)

For biographical information visit:  
[www.stevensametz.com](http://www.stevensametz.com)

## 1. A Way of Talking to a Dog That You Don't Know

The desperate dog is baying long,  
for his farm is empty of folk tonight.  
It's Saturday, and everyone's gone to town  
dancing.

But I hear you, Booby-Pup,  
(two fields away and across the road)  
and I understand how you feel.  
I'm alone tonight too.

Your voice feels good, doesn't it?  
You hear yourself, you say yourself,  
you throw yourself way up high in the wind  
and you don't think about it too real directly,  
but you kind of wonder, don't you,  
if something out there might not hear you  
and come.

Well, I'm coming in my own way.  
Oh, I'll stay here where I am alright,  
*but I'm extending the human mind to you.*

It comes over there right beside you where you're howling  
and it wraps this good intention  
around your cocked back throat  
and its trajectory of sound:

*Easy. Easy Easy.  
It's not so bad to spend a night alone.  
You've got your health. You've got your bones.  
You're strong. You'll be running free again tomorrow.  
Easy, Booby-Pup.  
I love you. You're not alone.*

Some time passes, and  
now it's grown quiet again.  
Is the dance over so early?  
Or maybe the desperate dog felt me come.  
Anyway, something through the silence is now reaching me  
and saying:

*Easy. It's not so bad to spend a night alone.*

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## 2. Blood Love

I wonder have you found  
the two red points of red,  
remembrance of our night together?

As I fly across the continent's edge  
I curl my tongue around each incisor  
(you'd been nice enough to say  
what nice teeth I had...).

The sound of your blood  
racing fills my ears again.  
Your beauty,  
the swell of your chest,  
the hard, unyielding pressure  
of your arms around me,  
taking me up,  
slamming me back,  
harder, harder  
stripping me away  
to where I recognized  
my self.

How could I resist  
such an invitation to feed?  
You, belly down,  
I slowly kiss your feet,

rising along your outer thigh  
and spine upwards  
to graze your neck.

Never overly endowed,  
you scarcely noticed  
my gentle intrusion,  
a lesser moan  
in a night of ecstasy's cries.

I lay on you in stillness,  
drinking, drinking you in  
'til dawn's light drove me away.

(So now you're having coffee,  
talking on the phone to friends;  
"Did you get his number... no?"  
"But he'll be back,"  
you're pretty sure.

Be sure,  
stay healthy,  
my love.  
Your siren song  
sings in my veins.  
Now, you're in my blood.

—Peter Elliot

### 3. At Being Buried, My Surprise

When they put me down here  
—I knew they had to; I was not angry—  
I expected only the dark and the damp cold  
and long boring years of hoping for the resurrection.  
Imagine my surprise, then, when  
not ten minutes after they'd cried their last and gone  
I sensed some...

some breathing coming toward me  
through the ground.

It was distant, very distant,  
but it was growing stronger,  
and it was definitely coming my way.  
What was it?...

As the breathing drew closer,  
I slowly discerned that it was  
the breathing of a song  
and growing closer still, I could say  
the song of a throng,  
and closer still, at last the words:

*“Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,”*  
they cried,

and I perceived this the song of those who had died  
and now praised the Lamb  
as Lord of heavenly armies.

This song was coming to stir and roll me over  
in my grave...

Then famous people came my way  
and other saints from epochs and struggles  
I never knew. Wraiths all,  
they came round my grave  
and breathed their song through my lowly corpse.

Bright Light saw I then  
and struggled upward in my spirit  
to see clear again. I saw:

A soft green mixed with faint rose  
in the robes of a tenors' [choir],\*  
and as their song passed through my being  
a kind of recognition quivered

in both them and me:  
Lovers of Christ. Brothers of Christ.  
Robed in colorful glory.

Blue was there too on many whom I saw,  
Blue and every color of... autumn.

Not one there was  
unmagnificent  
undazzling,

Not one unshining.

All, in fact, was now a shining and a sound  
moving through my plot of ground.  
And I was being blended [with]\*\* their Light  
and so sang with them,

*“O Might. Might. Might-y Lord!  
How vast, how glad this saved board!  
How breathe we twice,  
unsnared from vice?  
O Might. Might. Might-y Lord!”*

Straining further these new senses mine,  
I tried to gaze where these veterans stared.  
What cared I more that I was dead?  
I turned with these toward Christ our Head  
and sang with them the gladsome song:

*Sanctus. Sanctus. Sanctus.  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

O gentle friends among the living still,  
you yet but half alive,  
pass by this plot with care.  
“A graveyard is a spooky spot,” you'll say;  
but the ground a different story would to you now tell.

Destined to be on the Last Day  
the place of a most amazed upstanding,  
it is already stirring.  
It is already moved.  
It is already singing.

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\* “chorus” in the original poem

\*\* “to” in the original poem.

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#### Performing Forces

2 Flutes (2nd doubles on Piccolo)  
2 Oboes (2nd doubles on English Horn)  
2 Clarinets  
(1st doubles on E♭ Clarinet; 2nd doubles on Bass Clarinet)  
2 Bassoons (2nd doubles on Contrabassoon)  
  
2 Horns in F  
2 Trumpets  
Trombone  
Tuba

Percussion (3 players)  
(Timpani, Marimba, Xylophone, Vibraphone, Orchestra  
Bells, Bass Drum, Guero, Suspended Cymbal, Concert  
Tom-toms, 3 Low Woodblocks, Tam-tam, Crash Cymbals,  
Triangle)

Harp  
Piano (doubling on Celesta)

Strings

Baritone Solo  
SATB Chorus (in No. 3 only, preferably off-stage)

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**Duration: 26 minutes**

The choral part is available as a free download at [www.ecspublishing.com](http://www.ecspublishing.com). Search for the product number 7154 and find the link in the description. The full score and parts are available on rental from the publisher. An additional full score is available for sale (7152).

# American Songs - Sacred and Profane

for Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus, and Piano or Orchestra\*

## 1. A Way Of Talking To A Dog That You Don't Know

dur. 8:30

Jeremy Driscoll  
from *Some Other Morning*

Steven Sametz

♩ = 84

Piano

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The left hand has a bass clef. The music starts in 4/4 time, then changes to 3/4, and back to 4/4. It features several triplet patterns and a dynamic marking of *f* (forte).

*Ped.* *\* Ped.* *\* Ped.* *\* Ped.* *\* Ped.*

*Pedaling throughout is often designed to blur the sound in a kind of dreamscape.  
The performer should feel free to vary pedaling for acoustics of the instrument and the hall*

5

♩ = 56

The

This section shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the word "The". The vocal line is in a bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff. Dynamics range from *mf* (mezzo-forte) to *pp* (pianissimo). Pedaling instructions are provided below the piano part.

10

A

des - per - ate dog is bay - ing long, — for his farm is emp - ty — of folk to -

This section contains the lyrics and musical notation for the first line of the song. It includes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part features triplet patterns and dynamic markings of *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano). Pedaling instructions are provided below the piano part.

\* Full orchestral accompaniment available on rental.  
Chorus in No. 3 only

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night. *mf* from a distance, like a hoedown It's Sat-ur-day night and

*pp poco marcato*

*una corda* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. normale \*

ev - 'ry - one's gone to town danc - ing,

*leggerio* *mf*

*pp*

Ped. \* (II. Ped.) Ped. \* (I. Ped.) Ped. \*

but I hear you, — Boo - by - Pup, (two fields a-way a -

*pp* *p dolce* *mf*

Ped. \* Ped. \*

cross the road) I un - der - stand how — you feel. — I'm a -

*p*

Ped. \* Ped.

30 C  
mf freely

lone to - night too. Your voice feels good, does - n't it?

34 *f*

You hear your - self, you say your - self, you throw your - self way up high in the

37

wind and you don't think a - bout it too real di - rect - ly, but you kind of

40 *mp* *mf*

won - der, don't you, if some - thing out there might not hear you, and

43

come.



# American Songs - Sacred and Profane

for Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus and Piano or Orchestra\*

## 2. Blood love

Peter Elliot

Steven Sametz

*♩ = 84-92 stealthily*

Piano *ppp* *p*

5

7 *mf* *p* *p legg.*

9 *mf* *recit. (freely)* *f*

*8va* *♩ = 80* I won-der\_ have you found the two points of

\* Full orchestral accompaniment available on rental.  
Chorus in No. 3 only

## 11 Tempo I

red, re-mem-brance of our night to-geth - er? \_

Tempo I

*p* *mf*

## 15

As I fly a -

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

*calmly*

B

## 18

cross the con - ti - nent's edge I curl my tongue

*mf* *p* *mf*

## 21

a-round each in - ci - sor (you'd been

*p* *pp*

*Ed.* \*

25

nice e-nough to say what — nice teeth I had...).

28

*mp* *p*

32 C

The sound — of — your blood —

(II. Led.)

35

— rac-ing — fills my ears a-gain. Your beau - - - ty, the

*mp* *p*

39

swell of your chest, the hard un - yield - ing pres - sure of your arms a -

*p* *mf* *p sub.*

43

round — me, tak - ing me up, slam - ming me back, hard - er,

*f* *8va* *II. Ped.* *\* Ped. \**

47

hard - er, strip - ping me a - way to where I re - cog - nized my

*rall.* *(brief) p* *recit. (freely)* *(brief) p* *pp* *(II. Ped.)*

# American Songs - Sacred and Profane

for Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus and Piano or Orchestra\*

dur. 12:45

for my good friend, Joseph Fabboli

Jeremy Driscoll  
from *Some Other Morning*

## 3. At Being Buried, My Surprise

♩ = 48

Baritone Solo

Piano

*pp* *sim.*

*p*

When they put me down —

6

here I knew they had to; I was not an - gry, I ex - pect - ed

12

on - ly the dark and the damp - cold and the long bor - ing years of

16

hop - ing — for the res - ur - rec - tion. A

*ped.* \* *ped.* \* *sim.*

\* Full orchestral accompaniment available on rental. Chorus in No. 3 only

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21 *mf*

Im - ag - ine my sur - prise, then, when not ten min - utes af - ter they'd

25 *p*

cried their last and gone I sensed some... some

30 *mp* **B**

breath - ing com - ing toward me through the ground.

35 *pp* *p* *mp*

It was dis - tant, ve - ry dis - tant, but it was grow - ing strong - er, and it was

40 *mf* *mp*

def - i-nite-ly com-ing my way. What was it? As the

44 *p*

breath-ing drew clos - er I slow-ly dis-cerned that it was the

49 *p* *mp*

breath-ing of a song and grow-ing clos-er still,

54 *warmly* *mp*

I could say the song of a throng, and clos-er still, at last the

59 **p** **D**

Bar. Solo

words: they cried, and I per-ceived this,

S  
A  
T  
B

“San - ctus, — San - ctus, — San - ctus.”

“San - ctus, — San - ctus.”

Pno. **ppp**

*p* *ped.* \* *II. ped.* \*

63

Bar. Solo

the song of those who had died and now — praised the Lamb — as

Pno. *mf poco marc.*

*f*

*ped.* \*

66 **E**

Lord — of heav-en - ly ar - mies. — This song was com-ing to

*poco f* *p*