

DREAM LAND

Trenton Rhodes (ASCAP)

CHORAL VOICES – SATB + Piano

DREAM LAND (1st stanza)

by CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830–1894)

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmed sleep:
Awake her not.
Lured by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
Her pleasant lot.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Dream Land is a gorgeous poem by the 19th century poet Christina Rossetti. It speaks of a woman who is using sleep as a way to escape the turmoil and pain of her life, something that I'm sure many people can relate to. In attempting to sleep, the woman is seeking true peace and solace, before the day comes to sweep her away.

In my freshman year of college, this poem really stuck out to me. I'd never heard of Rossetti, and after reading and analyzing the poem I was so captivated by it. The very subject I felt was so musical that I wanted to bring the musical parts to life, which is where this piece started. At the time of writing this work, I just needed a quick piece to fulfill requirements for a composition contest, and so I decided to only set the first stanza.

This work is very peaceful and tranquil, to complement the text. Some rhythms and harmonic choices are a little ambiguous, to represent the dreamy atmosphere. The piece takes us on a quick journey from Eb major all the way to A major, a full tri-tone away, and it does so using harmonic choices that slowly pull you toward the modulation. The overall structure is foggy, and melodic statements are not very clear, to represent the dreamy, ignorant state of mind. The over-arching theme behind this work is dreamy sleep; something to think about when preparing or listening to it.

- Trenton Rhodes, 2025

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