

# Owen Leech

## **Three Poems of Isaac Rosenberg**

for unaccompanied mixed choir

2013

Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918) is perhaps best known as one of the finest poets of the First World War, though certainly - as a working-class Jew brought up in London's East End - the most atypical. Also a painter of great promise, he died on the Somme in April 1918 at the age of twenty-seven. In these three poems, however, we are far from the battlefield; this is more familiar poetic territory: the joy and pain of a young man's desire and love.

### **If You Are Fire**

If you are fire and I am fire,  
Who blows the flame apart  
So that desire eludes desire  
Around one central heart?

A single root and separate bough,  
And what blind hands between  
That make our longing's mutual glow  
As if it had not been?

### **Song**

A silver rose to show  
Is your sweet face;  
And like the heavens' white brow,  
Sometime God's battle-place,  
Your blood is quiet now.

Your body is a star  
Unto my thought;  
But stars are not too far,  
And can be caught -  
Small pools their prisons are.

### **A Mood**

You are so light and gay,  
So slight, sweet maid -  
Your limbs like leaves in play,  
Or beams that grasses braid:  
O! Joys whose jewels pray  
My breast to be inlaid.

Frail fairy of the streets;  
Strong, dainty lure;  
For all men's eyes the sweets  
Whose lack makes hearts so poor;  
While your heart loveless beats.  
Light, laughing, and impure.

O! Fragrant waft of flesh,  
Float through me so -  
My limbs are in your mesh,  
My blood forgets to flow;  
Ah! Lilled meadows fresh,  
It knows where it would go.

# Three Poems of Isaac Rosenberg

## 1. If you are fire

*sempre movendo* -  $\text{♩} = 72$

Owen Leech

Musical score for the first system of 'If you are fire'. It features six vocal parts: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. The music is in 3/2 time and begins with a *ff* *appass.* dynamic. The lyrics are: 'If you are fire and I am'.

Musical score for the second system of 'If you are fire'. It continues the six vocal parts from the first system. The lyrics are: 'fire, Who blows, who blows, who blows the flame a - part So that de -'. The dynamics include *p* and *mp*. The system begins with a measure number '4'.

9

sire e - ludes de - sire A - round one cen - tral heart? A

sire e - ludes de - sire A - round one cen - tral heart? A

sire e - ludes de - sire A - round one cen - tral heart? A

sire e - ludes de - sire A - round one cen - tral heart? A

part, a - round one cen - tral, cen - tral heart? A

part, a - round one cen - tral, cen - tral heart? A

14

sin - gle root and se - par - ate bough And what blind

sin - - gle root and se - par - ate bough And what blind

sin - - gle root and se - - p'rate bough And what blind

sin - - gle root and se - - p'rate bough And what blind

sin - - gle root and se - p'rate bough And what blind

sin - - gle root and se - p'rate bough And what blind

19

*mf* hands, and what blind hands be - tween. That make our long - ing's mu - tual glow *p*

*mf* hands, and what blind hands be - tween. That make our long - ing's mu - tual glow *p*

*mf* hands, and what blind hands be - tween. That make our long - ing's mu - tual glow *p*

*mf* hands, and what blind hands be - tween. That make our long - ing's mu - tual glow *p* *pp legato* As

*mf* hands be - tween, long - ing's glow *mp* *p*

*mf* hands be - tween, long - ing's glow *mp* *p*

24

*pp legato* As if it had not been? *ff* If you are

*pp legato* As if it had not been? *ff* If you are

*pp legato* As if it had not been? *ff* If you are

*pp legato* if, as if, as if it had not been? *ff* If you are

*pp legato* As if, as if it had not been? *ff* If you are

*ff* If you are

28

fire and I am fire.

fire and I am fire.

fire and I am fire.

fire and I am fire.

fire and I am fire.

fire and I am fire.

18.08.2013  
Oviedo

## 2. Song

*luminoso, molto sostenuto* -  $\text{♩} = \text{c.62}$

*p*  
A sil - ver rose, a sil - ver rose to show Is your sweet

*p*  
A sil - ver rose, a sil - ver rose to show Is your sweet

*p*  
A sil - ver rose, a sil - ver rose to show Is your sweet

*p*  
A sil - ver rose, a sil - ver rose to show Is your sweet

*p*  
A sil - ver rose, a sil - ver rose to show Is your sweet

*p*  
A sil - ver rose, a sil - ver rose to show Is your sweet

5

*p senza cresc.*  
face; And like the heav'n's white brow, Some-time God's

*p senza cresc.*  
face; And like the heav'n's white brow, Some - time God's bat - tle -

*p senza cresc.*  
face; And like the heav'n's white brow, Some-time God's

*p senza cresc.*  
face; And like the heav'n's white brow, Some - time God's bat - tle -

*p senza cresc.*  
face: And like the heav'n's white brow, Some-time God's

*p senza cresc.*  
face; And like the heav'n's white brow, Some - time God's bat - tle -



8

bat-tle-place, Your blood is quiet now. Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my  
 place. A sil-ver rose. Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my thought;  
 bat-tle-place, Your blood is quiet now. Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my  
 place. A sil-ver rose. Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my thought;  
 bat-tle-place, Your blood is quiet now. Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my  
 place, bat-tle-place. Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my thought;

12

thought; Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my thought;  
 Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my thought; But stars are  
 thought; Your bo-dy is a star Un-to my thought;  
 Your blood is quiet now. But stars are not too far, too far, But stars are  
 Your blood is quiet now. But stars are not too far, too far,  
 Your blood is quiet now. But stars are not too far, too far, But stars are

16 *mp* *mf*

But stars are not too far, \_\_\_\_\_ And can be caught—

not far, but \_\_\_\_\_ stars \_\_\_\_\_ are not far, And can be caught—

*mp* *mf*

But stars are not too far, \_\_\_\_\_ And can be caught—

not far, but \_\_\_\_\_ stars \_\_\_\_\_ are not far, And can be caught— *dim.* Small pools their

*mp* *mf* *dim.*

But stars are not too far, \_\_\_\_\_ And can be caught— Small pools their

not far, And \_\_\_\_\_ stars \_\_\_\_\_ can be caught— *dim.* Small pools their

19 *mp* *p*

Small pools their pri - sons are.

Small pools their pri - sons are.

Small pools their pri - sons are.

*mp* *p*

pri - sons are, their pri - sons are, \_\_\_\_\_ their pri - sons are.

*mp* *p*

pri - sons are, their pri - sons are, \_\_\_\_\_ their pri - sons are.

*mp* *p*

pri - sons are, their pri - sons are, \_\_\_\_\_ their pri - sons are.

23

*pp*  
A sil - ver rose, \_\_\_\_\_ a sil - ver rose to

*pp*  
A sil - ver rose, \_\_\_\_\_ a sil - ver rose to

*pp*  
A sil - ver rose, \_\_\_\_\_ a sil - ver rose to

*pp*  
A sil - ver rose, \_\_\_\_\_ a sil - ver rose to

*pp*  
A sil - ver rose, \_\_\_\_\_ a sil - ver rose to

*pp*  
A sil - ver rose, \_\_\_\_\_ a sil - ver rose to

26

show\_ is your sweet \_\_\_\_\_ face. \_\_\_\_\_

show \_\_\_\_\_ is your sweet face, \_\_\_\_\_ is your sweet \_\_\_\_\_ face. \_\_\_\_\_

show is \_\_\_\_\_ your sweet \_\_\_\_\_ face. \_\_\_\_\_

show \_\_\_\_\_ is your sweet face, \_\_\_\_\_ is your sweet \_\_\_\_\_ face. \_\_\_\_\_

show is your sweet \_\_\_\_\_ face. \_\_\_\_\_

show \_\_\_\_\_ is your sweet face, \_\_\_\_\_ is your sweet \_\_\_\_\_ face. \_\_\_\_\_

25.08.2013  
Oviedo

## 3. A mood

*leggiero, volante* - ♩. = 92

*p*  
You are so light and gay, So slight, sweet maid, sweet maid—

*p*  
You are so light and gay, Your limbs like

*p*  
You are so light and gay, So slight, sweet maid, sweet maid—

*p*  
You are so light and gay, Your limbs like

*p*  
You are so light and gay, Your limbs like

*p*  
You are so light and gay, Your limbs like

4 *p* *mp*  
Your limbs like leaves in play Or beams that grasses braid: O!

*p*  
leaves in play. O! Joys whose jewels pray,

*p* *mp*  
Your limbs like leaves in play Or beams that grasses braid: O!

*p*  
leaves in play. O! Joys whose jewels pray to be in -

*p*  
leaves in play. O! Joys whose jewels pray

*p*  
leaves in play. O! Joys whose jewels pray

Joy - s to be in - laid.

O! Joy - s to be in - laid.

Joy - s to be in - laid.

laid, O! Joy - s to be in - laid.

My breast to be in - laid.

My breast to be in - laid.

Frail fai - ry of the streets; Strong dain - ty lure; Whose lack makes

Frail fai - ry of the streets; For all men's eyes the sweets; While your heart love-less

Frail fai - ry of the streets; Strong dain - ty lure; Whose lack makes

Frail fai - ry of the streets; For all men's eyes the sweets; While your heart love-less

Frail fai - ry of the streets; Strong dain - ty lure; Whose lack makes

Frail fai - ry of the streets; For all men's eyes the sweets; While your heart love-less

15

hearts so poor; Light, laugh-ing and im - pure.  
 beats. Light, laugh - ing, and im - pure.  
 hearts so poor; Light, laugh-ing and im - pure.  
 beats. Light, laugh - ing, laugh - ing and im - pure,  
 hearts so poor; Light, laugh-ing and im - pure, Light,  
 beats. Light, laugh - ing, and im - pure.

18

O! Fra - grant  
 Light, laugh - ing, and im - pure, laugh - ing, and im - pure. O! Fra - grant  
 laugh - ing, and im - pure, laugh - ing, and im - pure, laugh - ing, and im -  
 O! Fra - grant

22

*p* Float through me so— My blood, my blood for-gets to flow, to flow; *mf* Ah! Li-  
 lied  
 waft of flesh, *mp* My limbs are in your mesh, *mf* My blood for -  
*p* Float through me so— My blood, my blood for-gets to flow, to flow; *mf* Ah! Li-  
 lied  
 waft of flesh, *mp* My limbs are in your mesh, *mf* My blood for -  
*p* pure. Float through me so— My blood, my blood for-gets to flow, to flow; *mf* Ah! Li-  
 lied  
 waft of flesh, *mp* My limbs are in your mesh, *f* your mesh, My

26

*f* mea - - - dows fresh, *mf* It knows where it would  
 gets, *f* for - gets *mf* to flow; *mf* It knows where  
 mea - - - dows fresh, *mf* It knows where  
 gets, *f* for - gets, *mf* for - gets to flow; *mf* It  
 mea - - - dows fresh, *mf* It  
 blood, *f* for - gets, *mf* for - gets, *mf* for - gets;

29

go. You are so light

it would go. You are so light

it would go. You are so light

knows where it would go. You are so light and gay,

knows where it would go. You are so light and gay,

mp it would go. p You are so light and gay,

It knows where it would go. p You are so light and gay,

34

and gay, So slight, sweet maid, sweet maid, sweet maid-

and gay, So slight, sweet maid, sweet maid, sweet maid-

and gay, So slight, sweet maid, sweet maid, sweet maid-

Your limbs like leaves in

Your limbs like leaves in

Your limbs like leaves in



**un poco meno mosso**

**rall.**

38 *pp* *ff* *appass.*

Your limbs like leaves in play Or beams that gras - ses braid, that gras - ses braid. If

*pp* *ff* *appass.*

Your limbs like leaves in play Or beams that gras - ses braid, that gras - ses braid. If

*pp* *ff* *appass.*

Your limbs like leaves in play Or beams that gras - ses braid, that gras - ses braid. If

*pp* *ff* *appass.*

play. (hmm) If

*pp* *ff* *appass.*

play. (hmm) If

*pp* *ff* *appass.*

play. (hmm) If

**più lento - ♩ = c. 78**

**allargando.....**

41

you are fire and I am fire.

you are fire and I am fire.

you are fire and I am fire, am fire.

you are fire and I am fire.

you are fire and I am fire, am fire.

you are fire and I am fire.

you are fire and I am fire.

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