## RAIN MUSIC

On the dusty earth-drum Beats the falling rain; Now a whispered murmur, Now a louder strain.

Slender, silvery drumsticks, On an ancient drum, Beat the mellow music Bidding life to come.

Chords of earth awakened, Notes of greening spring, Rise and fall triumphant Over every thing.

Slender, silvery drumsticks Beat the long tattoo— God, the Great Musician, Calling life anew.

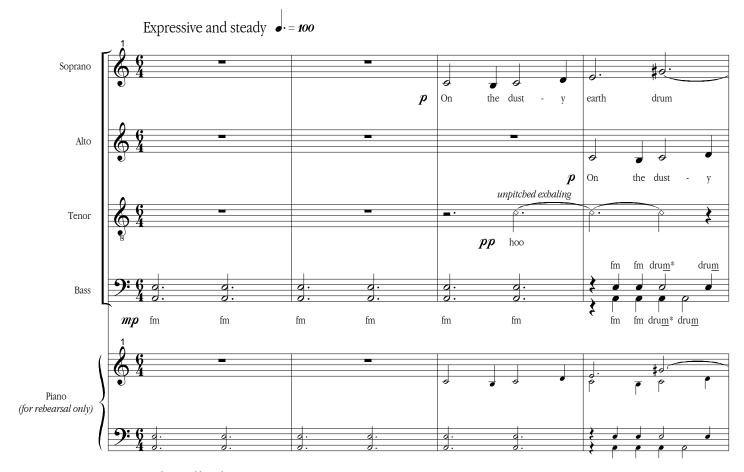
Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr. was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1895. Son of a well-known poet and educator, he was an intelligent child, learning to read early in his life and graduating second in his class from the Louisville Central High School. He enrolled in Fisk University but was forced to leave during his second year when he, as well as his older sister Florence, contracted tuberculosis, which was then a prime killer of black Americans. The death of Florence in 1914 prompted the first poem of Cotter's, "To Florence." Cotter was to have only a little over four years as a poet; he himself died of the disease in 1919 at the age of twenty-three. Thus all of his poetry was written under the shadow of his illness. He published one sole book of poetry entitled *The Band of Gideon and Other Lyrics* (1918). A few miscellaneous works were also published in magazines in the last year of his life as well as posthumously. Though his total output was small, Cotter's work shows a technical versatility and maturity uncommon in such a young writer. His poems address universal concerns such as nature, religion, love, death, and the then-current issue of the treatment of black Americans during World War I. His writing style varies widely from traditional forms to free verse. Only his premature death kept him from fulfilling the potential to which he would undoubtedly have grown.

This choral setting of the poem was first performed by the West Singers of Cherry Hill High School West (Cherry Hill, NJ) under the direction of Christine Bass on February 23, 1996 at the 1996 New Jersey Music Educators National Conference.

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Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr.

David Das (1995)

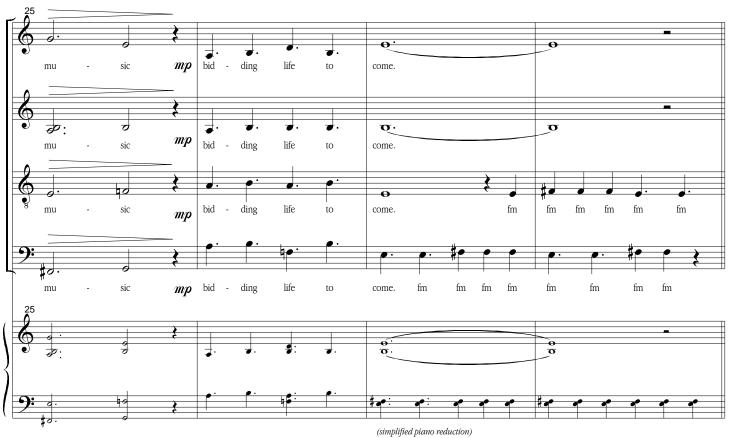


<sup>\*</sup>Percussive; close quickly to the m.

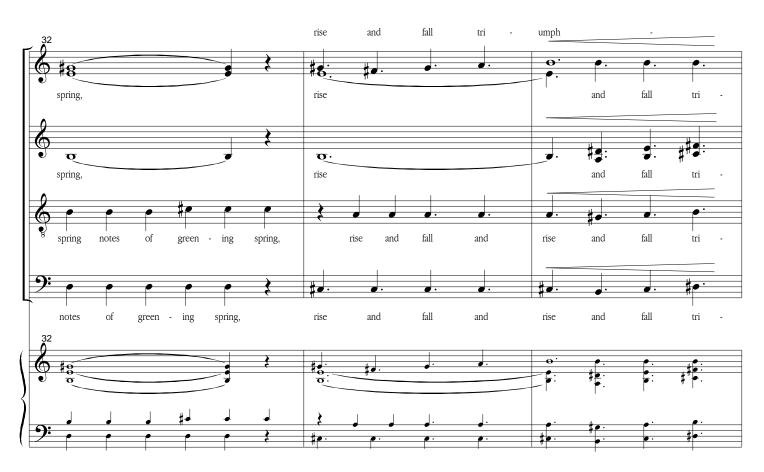
















Agitato • = 90



