

**So Let Us Live - Really Live!**  
**for Baritone and Piano**  
**(2009)**

**Program Note**

The four love songs that constitute *So Let Us Live - Really Live!* were commissioned by John Goodman in honor of his wife Kerry King's fiftieth birthday. The set - with its (relatively) light poetry and (excessively) tonal settings - was originally intended as "Hausmusik" ("house music"), music to be performed privately among (semi-inebriated) friends. However, certain personal events that occurred during their composition have compelled me to go public with them, and thus, with John and Kerry's indulgence, they are receiving their premiere here, rather than in a living room.

A thousand-and-one thanks to Allen Shearer's wonderful voice and Lino Rivera's exquisite hands, which were constantly in my mind's ear during the composition of the songs.

With love to Kerry, from John and Bob.

**Texts**

I. WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard a wise man say,  
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
But not your heart away;  
Give pearls away and rubies  
But keep your fancy free:  
But I was one-and-twenty,  
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard him say again,  
"The heart out of the bosom

Was never given in vain;  
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty  
And sold for endless rue."  
And I am two-and-twenty,  
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

II. FOR AN AMOROUS LADY  
Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)

"Most mammals like caresses, in the sense  
in which we usually take the word,  
whereas other creatures, even tame snakes,  
prefer giving to receiving them."

The pensive gnu, the staid aardvark,  
Accept caresses in the dark;  
The bear, equipped with paw and snout,  
Would rather take than dish it out.  
But snakes, both poisonous and garter,  
In love are never known to barter;  
The worm, though dank, is sensitive:  
His noble nature bids him give.

But you, my dearest, have a soul  
Encompassing fish, flesh and fowl.  
When amorous arts we would pursue,  
You can, with pleasure, bill or coo.  
You are, in truth, one in a million,  
At once mammalian and reptilian.

III. LOVE ME NOT FOR COMELY GRACE  
John Wilbye (1574-1638)

Love not me for comely grace,  
For my pleasing eye or face;  
Nor for any outward part,  
No, nor for my constant heart:  
For those may fail or turn to ill,

So thou and I shall sever.  
Keep therefore a true woman's eye,  
And love me still, but know not why;  
So hast thou the same reason still  
To dote upon me ever.

IV. SO LET US LIVE - REALLY LIVE!  
Gaius Valerius Catullus (ca. 84 - 54 B.C.E.)

So let us live - really live! - and let us love.  
As for the gossip and harrumphs of the old farts, well,  
they're not worth a copper penny.

Suns set and rise again, over and over,  
to bubble bright as ever.  
But our little light shines only once  
before the sleep of endless night.

So kiss me! Kiss me a thousand times! A hundred more!  
Now a thousand again! Another hundred!  
Don't even think of stopping!  
Give me another thousand, and then a hundred,  
so many kisses that we can never count them all.  
A hundred thousand thousand kisses:  
let us cast them to the wind, and never know their number,  
or jealous eyes might glitter green over such a richness of love.

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