

## COMPENSATION

I SHOULD be glad of loneliness  
And hours that go on broken wings,  
A thirsty body, a tired heart  
And the unchanging ache of things,  
If I could make a single song  
As lovely and as full of light,  
As hushed and brief as a falling star  
On a winter night.

Sara Teasdale  
from *Flame and Shadows*  
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duration: c. 3:15

Choosing the text for a choral work is always a challenge; for this project, I had the pleasure of engaging in a spirited negotiation with the Lexington High School Chamber Singers and their director, Jason Iannuzzi. I opened by sending four or five poems that I thought might work; Jason countered with two by Sara Teasdale. I read more of her poetry and responded with more possibilities; the Chamber Singers proposed several others. We finally settled on Teasdale's "Compensation." It is an interesting task to construct a three-minute piece based on eight short lines of poetry. Words and phrases will need to be sung more than once. But does the repetition emphasize the right words? And does it help or hinder the understanding of the text?