



# The shadow of Life

Walter G. Alcock  
(1861-1947)

Fleeting as light, as the pearly light, that comes at the fall of day,  
Or the first faint flush of a summer's dawn, or the dainty blossoms in May  
That bud and bloom, and wither and die, ere the swallows have journey'd away.  
So is our life, the most beautiful life, with its anguish, its sorrows and fears,  
With its springtide of hope, brief summer of love, and desolate winter of tears.

Phantom of clouds, a squadron of clouds, that steal o'er the sleeping land,  
Or the storm-tossed waves, that beat on the cliff, and whiten the treacherous sand,  
That tumble and roar, as they mock at the dead, the wreck of a gallant band,  
So is our life, the most beautiful life, with its anguish, its sorrows and fears,  
With its springtide of hope, brief summer of love, and desolate winter of tears.

Trackless as stars, pale, luminous stars, that shoot through the boundless sky,  
Or the old-world song, that floats on the wind, and passes away with a sigh,  
That touches the chord of a broken heart, and quickens a thought that would die,  
So is our life, the most beautiful life, with its anguish, its sorrows and fears,  
With its springtide of hope, brief summer of love, and desolate winter of tears.

Alfred Cecil Calmour (1857-1912)

Allegretto ♩ = 88

S  
Fleet - ing as light, as the pearl - y light, that comes at the fall of

A  
Fleet - ing as light, as the pearl - y light, that comes at the fall of

T  
Fleet - ing as light, as the pearl - y light, that comes at the fall of

B  
Fleet - ing as light, as the pearl - y light, that comes at the fall of



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4

S day, \_\_\_\_\_ Or the first faint flush \_\_\_\_\_ of a sum - mer's dawn, \_\_\_\_\_ or the

A day, \_\_\_\_\_ Or the first faint flush of a sum - mer's dawn, or the

T day, \_\_\_\_\_ Or the first faint flush of a sum - mer's dawn, or the

B day, Or the first faint \_\_\_\_\_ flush of a sum - mer's, a sum - mer's dawn, or the

7

S dain - ty blos - soms in May \_\_\_\_\_ That bud and bloom, \_\_\_\_\_ and

A dain - ty blos - soms in May \_\_\_\_\_ That bud and bloom, \_\_\_\_\_ and

T dain - ty blos - soms in May \_\_\_\_\_ That bud and bloom, \_\_\_\_\_ and

B dain - ty blos - soms in May \_\_\_\_\_ That bud and bloom, \_\_\_\_\_ and

10 *espress.*

S with - er and die, ere the swal - lows have jour - ney'd a - way.

A *espress.* with - er and die, ere the swal - lows have jour - ney'd a - way. \_\_\_\_\_

T *espress.* with - er and die, ere the swal - lows have jour - ney'd a - way. \_\_\_\_\_

B *espress.* with - er and die, ere the swal - lows have jour - ney'd a - way. \_\_\_\_\_ So \_\_\_\_\_

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13

S *p* > So is our life, \_\_\_\_\_ the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

A *p* So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

T *p* > So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful \_\_\_\_\_ life, \_\_\_\_\_ with its *cresc.*

B \_\_\_\_\_ is our life, \_\_\_\_\_ the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

15

S an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, \_\_\_\_\_ With its spring - tide of hope, \_\_\_\_\_ brief

A an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of

T an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of

B an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief

18

S *rall.* sum - mer \_\_\_\_\_ of love, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ des - o - late \_\_\_\_\_ win - ter of tears. *p*

A *rall.* love, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ des - o - late \_\_\_\_\_ win - ter of tears. *p*

T *rall.* love, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ des - o - late win - - - ter of \_\_\_\_\_ tears. *p*

B *rall.* sum - mer of love, and \_\_\_\_\_ des - o - late win - ter of tears. *p*

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22 *a tempo*

S *mf* Phan - tom of clouds, a squad - ron of clouds, that steal o'er the sleep - ing *p*

A *mf* Phan - tom of clouds, a squad - ron of clouds, that steal o'er the sleep - ing *p*

T *mf* Phan - tom of clouds, a squad - ron of clouds, that steal o'er the sleep - ing *p*

B *mf* Phan - tom of clouds, a squad - ron of clouds, that steal o'er the sleep - ing *p*

25 *cresc.*

S land, Or the storm - tossed waves, that beat on the cliff, and

A *cresc.* land, Or the storm - tossed waves, that beat on the cliff, and

T *cresc.* land, Or the storm - tossed waves, that beat on the cliff, and

B *cresc.* land, Or the storm - tossed waves, that beat, that beat on the cliff, and

28

S whi - ten the trea - cher - ous sand, That tum - ble and roar, as they *f* *p*

A whi - ten the trea - cher - ous sand, That tum - ble and roar, as they *f* *p*

T whi - ten the trea - cher - ous sand, That tum - ble and roar, as they *f* *p*

B whi - ten the trea - cher - ous sand, That tum - ble and roar, as they *f* *p*

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31

S mock at the dead, the wreck of a gal - lant band,

A mock at the dead, the wreck of a gal - lant band,

T mock at the dead, the wreck of a gal - lant band,

B mock at the dead, the wreck of a gal - lant band, *p* So

34

S So is our life, — the most beau - ti - ful life, with its an - guish, its sor - rows and

A So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, with its an - guish, its sor - rows and

T So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, — with its an - guish, its sor - rows and

B — is our life, — the most beau - ti - ful life, with its an - guish, its sor - rows and

*cresc.*

37

S fears, — With its spring - tide of hope, — brief sum - mer — of love, —

A fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of love, — and

T fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of love, — and

B fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of

*f*

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40 *rall.* *meno mosso* *Tempo 1mo.*

S — and des - o - late win - ter of tears. Track - less as stars, pale, lu - minous stars, — that

A des - o - late win - ter of tears. Track - less as stars, pale, lu - minous stars, — that

T des - o - late win - ter of tears. Track - less as stars, pale, lu - minous stars, — that

B love, and des - o - late win - ter of tears. Track - less as stars, pale, lu - minous stars, — that

45 *meno mosso* *espress.*

S shoot through the bound - less sky, Or the old - world song, — that

A shoot through the bound - less sky, Or the old - world song, that

T shoot through the bound - less sky, Or the old - world song, that floats

B shoot through the bound - less sky, Or the old - world

48 *rit.* *p* *meno mosso*

S floats on the wind, — and pass - es a - way with a sigh, That

A floats on the wind, — and pass - es a - way with a sigh,

T — and pass - es a - way with a sigh, That

B song, — that floats on the wind, and pass - es a - way with a sigh,

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51

S touch - es the chord of a bro - ken heart, and quick - ens a thought that would *rit.*

A That touch - es a bro - ken heart, and quick - ens a thought that would *rit.*

T touch - es the chord of a bro - ken heart, and quick - ens a thought that would *rit.*

B That touch - es a bro - ken heart, and quick - ens a thought that would *rit.*

54

S die, So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

A die, So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

T die, So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

B die, So is our life, the most beau - ti - ful life, with its *cresc.*

57

S an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief

A an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of

T an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief sum - mer of

B an - guish, its sor - rows and fears, With its spring - tide of hope, brief

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60

S  
sum - mer of love, and des - o - late win - ter, and

A  
love, and des - o - late win - ter, and

T  
love, and des - o - late win - - - ter, and

B  
sum - mer of love, and des - o - late win - ter, and

63

S  
des - o - late win - ter of tears.

A  
des - o - late win - ter of tears.

T  
des - o - late win - - - ter of tears.

B  
des - o - late win - ter of tears.

*rall.*

*pp*

**Sir Walter Galpin Alcock** (1861-1947) was born at Edenbridge, Kent, England, and was a chorister at Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham Green. At age 15 he won the Society of Arts scholarship to the National Training School for Music (which became the Royal College of Music in 1882). There, he studied composition with Arthur Sullivan and the organ with John Stainer. He was renowned as an organ recitalist. He was organist at St. Mary's, Twickenham; Quebec Chapel, St. Marylebone; Holy Trinity, Sloane Street; and St. Margaret's, Westminster. In 1893 he was appointed Organ Professor at the Royal College of Music. He held concurrent positions as assistant organist of Westminster Abbey and organist of the Chapels Royal. In 1916 he became organist of Salisbury Cathedral. Alcock had the distinction of playing the organ at Westminster Abbey at the coronations of three kings: Edward VII (1902), George V (1911) and George VI (1937). As a hobby, he constructed a model railway in his garden at Salisbury, with a steam engine and tender named the "Patrick Stirling." The Cathedral choirboys were often given rides. His compositions were mainly for the organ and church, including service settings, anthems, hymns and chants.

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