

Commissioned by, and arranged for, the Queensland Kodály Choir Inc. 2022. Creating a lasting legacy of Australian choral music.

## Acknowledgements

**Michael Leunig** for a life-time of drawings and poems, writings and paintings that have informed, inspired, challenged, comforted, disarmed, delighted, enraged and reminded so many of us of our earthy, simpler selves and our place in this beautiful, astonishing universe: and especially for his generosity and goodwill in allowing his words to be put to music in this way.

**Dr James Cuskelly** and the Queensland Kodaly Choir for their legacy project, the vision of more Australian-made songs available for communities to sing, and especially for James' trust and patience and encouragement which provided a safe container for the work.

James Rigby in Castlemaine for recording the songs in his home studio, for his musical heart, and for the benign and unhurried atmosphere he creates that is so essential for the tender emergence of new work.

Wendy Rowlands for notating the songs into readable charts with such diligence, for valuable feedback, encouragement and on-going patience with the many little changes and details in the editing process.

Mark Woods for mastering the recording, for his depth of experience and skill and his keen ear for every click and rattle.

**Terry White** for husbanding the process and delighting in the birth of the songs that made it through. And to family and friends for sharing their favourite Leunig pieces, lending their Leunig collections, and road-testing songs as they rolled off the assembly line.

## Foreword

In the introduction\* to his book of paintings titled *The Holy Fool*, artist, writer, and cartoonist Michael Leunig writes:

"Only in recent years have I come to realise that what I have been so constantly depicting, is the world of the holy fool: the people, the creatures, the circumstances and the peculiar eco-system of the spirit . . ."

He describes the holy fool as "a humble being . . . who says out loud quite cheerfully what others only dare to whisper" and "who brings relief and healing by expressing what has been repressed, or by articulating some unspoken universal grief."

He also suggests that underlying the pursuit of creativity in affluent societies there may be an intuitive attempt to recover "the capacity for wonder, spontaneity, playfulness, openness, mindfulness and access to raw beauty, the qualities that were so natural and easy in childhood."

It is in the spirit of these qualities that the texts for the songs in this collection have been chosen, guided by the commission set by Dr. James Cuskelly and the Queensland Kodaly choir to make up melodies for about 20 short songs based on Mr Leunig's works. This inspiring brief also asked for the songs to be easily learned by ear, accessible to novice and experienced singers alike, shorter rather than longer, simple rather than complex, with singable tunes, and lyrics that reveal the human condition and reflect the inclusive, egalitarian and community-building values of the choir.

What a fabulous challenge! It has been a privilege and a joy to undertake this task, especially to labour within the trust of James Cuskelly and the generosity and goodwill of Michael Leunig himself, whose warm reply to the idea included these words:

Dear James... I would be delighted for you to use any texts in the creation of choral music. . . . It has been my greatest honour and my deepest most joyful sense of fulfilment to know that various of my texts have become songs over the years. . . Might I say that when I create these texts I have had a sort of 'musicality' going on somewhere deep inside me - which seems to facilitate the writing process and makes it all very pleasurable in the end.

With best wishes, Michael Leunig.

My hope for these tunes is that they fulfil the brief and travel through the air like seeds on the breeze and grow wherever they land. Arrange them dear choir leaders, select the ones that suit your group, add harmonies and accompaniments. It will be the greatest reward if people sing them!

With love and gratitude, Fay White Singer- Songmaker, Sept 2023

<sup>\*</sup> Regressive Painting and the Holy Fool

## Michael Leunig Songs of Peace and Simplicity

## Music by Fay White

## Foreword

## Alphabetical Index of titles.

20. Winter of Beautiful Things

21. Winter Prayer – in E and Eb

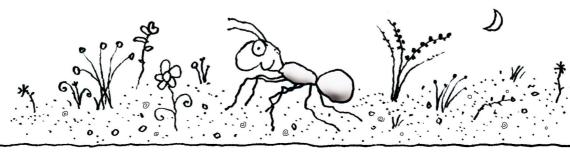
Alphabetical Index of titles.	
Notation by Wendy Rowlands	First lines
1. Apology to insects	Dear little ant
2. Care is the Cure - Hymn	Care is the cure
3. Let it Ring	When the heart is cut
4. Love is Born	Love is Born
5. Moments of no Consequence	Moments of no consequence
6. My Big Toe	My Big Toe is an honest man
7. Pat the Dog	Feeling dull, miserable and sad?
8. Peace	Peace is my drug
9. Plodder's Prayer	God give me a quiet week
10. Sitting on the Fence	Come sit down beside me
11 Small Towns	There is a little town called me
12. Spring Love Song	Life is just a little branch we land on
13. The First Day of School	The first day of school
14. The Summer Palace – melody and 3 part	Make a little garden in your pocket
15. The Trains	The trains aren't running on time
16. The Wee Dark Hours	The angel of the wee dark hours
17. Tiny Little Boat	God bless this tiny little boat
18. Wanted	Wanted - not dead but alive and well
19. What's the Use?	What's the use of this little hand?

A storm in a teacup

The little frog in joyful praise . . .

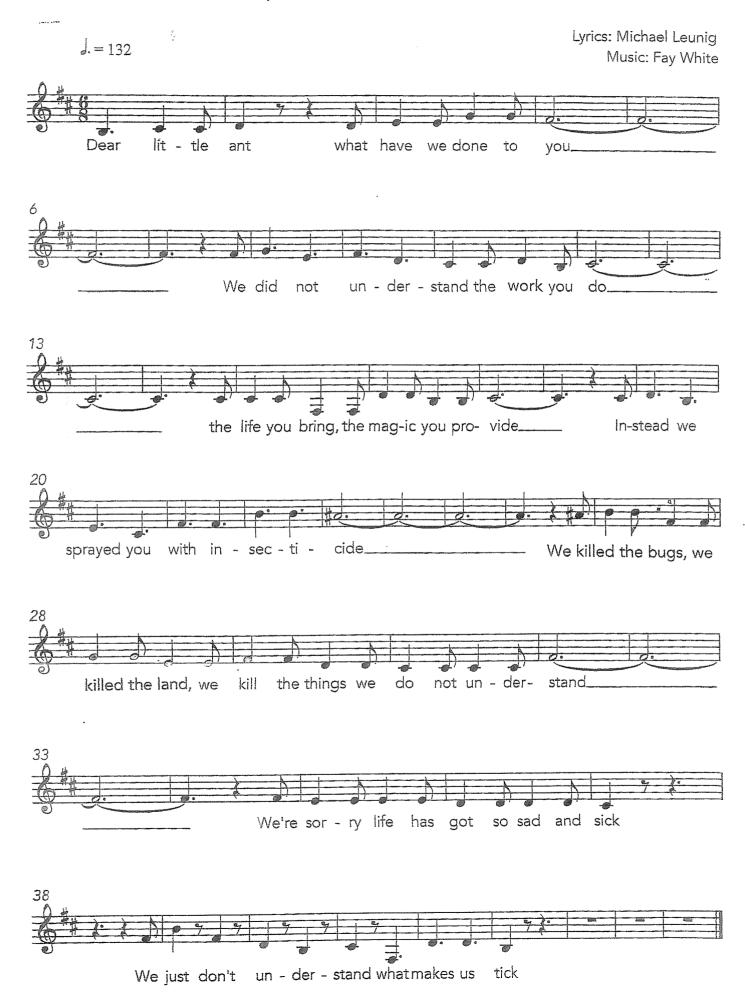
## APOLOGY TO INSECTS

Dear little ant, what have we done to you! We did not understand the work you do; The life you bring, the magic you provide, Instead we sprayed you with insecticide. We killed the bugs, we killed the land. We kill the things we do not understand. We're sorry life has got so sad and sick, We just don't understand what makes us tick.



Leuni9

## Apology to insects



### HYMN

Care is the cure. It is slow,

It is raw, It is pure.

It is hold .

It is simple and bare.
It is real.

It is there. Nothing is newer

Nothing is newer Or older, Or wiser, Or truer. (are is the cure.



## Care is the cure



When the heart Is cut or cracked or broken Do not clutch it Let the wound lie open

Let the wind
From the good old sea blow in
To bathe the wound with salt
And let it sting.

Let a stray dog lick it Let a bird lean in the hole and sing A simple song like a tiny bell And let it ring

## Let it ring (When the heart is cut) Words: Michael Leunig Music: Fay White J = 95 Gently В clutch it, Let the or cracked or bro ken\_ Do not When the heart is simile Vocal accompaniment dt - n dt - n dm dt - n dm Dm dt - n dm F#7 from the good old blow in. wind sea. Let the wound lie E B lick it, let and let it sting Let stray dog with salt bathe the wound В sing hole. and. the bird lean in - to В F#7 ny bell and let it ring ti like song\_ sim - ple ring ring

- dm

dt - n

Dm

dm

dt - n

dt - n

dt - n - dm

dt - n

- dm

Love is born
With a dark and troubled face.
When hope is dead
And in the most unlikely place
Love is born,
Love is always born.

松

STOWN STOWN

## Love is born

Lyrics: Michael Leunig Music: Fay White (This can be sung in a round) 1.(Love is born..) dark, and trou-bled with a is Love born\_ and in the most un - like - ly when hope is dead. Love is Love is born. ways\_ al

born.

Love

is

Moments of no consequence Seem to make a lot of sense. Like the gentle pitter patter Of the things that do not matter As I sit alone and stare; Neither here and neither there.



# Moments of no consequence



My big toe is an honest man So down to earth and normal; Always true unto himself And pleasantly informal; Full of simple energy: Contented with his role If all of me was more like him I'd be a happy soul.

# My big toe



feeling dull, miserable and sad?

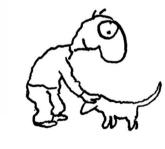
Then pat the dog.

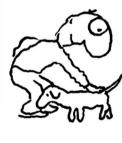
Run your hand from the head down to the tail.

Let your hand flow in a gentle sweep outward and upwards along the tail towards the sky.

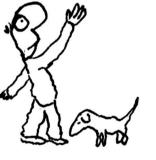
And now with arm outstretched and hand aloft, behold the magnificence of the sky!











# Pat the dog



# Peace is my drug. It stops the pain. In safe reflecting rooms Or in a lane Or in a park I will lie And have some peace And get high. If it's pure And there's lots of it about I overdose And pass out And dream of peace: My favorite thing, When nobody wants me And nothing's happening



## Peace is my drug



## PLODDERS PRAYER

God give me a quiet year, Nothing too amazing, Nothing too far up the creek, I need to do some grazing. God please let me simply plod

A path that's not too rough. Being me is very odd And that is quite enough.



# Plodders Prayer

This can be sung as a round



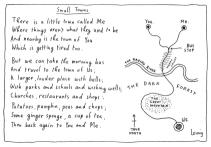
## e SITTING ON THE FENCE of

Come sit down beside me I said to myself,
And although it doesn't make sense,
I held my own hand
As a small sign of trust
And together I sat on the
Fence.



# Sitting on the fence





## Small Towns

(Story telling style) Words: Michael Leunig Music: Fay White Lively and freely E DmA called There lit-tle Ме Where things aren't what they is town\_\_\_ а  $E^7$ E A And of You\_ used be\_ by is the town to near -F#m G A A Which get-ting ti But is red take too we can the morn C#7 D Α bus of Us\_ Α ing and tra - vel to the town\_\_\_  $B^7$ E larg - er lou - der place\_\_ with bells With parks and schools and E  $E^7$ D Α Pot wish-ing wells\_ Church - es res - tau- rants\_\_\_ and shops  $B^7$ E D Α pump - kin, Some and chops gin - ger sponge, a - toes, peas а F#m D A G A

Then

back

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You

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Me

and

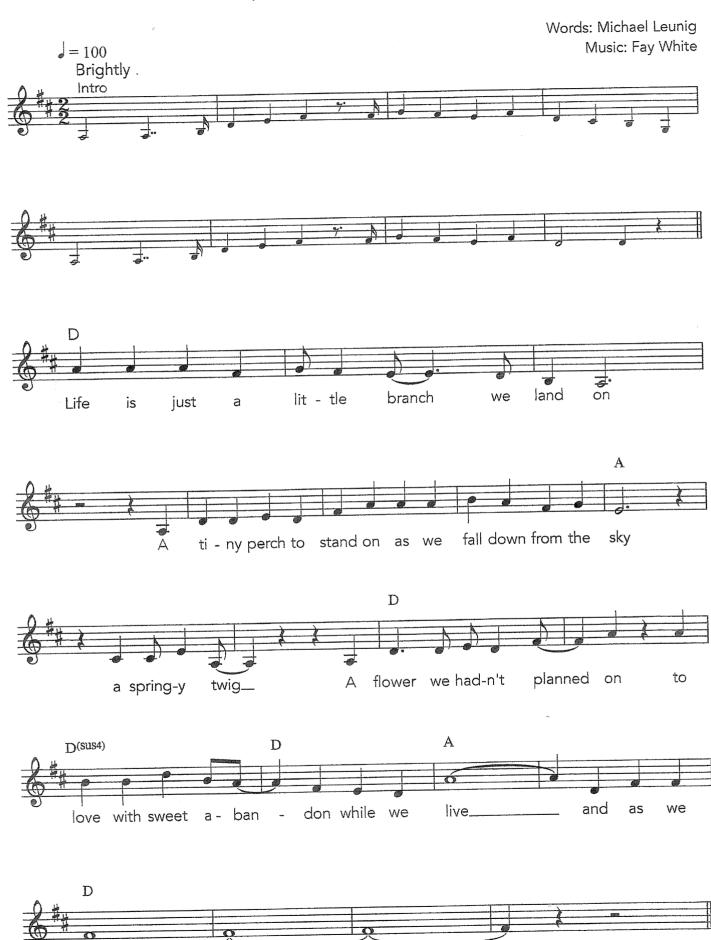
## SPRING LOVE SONG

Life is just a little branch we land on; A tiny perch to stand on as we fall down from the sky; A springy twig, a flower we hadn't planned on To love with sweet abandon while we live and as we die.



Leunig

# Spring love song



die

# The First Day of School. (A song) & 1 11 1

The first day of school could not have been merrier; The teacher turned out to be a fox terrier Who taught us to leap and taught us to bark And chase little birdies all over the park. For the rest of our lives we still had the spark from the wonderful first day of school.



# The first day of school



## The Summer Palace

Make a little garden in your pocket. Plant your cuffs with radishes and rocket. Let a passion fruit crawl up your thigh.

Grow some oregans in your fly.

Make a steamy compost of your fears.
Trickle irrigate your life with tears.

Let your troubled mind become a trellis. Turn your heart into a summer palace.





## The Summer Palace



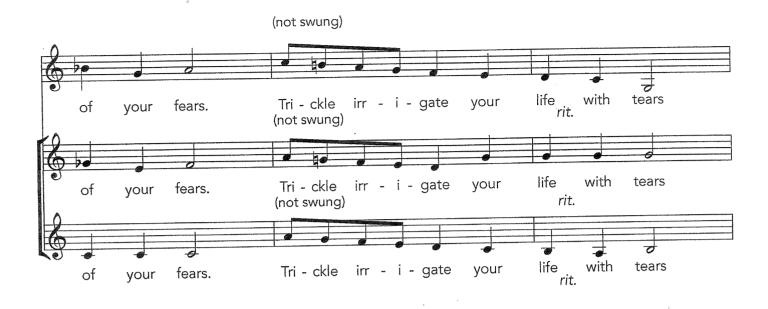
sum - mer

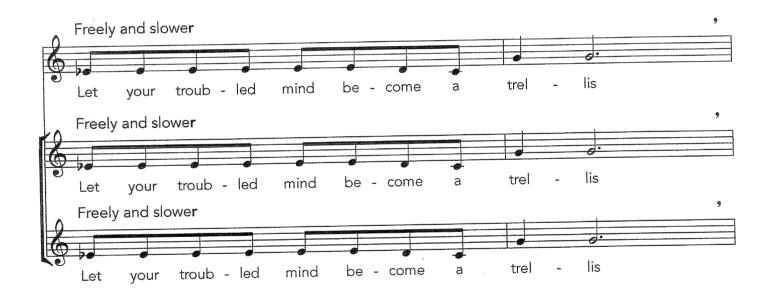
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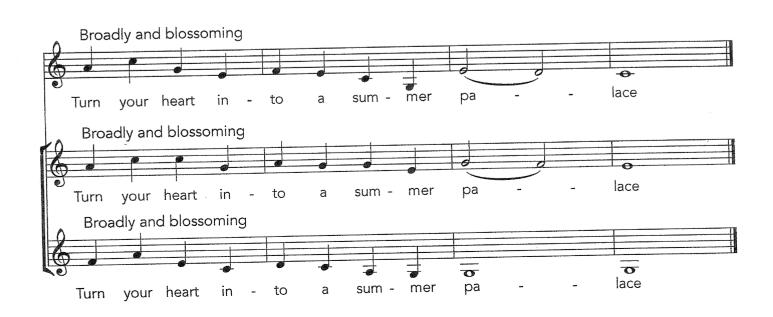
Turn your heart

ра











## The trains aren't running on time (a 2-8 part round)

Lyrics: Michael Leunig Music: Fay White J=116 1.(begin round) 2. 3. but it does - n't The trains aren't run-ning on time be-cause the mat-ter 6. 7. 5. sta - tion clock, tick,

The

tock, tick tock, is - n't work-ing

#### THE WEE DARK HOURS

The angel of the wee dark hours Visits you and brings you flowers And lays them on your worried heart And turns your darkness into art; A leap of faith, an act of love, A vision from the stars above And all your troubles on this earth Can find redemption and rebirth In fragrance from these happy flowers That lead you through the wee dark hours.



## The wee dark hours



God bless this tiny little boat And me who travels in it; It stays affoat for years and years And sinks within a minute.

And so the soul in which we sail Unknown by years of thinking Is deeply felt and understood. The minute that it's sinking.



## Tiny little boat

Words: Michael Leunig Music: Fay White Freely (rubato) Α Dmlt it that tra-vels in and me lit-tle boat God bless this tin - y G A D D and sinks with-in a And min - ute years for years and stays a float A Dm A is un-known by years of think-ing which we sail the soul in A F#m G

and un-der-stood the min-ute that it's

sink-ing

D

A

felt\_

D

deep-ly

# WANTED

Wanted; not dead but alive and well; good jokes!



Great, emotional mandolin orchestras



Beautiful love songs...



Weeny, tiny little brown wrens



.. Smaller, humbler buildings,...



Lots and lots and lots of children's choins.



## Wanted



What's the use of this little hand; What's the use of this little eye; What's the use of this little mouth When all the world is broken?

Make a cake with this little hand; Make a tear with this little eye; Make a word with this little mouth When all the world is broken





### WINTER

A storm in a teacup; a thundery thing, The rain tumbles down and the heart starts to sing. A flicker of lightning, the sky starts to drop, The flowers in the vase do a strange little hop. The candle flame wobbles, a tiny bell rings. My cup runneth over with beautiful things.



# Winter of beautiful things



#### WINTER PRAYER

The little frog in joyful praise has croaked The winter's quiet heavenly fog has come. The paddocks and the bush are softly cloaked In peaceful beautiful delirium

Oh holy mist come to our heart and mind Come gently to the troubles and the pains Make soft the angry shapes that clash and grind Make beautiful the scars and ugly stains.

Yet listen for the joyful frog, and thrill. Look softly as the mist of love comes in. Be still, forgive, adore with all your will,

And touch the softer, simpler world within.



 $\beta = 80$ 

The

 $B^7$ 

A gentle pace

lit-tle

E

E





# Winter prayer



