

JOHN ADAMS

TEXT FOR HARMONIUM

1. Negative Love

John Donne (1572 – 1631)

I NEVER stoop'd so low, as they
Which on an eye, cheek, lip, can prey ;
Seldom to them which soar no higher
Than virtue, or the mind to admire.
For sense and understanding may
Know what gives fuel to their fire ;
My love, though silly, is more brave ;
For may I miss, whene'er I crave,
If I know yet what I would have.
If that be simply perfectest,
Which can by no way be express'd
But negatives, my love is so.
To all, which all love, I say no.
If any who deciphers best,
What we know not—ourselves—can know,
Let him teach me that nothing. This
As yet my ease and comfort is,
Though I speed not, I cannot miss.

2. Because I could not stop for Death

Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.
We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.
We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.
We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground:
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.
Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

3. Wild Nights

Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

Wild Nights–Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our Luxury!
Futile – the winds –
To a Heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!
Rowing in Eden –
Ah, the sea!
Might I but moor – Tonight –
In thee!