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Lancaster, David ORCID logoORCID:  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1691-4320> (2017) The Dark Gate - for  
soprano and piano. [Composition]

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# The Dark Gate



For soprano and piano

By David Lancaster

Poetry by David Vogel



## The Dark Gate

This music sets five poems by David Vogel (1891-1944), sung without a break:

- 1) On Summer Evenings
- 2) How Can I See You Love
- 3) An Autumn Day will Breathe
- 4) With Gentle Fingers
- 5) There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

In his work and life Vogel was always an outsider. In Vienna (during WWI) he was imprisoned as a Russian subject; he subsequently adopted Austrian nationality then emigrated to Palestine before returning to settle in Paris. At the outbreak of WWII Vogel was arrested in France as an Austrian subject; on the Nazi invasion of France he was released and then re-arrested as a Jew before being transported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered in 1944.

Today Vogel is chiefly remembered for two short novels but there are also some thirty poems. The only anthology published in his lifetime was *Before the Dark Gate* (Vienna, 1923) from which I take my title, but some of the poems I have set were written later. With the benefit of hindsight they seem deeply imbued with the horror of the impending holocaust but this is only made explicit in the final poem, which is probably his last work.

I learned about Vogel and his poetry two or three years ago but after visiting Auschwitz and Birkenau in January 2016 I felt compelled to compose this piece, to re-tell Vogel's words and to reflect on my own memories of that place.

1

On summer evenings  
the blue mists rise  
From streams, and hang trembling  
Among evening whispers.

At the edges of forests  
Young girls sit alone  
Their hair hanging loose  
Weeping tears over nothing

2

How can I see you love  
Standing alone  
Amid storms of grief  
Without feeling my heart shake (tremble)

A deep night  
Blacker than the blackness of your eyes  
Has fallen silently  
On the world

And is touching your hair.

Come,  
My hand will clasp your dreaming  
Hand  
And I shall lead you between the nights,  
Through the pale mists of childhood.

3

An autumn day will breathe.  
With a pale, trembling hand  
It will slowly strip the black dress  
From your sleeping village.

In front of your white house  
He naked linden will stand  
Sadly swaying.

I shall return, lonely,  
Out of the night  
Bow gently to her and say:  
*Take my greeting to your mistress.*

But you  
Will go on softly sleeping on your bed.

4

With gentle fingers  
The rain is softly  
Playing sad melodies  
On the black instrument of night.

Now we are sitting in darkness,  
Each in their own house  
Listening to the rain  
Telling our sorrow.

For we have no more words.  
Our feet have been leadened  
By day.  
There is no dance  
Left in them.

5

There is one last solitary coach about to leave.  
Let us get in and go,  
For it won't wait.

I have seen young girls going softly  
With sad faces  
That look ashamed and sorry  
Like purple sunsets.

And chubby pink children  
Who went simply  
Because they were called.

And I've seen men  
Who stepped proud and straight through the  
streets of the world,  
Far and wide,  
They too got in calmly  
And left.

And we are the last.  
Day is declining.  
The last, solitary coach is about to leave.  
Let us too get in quietly  
And go,  
For it won't wait.



# The Dark Gate

## On Summer Evenings

David Vogel (1891-1944?)

David Lancaster

**Adagio** ♩=60 *p* *languid, distant*

On sum-mer eve-nings the blue mists rise

**Adagio** ♩=60 *quasi fp*

8 from streams and hang trem- bling a-mong eve-ning whis-pers.

14 *mp* At the ed-ges of for- ests— young girls sit a-

*p*

19 *mf* *mp*

lone, their hair hang- ing down. weep- ing

(8)

23 *p*

tears o - ver no - thing.

(8)

27

(8)

## 2. How Can I See You Love?

31 Poco più mosso ♩=72

*mp*

How \_\_\_\_\_ can\_ I

Poco più mosso ♩=72

*p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

35

*mp* *mf*

see you \_\_\_\_\_ my love \_\_\_\_\_

*p* *mp* *mf* *f*

39

*mp*

Stan - ding a -

*p*



43

*mp* *f*

*p*

lone a - mid storms of grief

*p* *f* *p* *f*

47

*mp* *mf*

with - out feel - ing my heart

*mf* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

50

*p*

shake. — A deep night

*p*

8vb

54

bla-cker than the black-ness of your eyes has fal - len

(8)-----

57 *pp*

si-lent-ly\_ on the world. And is touch - ing your

*p* *mp*

60 *mf*

hair. Come, my hand will

*mf* *p*

8<sup>vb</sup>-----

64

*mp*

clasp your dream-ing hand, And I shall

8<sup>vb</sup>

68

lead you bet - ween the nights.

(8)

71

*mp*

Through the pale\_ mists\_ of child - hood\_

*p*

(8)



## 3. An Autumn Day will Breathe

**Lento**  $\text{♩} = 56$   
*mp slentando*

84

An au-tumn day will breath, with a pale\_ trem-bling hand\_\_\_\_\_

**Lento**  $\text{♩} = 56$   
*mp*

88

It will slow - ly strip the black\_\_\_ dress from your sleep- ing\_\_\_ vill- age.\_\_\_

92

*slentando*

The na-ked lin-den will stand\_\_\_ sad-ly sway ing\_\_\_ And I shall re - turn\_\_\_\_\_

*mp*

*p*

97

lone-ly, out\_ of the night\_ Bow gent-ly to\_ her and say:

102 *slentando*

Take my greet-ing to your mis-tress. But you will go\_ on\_ sleep-ing so

106

**rall. poco a poco**

soft-ly on your bed\_\_\_\_\_

**rall. poco a poco**

## 4. With Gentle Fingers

112 **Piu Mosso** ♩=72

**Piu Mosso** ♩=72

*f* *f*

Ped.

117

*pp* *f*

Ped.

121

*p* *pp*

With gen-tle fin-gers the rain is soft - ly play-ing

Ped.

124

sad me-lo-dies on the black in-stru-ments of night.

*f*

Ped.

128

*p*

Now we are sitt-ing in

*p*

Ped.

132

dark-ness, each in their own house. List'-ning to the rain,



136

tell - ing our sor - row.\_\_\_\_

*f* *pp*

*Ped.*

140

*p*

For we have no more

*f*

*Ped.*

144

words\_\_\_\_ Our feet have been lead-en'd by day. There is no dance\_\_\_\_ left

*p*

148

in \_\_\_\_ them. ah \_\_\_\_ mm \_\_\_\_

*mf* *p* *pp*

3 5

Red.

153

ah \_\_\_\_

*p* *pp*

## 5. There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

158 **Lento, rubato**  $\text{♩} = 52$   
*p*  $\text{3}$   
 There is one last so-li-ta-ry coach a-bout to leave. Let us get

**Lento, rubato**  $\text{♩} = 52$   
*p*

163 *mp* *pp* *mp*  
 in — and go. For it won't wait. And I have seen young

168  $\text{3}$  *p*  
 girls go-ing soft - ly — with sad — fa-ces that look a - sham'd and

172

sor-ry like pur-ple sun - sets. And chub-by pink

177

child-ren who went sim-ply be-cause they were call'd. And I've seen men who stepp'd

181

proud and straight through the streets of the world far and wide They

185 *mf* *mp*

too got in calm-ly and left. And we are the last. Day is de

**Poco meno mosso al fine**

190 *p*

cli-ning. There is one last so-li-ta-ry coach, a-bout to

**Poco meno mosso al fine**

195 *slentando* *rall. poco a poco* *pp*

leave. Let us get in too and go, soft-ly, For it won't

**rall. poco a poco**

199

Musical score for measures 199-203, 4/4 time signature.

**Measure 199:** Treble clef, whole rest, "wait." below. Bass clef, half note G#4, half note A#4, dynamic *pp*.

**Measure 200:** Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note B4, half note C5, dynamic *pp*.

**Measure 201:** Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note D5, half note E5, dynamic *pp*.

**Measure 202:** Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note F#5, half note G5, dynamic *pp*.

**Measure 203:** Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note A5, half note B5, dynamic *pp*.

The score concludes with a double bar line in both staves.