Robert Kyr:  
*The Cloud of Unknowing*  
For Soprano, Baritone, Chorus & Strings  

**S = soprano; Br = baritone**  
C = chorus; Duo = S + Br  

**I. Songs of Night**

**i. unknowing** [*The Cloud of Unknowing; English*]

C: There is a cloud of darkness  
That you cannot imagine;  
Not a cloud in the air,  
Nor the absence of light.  

It is all that you do not know,  
All that you have forgotten,  
All that you do not see  
With your spiritual eye.  
This is the cloud of unknowing  
Between you and the One.

**ii. fearing** [*St. Teresa of Avila; Spanish*]

S: *Si el amor que me teneis,*  
*Dios mio, como el que os tengo,*  
*Decidme, en que me detengo?*  
*O Vos, en que os deteneis?*  

Br: *“Alma, que quieres de mi?“*  

S: *“Dios mio, no mas que verte.”*  

Br: *“Y, que temes mas de ti?”*  

S: *“Lo que mas temo es perderte.”*  

Duo: *Un amor que ocupe os pido,*  
*Dios mio, mi alma os tenga,*  
*Para hacer un dulce nido*  
*Adonde mas la convenga.*  

If the love You have for me,  
My God, is like the one I have for You,  
Tell me, what is holding me back?  
Or You, what is keeping You?  

“Soul, what do You want from me?”  
“My God, just to see You.”  
“And what do you most fear in yourself?”  
“What I fear most is losing You.”  

I ask You for a love that fills,  
My God: let my soul have You,  
To make a sweet nest  
Wherever it be best for her.

**iii. forgetting** [*The Cloud of Unknowing; English*]

C: Whatever you think about  
Is above you for awhile,  
Pushing you further from the One.  
Beneath, and between you  
And all creatures ever made,  
Put a cloud of forgetting.  

Hide them all,  
Hide even the angels and saints,  
Under the cloud of unknowing.  
And think only about  
The pure being of the One:  
Love the One for itself alone.
**iv. longing** [Psalm 42: 1-3, 8-9, 12; Latin]

As a hart longs for flowing streams,

So longs my soul for thee, O God.

My soul thirsts for God for the living God.

When shall I come and behold

the face of God?

Deep calls to deep

All the thunder of thy cataracts;

All thy waves and thy billows

Have gone over me.

By day, the Lord commands

His steadfast love;

And at night, his song is with me,

A prayer to the God of my life.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,

And why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God;

For I shall again praise him,

My help and my God.

**II. Songs of Dawn**

**i. waiting** [St. Teresa of Avila; Spanish]

_Duo:_ **Vuestra soy, para Vos naci,**

_I am Yours; I was born for You._

_What do You wish to make of me?_

_What do You wish to make of me?_

_Dueto:_ **vuestra, pues que me llamas;**

_Yours, because You waited for me;_

_Yours, for You did not lose me._

__Yours, I am, for You created me;_

__Yours, for You redeemed me;_

__Yours, for You suffered me;_

__Yours, for You summoned me;_

__Yours, for You did not lose me._

_B:_ **How shall I think about the One?**

_S:_ I have no idea.

_B:_ **And what is the One?**

_S:_ I do not know.

_Duo:_ **You may reach the One**

_And hold it close through love,**

_B:_ But never through thinking

_Find the One by loving the One._

_Dueto:_ **Vuestra soy, para Vos naci,**

_Quemadmodum desiderat cervus_  
_ad fontes aquarum_  
_ita desiderat anima mea ad te Deus_  
_sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem: vivum_  
_quando veniam et parebo ante faciem Dei_  

_Abyssus abyssum vocat_  
_in voce cataractarum tuarum_  
_omnes gurgites tui_  
_et fluctus tui super me transierunt_  
_per diem mandavit Dominus_  
_misericordiam suam_  
_et in nocte canticum eius_  
_mecum oratio Deo vitae meae_  

_A prayer to the God of my life._

_Why are you cast down, O my soul,_

_And why are you disquieted within me?_

_Hope in God;_

_For I shall again praise him,_

_My help and my God._

**ii. thinking** _[The Cloud of Unknowing; English]_

_B:_ **How shall I think about the One?**

_S:_ I have no idea.

_B:_ **And what is the One?**

_S:_ I do not know.

_Duo:_ **You may reach the One**

_And hold it close through love,**

_B:_ But never through thinking

_Find the One by loving the One._

_S:_ I do not know.
iii. beseeching [St. Teresa of Avila, Spanish]

C: Vuestro soy, para Vos naci,
que mandais hacer de mi?  
I am Yours; I was born for You.
What do You wish to make of me?

Br: Dadme muerte, dadme vida,
Give me death, give me life,
S: dad salud o enfermedad,
Give me health or sickness,
Br: honra o deshonra me dad,
Give me honor or dishonor,
S: dadme guerra o paz crecida,
Give me war or full-grown peace,
Duo: flaqueza o fuerza cumplida,
Frailty or robust strength;
que a todo digo que si.
I say yes to them all.

C: Vuestro soy, para Vos naci,
que mandais hacer de mi?  
I am Yours; I was born for You.
What do You wish to make of me?

Br: Dadme riqueza o pobreza,
Give me wealth or poverty.
S: dad consuelo o desconsuelo,
Give me comfort or distress.
Br: dadme alegría o tristeza,
Give me joy or sadness.
S: dadme infierno o dadme cielo,
Give me hell or give me heaven,
Duo: vida dulce, sol sin velo,
Sweet life, unveiled sun,
pues del todo me rendi.
I have left all behind.

iv. piercing [The Cloud of Unknowing; English]

C: With great courage and resolve,
Step above the cloud of forgetting.
With a single word of love,
Beat upon the darkness above you!
Strike the cloud of unknowing!
Strike with a sharp arrow!
Pierce the darkness above you!
Strike with a single word of love!
And never retreat,
No matter what befalls you.

v. surrendering [St. Teresa of Avila, Spanish]

All: Nada te turbé,
Let nothing upset you,
Nada te espante.
Let nothing startle you.
Todo se pasa,
All things pass;
Dios no se muda.
The One does not change.
Lo paciencia
Patience wins
Todo lo alcanza.
All it seeks.
Quien a Dios tiene,
Whomever has the One
Nada le falta:
Lacks nothing:
Solo dios basta.
Only the One is enough.
vi. enduring [Psalm 136: 1-9, 26; Latin]

V1: Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
O give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V2: confitemini Deo deorum
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
O give thanks to the God of gods;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V3: confitemini Domino dominorum
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
O give thanks to the Lord of lords;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V4: qui facit mirabilia magna solus
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
Who alone does great wonders;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V5: qui fecit caelos in sapientia
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
Who made the heavens in wisdom;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V6: qui firmavit terram super aquas
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
Who laid out the earth above the waters;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V7: qui fecit luminaria magna
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
Who made the great lights;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V8: solem in potestatem diei
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
The sun to rule over day;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V9: lunam et stellas in potestatem noctis
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
The moon and stars to rule over night;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V10: confitemini Deo caeli
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
O give thanks to the God of heaven;
For his steadfast love endures forever!

V11: confitemini Domino dominorum
R: quoniam in aeternum misericordia eius
O give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For his steadfast love endures forever!
Robert Kyr:
*Songs of the Soul*

**I. Descending: From the Abyss**

*Salve me Deus*
*quoniam venerunt aquae*
*usque ad animam*
*salve me Deus*
*veni in profundum aquarum*
*et flumen operuit me*

*clamavi de tribulatione mea ad Dominum*
*et proieci me in profundum*
*in corde maris et flumen circumdedit me*
*omnes gurgites tui et fluctus tui*
*super me transierunt*
*circumdederunt me aquae usque*
*ad animam abyssus vallavit me*

*ad extrema montium descendi*
*terrae vectes concluserunt me in aeternum*

*et sublevabis de corruptione vitam meam*
*Domine Deus meus*
*salve me Deus*

*Save me, O God!*
*For the waters have risen unto my soul.  
*<Psalm 69: 1-2>*
*Save me, O God!*
*I have come into deep waters  
*<Psalm 69: 1,3>*

*Out of my distress, I cry to you, O Lord,  
*For you cast me into the deep,  
*Into the heart of the sea, and the flood  
*Enveloped me; all your waves  
*And your billows washed over me,  
*The waters swirled about me,  
*Threatening my life;  
*The abyss swallowed me.  
*I descended to the roots of mountains;  
*The world was closing in  
*Around me forever,  
*But you brought up my life from the pit,  
*O Lord, My God;  
*Save me, O God.  <Jonah 2: 3-4, 6-7>*

**II. Venturing: On a Dark Night**

*En una noche oscura*
*con ansias en amores inflamada,  
!oh dichosa ventura!*
*sali sin ser notada*
*estando ya mi casa sosegada.*

*A oscuras y segura,  
por la secreta escala disfrazada,  
!oh dichosa ventura!*
*a oscuras y en celada,  
estando ya mi casa sosegada.*

*On a dark night  
Aflame with fervent love,  
Oh happy venture!  
I set out unespied  
My house then being quiet.*

*Safe and in shadows  
By the secret stairs, disguised,  
Oh happy venture!  
In shadows and stealthily,  
My house then being quiet.*

*<Noche oscura, San Juan de la Cruz>*

*<Dark Night, St. John of the Cross>*
III. Hoping: Toward Dawn

De profundis clamavi ad te Domine
Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord;
Domine exaudi vocam meum
Lord, hear my voice;
Out of the depths,
I cry to you, O One.

fiant aures tuae intendentes
Let thine ears be attentive
in vocem deprecationis meae
To the voice of my supplications.
Si iniquitates observaveris Domine
If thou, O Lord, should mark iniquities;
Domine, quis sustinebit
O Lord, who shall stand?
O One: Who shall remain?
Quia apud te propitiatio est
For there is forgiveness with you,
et propter legem tuam
And on account of Thy law,
sustinui te Domine
I wait for you, O Lord;
I wait.
sustinuit anima mea in verbo tuus
My soul waits upon your word;
speravit anima mea
My soul hopes.
sustinui te Domine
I wait for you, O Lord;
sustinui
I wait.  

<Psalm 130, adapted>

IV. Transforming: Beloved into Lover

En la noche dichosa,
On the happy night
en secreto, que nadie veia,
In secret, when no one spotted me
ni yo miraba cosa,
And I saw nothing
sin otra luz y guia
With no light or guide
sino la que en el corazon ardia.
But what was burning in my heart.

Aquesta me guiaba
This guided me
mas cierto que la luz del melodía,
Surer than midday light
adonde me esperaba
To where he awaited me
quien yo bein me sabia,
Whom I knew full well
en parte donde nadie parecia.
In a place where no one came.

!Oh noche que guiaste!
Oh night, such escort!
!Oh noche amable mas que el alborada!
Oh night, dearer than dawn!
!Oh noche que juntaste
Oh night you joined
Amado con amada,
Lover to beloved,
amada en el Amado transformada!
Beloved transformed to lover!

<Nocche oscura, San Juan de la Cruz>
<Dark Night, St. John of the Cross>
V. Arising: A Time for Song
Texts from Songs of Songs, an anonymous responsory for the Assumption of the Virgin, and Noche oscura (Dark Night) by St. John of the Cross

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum
Arise, my love, my beautiful one,
And come away;

Set me as a seal upon your heart;

ut signaculum super brachium tuum
For lo, winter is past,
The rain is over and gone.

As a seal upon your arm.

quia fortis est ut more dilectio dura
sicut inferus aemulatio
Flowers cover the earth,
Now is the time for song!

For love is strong as death,
Jealousy as cruel as the grave.

lampades eius lampades ignis
atque flammarum
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
A most vehement flame.

Oh noche que quiaste!
Oh noche amable mas que el alborada!
Oh noche que juntaste
Amado con amada,
Amada en el Amado transformada!

Flowers cover the earth.
I saw the fair one
Like a dove rising
Above the streams of water.
Whose incomparable fragrance
Was strong in her garments,
And as on a spring day,
She was circled about by
Flowers of roses and lilies of the valley.

Set me as a seal upon your arm;

Arise, hasten, O my love,
My beautiful one, and come away!

flores apparuerunt in terra
vidi speciosam
sicut columbam ascendentem
desuper rivas aquarum
cuius inaestimabilis
odor erat nimis in vestimentis eius;
et sicut dies verni circumdabant eam

Lover to beloved,
Beloved transformed to lover!

flores rosarum et lilia convallium
Set me as a seal upon your arm;
Set me as a seal upon your heart.

Lover to beloved,
Beloved transformed to lover!
VI. Unitig: Leaving My Care

On my flowering breast,
Kept whole for him alone,
There he fell asleep,
And I regaled him,
And cedars fanned the air.

The breeze from the ramparts
With my fingers through his hair,
Grazed my neck
With its gentle hand
And held all my senses still.

I stayed, forgot myself,
My face bent over my lover,
All things ceased, I left myself,
Leaving my care
Forgotten among the lilies.

<Noche oscura, San Juan de la Cruz>

VII. Transcending: And Love Remains

Love is patient,
Love is kind.
It bears all things,
Believes all things,
Hopes all things,
Endures all things.

For now we see
In a mirror, dimly,
But then we will see face to face.
Now I know only in part;
Then I will know fully,
Even as I have been fully known.
So now remain
Faith, hope, love;
These three,
But the greatest of these is love.

<I Corinthians 13: 4-7, 12-13>