

Benjamin Britten

Five Flower Songs Op.47

No. 1 To Daffodils

*Fair daffodils
We weep to see you
Haste away so soon
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon*

*Stay, stay until the hasting day
Has run but to even-song
And having prayed together
We will go with you along*

*We have short time to stay
As you daffodils
We have as short a spring
As quick a growth
To meet decay
As you or anything*

*We die as your hours do
And dry away
Like to the summer's rain
Or as the pearls
Of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again*

No. 2 The Succession of the Four Sweet Months

*First, April she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers*

*Then after her comes smiling May
In a more rich and sweet array*

*Next enters June and brings us more gems
Than those two that went before*

*Then (lastly) July comes
And she more wealth brings in
Than all those three*

No. 3 Marsh Flowers

*Here the strong mallow
Strikes her slimy root
Here hangs her deadly fruit*

*On hills of dust the henbane's faded green
Flower of sickly scent is seen
The flower is green*

*Here on its wiry stem in rigid bloom
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume*

*At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs
With fruit globose and fierce with poison'd
stings
In every chink with glossy leaf
And tawny bloom below
The few dull flowers
That o'er the place are spread*

Partake the nature of their fenny bed

*These with our sea weed
Rolling up and down up and down
Form the contracted flora of our town*

No. 4 The Evening Primrose

*When once the sun sinks in the west
And dew-drops pearl the evening's breast
Almost as pale as moonbeams are
Or its companionable star
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew
And hermit like, shunning the light
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night
Who blindfold to its fond caresses
Knows not the beauty he possesses*

*Thus it blooms on while night is by
When day looks out with open eye
'bashed at the gaze it cannot shun
It faints and withers and is gone*

No. 5 Ballad of Green Broom

*There was an old man liv'd out in the wood
And his trade was a cutting of broom
Green broom
He had but one son without thought
Without good
Who lay in his bed till t'was noon, bright noon*

*The old man awoke one morning and spoke
He swore he would fire the room that room
If his John would not rise and open his eyes
And away to the wood to cut broom*

*So Johnny arose and slipp'd on his clothes
And away to the wood to cut broom
He sharpen'd his knives and for once
He contrives to cut a great bundle of broom
Green broom, green broom*

*When Johnny pass'd under a lady's fine house
Pass'd under a lady's fine room
She call'd to her maid "go fetch me" she said
"go fetch me the boy that sells broom"*

*When Johnny came in to lady's fine house
And stood in the lady's fine room
"young Johnny" she said
"will you give up your trade and marry
A lady in bloom, full bloom?"*

*Johnny gave his consent
And to church they both went
And he wedded the lady in bloom, full bloom*

*At market and fair all folks do declare
There's none like the boy that sold broom
Green broom*

