



CAROL BARNETT

THE KING OF YELLOW
BUTTERFLIES

for SATB Chorus

Text by Vachel Lindsay




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Vachel Lindsay's poem "The King of Yellow Butterflies" is subtitled "a poem game"; the musical setting is a kind of game as well, a game of skill, full of tongue-twisting, deft turns for the singers. Word painting is used in the setting of "shiver," "whimper," and "each pool is like a looking glass," where the vocal lines make a mirror image. The works as a whole should leave a hovering, insubstantial impression, like a cloud of butterflies.

Duration: c. 3:00

THE KING OF YELLOW BUTTERFLIES
(A Poem Game)

The King of Yellow Butterflies,
The King of Yellow Butterflies,
The King of Yellow Butterflies,
Now orders forth his men.
He says, "The time is almost here
When violets bloom again."
Adown the road the fickle rout
Goes flashing proud and bold,
Adown the road the fickle rout
Goes flashing proud and bold,
Adown the road the fickle rout
Goes flashing proud and bold,
They shiver by the shallow pools,
They shiver by the shallow pools,
They shiver by the shallow pools,
And whimper of the cold.
They drink and drink. A frail pretense!
They love to pose and preen.
Each pool is but a looking glass,
Where their sweet wings are seen.
Each pool is but a looking glass,
Where their sweet wings are seen.
Each pool is but a looking glass,
Where their sweet wings are seen.
Gentlemen adventurers! Gypsies every whit!
They live on what they steal. Their wings
By briars are frayed a bit.
Their loves are light. They have no house.
And if it rains today,
They'll climb into your cattle-shed,
They'll climb into your cattle-shed,
They'll climb into your cattle-shed,
And hide them in the hay,
And hide them in the hay,
And hide them in the hay,
And hide them in the hay.

Vachel Lindsay (1917)

The King of Yellow Butterflies

Vachel Lindsay

Carol Barnett

light but intense ♩ = 112

Soprano: *pp* (hum) *p* The

Alto: *pp* (hum) *pp* The King of Yel - low But - ter - flies,

Tenor: *pp* (hum)

Bass: (hum)

Piano (for rehearsal only): light but intense ♩ = 112

S: King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, *mp* now or - ders forth his

A: *mp* now or - ders forth his

T: *mp* The King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, *p* the

B: *pp* (hum)

Pno.

The King of Yellow Butterflies

10 *p*

S men, now

A men, now

T King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, the King of Yel - low But - ter - flies,

B The King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, the

Pno.

13 *mp*

S or - ders forth his men, now

A or - ders forth his men, now

T the King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, the King of Yel - low But - ter - flies,

B King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, the King of Yel - low But - ter - flies, the king of

Pno.

16

S or - ders forth his men, now *mf*

A or - ders forth his men, now *mf*

T the King of Yel - low But - ter flies, the King of Yel - low But - ter flies, the *mf*

B Yel - low But - ter flies, the King of Yel - low But - ter flies, the King, the King, the *mf*

Pno.

19

S or - ders forth his

A or - ders forth his

T King, the King, the King, the King, now or ders forth, now or - ders forth his

B King, the King, the King, the King, now or - ders forth, now or - ders forth his

Pno.

The King of Yellow Butterflies

21 *f* *dim.*

S men. He

A men. He

T *f* *dim.* *pp*
but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low butt - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies.

B *f* *dim.*
yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low

Pno.

24 *pp*

S says, "The time is al - most here, the time is al - most here, the time is al - most here when

A *pp*
says, "The time is al - most here, the time is al - most here, the time is al - most here when

T *p*
He says, "The time is al - most here when

B *pp* *p*
but - ter - flies. "The time is al - most here when

Pno.

27

S *f* vi - o - lets *mf* bloom

A *f* vi - o - lets *mf* bloom

T *f* vi - o - lets *mf* bloom

B *f* vi - o - lets *mf* bloom."

Pno.

33

S *pp* a - gain." *p* ...goes flash - ing proud and bold,

A *pp* a - gain." *p* ...goes flash - ing proud and bold,

T *pp* a - gain." *mp* A -

B *p* A - down the road the fick - le rout, *mp* a -

Pno.

The King of Yellow Butterflies

37

S *mp* goes flash - ing proud and bold, *mf* a - down the road the

A *mp* goes flash - ing proud and bold, *mf* a - down the road the

T *mf* down the road the fick - le rout, a - down the road, a - down the road the

B *mf* down the road the fick - le rout, a - down the road, a - down the road the

Pno.

40

S *f* fick - le, fick - le, fick - le rout goes flash - ing proud and bold, *dim.* and bold, and bold, and

A *f* fick - le, fick - le, fick - le rout goes flash - ing proud and bold, *dim.* and bold, and bold, and

T *f* fick - le, fick - le, fick - le rout goes flash, flash - ing proud and bold, *dim.* and bold, and bold, and

B *f* fick - le, fick - le, fick - le rout goes flash, flash - ing proud and bold, *dim.* and bold, and bold, and

Pno.

43 *p* *mf sub.* *mp*

S bold. They shiv-er by the shal - low pools, and

A bold. They shiv-er by the shal - low pools, and

T bold, and bold. They shiv-er by the shal - low pools, and

B bold, and bold. They shiv-er, and

Pno.

47 *p*

S whim - - - per of the cold. They

A whim - - - per of the cold. They

T whim - - - per of the cold. They

B whim - - - per of the cold. They

Pno.

The King of Yellow Butterflies

51 (♩ = ♩)

S
drink and drink. A frail pre - tense! — They love — to pose — and preen. Each *mp*

A
drink and drink. A frail pre - tense! — They love — to pose — and preen. — *mp*

T
drink and drink. A frail pre - tense! — They love — to pose — and preen. — Each *mp*

B
drink and drink. A frail pre - tense! — They love — to pose — and preen. — *mp*

Pno.

55 (♩ = ♩)

S
pool is but a look - ing glass, — where their sweet wings are seen, — each *p*

A
Each pool is but a look - ing glass, where their sweet wings are seen, each *p*

T
pool is but a look - ing glass, — where their sweet wings are seen, *p*

B
Each pool is but a look - ing glass, where their sweet wings are seen, *p*

Pno.

59

S pool is but a look - ing glass, where their sweet wings are

A pool is but a look - ing glass, where their sweet wings are

T *p* each pool is but a look - ing glass, where their sweet wings are

B *p* each pool is but a look - ing glass, where their sweet wings are

Pno.

62

S *mf sub.* seen. *f mf* Ad - ven - tur - ers! *f mf* Gyp - sies, ev - er - y whit! They

A *mf sub.* seen. *f mf* Ad - ven - tur - ers! *f mf* Gyp - sies ev - 'ry whit!

T *mf sub.* seen. Gen - tle - men! *f mf* Gyp - sies ev - 'ry whit! They

B *p* seen. *f mf* Ah, *f mf* Gyp - sies ev - 'ry whit!

Pno.

The King of Yellow Butterflies

66

S live on what they steal. Their wings by briars are frayed a

A They live on what they steal. Their wings by briars are frayed, are

T live on what they steal. Their wings by briars are frayed, are

B They live on what they steal. Their wings by briars are frayed a

Pno.

71

S bit. Their loves are light.

A frayed a bit. Ah They have no

T frayed a bit. Their loves are light.

B bit. Ah

Pno.

76

S And if it rains to - day, they'll

A house. And if it rains to - day, they'll

T And if it rains to - day, they'll

B And if it rains to - day, and if it rains to - day,

Pno.

83 *mf*

S climb in - to your cat - tle - shed, they'll climb in - to your cat - tle - shed, they'll climb in -

A *mf* climb, they'll climb in - to your cat - tle - shed, they'll

T *mf* climb, they'll climb in - to your cat - tle - shed, they'll climb in - to your cat - tle - shed,

B *mf*

Pno.

The King of Yellow Butterflies

88

S *mp* *dim. poco a poco*
to your cat-tle-shed, and hide them in the hay, and hide them in the

A *p* *mp* *dim. poco a poco*
climb in - to your cat - tle-shed, and hide them in the hay, and

T *p*

B *p*
they'll climb in - to your cat-tle-shed,

Pno.

94

S *pp*
hay, and hide them in the hay, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low

A *pp*
hide them in the hay, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies, yel - low but - ter - flies,

T *pp*
(hum)

B

Pno.

99

S
but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies.

A
yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies,

T
ppp

B
pp (whisper)
yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low

Pno.

104

S

A
pp (whisper)
yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies.

T

B
but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies, yel - low but-ter-flies.

Pno.