

Full Score

Two Friends

a fable

for SATB choir, children's chorus (SA), and chamber orchestra

music: Matt Boehler
libretto: Erin Bregman

Two Friends

libretto by Erin Bregman

Two friends
Sharing lunch,
Sharing the shade the great oak made
On the 23rd day of 3rd grade.

Suddenly,
At the very same time,
They turn to each other
and ask,

"Why do we die?
Do you know?
Why do we die?"

Two friends
Need to know.
Leaping up, they both exclaim,
"Let's ask our principal, What's-her-name!"

"Why do we die?
Do you know?
Why do we die?"

"What a query!
What inquisitive minds!
You've proposed a marvelous question,
But my head is all congestion,
And, oh! this indigestion...
As you can tell,
I'm not feeling well.
I'm no doctrinarian,
Go ask the librarian."

Two friends
Round the block
To find a little man shelving books
While dispensing noise-quelling looks.

"Why do we die?
Do you know?
Why do we—" *-Ssssh!*

"What I know does not matter.
If I knew, would I tell you?
No!
What you need to know is how to look it up.
What you need to do is find out how to find it.
Go!
It is getting late: 5:38.
THE LIBRARY IS CLOSING IN 20 MINUTES."

Two friends
-Ssssh!
Start to read.
They open up a giant book
But it all sounds like gobbledygook!

*A Comprehensive Treatise of Death, Causes Compleat,
Compiled from Writings of The Great Physicians of our
Learnèd Societies in Europe, Defining herein each Familiar
Disease and Malady. Volume III.*

*Felo de Se, Carcinoma, Morbo Gallico, Submercio,
Febris, Ictus, Morbilli, Suffacatio,
Grangraena, Pueperium, Tussis Epidemicus,
Lepra, Vermis, Venenatio...*

*Morbus Cancrum, Morbus Cordis,
Morbus Coxae, Morbus Cutis,
Morbus Regius, Hungarius,
Morbus Sacer, Morbus Niger,
Morbus Indicus, Incurvatus,
Morbus Splenis, Strangulatorius,*

*Vulnus Punctum, Laceratum,
Vulnus Scaplet, Gladio, Sclopeticum...*

Two friends
Walking home.
Not understanding what they read,
They pass their pastor breaking bread.

"Why do we die?
Do you know?
Why do we die?"

"Now, come, my children, fix your gaze
Upon our Lord and the Trinity.
We show our faith in song and praise
To honor Their divinity:
Alleluia, Alleluia!
The good Lord's death has set us free."

Two friends,
Home at last.
Knowing that they're late,
They tiptoe through the back gate.

"You!
Get in here!
Don't make me ask twice."

"Why do we die?
Do you know—"

"Why are you late?
You have chores to do.
Don't stand there and shake
Like you haven't a clue!
Ungrateful, stupid brats!
Don't make me take the paddle to you!"

Two friends
Run away.
Climbing the limbs of the great old oak,
They hear crickets sing and bullfrogs croak.

"Why do we die?
Will we ever know?
Why do we die?"

A coyote
Draws up near,
with padded feet, with golden eyes.
His laughter takes the two friends by surprise.

*"Why do you ask
What you cannot learn?"*

*"Follow me
To where why is no concern."*

Two friends
Disappear
Into the night.

Instrumentation:

Flute
Oboe
B♭ Clarinet
Bassoon

Horn in F

Timpani

Percussion (1 player):
Snare Drum, Triangle, Bass Drum,
Sus. Cymbal, Castanets, Tambourine, Chimes, Glockenspiel

Harp
Piano

Children's Chorus (SA)
SATB Chorus

String Quintet (2 vlns, 1 vla, 1 vc, 1 cb)

duration: ca. 15 minutes