

The store house floor is bare
and hungry winter calls.

CHORUS We raise our hands up
to the sky

4.

TENOR The springtime sun
sits
throughout the sky. •
I sink into a counterpane
of blue, white, and yellow.
The scent of meadow-flowers
lingers
on my cheek.

CHORUS The ash is running into leaf
The chestnut holds a candle to the sky
The map is draped in mist

TENOR The gentle bell
summons
the corners of the farm.
I hear the rustle
of furrow-birds between the wheat.
The sounds of herded sheep
hover
across the stream.

CHORUS The buzzard's mew, the cuckoo's chant
The chaffinch casts a chatter to the wind
The lark's alight on breath of air

SOP. Where the woodsmoke
dances
my lover is at the fire.
I reach into the boundaries of time
to pull the evening close to me.
Then the hearth-fire
will flicker,
in our eyes.

CHORUS No marshal drum now haunts the valley.
The howl of wolf is heard no more.
The tears of plague have passed away.
Spring steps from flower to flower,
from soul to soul,
the world
lives at peace
with ourselves.

5. ORCHESTRAL PASSAGE

6.

TENOR Start the chainsaws.
Tighten the cables.
Taller trees first,
watch where they fall.
Blast out the stumps.
Bulldoze the hedges.
Here is the harvest!
Sing its praises!
Higher quotas
and arable land.

BASS Another copice gone!
Another woodland levelled.

CHORUS Here is the harvest!
Sing its praises!
Giant fields
of arable land!

TENOR Channel the rivers.
Straighten the streams.
Dredge out the ditches.
Dry out the land.
Here is the harvest!
Sing its praises!
Higher quotas
and arable land.

BASS A few more wild flowers wither and die.
Another marshland gone!

TENOR The wind is right
Begin the burning.
The sky is clear,
set light to the stubble.
Fire the straw
across the field.
There's another wheatfield blackened,
another pall of smoke.

BASS See the furrow-birds flying through smoke.
See the field-voles running the flames.

CHORUS Here is the harvest!
Sing its praises!

7.

CHORUS We raise our faces to the sky
to the cleanliness
of light,
the distant hills,
the silent streams,
the forest trees.
Here we have no fear
of storm or flood,
no danger from the
element of air we breathe.

BASS Unaware, you raise your faces to the sky.
The slow wind is sown.
It reaches under skin,
into bone,
stealing
unaware
on breath of air.

CHORUS In the lazy valley
country traffic drones.
The lead haze hangs, hovers
over the hedgerow.

BASS stealing unaware on breath of air

CHORUS Over the rolling hills
tractors crawl through fields,
spraying crops, insecticide
drifts across the air.

BASS the soft caress of wind on cheek

CHORUS Over far horizons
steel chimneys seep
sulphur into clouds.
The acid rains on another man's land.

We are all caught in a chemical chain,
insects linked to birds,
mammals manacled to man.

We are all layered in lead,
dull poison in our children's brains.

The food on every market stall,
inviting, lies contaminated.

Our woodlands wither,
and the river trout
have left the sterile clarity of stream.

BASS None of this need be.
You have the means
for a better kind of life.
But it makes a few men rich, and
neither they,
nor those that govern you,
will live to see
your children's poisoned world.

CHORUS We do not raise our faces to the sky.
There is no
cleanliness of light.