

Nicholas O'Neill

**The Oxen
(2019)**

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

The Oxen

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Nicholas O'Neill (b.1970)

With a gentle lilt, ♩=126

SOPRANO *mp tenderly*
Christ - mas Eve, and

ALTO *mp tenderly*
Christ-mas Eve, and

TENOR *mp tenderly*
Christ - mas Eve, and

BASS *mp tenderly*
Christ - mas Eve, and

Piano *mp* *mf* *mp*

11

S. *p* *mp*
twelve of the clock. "Now they are all on their knees," An el - der said as we sat in a flock

A. *p* *mp*
twelve of the clock. "Now they are all on their knees," An el - der said as we sat in a flock

T. *p* *mp*
twelve of the clock. "Now they are all on their knees," An el - der said as we sat in a flock

B. *p* *mp*
twelve of the clock. "Now they are all on their knees," An el - der said as we sat in a flock

Pno. *p* *mp*

21

S. *f*
By the em-bers in hearth-side ease. We pic-tured the meek mild crea - tures where They

A. *f*
By the em-bers in hearth-side ease. We pic-tured the meek mild crea - tures where They

T. *f*
By the em-bers in hearth-side ease. We pic-tured the meek mild crea - tures where They

B. *f*
By the em-bers in hearth-side ease. We pic-tured the meek mild crea - tures where They

Pno. *f*

30

S. *mf* *p*
dwelt in their stra - wy pen, Nor did it oc - cur to one of us there To doubt they were

A. *mf* *p*
dwelt in their stra - wy pen, Nor did it oc - cur to one of us there To doubt they were

T. *mf* *p*
dwelt in their stra - wy pen, Nor did it oc - cur to one of us there To doubt they were

B. *mf* *p*
dwelt in their stra - wy pen, Nor did it oc - cur to one of us there To doubt they were

Pno. *mf* *p*

39

S. knee - ling then.

A. knee - ling then.

T. knee - ling then.

B. knee - ling then. *mf* So

Pno. *mp*

48

S. *mf* So

A. *mf* So fair a fan - cy

T. *mf* So fair a fan - cy *f* few would weave in these years! *mf* Yet, I

B. *f* fair a fan - cy *mf* few would weave In these years! Yet, I feel,

Pno. *mf*

56

S. *f* fair a fan - cy few would weave in these years! *mf* Yet, I feel, *mp* If

A. *f* few would weave in these years! *mf* Yet, I feel, *mp* If

T. *mp* feel, Yet, I feel, *mp* If

B. *mp* Yet, I feel, *mp* If

Pno. *f*

64

ritenuto *A tempo*

S. *mf* some - one said on Christ - mas Eve, *mp* "Come; see the o - xen kneel,

A. *mf* some - one said on Christ - mas Eve, *mp* "Come; see the o - xen kneel,

T. *mf* some - one said on Christ - mas Eve, *mp* "Come; see the o - xen kneel,

B. *mf* some - one said on Christ - mas Eve, *mp* "Come; see the o - xen kneel,

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp*

72 *mf*

S. In the lone - ly bar - ton by yon - der coomb Our child - hood used_ to

A. *mf*
In the lone - ly bar - ton by yon - der coomb Our child - hood used_ to

T. *mf*
In the lone - ly bar - ton by yon - der coomb Our child - hood used_ to

B. *mf*
In the lone - ly bar - ton by you - der coomb Our child - hood used to

Pno. *mf*

79 *mp*

S. know," I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so,

A. *mp*
know," I_ should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so,

T. *mp*
know," I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so,

B. *mp*
know," I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so,

Pno. *mp*

89

p *pp* **ritenuto** **A tempo**

S. I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so.

A. I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so.

T. I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so.

B. I should go with him in the gloom, Ho-ping it might be so.

Pno. *p* *pp* **ritenuto** **A tempo**

97

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *p* *pp*