Sean Michael Salamon

The Sky Calls to Us

for Mixed Choir

The Sky Calls to Us,

a setting of two quotations by Carl Sagan:

No. 1 The Sky Calls to Us

The sky calls to us. If we do not destroy ourselves, We will, one day, venture to the stars.

No. 2 We're Made of Star-Stuff

Some part of our being knows this is where we came from.
We long to return.
And we can—
because the cosmos is also within us.
We're made of star-stuff.
We are a way for the cosmos to know itself.

The Sky Calls to Us, for unaccompanied mixed choir, had been brewing in my mind for a while before I ever wrote a note of it. When I was ten, I was introduced to Carl Sagan through his masterwork documentary, Cosmos, and it truly changed my life. Carl's quiet passion for nature and the universe shaped my worldview. His teachings and writings influenced my opinions on a multitude of things. Consequently, I had known for a long time that I wanted to write homage to him, a man who died before I was old enough to ever know his name.

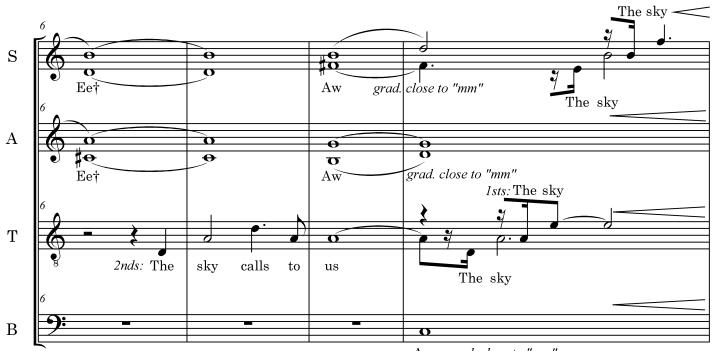
In deciding to set his text to music, I knew I faced a challenge because it was prose. Because of this, I was careful to find two quotations that were exceptionally poetic. These particular ones—loaded with metaphor and vivid imagery—could pass for poetry awfully well. They express a vision of Carl's that was central to his life: that humans will eventually wade out into the cosmos and become a starfaring species. What a glorious prospect this was: that someday, maybe soon, we would set sail for the universe which bore us, and achieve communion with our most distant ancestors, the stars. It is with this spirit that I wrote this piece and present it now.

It may be performed by a choir of eight or larger. Keep in mind that larger forces may obscure the clarity of the tone required, especially in No. 1, which must be done senza vibrato. However, with larger forces it will be easier to execute parts which call for staggered breathing.

-Sean Michael Salamon

The Sky Calls to Us

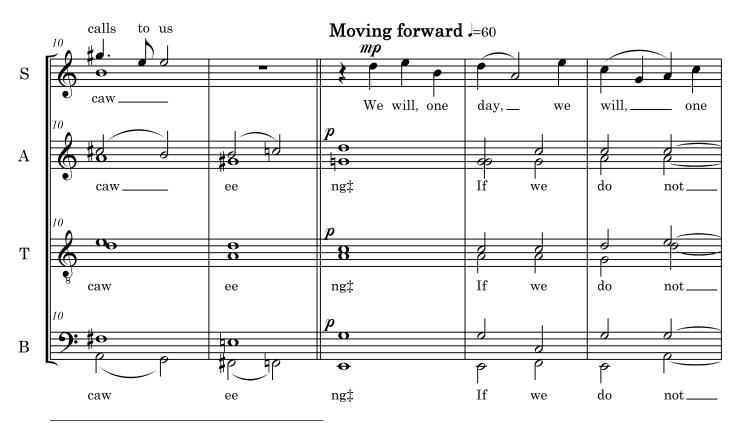




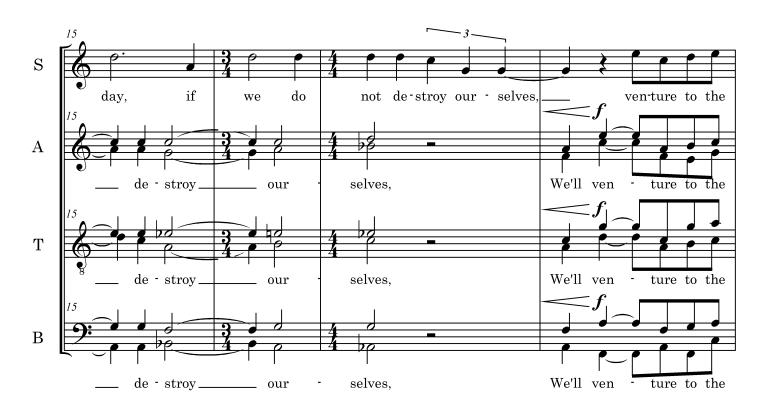
Aw grad. close to "mm"

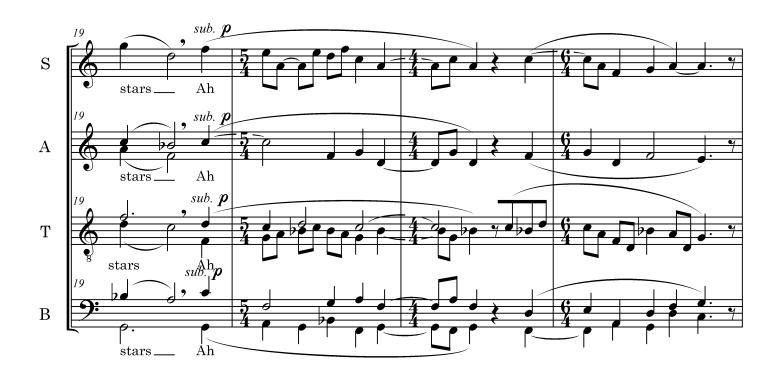
^{*} The "ooh" should be as closed as possible with the lips still parted.

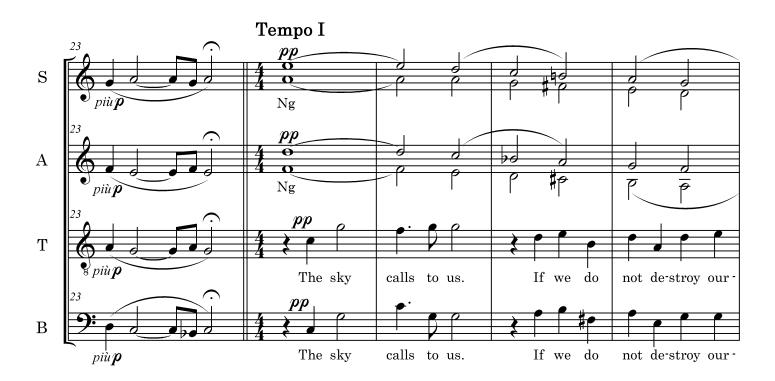
[†] The "ee" should flip suddenly from the preceding vowel and sounds like a German "ü."

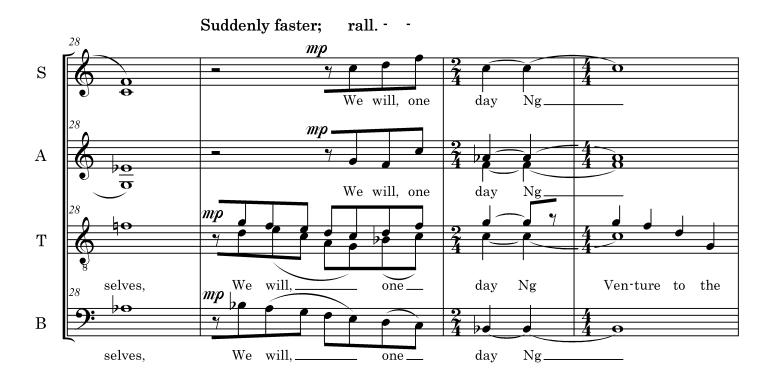


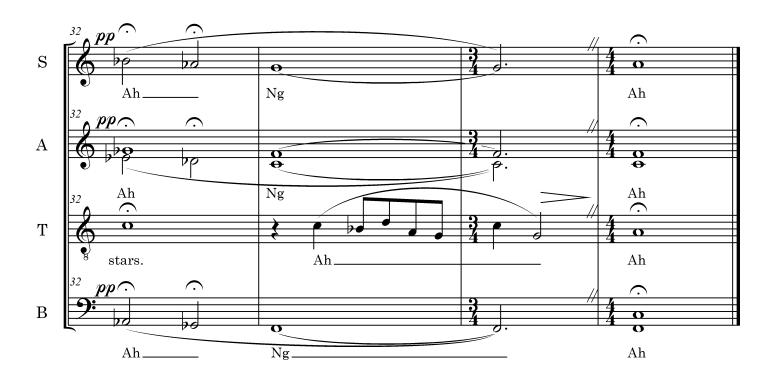
‡ This is an immediate flip to a hum with the mouth open and rounded, and the soft palate closed.

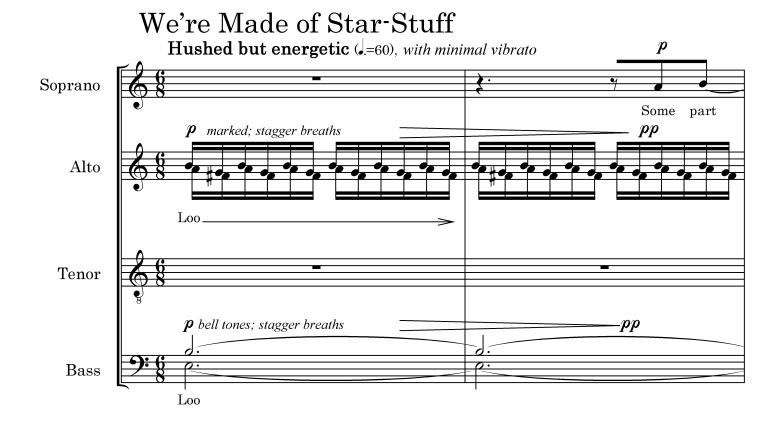


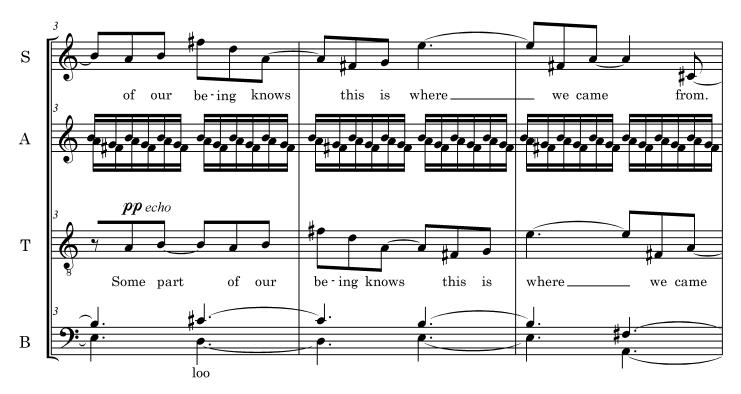


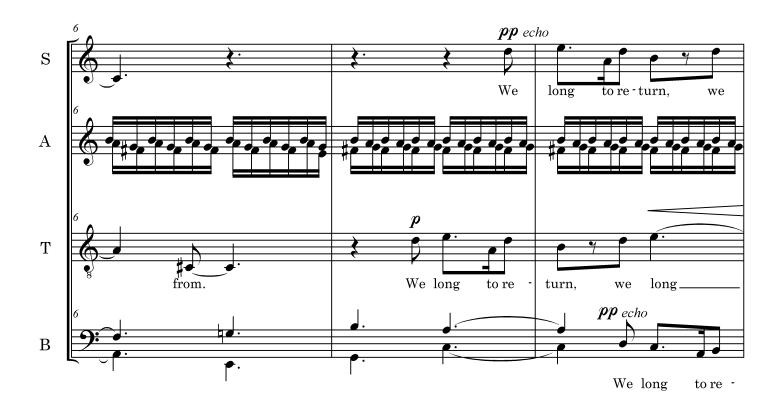


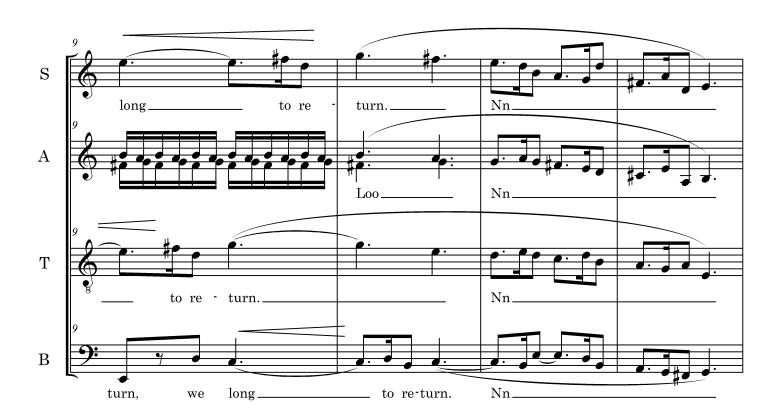


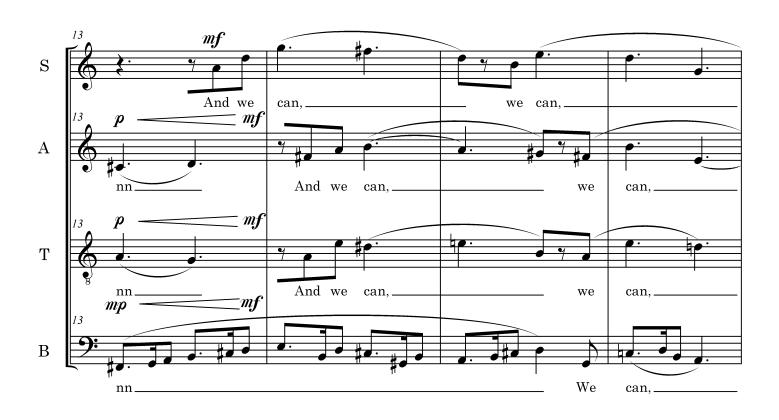


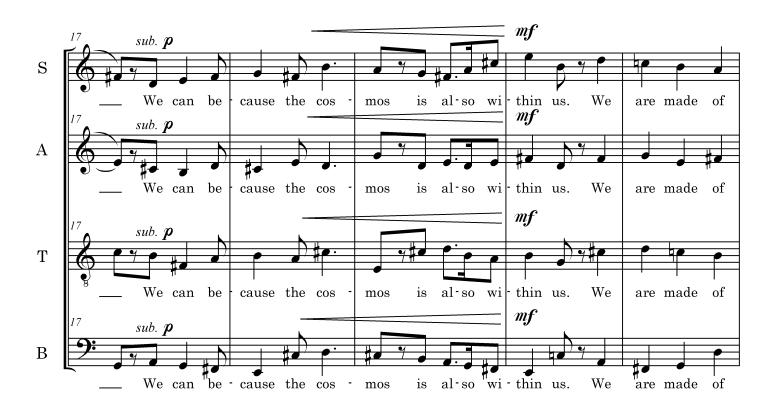


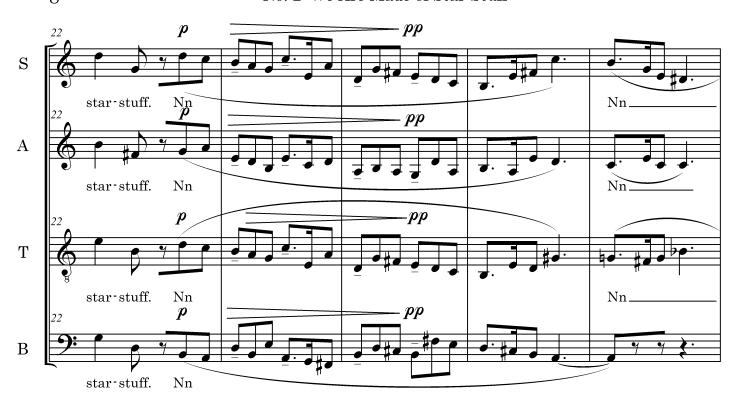


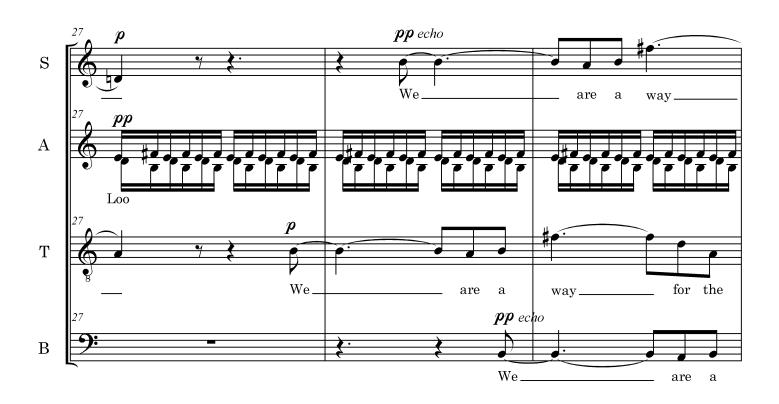


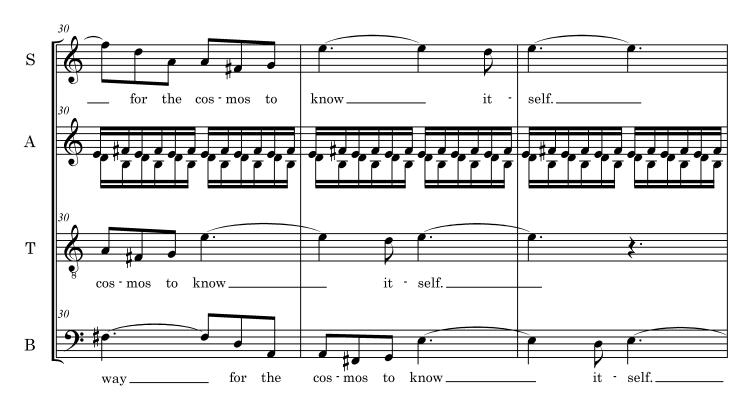


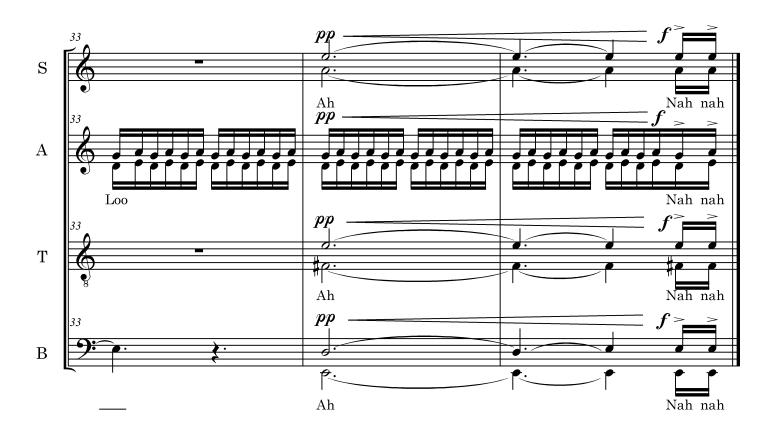














Sean Michael Salamon is a student of Nancy Galbraith at Carnegie Mellon University. He is equally conversant in the musical languages of classical music and musical theatre, having been most influenced by Bach, Sondheim, Vaughan Williams and Bartók. Since arriving at Carnegie Mellon, he has written music for both the concert hall and the stage. His pieces have been performed by ensembles in several cities across the United States, as well as Canada and Romania. His ballet, *Hard Times* (co-written with Andrea Beschel and Mitch Marois) was premiered at the CMU School of Drama's Playground Festival. When not composing he sings in the Carnegie Mellon Concert Choir, and at Trinity Cathedral in downtown Pittsburgh. He is also the music director of Carnegie Mellon's all-male a cappella group, The Originals. Additionally, he is an Eagle Scout.