

# Robinsons

for Mezzo-Soprano, Flute,  
Clarinet, and Piano



Bill Robinson

# Robinsongs

for Mezzo-Soprano, Flute, Clarinet in B flat, and Piano

April 30—September 11, 2012

Duration: about 14 minutes      Cover photo: Parma Cathedral dome

for Joseph, Mary Kay, and Rebecca Robinson

Joseph and Mary Kay Robinson (no relation) came to a concert in 2006 featuring some of my music performed by Eric Pritchard at Duke University. Joe had a long career as principal oboist with the New York Philharmonic, and Mary Kay has performed extensively as a violinist. They asked me to write a trio for oboe, violin, and piano, which resulted in *Aditya Hridayam*. After they performed this at Duke with Thomas Warburton, I realized how lucky I was to work with musicians of this caliber. In February 2012, Mary Kay was one of the musicians performing my *Clarinet Sextet* for clarinet and strings, which was a wonderful performance.

In 2011, Joe and Mary Kay asked me to write a piece they could perform with their aspiring diva daughter Becky, with Mary Kay playing piano. I wrestled with ideas for lyrics for many months, but found this to be an exceptionally difficult assignment. After finishing *Violations* for viol consort (or string ensembles) on February 19, 2012, it was time to sit down to do *Robinsongs*, a set of songs for, well, the Robinsons. After delays and false starts with other lyrics, I managed to start scribbling Lewis Carroll's *Some Hallucinations* on April 30, but progress was quite difficult. After that came Ogden Nash's *The Purist*. (I've made a good-faith effort to find the holder of the copyright—but then, my music is so far from profitable that I don't suppose royalties will be an issue.) Finally, after much struggle and an uncommonly slow season of composition, came another Lewis Carroll poem, *You Are Old, Father William*, finished on the ominous date of September 11.

In August 2015 I made this new version of *Robinsongs* for mezzo, flute, clarinet, and piano, at the suggestion of Marianne Breneman, clarinetist and member of Conundrum, a chamber music group of soprano, flute, clarinet, and piano. In October 2022, I converted the legal-size format to letter-size.

Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not refer to other octaves. Sometimes I include courtesy accidentals to avoid confusion. Notes retain their value through meter changes.

## Bill Robinson

Publisher Parrish Press    Garner NC    Third Edition    October 2022

billrobinsonmusic.com

## Some Hallucinations

He thought he saw an Elephant,  
That practiced on a fife:  
He looked again, and found it was  
A letter from his wife.  
"At length I realize," he said,  
"The bitterness of life."

He thought he saw a Buffalo  
Upon the chimneypiece:  
He looked again, and found it was  
His Sister's Husband's Niece.  
"Unless you leave this house," he said,  
"I'll send for the Police!"

He thought he saw a Rattlesnake  
That questioned him in Greek:  
He looked again, and found it was  
The Middle of Next Week.  
"The one thing I regret," he said,  
"Is that it cannot speak!"

He thought he saw a Banker's Clerk  
Descending from the 'bus:  
He looked again, and found it was  
A Hippopotamus.  
"If this should stay to dine," he said,  
"There won't be much for us!"

—Lewis Carroll

## The Purist

I give you now Professor Twist,  
A conscientious scientist,  
Trustees exclaimed, "He never bungles!"  
And sent him off to distant jungles.  
Camped on a tropic riverside,  
One day he missed his loving bride.  
She had, the guide informed him later,  
Been eaten by an alligator.  
Professor Twist could not but smile.  
"You mean," he said, "a crocodile."

--Ogden Nash

## You Are Old, Father William

"You are old, father William," the young man said,  
"And your hair has become very white;  
And yet you incessantly stand on your head--  
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," father William replied to his son,  
"I feared it might injure the brain;  
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,  
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned  
before,  
And have grown most uncommonly fat;  
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door--  
Pray what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey  
locks,  
"I kept all my limbs very supple  
By the use of this ointment--one shilling the box--  
Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are to  
weak  
For anything tougher than suet;  
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the  
beak--  
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,  
And argued each case with my wife;  
And the muscular strength, which it gave to my  
jaw,  
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly  
suppose  
That your eye was as steady as ever;  
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose--  
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is  
enough,"  
Said the father. "Don't give yourself airs!  
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?  
Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs!"

---Lewis Carroll

# Robinsongs

## 1. Some Hallucinations [5:20]

lyrics by Lewis Carroll  
music by Bill Robinson

A perfectly sane tempo (♩=60)

Voice

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Piano

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*Red.*

*8va*

*\**

5

5

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

8

8

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*8va*

*Red.*

*\**

12

*mp* *mp* *mp*

12

*mp*

17

*p*

He thought he saw an El - e - phant, That prac - ticed on a fife: He

*p*

17

*p*

8<sup>vb</sup>

19

*mp* *mf*

looked a - gain, and found it was A let - ter from his wife. "At length I re - a - lize," he said, "The

19

*mp* *mf*

8<sup>vb</sup>



Some Hallucinations

28 *cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*)  
thought he saw a Buf - fa - lo Up - on the chim - ney - piece: He

*cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*)

28 *cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*)

Leo. Leo.

30 (*mf*)  
looked a - gain, and found it was His Sis - ter's Hus - band's Niece. "Un -

*mp* *cresc. p. a p.* (*mf*)

30 (*mf*)

Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo.

32 *f*  
less you leave this house," he said, "I'll send for the Po - - -

*f*

32 *f*

Leo. Leo. \*

Some Hallucinations

6

34 *ff*  
licel!"  
*ff* *p* *cresc. p. a p.*  
*ff* *mf* *p* *cresc. p. a p.*

38  
*(mp)* *(mf)*  
*mp* *cresc. p. a p.* *(mf)*  
*(mp)* *(mf)* 6 6 6 6 6 6

40 *f*  
He thought he saw a Rat - tle - snake That ques - tioned him in  
*f* *f*  
40 *f* 3 3 3 3 3

3

3

3





Some Hallucinations

8

49

*mf* *mp*

3 6

53

*mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

"The one thing I re -

*cresc. p. a p.*

53

*cresc. p. a p.*

55

*(mf)*

gret," he said, "Is that it can - - - not

*(mf)*

55

*(mf)*

*And.* *And.* *And.* \*

57 *f*  
speak!"

*f* *ff*

59

*f* *ff*

62 *mp*  
He

*p* *mp*

65  
thought he saw a Ban - ker's Clerk De - scen - ding from the 'bus: He

*mp* *f*

65

*mp* *f*  
Rec. \*

67 *f*  
looked a - gain, and found it was A Hip - po - pot - a - mus.

*f* *p*

67

*f* *p*  
Rec. \* Rec.

71

*p*

71

*p* 8va  
Rec.

74 *mf* *mp* *mf*

"If this should stay to

74 *mp* *8va* *mf*

77 *f* *ff*

dine," he said, "There won't be much for

77 *ff* *8va*

79 *pp* *pp* *p*

usi"



20

Twist, \_\_\_\_\_ A con - sci - en - tious sci - en -

20

22

tist, \_\_\_\_\_ Trus - tees ex - claimed, "He ne - ver

22

24

bun - gles!" \_\_\_\_\_ And

24

The Purist

14

27

sent him off to dis - tant jun - gles. And sent him off to dis - tant jun - gles.

31

31

*f* *p*

*f* *p* *legato*

*ped.* \*

35

*f* **Camped**

*f*

35



38

on a tro - pic ri - ver - side, One day he missed his lov - ing

*f*

38

*f*

Reo.

41

bride. She had, the guide in - formed him la - ter, Been

41

Reo.

Reo.

44

eat - en by an al - li - ga - tor.

*ff*

*ff* *dim. p. a p.*

*ff* *dim. p. a p.*

44

*ff* *dim. p. a p.*

Reo.

47

Musical score for measures 47-48. The system includes a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line is mostly silent. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *f* and *(mf)*. The word *Rec.* is written below the bass line.

49

Musical score for measures 49-52. The system includes a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line has a melody in the right hand. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *(mp)* and *p*. The word *Rec.* is written below the bass line.

53

Musical score for measures 53-56. The system includes a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line is mostly silent. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *(mp)* and *p*. The word *Rec.* is written below the bass line. An asterisk (\*) is placed below the first measure of the piano accompaniment.

59

*mp*

*mp*

59

*mp*

67

67

70

*f*

Pro - fes - sor Twist could not but

70

The Purist

73

smile but smile but smile but smile but smile but smile but

*ff* *f*

76

smile but smile.

*mf* *mp* *p*

*rit.* *a tempo*

76

*mf* *mp* *p*

*rit.* *a tempo*

79

mean," he said, "a cro - - - co - - - dile."

*p*

79

*p*

# III. You Are Old, Father William [6']

lyrics by Lewis Carroll  
music by Bill Robinson

Guano ma non troppo (♩ = 65)

Voice

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Piano

*mp*

"You are

*p*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

5

*mf*

*f*

old, fa-ther Wil - liam," the young man said, "And your hair has be-come ve-ry white; \_\_\_\_\_ And

*mf*

*f*

5

*mp*

*mf*

*Rec.* \* *Rec.* \*

8

*f*

yet you in - ces - sant - ly stand on your head - - - - Do you

*f*

*f*

8

*f*

*Rec.* \*



21

now that I'm per - fect - ly sure I have none, Why, I do it a - gain and a - gain. Why, I

23

do it a - gain and a - gain. Why, I do it a - gain and a - gain. Why, I

25

do it a - gain and a - gain."

Father William

22

27 *mp*  
"You are

*p* *mp*

29 *mf*  
old," said the youth, "as I men - tioned be - fore, And have grown most un - com - mon - ly

*mf* *mp* *mf*

Red. \*

31 *f*  
fat; Yet you turned a back - som - er - sault in at the

*p* *f* *p* *f*

Red. \*



35

door

35

36

Pray what is the rea - son of

36

38

that?"

*mf*

38

Father William

24

Musical score for measures 40-42. The system includes a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line begins with a whole rest in measure 40, followed by a half note in measure 41, and a quarter note in measure 42. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The time signature changes from 6/8 to 4/4 between measures 41 and 42.

Musical score for measures 43-45 with lyrics. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey locks, "I". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *cresc. p. a p.*, and *(mp)*. The time signature changes from 6/8 to 4/4 between measures 44 and 45.

Piano accompaniment for measures 43-45. The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a bass line. A dynamic marking of *cresc. p. a p.* is present. A performance instruction "Leo. \*" is written below the first measure.

Musical score for measures 46-48 with lyrics. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "kept all my limbs ve - ry sup - ple By the". The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *(mf)*. The time signature changes from 6/8 to 4/4 between measures 47 and 48.

Piano accompaniment for measures 46-48. The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a bass line. A dynamic marking of *(mf)* is present.

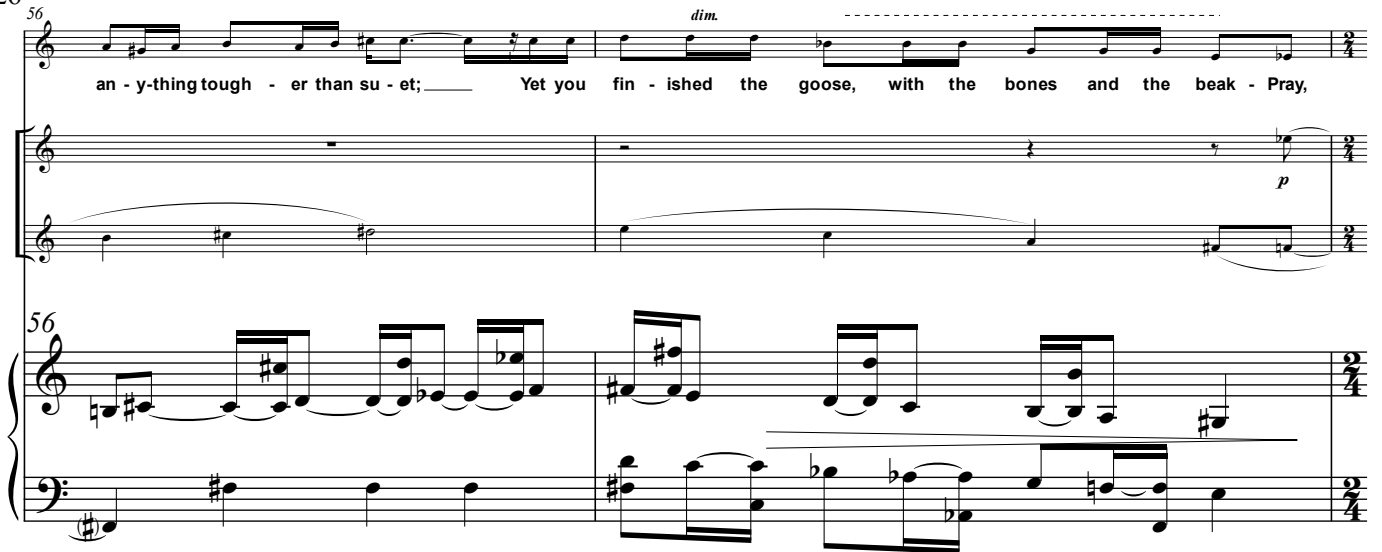


Father William

26


56 *dim.*

an - y-thing tough - er than su - et; \_\_\_\_ Yet you fin - ished the goose, with the bones and the beak - Pray,



58 *p* *f*

how did you man - age to do it?" \_\_\_\_ "In my



58 *p* *mp*




61

youth," said his fa - ther, "I took to the law, And ar - gued each case with my wife; \_\_\_\_



61 *f*



63

And the mus - cu - lar strength, which it gave to my

65

jaw, Has las - ted the rest of my

65

Leo. Leo. Leo. \*

68

life." "You are

68

Father William

28

73

old," said the youth, "one would hard-ly sup-pose That your eye was as stea-dy as ev-er ev-er ev-er ev-er;

*p*

73

77

Yet you ba-lanced an eel on the end of your nose - What

77

80

made you so aw-ful-ly cle-ver?"

80

*pp*

83

83

*f*

*ff*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 83 and 84. The vocal line (top staff) is mostly silent in measure 83 and begins in measure 84 with a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*.

84

*ff*

*ff*

"I have

84

*ff*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 84 and 85. The vocal line (top staff) continues the melody from measure 84. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) continues with the same rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *ff*. The lyrics "I have" are written under the vocal line.

86

an - swered three ques - tions, and that is e - nough," Said the fa - ther. "Don't give your - self airs! Do you

86

Detailed description: This system contains measures 86 and 87. The vocal line (top staff) continues the melody. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) continues with the same rhythmic pattern. The lyrics "an - swered three ques - tions, and that is e - nough," Said the fa - ther. "Don't give your - self airs! Do you" are written under the vocal line.

Father William

30

88

think I can list - en all day to such stuff? Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs! Be

90

off, or I'll kick you down stairs! Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs! Be

92

off, or I'll kick you down stairs!"