

A THOUSAND TENDER PASSAGES

A Letter from George Washington to Sally Fairfax

for SATB Chorus, Harp, and Cello

Matthew Van Brink

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Program Note

In his 2004 book *His Excellency George Washington*, Joseph J. Ellis writes:

The evidence is scanty, but convincing beyond any reasonable doubt, that George Washington had fallen in love with his best friend's wife... Just when the infatuation began, and whether it ever crossed the sexual threshold, has resisted surveillance by generations of historians and biographers. What we do know is based primarily on two letters Washington wrote to Sally Fairfax in September 1758 while serving in the Forbes campaign, and one letter he wrote near the end of his life in an uncharacteristically sentimental mood...

The earlier letters of 1758 are convoluted documents, in part because the act of writing them threw Washington into such emotional disarray that his grammar and syntax lost their customary coherence, in part because he deliberately used imprecise and elliptical language to prevent any prying eyes from knowing his secret.

Text

'Tis true, I profess myself a Votary to Love—I acknowledge that a Lady is in the Case—and further I confess that this Lady is known to you.—Yes Madam, as well as she is to one, who is too sensible of her Charms to deny the Power, whose Influence he feels and must ever Submit to. I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate, till I am bid to revive them.—but experience alas! Sadly reminds me how Impossible this is.—and evinces an opinion which I have long entertained, that there is a Destiny, which has the Sovereign Controul of our Actions—not to be resisted by the Strongest efforts of Human Nature.

The World has no business to know the object of my Love, declared in this manner to you—you when I want to conceal it—One thing, above all things in this World I wish to know, and only one person of your Acquaintance can solve me that, or guess my meaning. —but adieu to this, till happier times, if I shall ever see them. . . .

Do we still misunderstand the true meaning of each others Letters? I think it must appear so, tho I would feign hope the contrary as I cannot speak plainer without—but I'll say no more, and leave you to guess the rest. . . . I should think my time more agreeable spent believe me, in playing a part in Cato with the Company you mention, & myself doubly happy in being the Juba to such a Marcia as you must make. . . . One thing more and then have done. You ask if I am not tired at the length of your Letter? No Madam I am not, nor never can be while the Lines are an Inch asunder to bring you in haste to the end of the Paper. . . . Adieu dear Madam, you possibly will hear something of me, or from me before we shall meet.

First two paragraphs excerpted from George Washington's letter to Sarah ("Sally") Cary Fairfax on 12 September 1758. Third paragraph from a letter to her on 25 September 1758

Duration

7 minutes

A Thousand Tender Passages

A letter from George Washington to Sally Fairfax
for SATB Chorus, Harp, and Cello

Andante (♩ = 60)

MATTHEW VAN BRINK

Score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Violoncello, and Harp. The tempo is Andante (♩ = 60). The key signature is one sharp (F#).

Soprano: *p* 'Tis true, I pro -

Alto: *p* 'Tis true, I pro -

Tenor: *p* 'Tis true, I pro -

Bass: *p* 'Tis true, I pro -

Violoncello: *p*

Harp: *p* D:C:B: E:F#G:A:

Score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Violoncello, and Harp. The tempo is Andante (♩ = 60). The key signature is one sharp (F#).

Soprano: *mp* -fess my-self a vo - ta - ry to *mf* love, *p* I ac -

Alto: *mp* -fess my-self a vo - ta - ry to *mf* love, *p* I ac -

Tenor: *mp* -fess my-self a vo - ta - ry to *mf* love, *p* I ac -

Bass: *mp* -fess my-self a vo - ta - ry to *mf* love, *p* I ac -

Violoncello: *mf*

Harp: *mf*

9 *mp* *mf*

-knowledge that a la-dy is in the case, and

mp *mf*

knowledge that a la-dy is in the case, and

mp *mf*

knowledge that a la-dy is in, a lad-y is in the case, and

mp *mf*

knowledge that a la-dy is in the case, and

13

fur-ther I con-fess that this la - dy is known to you, —

fur-ther, fur-ther I con-fess that this la - dy is known to you —

fur-ther I con-fess that this la - dy is known to you, —

fur-ther I con-fess that this la - - - dy is known to you —

mf

cresc.

17 *f* *mf* *p* *cresc.*

yes, Mad-am— as well as she is— to one who is too

f *mf* *p* *cresc.*

as well as she is— to one who is too

f *mf* *p* *cresc.*

as well, as well as she is— to one

f *mf* *p* *cresc.*

as well, as well as she is— to one

p *cresc.*

f *p* *cresc.*

21 *mp*

sen - si - ble of— her charms to de - ny the pow'r,— whose

mp

sen - si - ble of— her charms— to de - ny the pow'r, whose

mp

who is too sen - si - ble of— her charms to de - ny the pow'r whose

mp

who is too sen - si - ble of— her charms to de - ny the pow'r, whose

mp *cresc.*

mp

24

in - flu - ence he feels and must ev - er sub - mit to.

mf f

mf f

mf f

mf f

mf f

26

I feel the force of her am - i - ca - ble beau - ties

f f

f f

f f

f f

f mf

29 *mf* *f* *mp* *p*

in the rec-ol-lec-tion of a thou-sand ten-der pas-sag-es that I

mf *f* *mp* *p*

in the rec-ol-lec-tion of a thou-sand ten-der pas - sag - es that I

mf *f* *mp* *p*

in the rec-ol-lec-tion of a thou-sand ten-der pas - sag - es that I wish

mf *f* *mp*

in the rec-ol-lec-tion of a thou-sand ten-der pas - sag - es

mf *f* *p* *mf*

f *pp cresc.* *gliss.*

32 *mp* *p*

wish I could o - blit - er - ate, till I am bid to re - vive them. But ex -

mp *p*

wish I could o - blit - er - ate till I re - vive them. But ex -

mp *p*

I could o - blit - er - ate till I re - vive them. But ex -

p

But ex -

p

p cresc. *mf* *p*

35

mf *f* *decresc.*

-per-i ence, a-las! sad - ly re minds me how — im -

mf *f* *decresc.*

-per - i - ence, a-las! a - las! sad - ly re minds me how — im -

mf *f* *decresc.*

8 -per - i - ence, a-las! div. unis. sad - ly re minds me how — im -

mf *f* *decresc.*

-per - i - ence, a-las! sad - ly re - minds me how — im -

mf

mf

38

p *mp* *cresc.*

- pos - si - ble this is. and e - vinc - es an o -

p *mp* *cresc.*

- pos - si - ble this is. and e - vinc - es an o -

p *mp* *cresc.*

8 - pos - si - ble this is. and e - vinc - es an o -

p *mp* *cresc.*

- pos - si - ble this is. and e - vinc - es an o -

p

decresc. *p*

42

-pin - ion that I have long en - - - ter - tained, that there is a des - ti - ny,

-pin - ion that I have long en - - - ter - tained, that there is a des - ti - ny,

o - pin - ion that I have long en - ter - tained that there is a des - ti - ny,

-pin - ion that I have long en - ter - tained that there is a des - ti - ny,

f *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

mf

cresc. *f*

46

p cresc.

which has the sov'-reign con - trol of our ac - tions, which has the

p cresc.

which has the sov'-reign con - trol of our ac - tions,

p cresc.

p cresc.

49

sov-'reign con - trol of our ac - tions not to be re-sist - ed by the

not to be re-sist - ed by the

which has the sov-'reign con - trol con - trol, not to be re-sist - ed by the

not to be re-sist - ed by the

mp *cresc.*

52

strong - est ef - forts of hu - man na - - - ture.

strong - est ef - forts of hu - man na - - - ture.

strong - est ef - forts of hu - man na - - - ture.

strong - est ef - forts of hu - man na - - - ture.

mf *cresc.*

54 *f*

The world has no bus - 'ness to know the ob - ject of my

f

The world has no bus - 'ness to know the ob - ject of my

f

The world has no bus - 'ness to know the ob - ject of my

f

The world has no bus - 'ness to know the ob - ject of my

f

gliss.

57 *mf* *f* *pp*

love, de - clared in this man - ner to you, you,

mf *f* *pp*

love, my love, de - clared in this man - ner to you, you,

mf *f* *pp*

love, de - clared in this man - ner to you, you,

mf *f* *pp*

love, my love, de - - - clared in this man - ner to you, you,

mf *f* *pp*

61

p *mp* *p*

when I want to con- ceal it, One thing a - bove all

p *mp*

when I want to con- ceal it,

p *mp*

when I want to con- ceal it,

p *mp*

when I want to con- ceal it,

p *mp* *mp*

p *mp*

64

things in the world I wish to know, and only one per - son

mp

p *mf*

gliss. *p cresc.* *mp cresc.*

67

or — guess at my

or — guess at my

of your ac-quain-tance can solve me that or — guess at my

or — guess at my

p

mf

p

mf

70

mean-ing. — But a - dieu to this, till hap-pi - er times, if

mean-ing. — But a - dieu to this, till hap-pi - er times, if

mean-ing. — But a - dieu to this, till hap-pi - er times, if

mean - ing. But a - dieu to this, till hap-pi - er times, if

f

mf

f decresc.

f

mf decresc.

73

p *mf*

I shall ev - er see them. *div.*

p *mf*

I shall ev - er see them. *div.*

p *mf*

I shall ev - er see them.

p *mf*

I shall ev - er see them.

p *mf*

p *cresc.* *f*

77

f *mf*

f *mf*

81

p cresc.

Do we still mis-un-der stand, do we still mis-

p cresc.

Do we still, do we still mis-un-der stand, mis-

p cresc.

Do we still mis-un-der-stand, do we still mis-un-der

p cresc.

Do we still mis-un-der-stand, do we still mis-

f *p*

f *mp*

85

mf

-un-der-stand the true mean-ing,

mp

the true mean-ing of each oth-ers'

mf

und - er-stand the mean-ing, the

mp

mean-ing of each oth-ers' let - ters?

mf

stand the true mean-ing, the

mp

mean-ing of each oth-ers' let - ters?

mf

- un - der-stand the mean-ing

mp

the true mean-ing of each oth-ers'

p

cresc.

88

let - ters? I think it must ap - pear so, though

I think it must ap - pear so, it must ap - pear so, though

I think it must ap - pear so, it must ap - pear so,

let - ters? I think it must ap - pear so,

mf *p cresc.*

92

I would feign the con-trar-y as I can-not as

I would feign the con-trar-y as I can - not speak

though I would feign the con-trar-y as I can - not speak

though I would feign the con-trar-y as I can - not speak

mf *p* *mp*

cresc. *mf* *p* *8va*

[illegible]

100

solo *pp cresc.*

but I'll say no more, say no more

and leave you

mf

p

and

p

and

mp

p

cresc.

mp

104

tutti *p* *mf*

and leave— you to guess the rest.

leave— you to guess the rest, the rest.

leave— you to guess the rest, the rest.

and leave— you to guess the rest, the rest.

p *mf*

cresc. *mf*

D:C#B:
E:F#G#A:

108

mp *mp* *mp* *mp*

I should think my time more a - gree-a - ble spent, more a -

I should think my time more a - gree-a - ble spent,

I should think my time more a - gree-a - ble spent,

I should think my time more a - gree-a - ble spent, more a -

mp *mp*

112

gree - a - ble spent in play - ing the part in Ca - to

more a - gree - a - ble spent in play - ing the part in Ca - to

more a - gree - a - ble spent in play - ing the part in Ca - to

gree - a - ble spent in play - ing the part in Ca - to

mf

mp

mf

115

with the com-pan - y you men - tion and my - self doub - ly

with the com-pan - y you men - tion, and my-self doub-ly

with the com-pan - y you men - tion, and my-self doub-ly

with the com-pan - y you men - tion and my - self doub - ly

p

p

p

p

122

f non. decresc.

Mar-cia as you must make.

f non. decresc.

Mar-cia as you, as you must make.

f non. decresc.

Mar-cia as you, as you must make.

f non. decresc.

Mar-cia as you must make.

unis.

f

127

unis. *p*
One thing more, and then have done, one thing

p
One thing more, and then have done, one thing

p *pp* *pizz.* *p*

131

p
You ask if

more, and then have done. You ask if

more, and then have done. You ask if

p
You ask if

mp

134

I am not tired at the length of your let - ter? _____

I am not tired at the length of your let - - - ter? _____

I am not tired at the length of your let - ter? _____

I am not tired at the length of your let - ter? _____

137

No, mad-am, I am not, nor nev - er can be while the

No, I am not, nor nev - er can be while the

No, I am not, nor nev - er can be while the div.

No, I am not, nor nev - er can be while the

140

pp *p*

lines, while the lines are an inch a - sun - der, as -

lines, while the lines are an inch a -

lines, while the lines are an inch a - sun - der, an inch a -

lines, while the lines are an inch a - sun - der, a -

arco *pp*

p

143

mp *p* *cresc.*

- sun - der to bring you in haste to the end of the

mp *unis. p* *cresc.*

- sun - der to bring you in haste to the end of the

mp *div. p* *cresc.* *unis.*

- sun - der to bring you in haste to the end of the

mp *p* *cresc.*

- sun - der to bring you in haste to the end of the

p *cresc.*

p.d.l.t. *>* *>* *>* *>*

cresc.

147 *div.* *f*

pa - per

f

pa - - - - per.

f

pa - - - - per.

f

pa - - - - per.

ff

A - dieu, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

ff

A - dieu, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

ff

A - dieu, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

ff

A - dieu, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

f

nat.

f

ff

f

152 *mf*

Mad - am, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

mf

Mad - am, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

mf

Mad - am, a - dieu, a - dieu, dear

mf

Mad - am, a - - - - dieu, a - dieu, dear

f

Mad - am, Mad - am, Mad - am, Mad - am,

mf

f

f

155

solo p
you — pos - si - bly will hear some - thing of me or — some - thing

p *mf*

gliss.
pp cresc. *p cresc.*

158

mp *f*
be - fore be - fore be -

mp *f*
be - - - fore, be - fore, be - fore

mf *tutti mp* *div.* *f unis.*
from me be - - - fore, be fore, be - fore be -

mp *f*
be - fore, be - fore be - fore

mf *p* *f*

Poco rit.

161

fore we shall meet, shall meet, shall meet.

be - fore we shall meet, shall meet.

decresc.

decresc.

p *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

div.

A tempo**Poco rit.**

165

mf *p* *mf* *p*

gliss.

6

