

HALCYON DAYS

Sacred days draw near, traditions hallowed and wan,
Well-worn prayers embrace their heirs when love returns as embers.
Dreams delayed, hopes frayed in the blue nights of winter.
Daybreak dreams of reunions lost.
Rise up, tattered and torn! Rise up, barren and reborn!
Go forth in peace, bring joy to the dawn, and grace, turn your face upon us.

Jacqueline Goldfinger

We all have good years and bad years, but few years have been as stormy for so many people as 2020. It's hard to think of the upcoming winter holidays without acknowledging the effects of current events, as millions of people sacrifice precious time with their loved ones for the safety of their communities. Along with poet Jacqueline Goldfinger, my hope for this December is that we each can create our own Halcyon Days – a period of calm during winter storms – where we can reflect on what we have lost but rise up to face the new year with joy and grace.

Melissa Dunphy, October 2020

*Commissioned by VOCES8 for their LIVE from London – Christmas 2020 festival,
and first performed by them at the VOCES8 Centre, London, on 5th December, 2020
and live-streamed globally as part of a set of six new works.*

Duration: 3'30"

for Voices 8

Halcyon Days

Jacqueline Goldfinger

Melissa Dunphy

Moderato ♩ = 60

p espressivo

Soprano
Sa-cred days draw near, tra-di-tions hal-lowed and wan, well-worn

p espressivo

Alto
Sa-cred days draw near, hal-lowed and wan, well-worn

pp *p espressivo*

Tenor
Oo, hal-lowed and wan,

pp *p espressivo*

Bass
Oo, hal-lowed and wan,

Piano (for rehearsal only)

6

S
prayers em-brace their heirs when love re - turns as em - bers. Dreams de -

A
prayers em-brace their heirs when love re - turns as em - bers.

T
well-worn prayers em-brace their heirs, love re - turns as em - bers.

B
well - worn prayers, love re - turns as em - bers.

Pno