

Drew Sperry

Before It Was Day

For Voice and Piano

2026

- Mezzo-Soprano -

Perusal Score

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Written in collaboration with Xavier Perry and Austin Gentry for the
2026 *Sparks and Wiry Cries SongSLAM*, Indiana Competition

Performance Notes

- Pedal markings indicate when the sustain pedal must be used. Otherwise, the performer is free to use the pedal as they please.
- Dynamics in the piano part are occasionally placed above the staff for readability. All dynamics notated this way apply to both hands and should be treated as if they were notated between the two staves.
- When transitioning between meters with different denominators (4/4 and 6/8 or 4/4 and 3/2, for example), the smallest common denominator will always remain consistent.
 - ♩ = ♩ when transitioning between meters such as 4/4 and 6/8.
 - ♩ = ♩ when transitioning between meters such as 4/4 and 3/2.

Vocal Range (Mezzo-Soprano)

A3 - E♭5

Duration: ca. 5 minutes

Text

“Before Sunrise” (1920) by William Saphier (1886-1942)

Before it was day
I climbed to meet the sun
half way
on the side of a mountain.
A high cool pond
poured down over the rocks
to a slow dreamy valley
singing of new born clouds.
Facing the warm reflections
on the quiet sky
I bowed and kissed the dew
on the young grass.
But soon I felt guilty.
What had I done?
What is the dew
on young grass?

Perusal Score

Before It Was Day

for Voice and Piano

William Saphier

Drew Sperry

Slowly, plaintive ♩ = 66

Score for Voice and Piano, featuring a large diagonal watermark reading "Percussion Score".

The score is divided into three systems, each with a Voice staff and a Piano staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

System 1: The Voice staff has a whole rest. The Piano staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a mezzo-piano (*mp*) section with two measures of five sixteenth notes each, then a forte (*f*) section with two measures of three eighth notes each, and ends with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand of the piano has a five-finger pattern (5, 5) and a three-finger pattern (3, 3). The left hand has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a five-finger pattern (5, 5). The system concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

System 2: The Voice staff has a whole rest. The Piano staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, followed by a forte (*f*) section with two measures of three eighth notes each, and ends with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand of the piano has a five-finger pattern (5, 5) and a three-finger pattern (3, 3). The left hand has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a five-finger pattern (5, 5). The system concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

System 3: The Voice staff has a whole rest. The Piano staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) section with two measures of three eighth notes each, and ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand of the piano has a five-finger pattern (5, 5) and a three-finger pattern (3, 3). The left hand has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a five-finger pattern (5, 5). The system concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

8

p *(mf)* *p*

mf

Red.

11

mp *f* *mp sub.*

Be - fore it was day — I

(p) *mp* *p* *(p)* *mf*

Red.

15

climbed to meet the sun

(p) *mf* *p* *(p)*

Red.

17 *rit.* *a tempo* *f* *mp* *poco rit.* *f*

half way_ I climbed_ on the side of a moun -

mf

cresc. *f* *mp*

Red.

20 *a tempo* *mp* *mf* *p*

-tain._ I climbed....

(mp) *f* *p* *mf*

25 *(p)*

I climbed....

mp *mf* *p*

p *(p)*

Red.

30

p

mp *mf* *p*

A high cool

(p)

Red.

With motion ♩ = 76

33

mf *p* *mf* *p*

pond poured down o-ver the rocks to a

mp *mf* *p* *mf*

Red.

36

mf *mp* *f*

slow a dream-y val-ley sing-ing of new born

p *mf* *p* *f mp sub.*

poco rit.

40 **a tempo** (♩ = 76) **mp** **poco rit.** **p**

clouds. Fac - ing the warm re - flec - tions on the qui - et

f *sub. p*

43 **a tempo** (♩ = 76) **f** **p** **accel.** **mf** **p**

sky I bowed and kissed the dew I bowed and kissed the

mf *p* *mf* *p*

47 **f** **mp sub.** **molto rit.**

dew I bowed and kissed the dew I bowed and

f *sub. p*

.....Slowly and without feeling ♩ = 66

51 *ff* *f* *mp*

kissed the dew on the young grass.

ff *sub. mp*

Red.

55 *p* quasi-recitative, remorsefully and with bitterness *mf* *f*

But soon I felt guilt - y. What had I done? What had I done?

p

Red.

rit.a tempo (♩ = 66)

59 *p* cantabile *mf* *p*

What had I done? What is the

p *(p)*

Red.

63 *mf* *p* *mp*

dew _____ on young _____ grass?

mp *p*

5 5 3

(p)

Red.

66 *f*

What is the dew... _____

f *p*

5 5 3 3

(p)

Red.

68 *mf*

Be - fore it was day... _____

3

(p) *cresc.* *mf* *p*

5 5

Red.

71 *p* *mp* *n*

Be - fore it was day...

p *sempre* *(p)*

Red.

75 *mf* *p* *mp* *dim.* *pp* *mp gently*

Red.