

# A PSALM OF LIFE

Unison, optional Two-Part, accompanied

Based on

*A PSALM OF LIFE*

*(What the Heart of the Young Man  
Said to the Psalmist)*

Written by American Poet

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

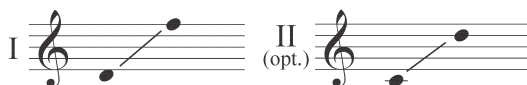
Words and Music by

LYNN SHAW BAILEY

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Range:



Time: Approx. 2:45

\*Difficulty: Moderate

# Performance Notes

The great American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) coined the phrase “footprints on the sands of time” in *A Psalm of Life* (1839). This poem challenges the readers to live determined lives of dignity, action and greatness. Longfellow advises us to live in such a way that others see the footprints we leave behind and are encouraged to go forward. He admonishes us to “act in the living Present” and “be a hero in the strife.”

The poem is subtitled *What the Heart of the Young Man Said to the Psalmist*. Published when Longfellow was 32, it was included in his first collection of poems entitled *Voices of the Night*. I was particularly drawn to these words:

“Lives of great men all remind us  
    We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing leave behind us  
    Footprints in the sands of time.”

Did you notice that we can choose to take responsibility for making our own lives sublime. “Sublime” may be a word you don’t hear very often, but it is a wonderful adjective describing someone or something that is noble, majestic and not to be excelled. It is someone of grand and lofty ideas, expression or manner...someone or something that inspires awe due to some elevated quality such as beauty, grandeur or excellence.

Great people leave their mark on others. Who do you consider great? First, consider this word of caution. Just because someone is famous doesn’t mean they are great. No matter your age or place in life, you can be great by doing your best, overcoming obstacles and making a real difference in the life of someone else. That’s what true greatness is really all about.

I encourage you to read the entire poem and discuss it with your teacher, family and friends. Learn more about Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his writings. Then go out and be great! Inspire others and be a hero in strife. Walk on and leave YOUR footprints on the sands of time...

*Soli Deo Gloria...*

Lynn Shaw Bailey (2008)

In honor and memory of Brian R. Busch (1940-2007), founder of BriLee Music, who made his life sublime.

# A PSALM OF LIFE

(Walk On)

Unison, optional Two-Part, accompanied

Based on *A PSALM OF LIFE (What the Heart  
of the Young Man Said to the Psalmist)*

Written by American poet

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

Words and Music by  
LYNN SHAW BAILEY (ASCAP)

**Broadly with expression** (♩ = ca. 76)

The piano accompaniment for the first system is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line with quarter notes. The dynamic marking is *mf*.

I *mf*  
Lives of hon - or, lives of glo-ry,—

II (opt.) *mf*  
Lives of hon - or, lives of glo-ry,—

The second system includes two vocal parts, I and II (optional), and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. They sing the lyrics "Lives of hon - or, lives of glo-ry,—". The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and bass lines as the first system, with a dynamic marking of *mf*. A box containing the number 5 is placed above the piano accompaniment staff.

9

Lives of love for hu - man-kind, once de - part - ed

Lives of love for hu - man-kind, once de - part - ed

9

leave be - fore us foot - prints on the sands of time.

leave be - fore us foot - prints on the sands of time.

15

I  
II  
(opt.)

Unison voices

Walk on, leave your

foot - prints. Walk on, leave your foot-prints on the

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

sands of time. Walk on, though you're wear - y.— Walk

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line has a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment includes a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns.

21  
on, leave your foot-prints on the sand. Walk on, leave your foot-prints on the

The third system begins at measure 21, indicated by a box around the number '21'. The vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support.

25

sand. Lives of great-ness all re-mind us

29

we can make our lives sub-lime, and de-part-ing

I

II

*f*

leave be-hind us foot-prints on the sands of time. Walk

leave be-hind us foot-prints on the sands of time. Walk

*f*

33

on, leave your foot-prints... Walk on, leave your foot-prints on the  
 on, walk\_ on, walk\_ on. Walk on, leave your foot-prints on the

33

sands of time. Walk on, though you're  
 sands of time. Walk\_ on,

39

wea-ry... Walk on, leave your foot-prints on the sand... Walk  
 walk\_ on. Walk on, leave your foot-prints on the sands of time. Walk

39

*decresc.* 43

on, leave your foot - prints on the sands of

*decresc.*

on, leave your foot - prints on the sands \_\_\_\_\_ of

*decresc.* 43

*mp* *rit.*

time. Walk on!

*mp* *rit.*

Walk on, walk on!

*mp* *rit.*

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