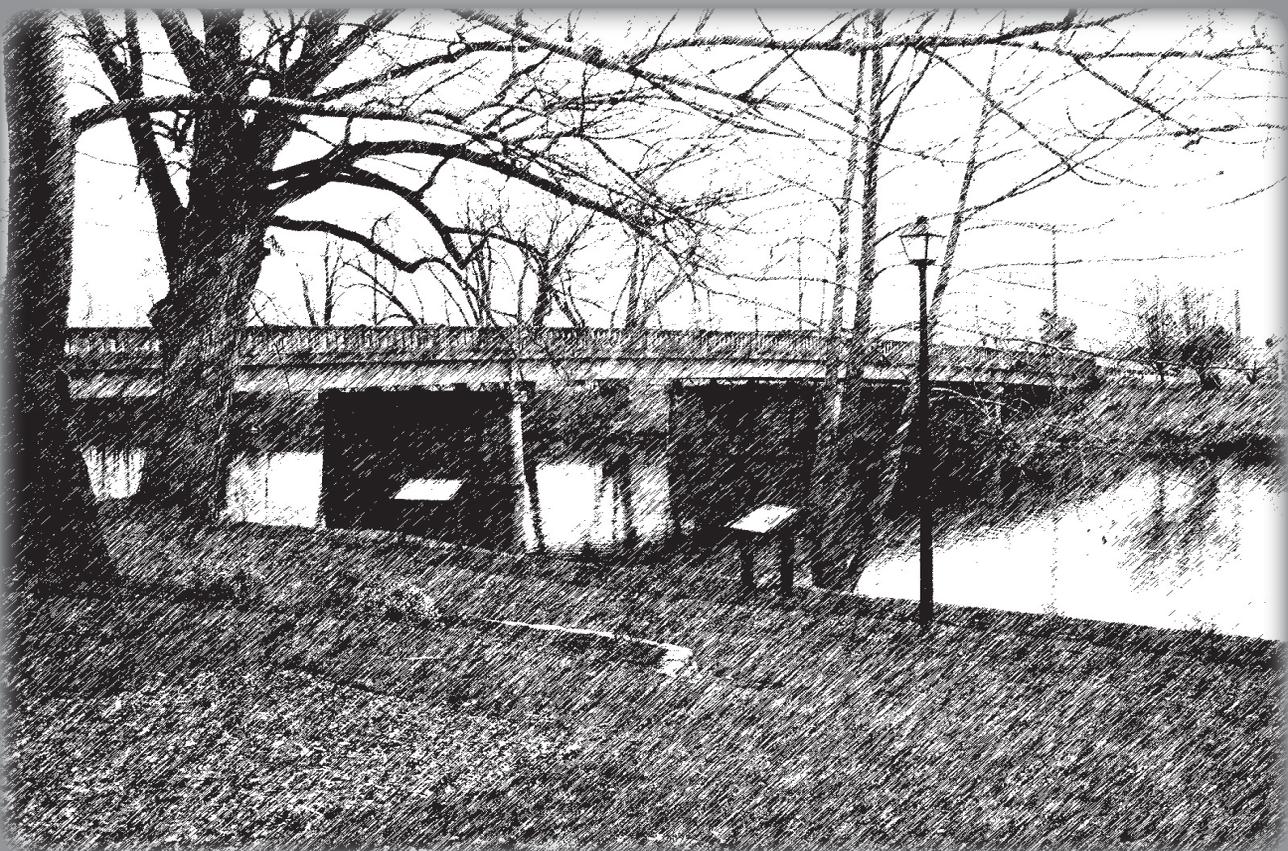


# *If I can stop one heart from breaking*

*Poem by Emily Dickinson*

*Music by John G. Barr*

*for two-part treble voices with piano*





## The Composer

John G. Barr (b. 1938) received his B.S. in Music Education from Manchester College (Indiana) and his S.M.M. and S.M.D. from Union Theological Seminary School of Sacred Music in New York City. His principal study in composition was done under Joseph Goodman at U.T.S. His graduate organ study was with Donald Coats and Robert Baker. He taught piano and instrumental and choral music at Hillcrest School for Missionary Children, Jos, Nigeria; was Director of Music and organist at University Presbyterian Church, Madison, Wisconsin; before his thirty-five-year tenure at Bridgewater College (Virginia) teaching organ, piano, and music theory.

## Program Notes

This piece is also available from the publisher as a part of the collection Amherst Melodies, Four Settings of Emily Dickinson's Poems by John G. Barr for Treble Voices (SSAA) with organ or piano. Other poems in the collection include: I've heard an Organ talk sometimes... (Organ); Let down the Bars, O Death (Piano); and The Grass so little has to do- (Piano)

I named these settings of four poems by Emily Dickinson after the village of Amherst, Massachusetts, where the poet lived at her father's home for virtually all of her life. The pieces were

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composed at various periods between 2004 and 2006. I was prompted to write them, at first by my thought that there ought to be a setting of I've heard an Organ talk, sometimes... that required an organ accompaniment. Later I felt that this solitary setting might be enhanced by some companion pieces which I then developed. In the process I soon found that for these other three pieces, the piano (an instrument that Emily played) was a more effective collaborator. All four pieces were first performed by Daughters of Song, Harrisonburg, Virginia, conducted by Gretchen Welch, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia, on April 15, 2007.

John G. Barr

## # 919 If I can stop one Heart from breaking

If I can stop one Heart from breaking  
I shall not live in vain  
If I can ease one Life the Aching  
Or cool one Pain

Or help one fainting Robin  
Unto his Nest again  
I shall not live in Vain.

Performance time approx. 1:49

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# If I can stop one Heart from breaking

John G. Barr

Poem: Emily Dickinson #919

$\text{♩} = 138$  fast and light

Part one

*mp* If I can stop one

Piano

5  
1 Heart from break - ing I shall not live in vain If

5  
1 I can ease one Life the Ach - ing, Or cool one

11

1 Pain — Or help — one faint - ing Rob - in Un-to his

2

14

1 Nest — a-gain, I shall — not live, I shall — not live — I

2

17

1 Vain. *mf* If I can stop one

2 *mp* If I can stop one