

The Reaper Called Death

Slowly

The musical notation is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: 'There is a Rea - per _____ whose name is Death, who wields the sick - le keen.' The second staff contains the melody for the second line: 'He reaps the beard-ed grain at a breath _____ and the flowers that grow bet-ween. _____'. The notes are simple quarter and eighth notes with some rests and slurs.

2. Shall I have nought that this fair city, have nought but the bearded grain,
For the breath of these flowers is sweet to me, I will give them back again.
3. He gazed at those flowers with tearful eyes, he kissed their drooping leaves,
It was for the Lord of Paradise he bound them in his sheaves.
4. They are all gay, the Reaper said, and smiled.
Sweet tokens of the earth are they, where he was once a child.
5. They shall all bloom in fields of light, transplanted by my care,
And they all upon their garments white those sacred blossoms wear.
6. Oh, not in cruelty, not in pain, the flowers she most did love,
She knew she should find them all again in the realms of light above.
7. Not in cruelty, not in wrath, the Reaper came that day,
'Twas an angel that visited the green earth and took their flowers away.

Source: George Joynes, Longborough, 1957, collected by Peter Kennedy