

For Cecily Smithwick and the East Coker W. I.

THE OXEN

A carol for women's voices and piano

Thomas Hardy

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Slowly moving
(♩ = c. 60)

SOPRANOS & ALTOS

unis. *p* clearly

Christ-mas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

PIANO

p

always smooth

“Now they are all on their knees,” An el-der said as we sat in a flock By the

em-bers in hearth-side ease. We, pic-tured.

sempre p

expressive

The Oxen is taken from *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* by permission of the Trustees of the Hardy Estate, The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., and Macmillan & Co. Ltd. London.

pp *a tempo*

ox - en kneel," I should go

ox - en kneel," I should go

p

pp

p

p

expressive

unis.

with him in the gloom, — Hop - ing it might be

dim.

3

pp

so.

molto rit.

pp *cresc.*

5 *3*

expressive

pp

Aldeburgh, April 19th 1967