

## Pianist & Coach

### Is it thy will, thy image should keep open

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In this fourth sonnet from Tchaikowsky's *Seven Shakespeare Sonnets* the piano opens with notes quietly dripping like a tap that keeps you awake at night. The voice soon intimates that the speaker is suffering from insomnia due to questions that keep "my heavy eyelids" from sleeping.

At first it seems that the sleep-deprived speaker is unable to get any rest due to her constant thinking of the beloved. It is, however, indeed the greatness of her own

love that is berating her for being unable to "let go". It is the first time thus far in this selection of sonnets that the focus is moving away from the lost beloved and starting to concentrate on the loss of the speaker.

The piano part reflects a dramatic backdrop of inner turmoil and insecurity, which pictures the tossing and turning of the speaker. The waves of arpeggio-figurers and stabbing chords result eventually in a frustrated sigh-scream from both singer and piano.

#### **Sonnet 61**

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open  
 My heavy eyelids to the weary night?  
 Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,  
 While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?  
 Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee  
 So far from home into my deeds to pry,  
 To find out shames and idle hours in me,

The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?

O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great:

It is my love that keeps mine eye awake:

Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,

To play the watchman ever for thy sake:

For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,

From me far off, with others all too near.

Margaret Cable and André Tchaikowsky perform [Sonnet 61](#)

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