

# MOURNING/CORPUS CHRIS

*based on Benjamin Britten's arrangement of Corpus Christie carol*

M: Mourning *noun*

1. the act of someone who mourns; sorrowing or lamentation.
2. the conventional manifestation of sorrow for a person's death, especially by the wearing of black, the hanging of flags at half-mast, etc.

© Macquarie Dictionary Publishers, 2020

## MEDITATION

“My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep” (Book of Job, 30:31). Here the harp, usually associated with rejoicing, is used to symbolise grief.

The points of departure here are Benjamin Britten and Jeff Buckley’s versions of the traditional Corpus Christi carol. They are perfect examples of mourning. To give grief a musical voice, important is the role of repetition. Continual restatements or repetitions enable the inner depths of grief to slowly surface as if they are being massaged.

The carol uses a simple repeating four-part phrase, over and over again. Its symmetry provides the containment for inner grief. How does one add to this? One doesn’t.

*Mourning/Corpus Christie* repurposes aspects of the traditional carol by changing the sense of falling as heard with the descending scales with the harp being the main advocate. While it alludes to the laments of Britten and Buckley, it provides another perspective on grief’s eternal ability to speak in new ways.

The lament finishes with a quasi-lullaby of comfort with the use of a melody that now ascends. From mourning’s descent we move to healing’s ascent.