

The Little Match Girl

“The Little Match Girl” is best read sitting down. Heartbreak , catharsis, redemption. We are the ones redeemed because we care.

Andersen’s story is only three pages. I picked a translation from the Danish, and set it more or less word for word. The occasional speedups and slowdowns in my setting pose a challenge to the orchestra, and particularly the chorus, in staying together. The climax comes when the little girl rises to heaven in her grandmother’s arms. An orchestral interlude then recapitulates the themes, and the chorus returns in serenity.

Gordon Getty