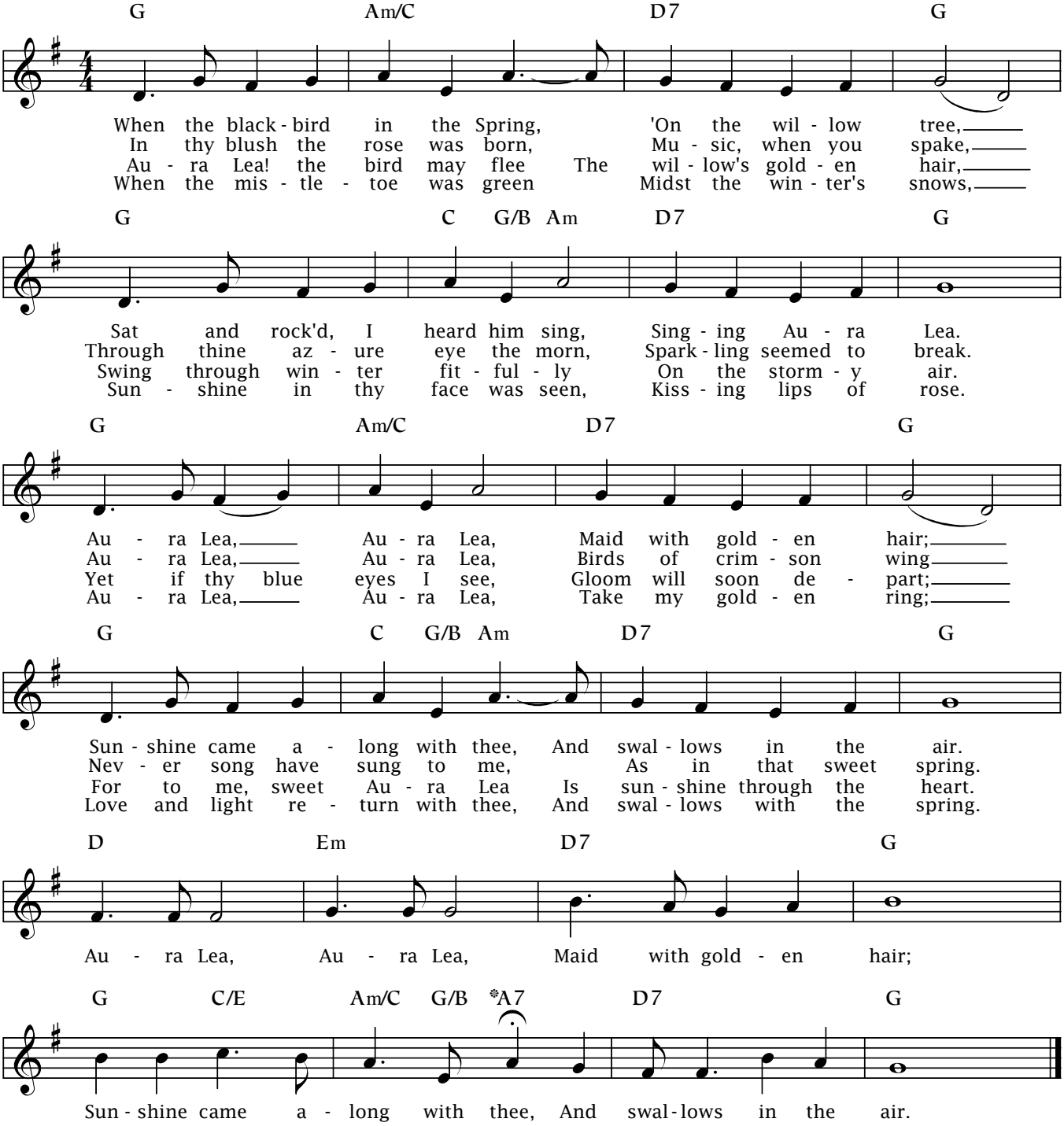
Aura Lea

Music by George R. Poulton, lyrics by W. W. Fosdick (published 1861)

NOTE: On chords marked * play open fifths or 1-5-7 (no thirds)



George R. Poulton (1828-1867) was born in England, and emigrated with his family to Lansingburgh NY in 1835. Poulton showed musical talent from a young age, and published at least twenty songs popular in minstrel shows of the time. William Whiteman Fosdick (1825-1862) was a poet, writer, lyricist, and attorney who was born to a theatrical family in Cincinnati OH. Fosdick's poems were set to music by several composers. "Aura Lea" gained great popularity during the American Civil War, sung equally by Union and Confederate soldiers. It was featured in the 1936 film Come and Get It, sung by Frances Farmer; the song "Love Me Tender" was adapted from "Aura Lea" (with lyrics by Ken Darby, under his wife Vera Matson's name) for Elvis Presley in 1956. Poulton and Fosdick both died young (ages 38 and 37, respectively); "Aura Lea" remains the best-known work of either man.