Verse:

When all the world is a hopeless jumble and the raindrops tumble all around,

Heaven opens a magic lane, a magic lane, a magic lane, a magic lane.

And when all the clouds darken up the sky-way, there's a rainbow highway to be found, leading from your window pane to a place behind the sun, just a step beyond the rain, the rain.

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Chorus:

Somewhere over the rainbow 'way up high,

there's a land that I heard of

Somewhere once in a lullaby.

Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue,

and the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true.

Some day I'll wish upon a star and wake up where the clouds are far behind me.

Where behind, behind doo
troubles melt like lemon drops, away above the chimney tops, that's where you'll find me.

Some where over the rainbow blue birds fly. Birds fly

o ver the rainbow. Why then, oh, why can't I? If happy little blue birds fly beyond the rainbow, why, oh, why can't I?
Performance Notes

"Over The Rainbow", from the 1939 movie "The Wizard of Oz", won an Academy award for composer Harold Arlen and lyricist E. Y. ("Yip") Harburg. This was a rare collaboration for the two. Before coming to Hollywood, Arlen had become known for his many bluesy songs for Harlem's Cotton Club performers ("Stormy Weather", "I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues", "I've Got The World on a String") and his efforts with Johnny Mercer ("Blues in the Night", "Come Rain or Come Shine"). Yip Harburg is best known to barbershoppers through his lyrics to "It's Only a Paper Moon" and "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?".

"Over The Rainbow" was deleted from the print of "The Wizard of Oz" three times. The publisher objected to the difficult-to-sing octave leap on the word "somewhere" and the simple melody of the B section (bars 37-44), which he likened to a "child's exercise". But each time Arlen and the movie's producer Arthur Freed prevailed, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Ed Waesche is a premiere arranger, quartet singer, coach, a certified judge in the Music category, and former President of the Barbershop Harmony Society. This is another one of his outstanding contributions to singers of harmony.

The song is one of hope. The lyrics of the Verse anticipate a happy ending, so acknowledge the purpose of the echo "a magic lane" in bars 7 and 8. Other highlights in the Verse are the swipe on "sun" in bar 17 (bright) and "rain, the rain" in bar 19 (contrasting picture painting that suggests a stillness after the rain ends).

The lyrics in the so-called "child's exercise" in bars 37-44 of the Chorus are full of anticipation, leading to the song's first climax after the key lift. Stay with the energy of the climax through bar 48. That's followed by a natural let-down, with voices descending to the song's first ending at bar 52.

The composers wrote a brilliant ending. (Yes, bars 53-56 contains the composers' melody and lyric!) It contains a question that only the performer can answer. If you try hard enough, you can!

The key lift at bar 45 will put some leads and baritones into ranges they may not be able to handle with good vocal quality. The alternate key lift (Music Works file OVERRAI2.mww), and preparation for it, will make this climax easier to handle. If the high E in the bari part in bar 45 is still too high for the baritones, sing the low E with the basses and swipe to the B-natural which you've just sung as the last note in bar 44.

Coming to the ending, note the caesurae in bars 54 and 55. There's a natural ritardando before the first one, and that caesura should be brief. The pleading of the lyrics after it leads to a strong major triad on the downbeat of bar 55. This caesura is a little longer in duration, anticipating the natural drawing out of the final climax.