

commissioned by Michael Borowitz

Jeffrey Ryan

Found Frozen

*Three Poems of Helen Hunt Jackson
for soprano and piano*

Perusal Copy

Found Frozen

Three Poems of Helen Hunt Jackson

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Programme note:

When pianist Michael Borowitz commissioned me to write a song cycle for himself and soprano Tina Selvaggio, I searched diligently for the poems that would inspire the perfect vehicle for this talented team. I knew that I especially wanted work by a female poet, preferably American (as the performers are), and preferably something with a sense of emotional “sweep” to highlight the communicative gifts of both musicians.

My search ended when I discovered the work of the American poet Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885). A contemporary of Emily Dickinson, Jackson was considered by Emerson, among others, to be one of the best women poets of her time. She turned to poetry after the death of her first husband in 1863; her early work (much of which was published anonymously or under pseudonyms, as was still common for women poets at the time) attracted an unusual amount of attention, and she soon became self-supporting—no small feat for *any* poet of *any* age. Later in life, she published under her own name, and many more of her poems were collected and published posthumously.

The three poems in this cycle all reflect upon the richness of a life now shadowed by the spectre of death. In each, Jackson’s simple, declarative style gives room to tremendous emotional breadth, reaffirming the joy and exhilaration of the present moment, and finding solace in the knowledge of a life well-lived.

Found Frozen is dedicated with love to Michael and Tina.

Performance notes:

Total performance time: ca. 12'30"

Vocal range: C#⁴ to C#⁶ (ossia B⁵)

Pedal markings should be carefully observed throughout.

Found Frozen

She died, as many travellers have died,
O'ertaken on an Alpine road by night;
Numbed and bewildered by the falling snow,
Striving, in spite of failing pulse, and limbs
Which faltered and grew feeble at each step,
To toil up the icy steep, and bear
Patient and faithful to the last, the load
Which, in the sunny morn, seemed light!

And yet

'T was in the place she called her home, she died;
And they who loved her with the all of love
Their wintry natures had to give, stood by
And wept some tears, and wrote above her grave
Some common record which they thought was true;
But I, who loved her last, and best,—I knew.

Poppies on the Wheat

Along Ancona's hills the shimmering heat,
A tropic tide of air with ebb and flow
Bathes all the fields of wheat until they glow
Like flashing seas of green, which toss and beat
Around the vines. The poppies lithe and fleet
Seem running, fiery torchmen, to and fro
To mark the shore.

The farmer does not know
That they are there. He walks with heavy feet,
Counting the bread and wine by autumn's gain,
But I,—I smile to think that days remain
Perhaps to me in which, though bread be sweet
No more, and red wine warm my blood in vain,
I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,
Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat.

Her Eyes

That they are brown, no man will dare to say
He knows. And yet I think that no man's look
Ever those depths of light and shade forsook,
Until their gentle pain warned him away.
Of all sweet things I know but one which may
Be likened to her eyes.

When, in deep nook
Of some green field, the water of a brook
Makes lingering, whirling eddy in its way,
Round soft drowned leaves; and in a flash of sun
They turn to gold, until the ripples run
Now brown, now yellow, changing as by some
Swift spell.

I know not with what body come
The saints. But this I know, my Paradise
Will mean the resurrection of her eyes.

poem by
Helen Hunt Jackson

Sound Frozen

music by
Jeffrey Ryan

$\bullet = 78$ Dramatically *ff*

She died, as man - y trav - el - lers have died, —

$\bullet = 78$ Dramatically *ff marcato*

5

Red. → allow all notes to ring

5:4

O'er - ta - ken on an Alp - ine road — by

sim.

5

night; —

5

6

p

Numbered and be-wil - dered by the fall-ing snow, Striv -

(r.h. legato)

p 6 8^{va} loco

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment features a right-hand part with a continuous sixteenth-note arpeggiated pattern and a left-hand part with block chords and a bass line. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and an 8va register marking.

ing, in — spite of fail - ing pulse, and limbs

6 8^{va} loco

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The vocal line continues with a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, and a quarter note G5. The piano accompaniment maintains the arpeggiated texture. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and an 8va register marking.

7:6

which fal - tered and grew fee - ble at each — step, —

6 8^{va} loco

Detailed description: This system contains the final two measures. The vocal line features a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment includes a 7:6 interval marking and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and an 8va register marking.

f

To toil up the ic - y steep, and bear pa -

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in 4/4 time and begins with a dynamic marking of *f*. The lyrics are "To toil up the ic - y steep, and bear pa -". The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and block chords in the left hand, also marked with *f*.

tient and faith - ful to the last, the load which, in the

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "tient and faith - ful to the last, the load which, in the". The piano accompaniment continues with similar sixteenth-note patterns and block chords.

ff

sun - ny morn, seemed light!

The third system concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "sun - ny morn, seemed light!". The piano accompaniment features a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic marking. The piano part includes sixteenth-note runs and block chords, with a final flourish in the right hand.

na - tures had _____ to give, _____ stood

mf *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

loco

8^{vb} 8^{vb}

Detailed description: This system contains the first vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *mf* and *pp*. Performance markings include *loco* with a wavy line and two instances of *8^{vb}* (8va below) with downward arrows. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

by _____ and wept some tears, _____ and wrote a -

poco rubato
mf warmer

poco rubato
mf

Detailed description: This system contains the second vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment has a 4/4 time signature. Dynamics include *mf*. Performance markings include *poco rubato* and *mf warmer*. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

bove her grave _____ some com - mon re - cord which they thought was

Detailed description: This system contains the third vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment has a 4/4 time signature. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

(no rit.)

f broadly

3

true;

But

I,

who loved her

last,

and

(no rit.)

f broadly

best,

ff

p sub.

ff

p sub.

Red.

pp

poco accel. al fine

knew.

poco accel. al fine

Sva

pp

ppp

Red.

poem by
Helen Hunt Jackson

Poppies on the Wheat

music by
Jeffrey Ryan

♩ = 92 *Fluidly*

The first system of piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth-note chords in a 4/4 time signature, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line. A 'Red.' marking with an arrow points to the beginning of the left-hand line.

The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand features a melodic line with accents and slurs. The left hand maintains the eighth-note bass line. A fermata is placed over the end of the system.

The third system continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand continues the eighth-note bass line. A fermata is placed over the end of the system.

The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand continues the eighth-note bass line. A fermata is placed over the end of the system.

The fifth system includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef and begins with a fermata, followed by the lyrics 'A - long' and 'An -'. The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and an eighth-note bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *ff* and *f*. A fermata is placed over the end of the system.

co - na's hills

p *f* *sfp* *f*

the shim

p sub. *f* *sfp*

mer - ing heat,

f *sfp* *ff* *decresc. poco a poco*

mf *p*

a trop-ic tide of air with

p *f sub.*

f *p* *f* *p* *f*

ebb and flow bathes

p *f*

p sub. *cresc. poco a poco*

all the fields of wheat

p sub. *mf*

un - til they glow like flash-ing seas of

ff

green, which toss and beat a -

round the

p

p

3

vines. The pop-pies lithe and

ff *p*

fleet seem run-ning, run-ning, fier - y

f sub. *p* *f sub.*

f *p* *sfp* *sfp*

torch - men, to and fro to

p *f sub.* *p*

sfp

mark the shore.

pp

pp

pp

The farm - er does not know that they are

sempre

there. He walks with heav-y feet,

count-ing the bread_____ and wine_____ by

au - tumn's gain,_____

f

But I,

f

f

3

I

3

smile to think that

f

3

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p *cresc. poco a poco*

days re-main per-haps to me in

p *cresc. poco a poco*

which, though bread be sweet no more, and—

which, though bread be sweet no more, and—

f

— red wine warm my blood in vain, (ossia)

— red wine warm my blood in vain, (ossia)

ff

6

rall. ad lib. ----- *a tempo*

mf

I shall be glad re-mem - ber-ing

fff ----- *f* ----- *mf*

8vb ----- *loco*

pp

how the fleet, lithe pop-pies ran like torch - men with the

8va

pp

(hold until end)

molto rall. to end -----

wheat.

(*8va*) ----- *molto rall. to end* -----

ppp

ppp

poem by
Helen Hunt Jackson

Her Eyes

music by
Jeffrey Ryan

♩ = 48 *Sadly*
espressivo e con rubato

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef).

- System 1:** The vocal line begins with a half note G4. The piano accompaniment starts with a bass line of eighth notes and a treble line of chords. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), *f* (forte), *p*, and *pp*. A performance instruction "(like a shudder)" is placed above the first piano measure. A *Red.* (ritardando) marking is at the bottom left.
- System 2:** The vocal line continues with eighth and quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *f > p*, *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p*. The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in both staves.
- System 3:** The vocal line concludes with a half note. Dynamic markings include *f > p*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, and *f*. The piano accompaniment ends with sustained chords.

Throughout the score, there are various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins. A large "PERUSA COPY" watermark is visible across the page.

First system of musical notation, measures 1-3. It features a treble and bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The music includes triplets and dynamic markings such as *f*. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

Second system of musical notation, measures 4-6. It features a treble and bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The music includes sextuplets and dynamic markings such as *ff*, *sf*, and *pp*. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

Third system of musical notation, measures 7-8. It features a treble and bass clef with a 6/4 time signature. The music includes a *senza misura* section and dynamic markings such as *ffff*. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

Fourth system of musical notation, measures 9-12. It features a treble and bass clef with a 6/4 time signature. The music includes dynamic markings such as *fff*, *pp*, and *espr.*, and a tempo marking of *a tempo*. A large watermark 'Perusal Copy' is visible across the page.

Piano introduction. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords. The piece concludes with a fermata and the instruction *led.* →

Piano introduction featuring trills in both hands. The right hand trill starts *slow* and becomes *fast*. The left hand trill is marked *mf* and *slower*. The piece ends with a *pp* dynamic marking and a fermata.

Vocal and piano accompaniment for the first line of lyrics. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 48$. The piano part includes a triplet in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. The lyrics are: "That they are brown, no man will dare — to say — he".

Vocal and piano accompaniment for the second line of lyrics. The piano part includes a triplet in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. The lyrics are: "knows. And yet I think — that". The piece concludes with a fermata and the instruction *led.* →

cresc. poco a poco

no man's look ev - er those

cresc. poco a poco

depths of light and shade for -

cresc. poco a poco

f sook, un - til their *mf* gen - tle

p *a tempo* *pp*

pain warned him a - way.

pp *pp* *(l.h.)*

Of all sweet things

3

I know but one which may be lik-ened to her

mf

eyes.

9 6 6 6 6

mf

When, in deep

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

nook of some green field, the wa - ter of a brook

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

makes ling - er - ing, whirl - ing - ed - dy - in its way,

round soft drowned - leaves, and in a flash of sun

p

p sub.

sfp

they turn to gold, un - til the

f

p

rip - ples run now brown, now yel - low,

p sub. 6 6 6 6

f

chang - ing as by some — swift —

f 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

ff

spell.

ff 6 6 6 6 *fff*

(hold pedal down)

p sempre

I know not — with what bod-y come the saints. But this I

The first system of the musical score features a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "I know not — with what bod-y come the saints. But this I". The piano accompaniment consists of sustained chords and arpeggiated figures. A dynamic marking of *fff* is present in the piano part.

know, my Par - a - dise will mean the res - ur - rec - tion

The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "know, my Par - a - dise will mean the res - ur - rec - tion". The piano accompaniment features a prominent arpeggiated pattern in the left hand. Dynamic markings of *fff* are used in both the vocal and piano parts.

of her eyes.

The third system concludes the vocal line with the lyrics "of her eyes." The piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated figures and sustained chords. Dynamic markings include *pp* and *p* throughout the system.