

Eddie Hill

**Between the Limbs,
Music**

*for
Soprano
&
Piano*

FOR PERUSAL ONLY



Edie Hill

Between the Limbs, Music

Between the Limbs, Music is a set of four songs that deal with themes of love, life and death.

I. *The Book of Hungers* establishes the idea that we are part of a continuum. Our commonality is mortality and what we long for in life is love. This is a circle that continues through the generations. The music in the first song has an ancient, circular feel, as if a clock or a river were running underneath the vocal line, sometimes with the two running in, out and across one another. Another important aspect is the contrast between this ‘clock’ or ‘river’ music and the music which proceeds the declaration “we carry it with us.” To me, these words mean that we all carry or bear this book, and we do it with great strength of spirit.

II. *Hummingbird* moves into the wonderful realm of young love. I wanted this song to be like a watercolor – very fluid, very colorful. I wanted the music to convey the type of love when one is young and feels completely free and unscathed by life’s burdens – pure, fantastic passion.

III. *Autumn Dusk* tempers the carefree youthfulness of *Hummingbird*. This song is about mature love – a love that has endured. The voice sings a slow lullaby and the piano is instructed to play the sparse gestures “like muffled shapes at dusk.” At the very end of the song, the music and voice lift up into the air as the geese do in the poem, flying away from the two lovers.

IV. *Between the Limbs, Music* opens with the music that accompanies “the book” music in the first song. It is meant to be a call to attention before the singer begins more softly, singing on “ah,” and the “the heart’s song resumes again after sleep...” As the voice enters, the clock or river music returns, running through the rest of the song. This song imparts the idea that we are all “drifting on the promise of death” – and that this is the paradox of life – there cannot be joy without sorrow, passion without solitude or life and love without death to drive us forward, make us yearn. Even though we cannot have one without the other, the poet chooses to highlight joy, passion, breathing and ecstasy – so I chose to end the song with a soaring “ah” – an expression of joy and passion.

-Edie Hill

I. The Book of Hungers

The book of hungers
was conceived in an ancient language.

Past dayfall its pages turn,
moving between darkness and shadow.

We carry it with us,
its landscape bound with impenetrable thread.

The wind in the frost-withered leaves
recalls the persistent whisperings of lovers

skating afternoons
along the river's edge,

wanting nothing but the pressure
of mouth on mouth,

the coolness of their faces
smooth as the flesh-caps of mushrooms.

The book lies open in our hands.
We carry it with us,

surrendering one by one
to the damp soil's need.

How naked the spirit is
without the simple truth of the body.

"They spring up in bunches after rain,
frequently circling the dead."

We pass the book like an invitation among us.
It shall not be rewritten.

II. Hummingbird

The hummingbird flies
like uneven breath.
His throat is the rare hue

of the cardinal flower.
See how the asparagus rises
before distributing

its seed, and the scarred
moon barely visible
in the water, wreathed

by reflections of trees.
Let's swim into the cold
where the black loons dive,

two by two, and later,
in the high grass, where
there can be no abstinence,

speak to me the way
a leaf does ascending
in a gust. Say again

how the hummingbird returns
to the same wild grove,
the same magnetic blossoms.

III. Autumn Dusk

Night enters the lake
with its black tongue
as slender reeds
rouse the wind.

In outlying fields,
the harvested earth
folds itself in darkness
and the gold lights
of farmhouses
turn on, one by one,
like thoughts
before sleep.

Lie down beside me
in the shore's
deep shade
where high leaves
swirl and surrender
to the grass.

We will blend
more quietly
with autumn's weight.
When we wake
to frost under
these chestnut branches

geese will be passing
in strict formation
overhead, flying
in pairs away from
this common dream.

IV. Between the Limbs, Music

The heart's song resumes again after sleep.
We drift on the promise of death, death's waves,
the two of us rocking, while the small town
drowns around us – low train-whistles
and beyond the neighborhoods, the prairie
restoring itself after recent fires.
The fish dream of dawn under their island
which is water, and the lake glows with algae
under the unadorned stars. Night-Hunter,
I give you whatever I assume
for joy is more inclusive than sorrow
and passion encompasses solitude...
so we float, the land ever close to us,
drowning and breathing, hopeless and ecstatic.

JOAN WOLF PREFONTAINE
from her book of poems, *The Divided Shpere*
Floating Island Publications, 1985
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I. The Book of Hungers

for Carolyn Campfield

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

Edie Hill

freely, flowing, keeping momentum

$\text{♩} = 76$
 $\text{♩} = 56-58$

rall. -----

p *mp* *p*

The book of hun - gers was con -

Dolce, legato *rall.* ----- *freely, flowing, keeping momentum*

$\text{♩} = 76$ $\text{♩} = 56-58$

p *p*

light pedal

4

mp *p* *mp* *p*

ceived in an an - - - cient lan - guage. Past day - fall its pag - es

pp *pp* *mp* *p* *mp*

7

mf *p* *p* *rall.* *mp* *pp*

turn, turn, mo - ving be - tween dark - ness and sha - dow.

mf *p* *rall.* *pp*

8th

♩ = 76-80 *accel. poco a poco* -----
 With strength, like a chant or declaration

10 *f* 3

We car-ry it with us, — We car-ry it with us, — its

♩ = 76-80 *accel. poco a poco* -----

f * grace notes are before the beat

8vb. Ped. Ped. Ped.

♩ = 96 *rall. poco a poco* -----
mf *mf* *p*

13 land - scape — bound with im - pen - e - tra - ble thread. —

♩ = 96 *rall. poco a poco* -----

mp *Dolce, legato* *p*

light pedal

Ped.

Delicately
 16 ♩ = 56-58 *p*

The wind — in the frost - with - ered leaves — re -

Delicately
 ♩ = 56-58

pp *pp* *mp*

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available for purchase.

27

fac - es — smooth — as the flesh - caps — of mush - rooms. —

Red. — Sub. —

With strength, like a chant or declaration

♩ = 88

31

The book lies op - en in our

mf

ppp

f

Sub. — Red. —

34

hands. We car - ry it with us, — The book

ff

(Red.) — Sub. — Red. —

37 *molto rall.* -----

lies op - en in our hands. We car - ry it with us, sur -

molto rall. -----

f *fading, more distant* *mf*

Red. ----- *Red.* -----

40 $\text{♩} = 50$ *rall. poco a poco* *mp* ----- *molto rall.* ----- *Recit. - very freely* *freely, moving forward*

ren - der - ing one by one to the damp soil's need. How na - ked the spir - it

$\text{♩} = 50$ *rall. poco a poco* ----- *molto rall.* ----- *Recit. - very freely*

mf *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Red. ----- *Red.* ----- *Red.* -----

let fade before beginning m. 42

43 *mp* *p* ----- *mp* ----- *mf* ----- *mp* ----- $\text{♩} = 56-58$ *pp* ----- *molto rall.* -----

is with - out the sim - ple truth of the bod - y. "They spring up in bunch - es

$\text{♩} = 56-58$ *molto rall.* -----

pp

45 *mp* *p* *mp* *accel.* -----

af - ter rain, _____ fre - quent - ly cir - cling the dead." _____

mp *p* *accel.* ----- *mf*

a bit faster *p* *rall.* -----

We pass _____ the book like an in - vi - ta - tion _____ a - mong us. _____

a bit faster *p sub.* *rall.* -----

52 *mp* *mf* *mp* *♩=56-58 accel.* *♩=80 moving forward* *♩=88*

It shall not _____ be re - writ - ten. _____

♩=56-58 accel. *♩=80 moving forward* *♩=88*

mp *repeat ad lib.*
to niente

II. Hummingbird

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

Edie Hill

♩=72-76

p The hum - ming - bird flies *mp* like un - e - ven
as if darting through the air

ppp Subtlety, like a watercolor throughout

Red.

poco cresc.

4 breath. His throat is the rare hue of the

ppp

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

mp car - di - nal flow'r.

p

molto rall.

molto rall.

pp *mp* *niente* *pp*

ppp

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Sub.*

poco rall.

9 $\text{♩} = 52$ *poco accel.*

See how the as - par - a - gus ris - es be - fore dis - trib - u - ting its

poco rall.

p *mp*

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

ppp

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

11 $\text{♩} = 80-100$

p *mp* *pp* *p* *pp*

seed, and the scarred moon

accel. into playing as fast as possible
ad lib. (like a wash of color) (accel.)

pp

Red. lightly ad lib., irregularly

15

bare - ly vis - i - ble in the wa - ter,

pp as is *ad lib. (as before)*

l.v. 2 2 3

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

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28 $\text{♩} = 60$ *pp* *mp*

lat - er, in the high grass,

ppp *(ad lib., as fast as possible)*

31 *mf* *f*

where there can be no

34 *p* *pp* *intimately* *p*

ab - sti-nence, speak to me the way a

as is *ppp* *pp* *p*

Red. Red. Red.

37 *mp* *p* *mf* a tempo (♩=72-76) *p*

leaf— does— as - cend - ing in³ a gust. Say a -

as if darting through the air *8va*

ppp *ppp* 5

(Red.) Red. Red.

40 *molto rall.*

gain how the hum³ ming - bird— re - turns to the same wild

molto rall.

pp 5 *darting*

(Red.)

43 *molto accel.* *f* *molto rall.* *sub. p* *mp* *pp*

grove, the same mag - net - ic— blos - soms.

molto accel. *mf* *molto rall.* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

l.v. *l.v.*

(Red.) Red. Red.

III. Autumn Dusk

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

Edie Hill

Freely, with fluidity, like a strange lullaby

$\text{♩} = c.50-52$

Night en - ters the lake — with its black tongue — as slen - der reeds

rouse the wind. — In out - ly - ing fields — the har - vest - ed earth —

folds — it - self — in dark - ness — and the gold — lights of farm - hous - es

sub. pp *molto accel.* *pp* *molto accel.* *ppp*

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

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available for purchase.

21 *pp* $\text{♩} = c.66$ *rall. slower* *ppp*

— We — will blend more qui - et - ly with au - tumn's weight, we —

$\text{♩} = c.66$ *ppp* *rall. slower*

8vb — — — — —
Ped. — — — — —

24 $\text{♩} = c.60$ *very legato, very freely, rubato*

— will blend more qui - et - ly with au - tumn's weight.

$\text{♩} = c.60$ *pp* *very light pedal*

8vb — — — — —
Ped. — — — — —

28 $\text{♩} = c.50$ *molto rall.* *pp* *mp*

When we wake to

$\text{♩} = c.50$ *molto rall.* *ppp*

8vb — — — — —
Ped. — — — — —

32

p *accel.* *rall.* *mp* *p*

frost un - der these chest - nut branch - es — geese will be pass - ing in

p *accel.* *rall.* floating, soaring

niente *pp*

(Red.) Red.

35

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

strict for - ma - tion o - ver - head, — fly - ing in pairs — a -

poco accel. *poco rall.* *c.76 accel.*

pp

8vb Red.

38

ppp *accel.* *rall.*

way from this com - mon dream.

pp *accel.* *rall.*

8vb Red.

IV. Between the Limbs, Music

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

Edie Hill

♩=96

♩=96

ff

f *8va*

mf

8vb

8vb

rall. ----- ♩=80-84

mp

p

dolce, legato pp

(Ped.)

8

♩= ♩

mf

light pedal

12 *rall.* $\text{♩} = c.116$ *p* Ah

pp *mp* *p*

Red. *Red.* *sim.*

15 *mp* *p* *mp* The

19 *mp* heart's song re - sumes a - gain af - ter sleep. We

3

23

drift on the prom - ise of death, death's waves,

l.v.

8vb

Red.

26

Ah

dolce

p *mp* *pp*

light pedal

8vb

Red.

29

the two of us rock - ing, while the

p *mp* *p*

Red. *Red.* *sim.*

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40 $\text{♩} = c.126$
pp *mf* *p* 3
 dawn — un - der their is - land which is

43 $\text{♩} = c.126$
mf
 Red. Red. sim.
 wa - - ter, and the lake glows with al - - -

46 *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *mf*
accel. *accel.*
 gae un - der the un - a - dorned stars.
pp cresc.
8va

49 $\text{♩} = c. 100$ **fff** *Recit.*

Night-Hun - ter, I give you what ev - er I as -

ff **fff**

Sub -

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

52 $\text{♩} = c. 112$ **p** **f**

sume for joy is more in - clu - sive than

$\text{♩} = c. 112$ **p** **mf**

light pedal

55 **mp** **f** **mp** **p** **pp**

sor - row and pas - sion en - com - pas - ses sol - i - tude... so we

p **mp** **sub. pp** **ppp**

♩ = 132-138 *Keeping momentum to end*

59 *p* *mf* *f*

float, _____ the land ev - er close to

niente *mp*

Red. *Red.* *sim.*

62 *ff*

us, drown - ing and breath - ing, _____

mf like rolling water

Svb. *Red.*

66 *mf* *ff* *ff* *singing out, molto espressivo*

hope - less and ec - stat-ic. _____ Ah _____

Svb.

70

Ah

Red.

73

fff

fff

8va

8vb

Red.

8vb



Described as "...bold...radiant, deftly crafted..." (Musical America), Edie Hill's music is performed all over the world. Venues have included Lincoln Center, Met Cloisters (NYC), Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall (NYC), Musis Sacrum in Arnhem, Holland, LA County Museum of Art, Library of Congress, Minneapolis' Walker Arts Center, St. Paul's Schubert Club, Berwald Hall (Stockholm Sweden), Liviu Cultural Center (Romania), Feszek Művészklub (Budapest), St. Peter's Basilica (Vatican City).

A three-time McKnight Artist Fellow and a two-time Bush Artist Fellow, Hill has received grants from the Jerome Foundation, ASCAP, New Music USA, Meet The Composer, Minnesota State Arts Board, Chamber Music America, and was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. The album, *Born: music of Edie Hill and Michael Gilbertson* won the 2023 GRAMMY® for "Best Choral Performance" for The Crossing (Donald Nally, conductor). She has a B.A. from Bennington College and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Minnesota.

Composer in Residence at Schubert Club from 2005-2017, she ran and grew the Mentorship Program for high school composers. She was Composer

Mentor for MN Varsity for composers 14-18 years of age co-sponsored by The American Composers Forum and Classical Minnesota Public Radio. She has lectured at colleges, universities and various institutions in the States and abroad.

For Hill, writing music is an opportunity to research, learn, muse, reach down deep, and allow inspiration to come from the stuff of life. Her compositions are fueled by her experiences, passions and curiosities.

for complete biography as well as works for perusal and sale, visit ediehill.com



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