

Edie 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*

♩=76 *rall.* ----- ♩=56-58 *p mp p*

The book of hun - gers was con - freely, flowing, keeping momentum

*Dolce, legato* *rall.* ----- ♩=56-58 *p*

*light pedal*

4 *mp p mp p*

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

*pp mp p mp*

7 *mf p p mp pp*

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

*mf p p pp* *rall.* -----

8vb. 1

♩=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<sup>3</sup> it with us, — its

♩=76-80 *accel. poco a poco* -----

*f*

Sub. — \* grace notes are before the beat

Red. — Red. — Red. —

♩=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

Red. —

*Delicately*

16 ♩=56-58 *p*

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

*Delicately* ♩=56-58

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

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available for purchase.

27

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

Red. Red. Sub.

With strength, like a chant or declaration

♩ = 88

31

The book lies op - en in our

mf

f

ppp

Sub.

Red.

34

hands We car - ry it with us, The book

ff

f

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* *mf* *accel.* -----

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

49 *p*

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

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

*p sub.*

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

It shall not \_\_\_\_\_ be re - writ - ten. \_\_\_\_\_

♩=56-58 *accel.* ----- *rall.* ----- ♩=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  
*p* as if darting through the air  
*ppp*

*♩=72-76*

*ppp* Subtly, like a watercolor throughout

*Red.*

*poco cresc.*

4 breath. His throat is the rare hue of the

*ppp*

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

6 *mp* car - di - nal flow'r. *p* *molto rall.*

*molto rall.*

*pp* *mp* *niente* *ppp*

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

9  $\text{♩} = 52$  *poco accel.* *poco rall.* *p* *mp* 4

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

$\text{♩} = 52$  *poco accel.* *poco rall.* 4 4

*p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp* 4 4

*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* 2 *l.v.* 2 3 *ad lib. (as before)*

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

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available for purchase.

28  $\text{♩} = 60$   
*pp* *mp*

lat - er, in the high grass,

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

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

31 *mf* *f*

where there can be no

34 *p*  $\text{♩} = 50$   
*pp* *intimately* *p*

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

*as is*  $\text{♩} = 50$   
*ppp* *pp* *p*

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

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

leaf— does— as - cend - ing in<sup>3</sup> a gust. Say a -

as if darting through the air *Sva*

*ppp* *ppp* 5

(Red.) Red. Red.

40 *molto rall.*

gain how the hum<sup>3</sup> - 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 - som.

*molto accel.* *molto rall.*

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

*l.v.* *l.v.*

Red. Red. Red.

# III. Autumn Dusk

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

Eddie Hill

*Freely, with fluidity, like a strange lullaby*

*♩ = c.50-52*

*p* Night en - ters the lake with its black tongue as slen - der reeds *pp*

*♩ = c.50-52 Like muffled shapes at dusk*

*ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp*

Sub. Red.

Sub. Red.

Red.

5 *mp* rouse the wind. *p* In out - ly - ing fields *poco accel.* the har - vest - ed earth *rall.* *mp*

8 *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *poco accel.* *rall.*

Sub. Red.

Sub. Red.

8 *sub. pp* folds it - self in dark - ness and the gold lights of farm - hous - es *molto accel.* *pp*

*ppp* *p* *ppp* *molto accel.*

(Red.)

Red.

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available for purchase.

21 *pp* ♩ = c.66 *rall.* *ppp* *slower*

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

*ppp* *rall.* *slower*

*Sub.*  
*Ped.*

24 ♩ = c.60 *very legato, very freely, rubato*

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

*pp* *very light pedal*

*Sub.*  
*Ped.*

28 ♩ = c.50 *molto rall.* *pp* *mp*

When we wake to

*molto rall.* *ppp* ♩ = c.50

*Sub.*  
*Ped.*

32

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

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

*acc.* *rall.*

floating, soaring

niente *pp*

(Red.) Red.

35

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

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

*poco accel.* *poco rall.* *acc.*

*poco accel.* *poco rall.* *acc.*

*pp*

*Sub.*

(Red.) Red.

38

way from this com - mon dream.

*ppp*

*acc.* *rall.*

*pp*

*Sub.*

(Red.) Red.

# IV. Between the Limbs, Music

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

Eddie Hill

♩=96

♩=96

*ff*

*f*

*mf*

8va

8va

Ped.

4

*rall.*

♩=80-84

*mp*

*p*

*dolce, legato pp*

(Ped.)

8

♩=96

*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

23

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

Sub. l.v.  
Ped. Ped.

26

Ah

dolce

light pedal

Sub.

f pp

p mp pp

Ped. Ped.

29

the two of us rock - ing, while the

Ped. Ped. sim.

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40 *pp* *mf* *p*  $\text{♩} = c.126$

dawn un - der their is - land which is

*mf*

*Red. Red. sim.*

43

wa - - ter, and the lake glows with al - - -

46 *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *mf* *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  $\text{♩} = c. 112$

sume for joy is more in - clu - sive than

*p* *f*

$\text{♩} = c. 112$

*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

*ff* *3*

*Sub.* *Red.*

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

hope - less and ec - stat-ic. \_\_\_\_\_ Ah \_\_\_\_\_

*Sub.*

70

Ah

red.

73

*fff*

*fff*

8va

8va

red.

FOR PEPUSAL







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](http://ediehill.com)*

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