

Edie Hill

ESKIMO CURLEW

from *Spectral Spirits*

for SSAATTB chorus

N°42.

PLATE CCVIII



Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon F.R.S. F.L.S.

Esquimaux Curlew. NUMENIUS BOREALIS. Lach. Male 1. Female 2.

Engraved from the Colours by R. Bowill. 1838

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Program Note

Fred Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews*, first published by Dodd, Mead & Company in 1955, was a fictionalized account of a real situation. Eskimo Curlews were dangerously close to extinction back then. The last photograph of the bird was taken in 1963. There was a confirmed sighting in Nebraska in 1987.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

The Naming

Numenius borealis. Swiftwing. Sweetgrass. Little Sicklebill.

Eskimo Curlew

I grew up reading *The Last of the Curlews* before bed,
your crescent-moon beak beckoning me north.

Even then you were almost gone, though millions of you
once filled the skies, migrating from the northern tundra

to South America, feeding on grasshoppers along the way.
Within twenty years, your vast flocks were brought down

by market hunters, fire suppression, tilling of the prairies,
eradication of grasshoppers. Before hunting was banned,

two million curlews were killed each year.
Here's the part that still makes me weep:

You were wiped out because you stayed
by your fallen companion; from you

I learned what loyalty means. Today, birders
search for you along Galveston's shore,

sometimes catch a glimpse, memory being so strong.
No one knows for sure you're gone. You live on

in the pages of a book, a waning crescent moon.

Poetry from *Passings* by Holly J. Hughes
Permission granted by Holly J. Hughes.
First Published by Expedition Press 2016;
Republished by Wandering Aengus Press, 2019

*Spectral Spirits (of which Eskimo Curlew is an excerpt) was commissioned for
The Crossing - Donald Nally, conductor - with generous support provided by John Hawthorn and Danielle Macbeth.*

THE NAMING

Alto Solo *mp dolce*

Nu - men - i - us — bo - re - a - lis. — Swift - wing. — Sweet - grass. — Lit - tle Sic - kle - bill.

ESKIMO CURLEW

HOLLY J. HUGHES

EDIE HILL

♩ = c. 65

S

A *mp tenderly*

I — grew up read - ing The Last of the Cur - lews — be - fore bed, — your

T

B

♩ = c. 95 rit. — — — — — ♩ = c. 65

S

A *p pp mf p*

cres - cent - moon beak — beck - on - ing me north. E - ven then you were al - most — gone, — E - ven

T *p p*

north. E - ven

B *pp mf p*

E - ven then you were al - most — gone, — E - ven

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Michael W. Smith

Lyrics by Michael W. Smith

Tempo: ♩ = c. 80 *accel.*

9

S1 mil-lions of you once filled the

S2 mil-lions of

A then you were al-most gone, though mil-lions of you once filled the skies,

T then you were al-most gone,

B then al-most gone,

12

S1 skies, mil-lions filled the skies,

S2 you once filled the skies, mil-lions once filled the skies,

A1 mil-lions of you once filled the skies,

A2 mil-lions of you once filled the skies,

T1 mi-grat-ing,

T2 mi-

B

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available for purchase.

accel.

18

S1

S2

A1

A2

T1

T2

Bar

B

you once filled the skies, _____

ah _____

skies, _____

mi - grat - ing

mi - grat - ing, _____ mi - grat - ing

mi - grat - ing from the north - ern tun - dra, _____

mi - grat - ing from

mf *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

3 *3* *3* *3*

3 *3* *3* *3*

21 ♩ = 99

mf *poco rit.* -----

S1 feed - ing on grass - hop - pers ____ a -

S2 feed - ing on grass - hop - pers ____ a -

A1 feed - ing on hop - pers ____ a -

A2 feed - ing on hop - pers ____ a -

T1 *f* South A - mer - i - ca, *mf* feed - ing on hop - pers ____ a -

T2 *p* ing South A - mer - i - ca, *f* *mf* feed - ing on hop - pers ____ a -

Bar the north - ern tun - dra ____ to South A - mer - i - ca, *f* *mf*

B the north - ern tun - dra ____ to South A - mer - i - ca, *f* *mf*

24 $\text{♩} = 90$ $\text{♩} = 100$

S1
long the way. —

S2
long the way. —

A1
long the way. — With - in twen-ty years, With - in twen-ty years, your

A2
long the way. — With - in twen-ty years, With - in twen-ty years, your

T1
long the way. — years, years, your

T2
long the way. — years, years, your

Bar
long the way. — your

B
long the way. — your

p *f* *mp* *f*

p *f* *mp* *f*

f *f*

f *f*

f *f*

28

f

S1

mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

S2

mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

A1

vast flocks were brought down by mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

A2

vast flocks were brought down by mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

T1

vast flocks were brought down by mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

T2

vast flocks were brought down by mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

Bar

vast flocks were brought down by mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

B

vast flocks were brought down by mar - ket hunt - ers, fire sup - pres - sion,

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32 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 90$

S1 till - ing of the prai - ries, — Be - fore hunt - ing — was banned, *p* ₃

S2 till - ing of the prai - ries, — grass— Be - fore hunt - ing — was banned, *mp* *p* ₃

A1 till - ing of the prai - ries, — grass— hunt - ing — was banned, *mp* *p*

A2 till - ing of the prai - ries, — e - ra - di - ca - tion of hunt - ing — was banned, *mp* *p*

T1 till - ing of the prai - ries, — e - ra - di - ca - tion of hop - pers, banned, *mp* *mp*

T2 till - ing of the prai - ries, — hop - pers, banned, *mp* *mp*

Bar till - ing of the prai - ries, —

B till - ing of the prai - ries, —

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available for purchase.

45

S pan - ion; from you I learned

A pan - ion; from you I learned what loyal - ty means.

T pan - ion; loyal - ty means.

B pan - ion; loyal - ty means.

48 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 65$ *mp*

S To - day, bird - ers search for you a - long Gal - ves - ton's shore,

A *pp* oo

T *pp* oo

B *pp* oo

51

S some-times catch a glimpse, mem - o - ry be-ing so strong. No one knows for sure you're gone.

A

T

B

8

FOR PERSAL ONLY

54

S *p* *mp* *p* *rit.* *pp*
 You live on in the pag - es of a book, a wan - ing cres - cent moon.

A *pp*
 moon.

T *pp*
 moon.

B *pp*
 moon.

8

FOR PERSAL ONLY



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. 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. 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 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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