

Edie Hill

NORTHERN CURLEW

from *Spectral Spirits*

for SSAATTB chorus

N°42

PLATE CCVIII



Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon F.R.S. &c.

NUMENIUS BOREALIS. Linn. Male 1. Female 2.

Engraved from the Original Coloured by E. Bosc.

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. Northern 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.

Northern 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 Northern 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.

NORTHERN 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

accel. -----

♩ = 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

15 *p* *p* *mf* *p*

S1 you once filled the skies,

S2 *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*
ah mil-lions of

A1 *mp* *mf* *p*
ah

A2 *p* *mf* *p* *p*
mil-lions of you mil-lions of you once filled the

T1 *mp* *mf* *p*
mi - - - grat - ing,

T2 *mf* *p*
- - - grat - ing,

Bar.

B

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a SATB choir. It features six vocal staves (S1, S2, A1, A2, T1, T2) and two bass staves (Bar. and B). The music is in 3/4 time and includes various dynamics such as piano (p), mezzo-forte (mf), and mezzo-piano (mp). There are also performance markings like hairpins and a triplet. The lyrics are: 'you once filled the skies, ah mil-lions of you mil-lions of you once filled the mi - - - grat - ing, - - - grat - ing,'. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR PERSAL ONLY' is overlaid on the score.

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available for purchase.

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* *mf* South A - mer - i - ca, feed - ing on hop - pers ___ a -

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

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

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

FOR PENTASAL ONLY

24 $\bullet = 90$ $\bullet = 100$

S1
long the way. —

S2
long the way. —

A1
long the way. — *p* — *f* *mp* — *f*
With - in twen-ty years, With - in twen-ty years, your

A2
long the way. — *p* — *f* *mp* — *f*
With - in twen-ty years, With - in twen-ty years, your

T1
8 long the way. — *f* years, *f* years, your

T2
8 long the way. — *f* years, *f* years, your

Bar.
long the way. — *f* your

B
long the way. — *f* your

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, —

FOR PRACTICE ONLY

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available for purchase.

36 *mf* *p* *rit.* -----

S two mil-lion cur-lews_ were killed each year.

A *mf* *p* *p* *mp* *p*
mil-lion cur-lews_ were killed each year. Here's the part that still makes me weep:

T *mf* *p*
two mil-lion cur-lews_ were killed each year.

B *mf* *p*
two mil-lion cur-lews_ were killed each year.

41 $\text{♩} = 75$ *p* $\text{♩} = 80$ $\text{♩} = 70$

S be-cause you stayed, _____ you stayed by your fall-en_ com -

A *p*
you stayed, _____ stayed by your fall-en_ com -

T *mp* *p*
You were wiped out, You were wiped out you stayed by your fall-en_ com -

B *mp* *p*
You were wiped out, You were wiped out you stayed

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 $\text{♩} = c. 65$ *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

54

S You live on in the pages of a book, a wan-ing cres-cent moon.

A moon.

T moon.

B moon.



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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