

Edie Hill

PASSENGER PIGEON

from *Spectral Spirits*

~
for SATB divisi chorus

№ 15.

PLATE IXB



Passenger Pigeon
COLUMBA MIGRATORIA, Linn.
Male, 1. Female, 2.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Program Note

Holly J. Hughes' poem begins with an idyllic description of a male and female painted by James J. Audubon. The birds are only aware of one another. Then Holly opens up the skies as a backdrop to the masses of Passenger Pigeons that once filled the skies. And she proceeds to tell their story.

*"The Passenger Pigeon was the most abundant land bird on the planet." But by 1914, the last Passenger Pigeon died in the Cincinnati Zoo. Her name was Martha. Like most species casualties, this one was human caused.

**Hope Is the Things With Feathers* (2000, 2009) by Christopher Cokinos

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The Naming

Ectopistes migratorius. Wandering wanderer.

Passenger Pigeon

from the painting by James J. Audubon, 1824. On Sept. 1, 1914, Martha, the last passenger pigeon, died in the Cincinnati Zoo.

See how she bends to him, her beak held within his
while she waits for his food to rise up to her hunger.

He rests on the arcing branch, his neck a perfect answer to hers,
wings held aloft and slightly splayed while long tail feathers stream

away, Prussian blue going to dusk, breast russet, branch below
studded with viridian lichen to match his coat, colors chosen

by Audubon as he painted them in courtship *in situ*.
See how her colors foreshadow the fall—dun, mustard, black—

how her tail balances his wings painted in parallel planes,
how the drooping oak leaf holds them in place, stasis

in which they are aware of no one but each other.
Audubon captured then in gouache, graphite, and pastels,

not knowing they would soon be gone; in his time
they were more numerous than all other species combined.

They say the pigeons flew over the banks of the Ohio River
for three days in succession, sounding *like a hard gale at sea*.

Years later, guns spattered shot into skies stormy with pigeons.
Thousands plummeted, filling railroad cars bound for fine restaurants.

Now, of those hundreds of millions that once darkened
the skies, we are left with Martha, who never lived in the wild,

stuffed in the Smithsonian, Prussian-blue feathers stiff,
glass eyes staring, waiting, still, for her mate.

Poetry from *Passings* by Holly J. Hughes
Permission granted by Holly J. Hughes.
First Published by Expedition Press 2016;
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Spectral Spirits (of which Passenger Pigeon is an excerpt) was commissioned for
 The Crossing - Donald Nally, conductor - with generous support provided by John Hawthorn and Danielle Macbeth.

Free, quasi recitative

THE NAMING

Alto Solo

Ec - to - pis - tes mi - gra - to - ri - us ————— Wan - der - ing wan - der - er. —————

PASSENGER PIGEON

from the painting by James J. Audubon.

On Sept. 1, 1914, Martha, the last passenger pigeon, died in the Cincinnati Zoo.

HOLLY J. HUGHES

EDIE HILL

See ——— how she ——— bends to him,

her beak held with-in his ———

held with-in his ———

while she

to her hun - ger. — He rests

up to her hun - ger. —

food to rise up to her He rests on the arc - ing branch,

waits for his food to rise

8 *p* *pp*

S a per - fect an - swer _____

A

T *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *delicately*

8 his neck a per - fect an - swer to hers, wings held a - loft and slight - ly splayed while

B *mp* *delicately*

wings held a - loft and slight - ly splayed

11 *accel.* 70 *savor, marvel*

S

A

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

8 long tail feath - ers stream a - way, Prus - sian blue go - ing to dusk,
bring out baritone

B *mp* *mf* *p*

Prus - sian blue go - ing to dusk,

15 *p* *mf* ♩ = c. 65

S
breast rus-set, — stud-ded with vi-ri-di-an li-chen — to

A
breast rus-set, — branch be-low — stud-ded with vi-ri-di-an li-chen — to

T
breast rus-set, — branch be-low stud-ded with vi-ri-di-an li-chen —

B
breast rus-set, — branch be-low stud-ded with vi-ri-di-an li-chen —

18 ♩ = c. 55 ♩ = c. 65

S
match his coat, col-ors — cho-sen by Au-du-bon — as he

A
match his coat, col-ors — cho-sen Au-du-bon — as he

T
col-ors — cho-sen Au-du-bon — as he

B
Au-du-bon — as he

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available for purchase.

♩ = c. 60
sub. p

S
 his wings — paint-ed in par - al - lel planes, paint-ed in par - al - lel

A
sub. p *bring out*
 his wings — paint-ed in par - al - lel planes, paint-ed in par - al - lel

T
sub. p
 — paint-ed in par - al - lel planes, in par - al - lel, pain - ted in par - al - lel

B
sub. p
 — paint-ed in par - al - lel planes, in par - al - lel, paint-ed in par - al - lel

S
bring out mp *mf*
 planes, — how the droop - ing oak leaf — holds — them

A
bring out mp *mf*
 planes, — how the droop - ing oak leaf — holds — them

T
 “back drop” line
 planes, in par - al - lel planes, in par - al - lel, paint - ed in par - al - lel,

B
 “back drop” line
 planes, in par - al - lel planes, in par - al - lel, paint - ed in par - al - lel,

35

S *p* < > *p* *p*
in place, sta - sis sta - sis in

A *p* < > *p* *p*
in place, sta - sis sta - sis in

T *pp* < > *p* *p*
paint-ed in par - al - lel planes sta - sis sta - sis in

B *pp* < > *p* *p*
paint-ed in par - al - lel planes sta - sis sta - sis in

38

S *intimate* *mf* *mp* *p*
which they are a - ware of no one but each oth - er.

A *intimate* *mf* *mp* *p*
which they are a - ware of no one but each oth - er.

T *intimate* *mf* *mp* *p*
which they are a - ware of no one but each oth - er.

B *intimate* *mf* *mp* *p*
which they are a - ware of no one but each oth - er.

41 $\text{♩} = c. 80$

mf

S1 gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mf

S2 gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mf

A1 gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mf

A2 gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mp *mf*

T1 Au-du-bon cap - tured them in gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mp *mf*

T2 Au-du-bon cap - tured them in gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mp *mf*

Bar ah gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

mp *mf*

B ah gouache, graph - ite, and pas - tels,

43 *mp* *f* *mf* < *f* > *mf*

S1 gouache, — graph - ite, — pas - tels, gouache, — graph - ite, —

S2 graph - ite, — pas - tels, gouache, — graph - ite, —

A1 *mp* *f* *mf* < *f* > *mf* gouache, — graph - ite, — pas - tels, gouache,

A2 *f* *mf* < *f* > *mf* *p* graph - ite, — pas - tels, gouache, not

T1 *f* *p* *mf* graph - ite, — not know - ing, — graph - ite, —

T2 *f* *p* graph - ite, — not know - ing, —

Bar *mp* *f* gouache, — graph - ite, —

B *mp* *f* gouache, — graph - ite, —

46 *f*

S1 pas - tels, _____

S2 pas - tels, _____

A1 *f* pas - tels, _____ *mf* in

A2 *mf* know-ing they would soon be gone, _____ *mf* not know-ing they would

T1 *f* pas - tels, _____ *mf* not know-ing they would soon be

T2 *mp* _____ *mf* not know-ing they would soon be gone, _____

Bar _____ *mf* not know-ing they would soon be

B _____ *mf* ₃ they would

49 *mf* 3

S1 in his time — they were more nu - mer - ous — than

S2 in his time — they were more nu - mer - ous — than

A1 his time — they were more nu - mer - ous — than all — oth - er

A2 soon be gone, — all — oth - er *ff*

T1 gone, — more nu - mer - ous, — *mf* 3

T2 more nu - mer - ous, — *mf* 3

Bar gone, —

B soon be gone, —

51 *mf*

S1 all, _____ in his time _____ they were more nu - mer - ous, _____

S2 all, _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com bined, _____

A1 *f* spe - cies _____ com - bined, _____ spe - cies _____ com - bined, _____

A2 *f* spe - cies _____ com bined, _____ they were more nu - mer - ous, _____ they were

T1 *mf* _____ *ff* more nu - mer - ous than all _____ oth - er

T2 *mf* _____ *ff* more nu - mer - ous than all _____ oth - er

Bar _____

B _____

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55 *ff*
S1 all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. _____

ff
S2 all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. _____

ff
A1 all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. _____

ff
A2 all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. _____

ff
T1 all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. _____

ff
T2 all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. _____

ff *mp*
Bar all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. They

ff *mp*
B all _____ oth - er spe - cies _____ com - bined. They

57

S1

S2

A1

A2

T1

T2

Bar

B

pp *mf* *pp*

pp *mf*

pp *mf*

pp *mf*

f *mf*

f *mf*

ah

ah

ah

ah

say the pi - geons flew o - ver the banks of the O - hi - o Riv - er for three days, — for

say the pi - geons flew o - ver the banks of the O - hi - o Riv - er for three days, — for

60

mf *mf*

S1 for three _____ days, _____

S2 of three _____ days, _____

pp *mf*

A1 ah _____

pp *mf*

A2 They say the pi - geons flew o - ver the banks of the O -

pp *mf*

T1 ah _____

pp *mf*

T2 They say the pi - geons flew o - ver the banks of the O -

pp

Bar three _____ days, ah _____

pp

B three _____ days, ah _____

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62

S1 *mf* for three _____ days _____

S2 *mf* for three _____ days _____

A1 *pp* *p* *f* ah for three days

A2 *f* *f* hi - o Riv - er for three days, _____ for three days

T1 *p* *f* for three days

T2 *f* hi - o Riv - er for three days, _____

Bar *p*

B *mf* _____ for three _____ days, _____

65

mf *f* *ff*,

S1 sound-ing like a hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

mf *f* *ff*,

S2 sound-ing like a hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

f *ff*,

A1 in suc - ces - sion, — hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

f *ff*,

A2 in suc - ces - sion, — hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

f *ff*,

T1 in suc - ces - sion, — hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

f *f* *ff*,

T2 in suc - ces - sion, — hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

mf *f* *ff*

Bar sound-ing like a hard gale, — a hard gale — at sea.

f *ff*

B a hard gale — at sea.

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69 *mf* *f* *poco rit.* ... ♩=95

S1
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies

S2
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies

A1
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies

A2
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies

T1
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies

T2
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies

Bar
mf *f*
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies, shot _____ in - to the skies,

B
mf *f*
Years lat - er, _____ guns spat - tered shot _____ in - to the skies, shot _____ in - to the skies,

72

S1 storm - - - - - y with pi - geons,

S2 storm - - - - - y with pi - geons,

A1 storm - - - - - y with pi - geons, Thou -

A2 storm - - - - - y with pi - geons, —

T1 *p* ah _____

T2 *p* ah _____

Bar guns spat-tered shot in - to the skies ah *p*

B guns spat-tered shot in - to the skies ah *p*

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78 *mf* Still ♩=55

S1
rail - road cars bound for fine res - t'raunts.

S2
rail - road cars bound for fine res - t'raunts.

A1
- sands ___ bound for fine res - t'raunts. Now, Now, ___

A2
- sands ___ bound for fine res - t'raunts. Now, Now, ___

T1
8 rail - road cars bound for fine res - t'raunts.

T2
8 sands bound for fine res - t'raunts.

Bar
mf *p*
sands, ah ___

B
mf *p*
sands, ah ___

84 *p*

S1 of those hun-dreds of mil-lions that once dark-ened the skies, we are left with Mar-tha, — who

S2 *p* Now, — Now, — Now,

A1 *p* Now, — Now, — Now,

A2 *p* of those hun-dreds of mil-lions that once dark-ened the skies, we are left with Mar-tha, —

T1

T2

Bar

B

88

S1
nev - er lived in the wild, — Mar - tha, — who

S2
Mar - tha, —

A1
Now, —

A2
Now, — Mar - tha, —

T1
p Mar - tha *mp* once *p* dark - ened the skies,

T2
p of those *mp* hun - dreds of mil - lions that once *p* dark - ened the skies,

Bar
p of those *mp* hun - dreds of mil - lions that once *p* dark - ened the skies,

B
mp mil - lions that once *p* dark - ened the skies,

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91

S1
nev - er lived in the wild, _____ oo _____

S2
Mar - tha, _____

A1
Now, _____ stuffed in the Smith - so - ni-an, _____

A2
Mar - tha, _____ oo _____

T1

T2

Bar

B

n

mp

3

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94 *mp* *n* *p*

S1 Mar - tha _____

S2 *mp* *p*
Prus - sian - blue feath - ers _____ stiff, _____ Now, _____ Now, _____

A1 *mp* *p*
Prus - sian - blue feath - ers, _____ stiff, _____ Now, _____ Now, _____

A2 *mp* *n* *p*
Mar - tha _____

T1 *p*
glass eye star - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____

T2 *p*
glass eye star - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____

Bar *p*
glass eye star - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____

B *p*
glass eye star - ing, _____ wait - ing, _____

98

S1
Mar tha _____

S2
Now, Now, Now

A1
Now, Now, Now

A2
Mar - tha _____

T1
8
still, for her mate.

T2
8
still, for her mate.

Bar
still, for her mate.

B
still, for her mate.

FOR PERUSAL 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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