

SONG CYCLE *for* SOPRANO

fox songs

POETRY BY:
JANE HIRSHFIELD - CAKI WILKINSON
ANASTASIA PENNINGTON-FLAX

COMPOSED BY:
GRIFFIN CANDEY

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1. Three Foxes by the Edge of the Field at Twilight

Jane Hirshfield

One ran,
her nose to the ground,
a rusty shadow
neither hunting nor playing.

One stood; sat; lay down; stood again.

One never moved,
except to turn her head a little as we walked.

Finally we drew too close,
and they vanished.
The woods took them back as if they had never been.

I wish I had thought to put my face to the grass.

But we kept walking,
speaking as strangers do when becoming friends.

There is more and more I tell no one,
strangers nor loves.
This slips into the heart
without hurry, as if it had never been.

And yet, among the trees, something has changed.

Something looks back from the trees,
and knows me for who I am.

2. Fox

Caki Wilkinson

The yards grow ghosts. Between the limbs and wings,
bleached street-lit things, I'm best at moving on.
Hunt-heavy, gray, slunk overflow like so
much weight got in the way, my shape's the shape
of something missed, flash-pop or empty frame.
Though you could say I've made a game of this,
and though midtrickery it might be true,
when evening lingers in the key of leaving
my senses swoon. A synonym for stay,
I'm always coming back. I chew through traps.
I love whatever doesn't get too close.

3. Foxes

Anastasia Pennington-Flax

I heard a fox gave birth to the mountains
before decamping to the woods,
to the valley
and believed it:
believed every word about the harvest
gone sour after their descent
as though belief were the salve
and not the source of the affliction

It's argued that the vineyards aren't lost
that there must be some infallible way
to chase off or catch them
or call them like us in wanting
to be tamed
but there's a whole world out there
for those who bother to raise their eyes
and let the foxes do their own pruning.

3 songs — approximately 10 minutes — completed in Marquette, MI in January 2019.

This cycle came about somewhat accidentally. As a long-time devotee of Ms. Hirshfield's poetry, I naturally paired up her *Three Foxes by the Edge of the Field at Twilight* when I stumbled upon Caki Wilkinson's incredible *Fox* — and the strong contrast between the two fascinated me. The ways in which two poets weave the same metaphor into their own settings in two completely individual ways is almost like a litmus test of a writer's voice — like asking a few stylistically-different artists to paint the same still life. When my very good friend, soprano Alex Nowakowski, mentioned that she had space on an upcoming recital and asked if I had anything brewing, these poems had just fallen into my lap — well-timed. Beyond that, I've always been an advocate for supporting living writers, and having worked with Anastasia on a bunch of projects before (all the way back to our graduate school days,) I knew that they'd be the perfect person to pen the third poem of this collection. (Unsurprisingly, they knocked it out the park.) This format satisfied me so much that I already had two other sets of poems queued up before I finished this one. Stay tuned. — gc

Score

1. Three Foxes by the Edge of the Field at Twilight

poem: Jane Hirshfield — composer: Griffin Candey

Crystalline (♩ = c. 72)

The musical score is written for Soprano and Piano. It begins with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Crystalline' with a quarter note equal to approximately 72 beats per minute. The piano part starts with a *pp* dynamic and includes the instruction '[pedal liberally throughout]'. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the piano accompaniment with a *pp* dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) features a *mf* dynamic, a *rit.* marking, and a triplet of eighth notes. The third system (measures 9-12) includes the vocal line with the lyrics 'One ran, her nose to the ground,' and a *p* dynamic. The piano accompaniment in this system includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *mp* dynamic. The score concludes with a *mp* dynamic in the piano part.

Soprano

Piano

pp

[pedal liberally throughout]

5

mf

rit.

mp

pp

9

Sopr.

p

One ran, her nose to the ground,

Pno.

mp

13

Sopr. a rus - ty sha - dow _____ nei-ther hun - ting _____ nor

Pno.

16

Sopr. *rit.* play - ing. _____ One

Pno.

19

Sopr. *a tempo* stood; sat; lay _____ down;

Pno. *pp* *p*

22

Sopr. stood _____ a - gain. _____ One ne-ver moved,

Pno. *p*

25

Sopr. ex - cept to turn her head a lit - tle as we walked.

Pno.

[*Lunga pausa* — let all of the gathered, pedaled sounds from the past four measures continue to ring; then, proceed quickly.] *Spring-Loaded* (♩ = c. 120)

28

Sopr. Fi - nal - ly, we drew too close, and they va - nished.

Pno.

31

Sopr. The woods took them back as if they had ne ver

Pno.

Surreal (♩ = c. 76-80)

34

Sopr. — been. I wish I had thought to put my face to the

Pno.

38 *rit.*

Sopr. *grass.* _____ But we kept wal - king, spea - king _____ as

Pno.

41 *a tempo*

Sopr. stran - gers do _____ when be - co - ming friends.

Pno.

43

Sopr. There _____ is more and more _____ I tell

[*running, fluidly — triplets simile*]

Pno.

46

Sopr. no one, _____ stran - gers _____ or loves.

Pno.

49

Sopr. *3* This slips in - to the heart with - out

Pno.

51

Sopr. hur - ry as if it had ne - ver been.

Pno.

53

Sopr. *mf* And yet, a - mong the

Pno.

56

Sopr. trees, some - thing has changed.

Pno.

59 *mp*

Sopr. *mp*

Some - thing looks back _____ from the trees, and knows me _____ for who _____

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 59, 60, and 61. The Soprano part begins with a rest in measure 59, followed by the lyrics "Some - thing looks back _____ from the trees, and knows me _____ for who _____". The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The Piano accompaniment features a steady pattern of arpeggiated chords in the right hand and triplets in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *mp*.

62 *rit.*

Sopr. *rit.*

_____ I am.

Pno.

p

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 62, 63, and 64. The Soprano part begins with a rest in measure 62, followed by the lyrics "_____ I am." The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The Piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated chords and triplets. The dynamic is marked *p* in the right hand and *mf* in the left hand. A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is present above the Soprano staff.

2. Fox

Forlorn, Invisible

poem: Caki Wilkinson — composer: Griffin Candey

[quick, anxious — slower, more deliberate]

Piano

mf *p*

[pedal liberally throughout]

Barely Visible ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 76$)

[pedal liberally throughout, always flowing]

Pno.

mf *p* *pp* *ff* *pp*

Ped.

Sopr.

9 The yards grow ghosts.

Pno.

Sopr.

11 [very abrupt, secco cutoff — slight pause] Be - tween the

Pno.

15

Sopr. limbs and wings, bleached street - lit things,

Pno.

18

Sopr. I'm best at moving on.

Pno.

[stretching slightly]

a tempo

4 (♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ = ○)

23

Sopr. Hunt - hea - vy, gray, slunk o - ver -

Pno.

28

Sopr. low like so much weight got

Pno.

subito p

33

Sopr. in the way, _____ my shape's the

Pno.

38

Sopr. shape of some - thing missed, _____ flash - pop

Pno.

mf

p

43

Sopr. _____ or _____ emp - ty frame. _____ Though you could

Pno.

mp

48

Sopr. say I've made a game of this, _____ and though _____ mid -

Pno.

[slight lift]

53 [slight lift]

Sopr. tri - cke - ry, _____ it _____ might be true, _____ when _____

Pno.

58 (♩ = c. 144-148)

Sopr. eve - ning lin - gers _____ in the key of lea - ving, _____

Pno.

rit.

Losing Momentum

(♩ = c. 136-140)

63

Sopr. _____ my sen - ses _____ swoon. _____

Pno.

68

Sopr. A sy - no - nym _____ for _____ stay, _____

Pno.

73

Sopr. I'm al - ways co - ming back.

Pno. *p*

(♩ = c. 100)

78

Sopr. I chew through traps.

Pno. *mp*

rit.

83

Sopr. I love what - e - ver does - n't get too close.

Pno. *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *pp*

[stretching to the end]

3. Foxes

poem: Anastasia Pennington-Flax — composer: Griffin Candey

Taking a Stance (♩ = c. 72)

[opening 8 measures in piano can stretch at leisure, lean into gestures, take time, et al.]

Piano

mf *rit.* *mp* *a tempo*

[sustain and soft pedal liberally throughout]

Pno.

f *mp* *rit.*

[leading into next tempo] (♩ = c. 76-80)

Sopr.

mp

I heard a fox gave birth to the moun - tains _____

Pno.

f *pp* *mp*

"Catch for us the foxes,
the little foxes
that ruin the vineyards,
our vineyards that are in bloom."

11

Sopr. *p*

be - fore de - cam - ping to the woods, to the val - ley

Pno. *p* *pp*

15

Sopr. [a bit slower — a piacere]

and be - lieved it: be - lieved eve - ry word a - bout the har - vest gone

Pno. [softly, colla voce]

19

Sopr. *mp* [pressing forward more, determined]

so - ur af - ter his de scent as though be - lief were the

Pno.

(♩ = c. 72-76)

23

Sopr. *mf*

salve and not the source of the af - flic - tion.

Pno.

Unfolding (♩ = c. 69-72)

27 *rit.* *f*

Sopr. It's ar - gued that the

Pno. *ff*

30

Sopr. vine - yards aren't lost, that there must be some in -

Pno.

33

Sopr. fal - li - ble way to chase off or catch them or call them like

Pno.

36

Sopr. us in wan - ting to be tamed but there's a

Pno.

39

Sopr. whole world out there for those who bo - ther to raise their

Pno.

42

Sopr. eyes and let the

Pno.

rit.

45

Sopr. fo - xes do their own pru - ning.

Pno.

Resolved (♩ = c. 69)

mp

48

Pno.

rit.

pp