

for Ann Marie Daehn

Michael Murray

Butterfly Days

songs from Robert Frost's *New Hampshire*

for mezzo-soprano and piano

1. Blue-Butterfly Day
2. Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter
3. Misgiving
4. To Earthward

(2020)

www.michaelmurraymusic.com

duration ca. 10'

from *New Hampshire* by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

1. Blue-Butterfly Day

It is blue-butterfly day here in spring,
And with these sky-flakes down in flurry on flurry
There is more unmixed color on the wing
Than flowers will show for days unless they hurry.

But these are flowers that fly and all but sing:
And now from having ridden out desire
They lie closed over in the wind and cling
Where wheels have freshly sliced the April mire.

2. Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter

The west was getting out of gold,
The breath of air had died of cold,
When shoeing home across the white,
I thought I saw a bird alight.

In summer when I passed the place,
I had to stop and lift my face;
A bird with an angelic gift
Was singing in it sweet and swift.

No bird was singing in it now.
A single leaf was on a bough,
And that was all there was to see
In going twice around the tree.

From my advantage on a hill
I judged that such a crystal chill
Was only adding frost to snow
As gilt to gold that wouldn't show.

A brush had left a crooked stroke
Of what was either cloud or smoke
From north to south across the blue;
A piercing little star was through.

3. Misgiving

All crying, "We will go with you, O Wind!"
The foliage follow him, leaf and stem;
But a sleep oppresses them as they go,
And they end by bidding him stay with them.

Since ever they flung abroad in spring
The leaves had promised themselves this flight,
Who now would fain seek sheltering wall,
Or thicket, or hollow place for the night.

3. Misgiving (cont'd)

And now they answer his summoning blast
With an ever vaguer and vaguer stir,
Or at utmost a little reluctant whirl
That drops them no further than where they were.

I only hope that when I am free,
As they are free, to go in quest
Of the knowledge beyond the bounds of life
It may not seem better to me to rest.

4. To Earthward

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of – was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Downhill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt,
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

1. Blue-Butterfly Day

Robert Frost

Michael Murray

Brightly ♩ = 120

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

p

f

f

It is blue - but-ter-fly day here in spring,

1. Blue-Butterfly Day

12 13 14 15 3

And with these sky - flakes down in flur - ry on flur - ry —

16 17 18 *mf*

There is more un - mixed

19 20 21

col - or — on the wing Than

22 *3* 23 24 25

flow-ers will show _____ for days _____ un-less they hur-ry. _____

26 27 28 *mp* 29 30 *f*

But these are *3* flow-ers that fly _____

31 32 *3* 33 34 *mp*

_____ and all but sing: _____ And

1. Blue-Butterfly Day

35 *mp* 36 37 38

now from hav - ing rid - den out de - sire

39 40 41 42

They lie closed ov - er in the wind and cling

p

43 44 45 46

p Where wheels have fresh - ly sliced the Ap - ril mire.

2. Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter

Robert Frost

Michael Murray

Gently ♩ = 90

mp

The

p

4 west was get - ting out of gold,

5 6

7 The breath of air had died of cold,

8 9 10

$\text{♩} = 60$ ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$) *with motion*

f

11 12 13 14

When shoe - ing home a - cross the white, I thought I saw a

mf

11 12 13 14

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ (*sempre*)
as before

mf

15 16 17 18

bird a - light. In sum - mer

mp

15 16 17 18

19 20 21 22

when I passed the place, I had to stop and

19 20 21 22

23 lift my face; 24 *f* 25 26 A bird with an an - gel - ic gift Was

27 sing - ing in — it sweet and swift. 28 29 30

31 *mp* evenly 32 33 34 35 No bird — was sing - ing in it now. — A sin - gle leaf

2. Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter

36 37 38 39 40

was on a bough, And that was all there was to see — In go - ing

41 42 43 44 45 46

twice a-round the tree. From my ad -

47 48 49 50 51 52

van - tage on a hill — I judged — that such a crys-tal chill

53 54 55 56 57

— Was on - ly add - ing frost to snow — As gilt to gold that

53 54 55 56 57

Detailed description: This system contains measures 53 through 57. The vocal line (top staff) begins with a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a series of eighth notes in measures 54-57. The piano accompaniment (bottom staves) consists of chords in the right hand and dyads in the left hand, all in a steady 4/4 rhythm.

58 59 60 61

would - n't show. A brush had left a crook - ed

pp *mf* *f*

58 59 60 61

Detailed description: This system contains measures 58 through 61. Measure 58 has a whole rest for the voice. Measure 59 has a whole note for the voice. Measure 60 starts with a piano fortissimo (*f*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a *pp* dynamic in measure 59 and a *mf* dynamic in measure 60. A long melisma is indicated by a large slur over the piano accompaniment in measures 60 and 61.

62 63 64

stroke Of what was ei - ther cloud or smoke —

62 63 64

Detailed description: This system contains measures 62 through 64. The vocal line (top staff) has a quarter note in measure 62, followed by eighth notes in measures 63 and 64. The piano accompaniment (bottom staves) has a melodic line in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

65 66 67 68

— From north to south a - cross the blue; — A pierc - ing

65 66 67 68

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 65 through 68. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 65, followed by the lyrics 'From north to south a - cross the blue;' in measure 66, and 'A pierc - ing' in measure 68. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and moving lines in the left hand.

69 70 71 72

poco rit.

lit - tle star — was through.

69 70 71 72

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 69 through 72. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The key signature remains two flats. The tempo marking *poco rit.* is placed above measure 69. The vocal line has a rest in measure 69, followed by the lyrics 'lit - tle star — was through.' in measure 70. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 72.

3. Misgiving

Robert Frost

Michael Murray

Apprehensively ♩ = 72

Musical score for the first system of "Misgiving". It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part is marked *mf* and includes the instruction "RH/LH ad lib." above the first two measures. The piano accompaniment consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern in the right hand, with a bass line in the left hand. The first system ends with a repeat sign in the bass clef. The tempo is marked as "Apprehensively" with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute.

Musical score for the second system of "Misgiving". It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The vocal line contains the lyrics "All cry - ing,". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern as in the first system. The second system ends with a repeat sign in the bass clef.

Musical score for the third system of "Misgiving". It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The vocal line contains the lyrics "'We will go with". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern. The third system ends with a repeat sign in the bass clef.

4

you, O Wind!"

4

5

The

5

6

fo - li - age fol - low

6

7

him, leaf and

8

stem; But a

9

sleep op - press - es them as they go,

9 (RH/LH ad lib.) 10

11 12 13

And they end by bid-ding him stay with

p *f*

3 3 3 3 3 3

14 15

them. Since ev - er they flung a -

mf

6 6 6 6

14 15 *ped.*

16

broad in

6 6 6 6

16

17

spring The

17

18

leaves had prom - ised them -

18

19

selves this flight,

19

20 21

Who now would fain seek

f *mp*

22 23

shel - ter - ing wall, Or thick - et, — or

p

24 25 26

hol - low place for the night.

f

27

And now they

mf *ped.*

6 6 6 6

27

28

an - - - - - swer his

6 6 6 6

28

29

sum - mon - ing blast

6 6 6 6

29

30

With an ev - er

30

31

va - guer and va - guer

31

32

stir, Or at

f

32

33 *mp*

ut - most a lit - tle re - luc - tant whirl

33 34

35 *p*

That drops them no fur - ther than

35 36 37

38 *f*

where they were. I on - ly hope

38 39 40

41

that when I am

41

42

free, As

42

43

they are free,

43

44

to go in

44

Detailed description: This system covers measures 44 and 45. The vocal line (treble clef) has notes for 'to', 'go', and 'in'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a sixteenth-note sixteenth-note triplet in measure 44 and a sixteenth-note sixteenth-note triplet in measure 45. The bass line is mostly silent.

45

quest of the knowl - edge

45

Detailed description: This system covers measures 45 and 46. The vocal line (treble clef) has notes for 'quest', 'of', 'the', 'knowl -', and 'edge'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a sixteenth-note sixteenth-note triplet in measure 45 and a sixteenth-note sixteenth-note triplet in measure 46. The bass line is mostly silent.

46

be - yond the

46

Detailed description: This system covers measures 46 and 47. The vocal line (treble clef) has notes for 'be -', 'yond', and 'the'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a sixteenth-note sixteenth-note triplet in measure 46 and a sixteenth-note sixteenth-note triplet in measure 47. The bass line is mostly silent.

47

bounds of life

47

48

It may not

48

49

seem bet - ter to me to rest.

p *pp*

49 50 51

4. To Earthward

Robert Frost

Michael Murray

With nostalgia ♩ = 84

4

Love at the lips was touch As

6

sweet as I could bear; And once that seemed too much; I lived on

7

8

air That crossed me from sweet things, The flow of was it

8 9 10

11

musk From hid-den grape-vine springs Down-hill at dusk?

11 12 13

mf *f*

14

I had the swirl and ache From sprays of hon-ey-suck-le That when they're

14 15

mp

16 *gath - ered shake Dew on the knuck - le.*

17

mf

18 *I craved strong sweets, but those Seemed strong when I was*

19

f

20 *young; The pet - al of the rose It was that stung.*

21

22

mf

mp

p

23 *mp* 24 25

Now no joy but lacks salt, — That is not dashed with pain And

26 27 28 *f*

wear-i-ness — and fault; I crave the stain Of tears, the

29 30 31 *mf*

af-ter-mark Of al-most too much love, The sweet of bit - ter

32 *mp*

bark And burn-ing clove. When

33 34

32 33 34

35 *mp*

stiff and sore and scarred I take a-way my hand From

36 37

35 36 37

38 *mp*

lean-ing on it hard In grass and sand, The hurt is not e-

39 40

38 39 40

41 *mf* 42 43 44 *mp*

nough: I long for weight and strength To feel the earth as

41 42 43 44

45 *p* 46 *poco rit.* 47

rough To all my length.

45 46 47

Hambidge - Rabun Gap, GA
and Springfield, MO
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