

Commissioned by Women in Harmony of Portland, Maine, Catherine Beller-McKenna, Director

# Look Out

*To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal  
is our only legitimate hope of survival. – Wendell Berry*

Wendell Berry

Joan Szymko

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The musical score is written for a voice and piano. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) shows the vocal line starting with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'Come to the win-dow, look out, and see'. The piano accompaniment begins with a tenderly marked melody. The second system (measures 7-10) continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'the val - ley tur - ning green in re - mem - brance of all springs past and to'. The piano accompaniment features a change in time signature to 2/4. The third system (measures 11-14) concludes the vocal line with the lyrics 'come, the woods per - fec - ting with im - mor - tal pa - tience the leaves'. The piano accompaniment returns to 3/4 time and ends with a 5/4 time signature change.

15 *poco rit.* **A** *mf*

S — that are the work of all of time, Look out and see, the

A that are the work of all of time, Look out and see, the

T that are the work of all of time, Look out and the

B that are the work of all of time, Look out and the

*mf*

*poco rit.* **A**



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18 *a bit slower* ♩=82

S sy-ca more\_ whose white limbs shed the his-to-ry of a man's life with their old bark, the

A sy-ca more\_ whose white limbs shed the his-to-ry of a man's life with their old bark, the

T sy-ca more\_ shed the his-to-ry\_ with their old bark,

B sy-ca more\_ shed the his-to-ry\_ with their old bark,

*a bit slower* ♩=82



21

*p* *rit.* *mp*

S riv-er quiv-er-ing un-der the morn-ing's breath and you will

A riv-er like the touched skin of a horse, and you will

T and you will

B and you will

*8va*

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24

*A tempo* *hold back slightly* *Tempo primo* *mf* *poco accel.* *cresc.*

S see al - so the sha-dow\_ cast up - on it by fire, the war that lights its

A see al - so the sha-dow\_ cast up - on it by fire, the war that lights its

T see al - so the sha-dow\_ cast up - on it by fire, the war that lights its

B see al - so the sha-dow\_ cast up - on it by fire, the war that lights its

*A tempo* *Tempo primo* *poco accel.*

*cresc. poco a poco*

28 **B** ♩=96 *f*

S way by bur - ning the earth. \_\_\_\_\_

A way by bur - ning the earth. \_\_\_\_\_

T way by bur - ning the earth. \_\_\_\_\_

B way by bur - ning the earth. \_\_\_\_\_

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**B** ♩=96 *f*



33 Tutti Unison

Come to your win-dows, \_\_\_\_\_ peo-ple of the world, \_\_\_\_\_ look out at what-e - ver you



38 *mf* Sop/Ten

see wher - e - ver you are, \_\_\_\_\_ and you will see dan - cing up - on it that



43

S sha - dow, dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow, dan - cing up - on it that

A *mf* dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow, dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow

T 8 sha - dow, dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow, dan - cing up - on it that

B *mf* dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow, sha - dow, dan - cing up - on it that

47

S sha - dow, *rit.* *mp* *dim.*

A sha - dow, *mp* *dim.* *p* You will

T 8 sha - dow, that sha - dow. *mp* *dim.*

B sha - dow, that sha - dow. *mp* *dim.*

*rit.*

51 **C** poco meno mosso *mp*

A see that your place, wher - e - ver it is, your house, your

**C** poco meno mosso *p* *mp*

56 *Più mosso*

*mp* *mf* *f*

S your shop, your for-est, your farm, bears the sha-dow\_ of its des-

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

A gar-den, your shop, your for-est, your farm, de-

*mf* *f*

T your for-est, your farm, bears the sha-dow\_ of its des-

*mf* *f*

B your for-est, your farm, de-

*Più mosso*

*mf* *f*

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62 (use same soloist throughout) *rit.* *mf* *recitativo* ♩=84

Solo

Alto solo: which is the e - co-no-my of greed

*f*

S truc-tion by war\_ de - struc-tion by war\_

*f*

A struc - tion\_ de - struc-tion by war\_

*f*

T truc-tion by war\_ de - struc-tion by war\_

*f*

B struc- tion\_ de - struc-tion be war\_

*rit.* ♩=84

*sub mp*

67

*mp* *mf* *accel.*

Solo

which is plun - der which is the e - co - no - my of wrath which is

*accel.*

72 - - - - - ♩=96

*f*

Solo

fire, which is fire.

*mf* *f*

S

which is fire, which is fire.

*mf*

A

which is fire, fire.

*mf*

T

which is fire, fire.

*f*

B

which is fire.

♩=96

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85 *mf* *recitativo*

Solo

solo: They are lit - tle men grown great by wil-ling-ness to drive what - e - ver ex - ists in - to its

*mf* *mp*

89 *mp* *p* *mp*

Solo

per - fect ab - sence. Their in - ten - tion to des-troy a - ny place is

S/A unison *pp* *mp*

S A

Their in - ten - tion to des-troy a - ny place is

*pp* *cresc. poco a poco*

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93 *accel.* *mf* =100

Solo

so - lid - ly found - ed up - on their will - ing - ness to de - stroy ev - ery place,

*mf*

S A

so - lid - ly found - ed up - on their will - ing - ness to de - stroy ev - ery place,

*mf*

T

ev - ery

*mf*

*accel.* =100

96 *f* *rit.* **E** ♩=84

Solo *f* ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_

S *mf* *f* ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_ ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_

A *f* ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_

T *f* place, \_\_\_\_\_ ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* tenderly, warm Ev - ery house - hold of the

B *f* ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_

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*legato* ♩=84 **E** *dim.* *mf*

100 *mf* *3* *3*

T world is at their mer-cy, \_\_\_\_\_ the house-holds of the far-mer and the ot-ter and the owl are at their mer-cy. \_\_\_\_\_

104

S *p* They have no mer-cy. *mp* They have no

A *p* They have no mer-cy. *mp* They have no

T *mp* They have no mer-cy.

B *p* They have no mer-cy.

*mp*

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108

S *p* poco rit. ♩=76 mer-cy. They have no mer-cy.

A *p* mer-cy. They have no mer-cy.

T *p* They have no mer-cy.

B *p* They have no mer-cy.

poco rit. ♩=76

*p*

112 *Tutti Alto* *legato, with crisp diction*

A *mp* Ha-ving hate, they can have no mer-cy. Their

116 *add Bass (8ve unison)* *mp* *mf*

A greed is the ha-tred of mer-cy. Their pock-ets jin-gle with the small change of the

119 *mf* *f*

S Their pock-ets jin-gle with the small change of the poor.

A *p* *mf* *f*  
poor. Their pock-ets jin-gle with the small change of the poor.

T *p* *mf* *f*  
Their pock-ets jin-gle with the small change of the poor.

B *p* *mf* *f*  
poor. Their pock-ets jin-gle with the small change of the poor.

*accel.* **F** *mf* *cresc.*

124 **Più mosso** ♩=100

**f** **ff** N.B.

S Their po- wer\_\_ is the wil- ling- ness to des- troy ev- ery thing\_\_ ev- ery thing for

A Their po- wer\_\_ is the wil- ling- ness to des- troy ev- ery thing\_\_ ev- ery thing for

T Their po- wer\_\_ is the will- ing- ness to de- stroy ev- ery thing\_\_ ev- ery- thing for

B Their po- wer\_\_ is the wil- ling- ness to des- troy ev- ery thing\_\_ ev- ery thing for

**Più mosso** ♩=100  
*Unrelenting, aggressive*

**f** **ff**

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131 **f** **molto rall..**

S know- ledge\_ which is mo- ney\_ which is po- wer\_ which is vic- to- ry\_\_ which is ash- es sown\_ by the

A know- ledge\_ which is mo- ney\_ which is po- wer\_ which is vic- to- ry\_\_ which is ash- es sown\_ by the

T know- ledge\_ which is mo- ney\_ which is po- wer\_ which is vic- to- ry\_\_ which is ash- es sown\_ by the

B know- ledge\_ which is mo- ney\_ which is po- wer\_ which is vic- to- ry\_\_ which is ash- es sown\_ by the

**f** **molto rall..**

137 **G** Più mosso accel. . . . . A tempo ♩=100

S wind. \_\_\_\_\_ Leave your win-dows and go out,

A wind. \_\_\_\_\_ Leave your win-dows and go out, *sempre f*

T wind. \_\_\_\_\_ Leave your win-dows and go out,

B wind. \_\_\_\_\_ Leave your win-dows and go out,

**G** Più mosso with bouyancy accel. . . . . A tempo ♩=100

*sempre f*

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144

S peo-ple of the world, peo-ple of the world, \_\_\_\_\_

A peo-ple of the world, peo-ple of the world, \_\_\_\_\_

T peo-ple of the world, peo-ple of the world, \_\_\_\_\_

B peo-ple of the world, peo-ple of the world, \_\_\_\_\_

1 3 1 2 3

149 Unison

S A

go in - to the streets, go in - to the fields, go in - to the woods,

153

S A

go in - to the streets, go in - to the fields, go in - to the woods and a-long the

T B

go in - to the streets, go in - to the fields, go in - to the woods and a-long the

rit. dim. *mf* *p* molto rall.

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rit. molto rall.

(roll very slowly)

157

S A

streams. Go to-gether go a - lone.

T B

streams. go a - lone.

*sub.mf* *mp* *p* poco rit.

*p* *mf* *p* poco rit.

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175 *mf* *rit.* Unison *mp* *molto rall.* *p*

S A yes, to the riv - ers, — to the birds and the a - ni - mals and e - v'ry liv - ing thing,

T B — to the birds and the a - ni - mals and e - v'ry liv - ing thing,

*rit.* *molto rall.* *p*

179 *rit.* *A tempo* *poco rit.*

S —

A *Gently mp* yes to the small hou - ses, —

T 8 —

B *Gently mp* yes to the small hou - ses, —

*rit.* *A tempo Gently* *poco rit.*

*p* *mp*

183  $\text{♩} = 70$  *mp*

S yes, yes, yes to the chil- dren.\_\_\_\_

A — yes, — — — —

T — yes, yes to the chil- dren.\_\_\_\_

B — — — —

$\text{♩} = 70$

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187 *p* S/A á 3

yes to the chil dren.\_\_\_\_ Yes.\_\_\_\_

yes to the chil dren.\_\_\_\_ Yes.\_\_\_\_

yes to the chil dren.\_\_\_\_ Yes.\_\_\_\_

yes to the chil dren.\_\_\_\_ Yes.\_\_\_\_

*p*



## JOAN SZYMKO

Joan Szymko's choral music is regularly performed at national and international choral festivals and conferences. Using a familiar music vocabulary, she creates works that are nonetheless fresh and

engaging; compelling and inspiring, her text selections are as notable as her music. Szymko is widely recognized as a prominent composer of exceptional repertoire for women's choir. The American Choral Director's Association recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in America by awarding her the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010.

Szymko lives in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. As resident composer she enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Portland based *Do Jump! Movement Theater*, (1995-2012) creating vocal underscoring for major touring productions. A dynamic conductor she has served on the choral music faculty of Portland State University (2013-15) and has led *Aurora Chorus* as Artistic Director since 1993. As a visiting artist, Szymko workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad.

### **Look Out** by Wendell Berry

Come to the window, look out, and see  
the valley turning green in remembrance  
of all springs past and to come, the woods  
perfecting with immortal patience  
the leaves that are the work of all of time,  
the sycamore whose white limbs shed  
the history of a man's life with their old bark,  
the river quivering under the morning's breath  
like the touched skin of a horse, and you will see  
also the shadow cast upon it by fire, the war  
that lights its way by burning the earth.  
Come to your windows, people of the world,  
look out at whatever you see wherever you are,  
and you will see dancing upon it that shadow.  
You will see that your place, wherever it is,  
your house, your garden, your shop, your forest, your farm,  
bears the shadow of its destruction by war  
which is the economy of greed which is plunder  
which is the economy of wrath which is fire.

The Lords of War sell the earth to buy fire,  
they sell the water and air of life to buy fire.  
They are little men grown great by willingness  
to drive whatever exists into its perfect absence.  
Their intention to destroy any place is solidly founded  
upon their willingness to destroy every place.

Every household of the world is at their mercy,  
the households of the farmer and the otter and the owl  
are at their mercy. They have no mercy.  
Having hate, they can have no mercy.  
Their greed is the hatred of mercy.  
Their pockets jingle with the small change of the poor.  
Their power is the willingness to destroy  
everything for knowledge which is money  
which is power which is victory  
which is ashes sown by the wind.

Leave your windows and go out, people of the world,  
go into the streets, go into the fields, go into the woods  
and along the streams. Go together, go alone.  
Say no to the Lords of War which is Money  
which is Fire. Say no by saying yes  
to the air, to the earth, to the trees,  
yes to the grasses, to the rivers, to the birds  
and the animals and every living thing, yes  
to the small houses, yes to the children. Yes.

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### PROGRAM NOTES

**Look Out** was commissioned by Women in Harmony (Portland, Maine) and premiered at the ensemble's 25th Anniversary concert season finale in May 2018. When asked to supply some comments for the concert program, I wrote the following:

*Wendell Berry's poem gave me a vessel in which to pour my grief. Grief at the seemingly bottomless, soulless greed of those who wield power over land, people, governments, information— over the future. But Berry's poem, and the choral setting I created has a long arc, as does history. And so the conclusion of the work is really a beginning— a gathering of energy and of courage — of heart.* —Joan Szymko

### PERFORMANCE NOTES

This is a work of dramatic intensity. Lean into it. Focus on tone color and articulation to express the shifting timbre of the narrative: pastoral, foreboding, forewarning and finally, an affirmative call to action.