

If I Were a Dog
GP - R017
SAB choir, piano

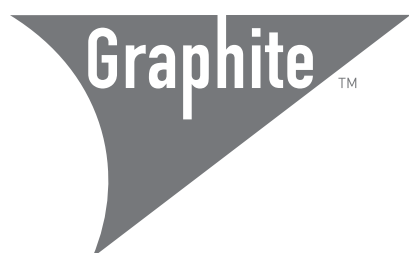
Paul John Rudoi

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Paul John Rudoi

If I Were a Dog

for SAB choir and piano



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Text:

I would trot down this road sniffing
on one side and then the other
peeing a little here and there
wherever I felt the urge
having a good time what the hell*
saving some because it's a long road

but since I'm not a dog
I walk straight down the road
trying to get home before dark

if I were a dog and I had a master
who beat me I would run away
and go hungry and sniff around
until I found a master who loved me
I could tell by his smell and I
would lick his face so he knew

or maybe it would be a woman
I would protect her we could go
everywhere together even down this
dark road and I wouldn't run from side
to side sniffing I would always
be protecting her and I would stop
to pee only once in awhile

sometimes in the afternoon we could
go to the park and she would throw
a stick I would bring it back to her

each time I put the stick at her feet
I would say this is my heart
and she would say I will make it fly
but you must bring it back to me
I would always bring it back to her
and to no other if I were a dog

- *"If I Were a Dog" by Richard Shelton, from The
Last Person to Hear Your Voice. © University of Pitts-
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From the Composer:

I own many different books of poetry from local
writers to the legends we know and love which I
reference to find the right texts for new commissions
and projects. But Richard Shelton's wonderfully
vibrant "If I Were a Dog" came from one of my
occasional encounters with The Writer's Almanac,
NPR's indispensable resource for downright great
poems. I wanted to set this beautifully crafted gem
without feeling fake, and I hope I've done it some
justice.

Above all, don't take it too seriously or too lightly.
Deliver the text clearly and phrase as you would speak
it. Don't go overboard with tempo shifts and let the
piano bounce rather than tiptoe. No need to hit an
audience over the head with a wink (e.g. measures
51-53) or something deeper (e.g. measures 67-70). In
essence, let Shelton's words do the work and revel in
the joy of a pet's unconditional love.

- Paul John Rudoi, 2018

Performance Notes

* In m. 12, while the score uses the alternate word
"heck," the original text is found on this page. Feel free
to use either at your discretion.

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If I Were a Dog

for SAB choir and piano

Richard Shelton

Paul John Rudoi

Thoughtful (♩ ~ 72) **Trotting** (♩ ~ 116)

mp *notable. elevated.*

Soprano

If I _____ were a dog... *TM*

Alto

If I _____ were a dog...

Bass

If I _____ were a dog...

Thoughtful (♩ ~ 72) **Trotting** (♩ ~ 116)

mf

Piano

** Play full duration, non staccato.*

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Lyrics from the poem "If I Were a Dog" from *The Last Person to Hear Your Voice*,
by Richard Shelton, © 2007. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press,
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Please report performances of this piece to
the composer at paul@pauljohnrudoi.com

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5

mf

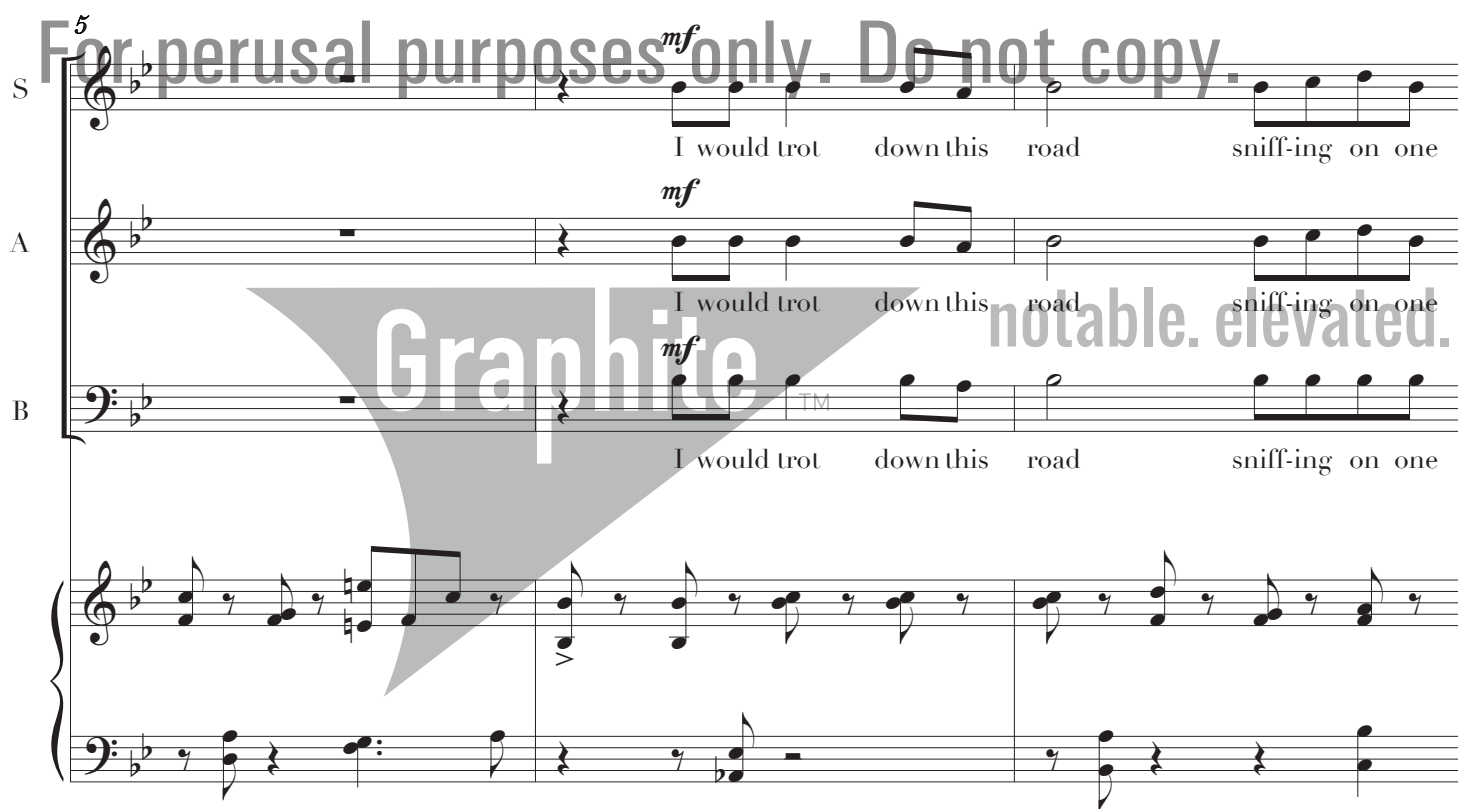
S I would trot down this road sniff-ing on one

mf

A I would trot down this road sniff-ing on one

mf

B I would trot down this road sniff-ing on one



8

S side and then the oth - er pee-ing a lit - tle here and there

A side and then the oth - er pee-ing a lit - tle here and there

B side and then the oth - er wher - ev - er ³ I felt the



11

f

S hav-ing a good time what the heck* sav-ing some — be-cause it's a

A hav-ing a good time what the heck* sav-ing some — be-cause it's a

B urge hav-ing a good time what the heck* sav-ing some — be-cause it's a

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14

mf

S long road I walk

A long road I walk

B long road but since I'm not a dog I walk

mp *mf*

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* See performance notes.

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17

S

straight down the road _____ try - ing to get home be - fore dark

A

straight down the road try - ing to get home be - fore dark

B

straight down the road try - ing to get home be - fore dark

rit. a tempo

p

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TM

notable. elevated.

p

rit. a tempo

p

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20

mf

Graphite

TM

notable. elevated.

24

S *mp* if I _____ were a dog

A *mp* if I _____ were a dog

B *mp* if I _____ were a dog

p

27

S *mf* and I had a mas - ter who beat me

A *mf* and I had a mas - ter who beat me

B *mf* and I had a mas - ter who beat me

mp *p non cresc.*

30

S *p* I would run a - way *mf* and go

A *p* I would run a - way *mf* and go

B *mf* and go

mp

33

S *f* hun - gry and sniff a - round un - til I found a mas - ter who loved me _____

A *f* hun - gry and sniff a - round un - til I found a mas - ter who loved me _____

B *f* hun - gry and sniff a - round un - til I found a mas - ter who loved me _____

f

36

mf

S I could tell by his smell and I would lick his

mf

A I could tell by his smell and I would lick his

mf TM

B I could tell by his smell and I would lick his

mf

39

mp legato

S face so he knew or may-be it would be a

mp

A face so he knew or may-be it would be a

B face so he knew

mp TM

42 *mf*

S wo-man I would pro- tect her we could go eve- ry- where to- geth- er

A *mf* wo-man I would pro- tect her we could go eve- ry- where to- geth- er

B *mf* I would pro- tect her we could go eve- ry- where to- geth- er

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45

S e- ven down — this dark and I would-n't run from side to side *mp*

A e- ven down — this dark road —

B e- ven down — this dark and I would-n't run from side to side

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no pedal

48

mp *mf*

S sniff - ing al - ways be pro - tect - ing her

mf

A I would al - ways al - ways be pro - tect - ing her

mp *mf*

B sniff - ing al - ways be pro - tect - ing her

no pedal

51

sub. p

S and I would stop to pee on - ly once in a - while

sub. p

A and I would stop to pee on - ly once in a - while

sub. p

B and I would stop to pee on - ly once in a - while

p

54

S *espress.*
mp some - times in the af - ter -

A *espress.*
mp some - times in the af - ter -

B *espress.*
mp some - times in the af - ter -

mp dolce *p*

pedal harmonically

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57

S *rit.* noon we could go to the park and she would throw a

A noon we could go to the park and she would throw a

B noon we could go to the park and she would throw a

mp *p* *mp* *p*

rit.

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Thoughtful (♩ ~ 72)

60

S

stick _____ back to her

A

stick I would bring it back to her TM

B

stick _____ back to her

notable. elevated.

Thoughtful (♩ ~ 72)

sustained,
not detached

63

notable. elevated.

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63

notable. elevated.

67 *p*

S each time — I put the stick at her feet I would say — this is my

A *p* each time — I put the stick at her feet I would say this is my

B *p* each time — I put the stick at her feet I would say this is my

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freely to the end

70 *mf* *p*

S heart and she would say I will make it fly —

A heart and she would say I will make it fly —

B heart and she would say I will make it fly — but you must

freely to the end

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73

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S *sempre p*
I would al - ways bring it back to her

A *sempre p*
I would al - ways bring it back to her

B *mf* *p* *sempre p*
bring it back to me I would al - ways bring it back to her

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76

S *mf* *p*
and to no oth - er if I were a

A *mf* *p*
and to no oth - er if I were a

B *mf* *p*
and to no oth - er if I were a

79

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S *rit.*
dog...

A *rit.*
dog...

B *rit.*
dog...

l.h. r.h. l.h. *p* *rit.* *TM*

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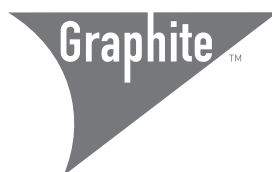
Paul John Rudoi is an award-winning musician, entrepreneur, and advocate for the arts. Deemed “indisputably unique, confident, and innovative” by the American Prize, Paul John Rudoi’s compositions are commissioned and performed by ensembles worldwide including Orphei Dränger, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Cantus, and Seraphic Fire. As a tenor vocalist, Paul has performed and recorded a wide range of music in professional ensembles nationwide including Seraphic Fire, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, True Concord, the Oregon Bach Festival, and Cantus.

Paul is also a fierce advocate for new music trends, resources, and issues. He is the co-founder of Consortio, an online platform designed to make commissioning music better for composers, conductors, and ensembles.

Paul served as Artistic Director of the St. John’s Boys’ Choir during their 40th Anniversary Season. He is now a digital strategist for the National Lutheran Choir and Chorale Director at Meetinghouse Church. Paul enjoys building, eating, and singing, not always in that order.

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