

JS 017  
3 minutes, 5 seconds

# Meditation (Whatever Happens)

*for SATB Choir and Piano*

*Text by*  
Wendell Berry

*Music by*  
Joshua Shank

B&F Music  
Joshua Shank

## Note from the composer

One of the things I like most about a musical drone is that I always feel as if it invites me to really listen to the smaller pieces of architecture of a musical work; the microscopic details seem suddenly gargantuan in comparison to this one, constant thing that's happening (in this case it's the F-sharp pulsing in the piano) and we're called on to contemplate these little things while we listen. This has always reminded me of some form of meditation, and when I combined some poems by Wendell Berry, that's exactly what I was reminded of. I love the simple message in the poetry. It's all love and beauty and gratitude; big things that might need to be somehow set in relief every now and then in order for us to figure out just exactly what they mean to each of us.

*Meditation (Whatever Happens)* was commissioned by the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota (Garrett Lathe, conductor) and is the first in a planned series of choral works which use musical drones as a point of departure.

## The Text

By Wendell Berry (b. 1934)

Whatever happens,  
those who have learned  
to love one another  
have made their way  
to the lasting world  
and will not leave,  
whatever happens.

This then may be the prayer without ceasing,  
this beauty and gratitude, this moment.

Nothing  
Is given that is not  
Taken, and nothing taken  
That was not first a gift.

Nothing.

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Excerpts from *I*, *VI*, and *III* (adapted by the composer).

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Commissioned by the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota  
Garrett Lathe, Conductor

# Meditation (Whatever Happens)

Text by  
Wendell Berry  
adapted by J.S.

Music by  
Joshua Shank

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At a constant tempo (♩ = 72)

The musical score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. It features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 5/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'At a constant tempo (♩ = 72)'. The score includes lyrics for the vocal parts and dynamic markings such as *mp* and *pp*. The piano part has a *mp sempre* marking. The score is divided into measures with a 5/4, 3/4, and 2/4 time signature change.

Soprano: What - e - ver hap - pens,

Alto: ooh

Tenor: No-thing,

Bass: No-thing,

Piano: *mp sempre*

*Ad. al Fine*

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

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8

*mp*

those who have learned

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*, mp*

*close slowly*

(ng)

*, mp*

*close slowly*

*, mp*

*close slowly*

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*, mp*

*close slowly*

8

*let vibrate*

*f*

15

*mp*

*very slow gliss.*

to love one a - no - ther

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*, mp*

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*, mp*

that is not

that is not

15

*simile*

*f*

*f*

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24

*mf*

21

have made their way

have made their way

ta - ken (n) and

ta - ken (n) and

ta - ken (n) and

ta - ken (n) and

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

no - thing ta - ken (n)

*mp* world \_\_\_\_\_ and will not leave,

*mp* world \_\_\_\_\_ and will not leave,

*mf* \_\_\_\_\_ that was not first a gift.

*mf* \_\_\_\_\_ that was not first a gift.

33 *f* \_\_\_\_\_

40 *mf* very slow gliss. (top voice) and non dim. what-e-ver hap - pens \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* very slow gliss. (top voice) and non dim. what-e-ver hap - pens \_\_\_\_\_

40 *f* \_\_\_\_\_



54

*mf*

*f* *sweetly*

with - out

ceas - ing,

this

*mf*

*f* *sweetly*

with - out

ceas - ing,

this

*mf*

*f* *sweetly*

with - out

ceas - ing,

this

*mf*

*f* *sweetly*

with - out

ceas - ing,

this

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54

*f*  
8<sup>vb</sup>

58

beau - ty

and

gra - ti - tude,

this

beau - ty

and

gra - ti - tude,

this

beau - ty

and

gra - ti - tude,

this

beau - ty

and

gra - ti - tude,

this

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58

*f*  
3

*f*

62 *f* mo - ment. *mf calmly* No - thing is

*f* mo - ment. *mf calmly* No - thing is

*f* mo - ment. *mf calmly* No - thing is

*f* mo - ment. *mf calmly* No - thing is

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62 *f* *mp al Fine*

*f* *8vb*

66 *mf* gi - ven that is not ta - ken

*mf* gi - ven that is not ta - ken

*mf* gi - ven that is not ta - ken

*mf* gi - ven that is not ta - ken

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66 *f*

72

*mf* and no - thing ta - ken *poco*

*mf* and no - thing ta - ken *poco*

*mf* and no - thing ta - ken *poco*

*mf* and no - thing ta - ken *poco*

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72

*f*

*f*

80

*sub. f* that was not first a gift. *p*

*sub. f* that was not first a gift. *p*

*sub. f* that was not first a gift. *p*

*sub. f* that was not first a gift. *p*

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80

*f*

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86 *mp* No - thing. —  
*mp* No - thing. —  
*mp* No - thing. —  
*mp* No - thing. —

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 Joshua Shank

*close slowly*

*n.*

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(ng) —  
*close slowly* *n.*  
 (ng) *n.*  
*close slowly* *n.*  
*close slowly* *n.*  
 (ng)

**B&F Music**  
 Joshua Shank

*no rit.* *very long*