

Joseph
SATB, a cappella

Timothy C. Takach

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Joseph

for SATB a cappella choir

Commissioned by Una Vocis Choral Ensemble, Mason City, Iowa

Text:

“I was like a father holding you in my arms”

Book of Hosea

a starry sky is in my arms

I hear my breathing—now not only mine
each dawn is different now that you are here

sometimes I stare at you, sometimes I tremble
I stand above you, my head a moon
and you down there on the sweet straw

each dawn is different now that you are here
I hear my breathing, now not only mine

all my dreams for you, wondering
who you might be, how far you may have come
to be with us

each dawn is different now that you are here

sometimes I feel among waves too steep,
my boat too small
for these wide hands to have made

when I've been working, when the sun is low,
I sink into the stream and lie there, pale as stone
and still this burning that I feel
so deep inside me

how are you mine, child?
how are you ever mine?

I am like a father
I am like a father

so let the old Joseph die, the new be born
hold high this lantern for the world to see—
this child, this light, this saving one

a starry sky within my arms (O heart)
each dawn is different now that you are here

*-Michael Dennis Browne
Used with permission.*

Notes from the composer:

As I was thinking about writing a new Christmas piece (and thinking about having something new to say), I realized that one character in the story that is often overlooked is Joseph. I asked poet Michael Dennis Browne to think about what emotions Joseph might have been experiencing at that time. He's about to assume the role of a father to a boy who is not his, and his simple life as a carpenter will never be the same.

Musically, the piece starts simply, in a minor exploration of the musical triad. It wanders a bit and feels a little ungrounded. His statements start on the offbeats, as if he hesitates. But as his thoughts turn to who this child is to become, the music shifts to major mode, and becomes warm and hopeful, as if his thoughts are enough to ground him. When he experiences his rebirth, he gains confidence and strength, and his statements start on the downbeats. Joseph has embraced the child and his role as a father.

- Timothy C. Takach (2016)

Notes from the poet:

When I began working on the words in August of 2016, I had Joseph rather more anxious than joyful—not at all sure about how to be a father to this mystery guest. But after the birth of our first granddaughter, Julia, some three weeks later, the words began to be lifted on the tide of wonder we were experiencing and I found a sense of blessing to be the main emotion I wanted to suggest. I also went back to memories of the births of our own three children, long ago, and the deep joy they have been to us ever since. I've kept elements of tension in the character—poems and lyrics need some of that—but the overall feeling is of transformation, the old doubts dying in the blaze of unprecedented joy.

- Michael Dennis Browne (2016)

Commissioned by Una Vocis Choral Ensemble, Mason City, Iowa.
Dedicated to all fathers whose perspectives have formed and shaped us.

For Graham and his journey. - TCT

Joseph

for SATB a cappella

Michael Dennis Browne

Timothy C. Takach

With Rubato $\text{♩} = 72$
mp

Alto

a star-ry sky is in my arms I hear my breath-ing- now not on-ly mine

5

A each dawn is diffe-rent now that you are here some-times I stare at you,
mp

T some-times I stare at you,

9

A some-times I trem-ble I stand a-bove you, my head a moon

T some-times I trem-ble I stand a-bove you, my head a moon

12

A *mf* and you down there on the sweet straw *mp* each dawn is diffe-rent

T *mf* and you down there on the sweet straw *mp* each dawn is diffe-rent

17

A *mf* now that you are here I hear my breath-ing, *p* now not on-ly mine

T now that you are here



21 $\text{♩} = 92$ *mf* *mp mf*

S all my dreams for you, who _____ how

A all my dreams for you, won-der-ing who you might be, how *mp mf*

T all my dreams for you, won-der-ing who you might be, how *mp mf*

B all my dreams for you, who you might be, how

27 *rit.* *f* *mf* $\text{♩} = 72$ *p*

S far you may have come to be with us each dawn is diffe-rent

A far you may have come to be with us each dawn is diffe-rent *p*

T far you may have come to be with us each dawn is diffe-rent *p*

B far you may have come to be with us

31 *mf* *mf* *mf*

S now that you are here some-times I feel a-mong waves too steep,

A now that you are here some-times I feel a-mong waves too steep,

T now that you are here some-times I feel a-mong waves too steep,

B

35

S my boat too small for these wide hands to have made when I've been work-ing,

A my boat too small for these wide hands to have made when I've been work-ing,

T my boat too small for these wide hands to have made when I've been work-ing,

B my boat too small for these wide hands to have made when I've been work-ing,

f

f

f

f

38

S when the sun is low, I sink in-to the stream and lie there, pale as stone

A when the sun is low, I sink in-to the stream and lie there, pale as stone

T when the sun is low, I sink in-to the stream and lie there, pale as stone

B when the sun is low, I sink in-to the stream and lie there, pale as stone

mf *rit.* *p* = 60

mf *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

43

S I feel so deep

A that I feel so deep in - side me

T and still this burn-ing that I feel so deep in - side me

B and still this burn-ing that I feel so deep in - side me

f

mf *f*

mp

mp

mp

mp

$\text{♩} = 72$

$\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

47 $\text{♩} = 92$
mf

S how are you mine, child? ev - er

A how are you mine, how are you ev - er

T how are you mine, how are you ev - er

B how are you mine, child? ev - er

53 *f*

S mine? I am like a fa - ther

A mine? I am like a fa - ther

T mine? I am like a fa - ther

B mine? I am like a fa - ther

59 $\text{♩} = 60$ *pp* **Warmly** $\text{♩} = 72$ *mf*

S Ah... so let the old Jo-seph die, the new be born

A I am like a fa - ther so let the old Jo-seph die, the new be born

T Ah... so let the old Jo-seph die, the new be born

B I am like a fa - ther so let the old Jo-seph die, the new be born

63

S *f* hold high this lan - tern for the world to see - this child, — this light, this *ff*

A *f* hold high this lan - tern for the world to see - this child, — this light, this *ff*

T *f* hold high this lan - tern for the world to see - this child, — this light, this *ff*

B *f* hold high this lan - tern for the world to see - this child, this light, this *ff*

68 $\text{♩} = 60$

S *mf* sav - ing one a star - ry sky with - in my arms (O heart)

A *mf* sav - ing one a star - ry sky with - in my arms (O heart)

T *mf* sav - ing one a star - ry sky with - in my arms (O heart)

B *mf* sav - ing one a star - ry sky with - in my heart

72 *mp*

S *mp* each dawn is diffe - rent *p*

A *mp* each dawn is diffe - rent now that you are here *p*

T *mp* each dawn is diffe - rent now that you are *p*

B *mp* each dawn is



Inspired by captivating narrative, speculative fiction and making humans better through art, the music of Timothy C. Takach has risen fast in the concert world. Applauded for his melodic lines, thoughtful text choices and rich, intriguing harmonies, Takach has received commissions and performances from GRAMMY Award-winning ensembles Roomful of Teeth and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the St. Olaf Band, Cantus, Lorelei Ensemble, VocalEssence, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, and numerous other organizations. His compositions have been performed on A Prairie Home Companion, The Boston Pops holiday tour, numerous All-State and festival programs and at venues such as the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center and Royal Opera House Muscat. Takach is a co-creator of the theatrical production of *All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914*, by Peter Rothstein.

Takach's a cappella choral symphony Helios is "larger than life, as if the piece were accompanied by an orchestra" and is "complemented with brilliant visuals created by CandyStations" (Tucson.com). In 2023 his ballet *Unfashioned Creature* was premiered in St. Paul, MN by the James Sewell Ballet. Takach was a co-founder, singer and Artistic Co-Director of the vocal ensemble Cantus and has frequent national work as a composer-in-residence, presenter, clinician and lecturer. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons.

Selected vocal works by Timothy C. Takach:

Mixed Voices

A Worshipper and a Man		SATB a cappella
And I Saw		SATB div. a cappella
Crossroads		SATB, piano
The Darkling Thrush	(earthsongs)	SATB, SAT soli, a cappella
Even in My Time		3-part treble, piano
Fragile		SATB, hand drum
Joseph		SATB a cappella
Mantra	(Graphite Publishing)	SATB, piano
MOMENTS IN FILM: A Mural of Change		SATB, piano
MOMENTS IN FILM: Insidious		SATB, piano
MOMENTS IN FILM: Flying Solo		SATB, piano
Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers	(Graphite Publishing)	SSATBB a cappella
One Boy Told Me		SATB, piano

Treble Voices

And I Saw		SSAA div. a cappella
Bahihii Waaliidkay Dhaqay		2-part, piano
Cassiopeia		SSA a cappella
How to Triumph	(Graphite Publishing)	SSA, piano
There is No Rose	(Lorelei Ensemble)	SSAA, SS soli, a cappella
Together, Unafraid		SSA, piano
She Tore a Map	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano

TB Voices

Empty		TB (opt. div), piano, opt. djembe
Every Fire		TTBB, piano
Goodbye, Then		TBB choir, Bb clarinet, piano
Kin		TB, piano
Mad		TB, piano
Original Harmony	(Colla Voce)	TTBB a cappella
Rough Beast		TTBB, percussion
Salve Regina	(Graphite Publishing)	TBB semi-chorus, TTBB a cappella

Large Works

At Home (ca. 15')		SATB, flute, clarinet
Born For This (ca. 16')		SATB and piano, chamber ensemble, or concert band
Changed by Beauty (ca. 18')		SATB, cello
Helios (ca. 65')		SATB a cappella
Rose Ever Blooming (ca. 50') composed with Jocelyn Hagen		SATB, orchestra
The Longest Nights (ca. 21')		SATB, piano or string quartet
This is How You Love (ca. 35') composed with Jocelyn Hagen		SATB div. a cappella
True North (ca. 16')		SATB, chamber orchestra
Unfashioned Creature (ca. 41'), a ballet		SATB, cello, percussion, dancers
We, the Unknown (ca. 40')		TTBB, soloists, chamber orchestra