



In the Mad Moonlight

Four Poems of Louis Jenkins

Music by David Evan Thomas

Texts

OKLAHOMA

I love this open and rolling prairie,
the vast blue sky
But towns, grain elevators, oil wells, refineries...all
strung together by right-angled roads, seems
altogether the wrong approach.
"Go south two miles, take a right,
take a hard right..."
A tornado doesn't bother.
It blows cross-country rearranging
the debris to suit itself.

WATER

Water does not want
to be contained.
Silently, secretly,
water feels along
the walls of the pipe for a flaw,
seeks the misthreaded joint,
the faulty faucet.
The drips go orderly,
joyfully into the sink
counting the seconds
of the long night. (Original title: "Drip")

CHEKHOV AND HEISENBERG

I tell my brother-in-law
that we stayed in the hotel where
Chekhov had stayed, in Nice.
He tells me that he once stayed
in the very hotel room that
Werner Heisenberg
had occupied back in 1926.
He thought the hotel was either
in Copenhagen or maybe Leipzig.
But he was uncertain.

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE

I like the high times as much as anyone,
the music and the jokes, flowers, laughter.
I like the night, the wine,
the shadows of trees on the path,
the secret places at the edge of the light,
the breeze sighing in the tall pines.
I also like the sound of the door closing,
the light clicked off.
But now it is nearly two in the morning
and here I am lying awake.
My dish is still out there somewhere,
in the mad moonlight,
last seen in the company of a spoon.

Louis Jenkins is one of the contemporary masters of the prose poem. Born in Oklahoma, Jenkins lived near Duluth, Minnesota, for over 30 years. The author of many books, his late poetry collections included *Where Your House Is Now: New and Selected Prose Poems* (Nodin Press, 2019), *In the Sun Out of the Wind* (2017), *Before You Know It: Prose Poems 1970-2005* (2009), *European Shoes* (2008), and *North of the Cities* (2007). His work was regularly featured on the radio show *A Prairie Home Companion*. His brief, accessible prose poems use humor, wry observation, and hypothesis to tease out the absurdity of everyday situations. In his poems, Jenkins maintained a tight focus on the mundane particularities of ordinary existence, using deliberately flat language to comic and often heartbreaking effect. Louis Jenkins died in late 2019.

David Evan Thomas has been honored with two McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowships, an Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and commissions from the Minnesota Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Born in Rochester, New York in 1958, Thomas studied at Northwestern University, Eastman School of Music, and with Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota. His music is published by ECS, MorningStar, Augsburg Fortress and several other publishers. Thomas was the first composer-in-residence for The Schubert Club from 1997-2005 and in 2016 he received the "An die Musik Award" from that organization for outstanding service. In 2018, Thomas was initiated into Sigma Alpha Iota Fraternity as a National Arts Associate. He lives in Minneapolis. More: www.davidevanthomas.com.

Commissioned by Schubert Club for mezzo-soprano Clara Osowski
with funding provided by Barbara Brown and John Michel
in memory of Louis Jenkins.

In the Mad Moonlight

Four Poems of Louis Jenkins

I. Oklahoma

Music by
David Evan Thomas

Expansive and unhurried ♩ = 56

Medium Voice

Piano

p *legatissimo* *cresc.*

con Fed.

6 *p*

I love this open and rolling

p sim.

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11

prai - rie, the vast blue sky But

mp

17 *leggiero* *accel.*

towns, grain el-e-va-tors, oil wells, re - fin - eries all

pp

21 **Somewhat faster** ♩ = 63 *pp*

strung to - geth - er by right - an - gled roads, seems

pp

pedal lightly

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33

accel.

hard right..."

Powerfully; faster yet ♩ = 82

35

ff

A tor - na - do does - n't bo - ther.

ff *agitato* *sfpp*

37

p

It blows cross -

p *cresc.*

39

cresc. molto

coun - try re - ar - rang - ing the de -

Leg. *Leg.*

41

ff

sfp

bris to suit it - self.

Leg. *Leg.* *

43

Leg. * *Leg.* * *8va* *sffz* *8va* *

II. Water

Poem by
Louis Jenkins

Music by
David Evan Thomas

Very steadily (♩ = 56)

Medium Voice

Piano

pp *ma sonore*

p

pedal discreetly

6

dim.

12

p *sereno e legato*

Wa - ter does not want to be con - tained.

pp

* *ped.*

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32

mf

- cet. The drips go

36

pp

or-der-ly, joy - - - ful-ly, joy - - -

40

f freely

- - - - - ful - ly in - to the

44

a tempo

p

pp

sink count - ing count - ing

48

p

count - ing count-ing the

52

sec - onds of the long night.

56

mf *pp*

III. Chekhov and Heisenberg

Poem by
Louis Jenkins

Music by
David Evan Thomas

Brightly (♩. = 104) *p* **Fast and light**

Medium Voice

I _____ tell my broth-er - in - law that we stayed in the

Piano

f *p* *sfz* *sfz*

9

ho - tel _____ where Chek - hov had stayed, in Nice.

f

17 *mp*

He tells me that he once stayed _____ in the ver - y ho - tel room _____ that Wer - ner

p *sim.*

Leo.

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50 *f* *p*

He thought, he thought, he thought the

f *mp*

Leg. *Leg.*

59 *legato*

ho - tel was ei - ther in Cop - en - hag - en or may - be Leip - zig.

f *pp*

Leg. *Leg.* *

67 *allarg.* *f* *a tempo* *pp*

But he was un - cer-tain.

f *pp loco* *f* *pp*

IV. Hey Diddle Diddle

Poem by
Louis Jenkins

Music by
David Evan Thomas

Moderate waltz-time ♩ = 116 *poco rall.* *a tempo*
easily

Medium Voice

espress. *mf* *meno f* *mp*

I like the high times as

7 *poco rall.* *port.*

much as an - y - one, — the mu - sic and the jokes, flow - ers, laugh - ter.

13 *a tempo* *a piacere* *a tempo*

I like the night, the wine, — the shad - ows of trees,

colla voce *mf*

19 *rall.*

the shadows of trees on the path.

p *mf*

25 **Intimately, same tempo**

pp

the secret places at the edge of the light,

pp

una corda

31 *sim.*

the breeze soughing, sough

sim.

sim.

fortissimo

37

p

poco rall.

- ing, sough - ing in the tall pines.

mf

42

a tempo

poco rall.

a tempo

I al - so like the sound of the

p

tre corde

48

doorclos - ing, the light clicked off.

poco f

p

ppp

f

54 **Faster** $\text{♩} = 56$

pp

4

3

p to the fore
8^{va}

Detailed description: This system contains measures 54 through 59. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a four-measure phrase (marked '4') and a three-measure phrase (marked '3'). The left hand has a simple accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. A slur with 'to the fore' and '8^{va}' spans across the bottom of the system.

60

mf quasi parlando

But now it's near-ly two in the morn - ing

fp

2 5 4 1

1

4

p

mp

(8^{va})

Red.

*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 60 through 65. It includes a vocal line in the treble clef with lyrics: "But now it's near-ly two in the morn - ing". The piano accompaniment in the bass clef has a dynamic marking of *fp* and includes fingerings (2 5 4 1) and (1). A dynamic marking of *p* is also present. A slur with '8^{va}' spans across the bottom. There are markings for 'Red.' and an asterisk '*' below the piano part.

66

and here I am ly - ing a -

5 4 1

Red.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 66 through 71. It includes a vocal line in the treble clef with lyrics: "and here I am ly - ing a -". The piano accompaniment in the bass clef has a dynamic marking of *mp* and includes fingerings (5 4 1). A slur with 'Red.' spans across the bottom.

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89 *p subito*

moon - light, last seen in the com - pa-ny

ped.

95

of a spoon.

ossia

ped.

allargando

101

sfz
ped.

