

JS-088 / Look Out / SATB, alto solo, piano / dur: 7'15"

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JOAN SZYMKO

# LOOK OUT

a setting of poetry by  
Wendell Berry

for  
SATB CHORUS  
&  
piano



**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.

*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

Unison      *mp*

Come to the win-dow, look out, and see

Pno

90 *tenderly*

for perusal only

the val - ley tur - ning green in re - mem - brance of all springs past and to

II

come, the woods per - fec- ting with im - mor - tal pa - tience\_ the leaves\_

15

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 see, the

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

poco rit. A mf

**for perusal only**

18 a bit slower  $\text{♩} = 82$

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 8 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  $\text{♩} = 82$

21

Soprano (S) voice part:

*p* rit. *mp*

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

Alto (A) voice part:

*mp*

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

Tenor (T) voice part:

*mp*

and you will

Bass (B) voice part:

*mp*

and you will

Piano accompaniment:

rit.

24

Soprano (S) voice part:

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

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

Alto (A) voice part:

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

Tenor (T) voice part:

see the sha-dow cast up-on it by fire, the war that lights its

Bass (B) voice part:

see the sha-dow cast up-on it by fire, the war that lights its

Piano accompaniment:

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

# for perusal only

28

Soprano (S) **B** ♩=96 *f*  
 way by bur - ning the earth.

Alto (A) **B** ♩=96 *f*  
 way by bur - ning the earth.

Tenor (T) **B** ♩=96 *f*  
<sup>8</sup> way by bur - ning the earth.

Bass (B) **B** ♩=96 *f*  
 way by bur - ning the earth.

Piano accompaniment:  
 Treble clef, 4/4 time, ♫ key signature.  
 Bass clef, 4/4 time, ♫ key signature.  
 Dynamics: ♩, ♩, ♩, ♩.

33 Tutti Unison

**for perusal only**

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

Piano accompaniment:  
 Treble clef, 4/4 time, ♫ key signature.  
 Bass clef, 4/4 time, ♫ key signature.  
 Dynamics: ♩, ♩, ♩, ♩.

38

Sop/Ten  
only: *mf*

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

Piano accompaniment:  
 Treble clef, 4/4 time, ♫ key signature.  
 Bass clef, 4/4 time, ♫ key signature.  
 Dynamics: ♩, ♩, ♩, ♩.

43

S: sha - dow\_\_\_\_ dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow,\_\_\_\_ dan - cing up - on it that  
*mf*

A: dan - cing up - on it that sha- dow,\_\_\_\_ dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow

T: sha - dow,\_\_\_\_ dan - cing up - on it that sha-dow,\_\_\_\_ dan - cing up - on it that  
*mf*

B: dan - cing up - on it that sha - dow,\_\_\_\_ sha-dow,\_\_\_\_ dan - cing up - on it that

=

47

S: sha - dow,\_\_\_\_ *dim.* that sha - dow.  
*mp* *rit.* *dim.*

A: that sha - dow.  
*dim.* *mp* *dim.* You will

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

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

=

51 C **poco meno mosso**

A: see that your place, wher - e - ver it is, your house, your  
**C poco meno mosso**

*mp*

56

Soprano (S) vocal line with lyrics: "your shop, your for-est, your farm, bears the sha-dow\_ of its des-". Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *Più mosso*.

Alto (A) vocal line with lyrics: "gar-den, your shop, your for-est, your farm, de-". Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*.

Tenor (T) vocal line with lyrics: "your for-est, your farm, bears the sha-dow\_ of its des-". Dynamics: *mf*, *f*.

Bass (B) vocal line with lyrics: "your for-est, your farm, de-". Dynamics: *mf*, *f*.

Più mosso section.

62

**Solo** (Treble clef) vocal line with lyrics: "rit. truc-tion by war de - struc-tion by war". Dynamics: *mf*, *recitativo*.

*mf* recitativo section.

*rit.*

*mf* recitativo section.

*mf* recitativo section.

Soprano (S) vocal line with lyrics: "truc-tion by war de - struc-tion by war". Dynamics: *f*.

Alto (A) vocal line with lyrics: "struc - tion de - struc-tion by war". Dynamics: *f*.

Tenor (T) vocal line with lyrics: "truc - tion by war de - struc-tion by war". Dynamics: *f*.

Bass (B) vocal line with lyrics: "struc- tion de - struc-tion be war". Dynamics: *f*.

*rit.*

*mf* recitativo section.

*rit.*

*mf* recitativo section.

*mf* recitativo section.

*rit.*

*mf* recitativo section.

*mf* recitativo section.

# for perusal only

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

67

Solo

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

72

Solo

fire, which is fire.

S

A

T

B

for perusal only

which is fire, fire  
which is fire, fire  
which is fire,  
which is fire.

cresc. poco a poco

78 **D** Intense, dramatic, poco marcato

Soprano (S): The Lords of War sell the earth to buy fire,

Alto (A): The Lords of War sell the earth to buy fire,

Tenor (T): The Lords of War sell the earth to buy fire,

Bass (B): The Lords of War sell the earth to buy fire,

**for perusal only**

81

Soprano (S): wa - ter and air of life to buy fire.

Alto (A): wa - ter and air of life to buy fire.

Tenor (T): wa - ter and air of life to buy fire.

Bass (B): wa - ter and air of life to buy fire.

Piano: ff

Measure 84: ff

85 solo *mf* *recitativo*

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

89 *mp* *p* *mp*

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

S/A unison *pp* *mp*

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

*cresc. poco a poco*

**for perusal only**

93 *accel.* *mf* =100

Solo so - lid - ly foun - ded up - on their wil-ling ness to de-stroy ev - ery place,

S/A so - lid - ly foun - ded up - on their wil-ling ness to de-stroy ev - ery place,

T tenor: *mf* ev - ery

*accel.* *mf* =100

*mp*

96 *f* rit. E ♩=84

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

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

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

T *f* *tenderly, warm mf*  
place, \_\_\_\_\_ ev - ery place. \_\_\_\_\_ Ev - 'ry house-hold of the

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

rit. dim. E ♩=84 *mf*

T 100 *mf* 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

Soprano (S) *p* They have no mer-cy. *mp* They have no

Alto (A) *p* They have no mer-cy. *mp* They have no

Tenor (T) *mp* They have no mer-cy. *p* They have no

Bass (B) *p* They have no mer-cy.

Piano (P) *mp*

# for perusal only

108 *Tutti* *poco rit.* *p* =76

Soprano (S) mer-cy. *p* They have no mer-cy.

Alto (A) mer-cy. *p* They have no mer-cy.

Tenor (T) They have no mer-cy.

Bass (B) They have no mer-cy.

*poco rit.* *p* =76

Piano (P) *p*

112

Tutti Alto      *legato, with crisp diction*

A

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

Bassoon part (8ve unison):

*mp*

116

add Bass (8ve unison)

*mp* *mf*

A

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

Bassoon part (8ve unison):

*mp*

119

*p*      *accel.*      *mf*      **F**      *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*

8 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.

**for perusal only**

*accel.*

*mp*

*mf*

**F**

*cresc.*

124 *f* Più mosso ♩=100

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

131

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

*molto rall.*

# for perusal only

137 **G** Più mosso      accel. . . . .      A tempo  $\text{♩}=100$   
*sempre f*

S      wind. . . . .      Leave your win-dows and go out,  
A      wind. . . . .      *sempre f*      Leave your win-dows\_and go out,  
T      8 wind. . . . .      *sempre f*      Leave your win-dows\_and go out,  
B      wind. . . . .      *sempre f*      Leave your win dows\_and go out,

**G** Più mosso      accel. . . . .      A tempo  $\text{♩}=100$   
*bouyant*  
*sempre f*

for perusal only

144

S      peo-ple of the world,      peo-ple of the world, . . . . .  
A      peo-ple of the world,      peo-ple of the world, . . . . .  
T      8 peo-ple of the world,      peo-ple of the world, . . . . .  
B      peo-ple of the world,      peo-people of the world, . . . . .



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

for perusal only

(roll very slowly)

157

S A

streams. Go to-gether go a - lone.

T B

streams. go a - lone.

poco rit.

$\text{♩} = 82$

S A

p

$\text{♩} = 82$

T B

p

162 **A tempo** *mf*

S A Say no to the Lords of War which is Mo-ney which is

T B Say no to the Lords of War which is Mo-ney which is

**A tempo**

*mf* *poco a poco cresc.*

166 *poco rit.* **H A tempo**

S A Fire, which is Fire. Say no by sa-ying

T B Fire, which is Fire. Say no by sa-ying

*poco rit.* **H A tempo**

170

S A yes to the air, to the earth, to the trees,

T B yes to the air, to the earth, to the trees, yes **Unison** to the gras-ses,

# for perusal only

175                          *mf*

Soprano (S)      *rit.* Unison      *molto rall.*      *p*  
 Alto (A)      yes      to the riv - ers, —      to the birds      and the a - ni-mals and e - v'ry liv-ing thing,  
 Bass (T)      —  
 Bass (B)      to the birds      and the a - ni-mals and e - v'ry liv-ing thing,

rit.                          *molto rall.*  
*p*

179       $\text{♩} = 76$

Soprano (S)      *rit.*      *A tempo*      *poco rit.*  
**for perusal only**  
 Gently      *mp*  
 Alto (A)      —      —      yes      to the small hou - ses, —  
 Bass (T)      —      —  
 Bass (B)      —      —      Gently      *mp*  
 yes      to the small hou - ses, —  

$\text{♩} = 76$

*p*

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

**Meno mosso**  $\text{♩} = 70$

183 *mp* *p* *mp*

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

A — yes,

T *p* *mp* yes, yes to the chil- dren.

B —

**Meno mosso**  $\text{♩} = 70$

187 *p* *p*

S yes to the chil- dren. Yes.

A yes to the chil- dren. Yes.

T yes to the chil- dren. Yes.

B yes to the chil- dren. Yes.

*p*