

Sarah Riskind

*For the Pacifica Choirs*

# Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter

*for SA chorus, violin, and piano*

2019

Duration: 4'



[www.sarahriskind.com](http://www.sarahriskind.com)



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*For the Pacifica Choirs*  
**Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter**  
*for SA chorus, violin, and piano*

Duration: 4'

Performance Notes:

The modality of this composition sets the scene of a winter landscape that may seem cold and barren, but reveals precious signs of beauty with a deeper look. There is text painting throughout the piece to bring out this contrast: from the A minor chord on “cold” in measure 10 to the octave leap up to “bird” in measure 18 and the bright C major chord on “star” in measure 53. By ending the piece on an A major chord, I have shown the narrator’s newly reverent perspective on winter and their faith that the seasons will soon continue their cycle.

Singers should spend considerable time becoming familiar with the melody, so that they can sing it almost like a folk song and bring out the ebb and flow of the text.

Although I wrote this piece for the Interludes ensemble of the Pacifica Choirs (approximately middle school ages), it would work well for older soprano/alto choirs as well. If you would like to feature a different instrument, contact me about adapting the violin part.

– Sarah Riskind

Previously based in Seattle and Boston, conductor and composer **Sarah Riskind** (b.1987) is the Director of Choral Activities at Eureka College in central Illinois, Music Director of the Baroque Artists of Champaign Urbana, and a faculty member at The Walden School. Riskind’s compositions are featured in the Project Encore catalogue of contemporary choral music and available at [www.sarahriskind.com](http://www.sarahriskind.com) as well as Swirly Music. Among her works are Jewish and Judeo-Christian music, secular pieces with improvisatory elements, and choral settings with string obbligato parts. She holds degrees from the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Williams College.

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## Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter

The west was getting out of gold,  
The breath of air had died of cold,  
When shoeing home across the white,  
I thought I saw a bird alight.

In summer when I passed the place  
I had to stop and lift my face;  
A bird with an angelic gift  
Was singing in it sweet and swift.

No bird was singing in it now.  
A single leaf was on a bough,  
And that was all there was to see  
In going twice around the tree.

From my advantage on a hill  
I judged that such a crystal chill  
Was only adding frost to snow  
As gilt to gold that wouldn't show.

A brush had left a crooked stroke  
Of what was either cloud or smoke  
From north to south across the blue;  
A piercing little star was through.

- Robert Frost (from *New Hampshire*, 1923)



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# Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter

for SA chorus, violin, and piano

Robert Frost  
from *New Hampshire* (1923)

Sarah Riskind (b. 1987)

**Freely, approx. ♩ = 66**

Violin

Soprano

Alto

Piano

**Freely, approx. ♩ = 66**

*f* *subp*

*p* had lib.

**A** **A Tempo ♩ = 66**

Vln.

S.

A.

west... was get-ting out of... gold, The breath of air had died of cold, When

**A** **A Tempo ♩ = 66**

Pno.

*mf*

11

Vln.

S.

A.

Pno.

shoe-ing home\_\_\_ ac- ross the white, I thought I saw a bird a - light. In

shoe-ing home\_\_\_ ac- ross the white, I thought I saw a bird a - ligh In

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

15

B

Vln.

S.

A.

Pno.

sum-mer when passed the place I had to stop and lift my face; A bird with an an-

sum-mer when I passed the place I had to stop and lift my face; a bird with an an-

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

19

Vln.

S.

A.

Pno.

*mf*

*sempre f*

ge - lic gift Was sing-ing in it sweet and swift.

ge - lic gift Was sing-ing in it sweet and swift.

**Sample Copy**

22

Vln.

S.

A.

Pno.

*f*

**C**

**Sample Copy**

27

Vln.

**D**

*p*

S.

solo 1  
*p*

No bird—was sing-ing in it— now. A sing-le leaf was on a

A.

**D**

Pno.

*subp*

*pp*

34

Vln.

**E**

*p*

S.

tutti *mf*

ooh—

A.

solo 2 *mp*

And that was all—there was to see In go-ing twice a-round the tree.

**E**

Pno.

39

Vln.

S.

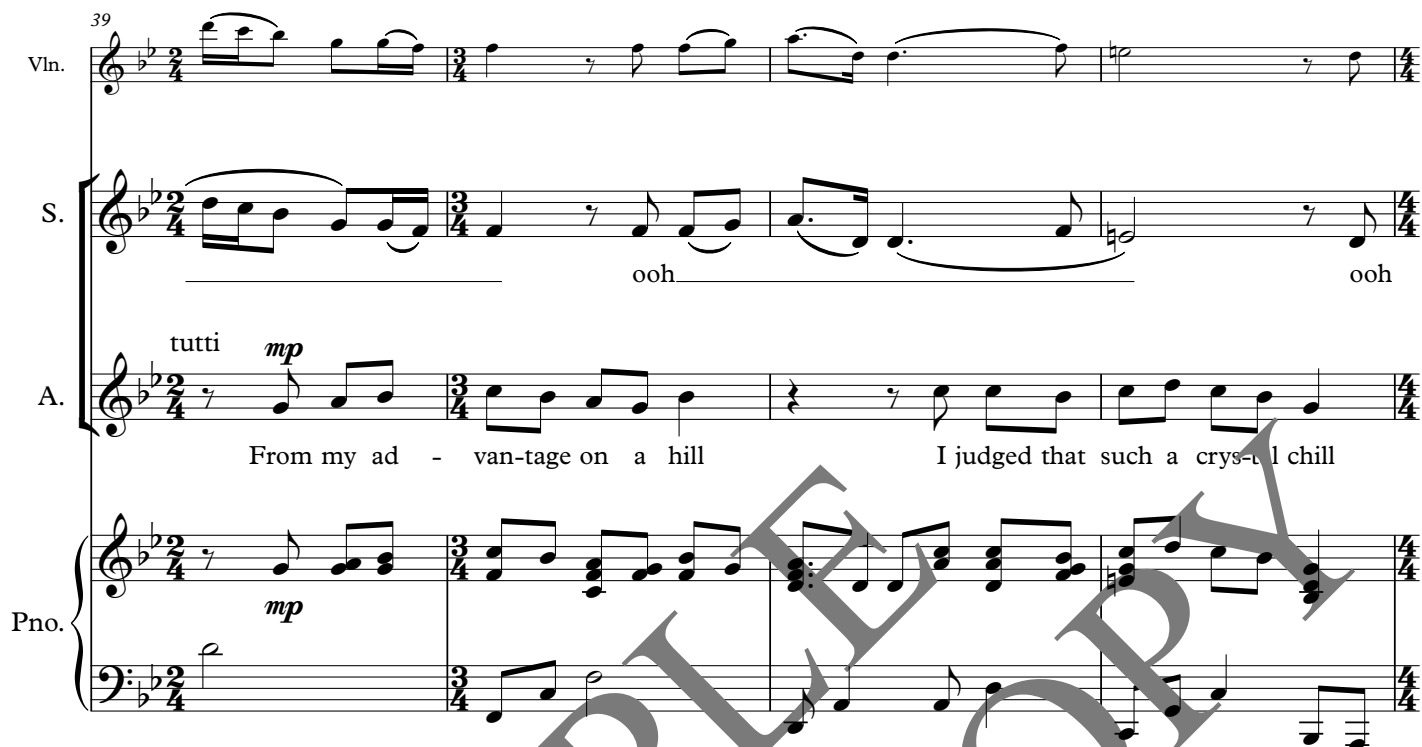
A.

Pno.

*tutti mp*

From my ad - van-tage on a hill I judged that such a crys-tal chill

ooh ooh



43

Vln.

S.

A.

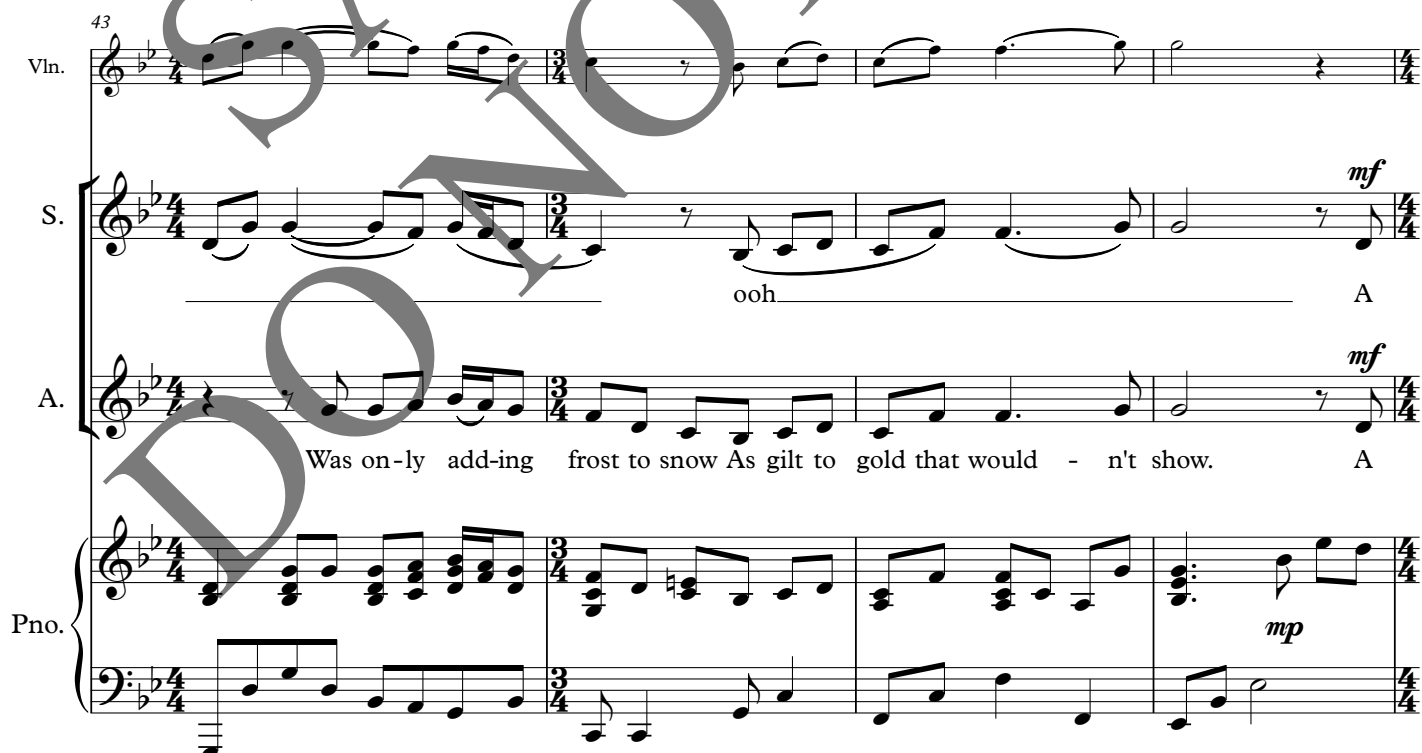
Pno.

*mf*

Was on-ly add-ing frost to snow As gilt to gold that would - n't show. A

ooh

*mp*



47 **F**

Vln. *mp cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

S. *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

A. *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

brush had left a croo - ked stroke Of what was either cloud or smoke From north to

brush had left a croo - ked stroke Of what was either cloud or smoke From north to

**F**

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

51 *rit.*

Vln. *f*

S. *p*

A. *p*

south ac - ross the blue; A pier - cing lit - tle star was

south ac - ross the blue; A pier - cing lit - tle star was

*rit.*

Pno.

**A tempo**

54

Vln. *p*

S. through.

A. through.

**A tempo**

Pno. *p*

DO NOT

SAMPLE

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