

# *On fire...no, after you*

*for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano*

**JESSICA MEYER**

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8'

## PROGRAM NOTE

Poet/mezzo Jennifer Beattie and I met at the Chamber Music America Conference in 2017 and talked about working together. Time passed, and then by happenstance I bumped into her while performing in another state. We knew we had to make time to chat, and after reading her poetry I definitely knew that a collaboration needed to happen. Her words are emotionally direct, just like the music I write - which is perfect for the narrative I wanted to create by putting these three poems in a sequence. It is about that moment when you realize you have fallen in love, and that breathless-passionate-yet-anxiously-fragile feeling that can overwhelm you in the early stages of such a relationship. I have been carrying these three poems around for a while now, so I am thrilled to have this commission made possible by BMI and Concert Artists Guild to bring these words to life, especially in the hands of fellow violist Jordan Bak. This piece is dedicated to the mutual friend who introduced Jennifer and I - pianist Adam Marks. He died unexpectedly in his sleep last year, leaving behind his loving husband and a community of colleagues who sorely miss his spirit.

Life is short, and love should always win.

### **on fire**

i am on fire.  
and I've decided to be very calm about it  
after all, burning is one way to go—  
i hold you in the space of other worlds  
a radio signal going on and on  
and on  
love falls around us  
the unruly embers of a windblown campfire

### **no**

when you say no  
i fall down this long dark well  
a discarded instrument with strings still gently vibrating  
but i too mean what i say  
and what i say is that life is rushing by us so fast  
so fast that we are already dead.  
and since we are already dead  
it follows  
that we don't have to feel like it's a risk  
to burn in the light

### **after you**

it wasn't just that one time  
it was every time  
it was that and no other  
it was buzz and snap,  
crackle, fly, fall.  
afterward turning inward  
broken open  
resolving  
resolved  
it felt  
like  
like  
itself. grasping. Broken  
open

# On fire...no, after you

Commissioned by the BMI Foundation, Inc./Carlos Surinach Fund for Concert Artists Guild,  
and written for Jordan Bak

JENNIFER BEATTIE

JESSICA MEYER

## I. On Fire

♩ = 145 **Breathless**

Score for the first system (measures 1-8). It includes staves for Voice, Viola, and Piano. The piano part features a *pp* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Score for the second system (measures 9-17). It includes staves for Voice, Viola, and Piano. The piano part features dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *pp*, and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Score for the third system (measures 18-25). It includes staves for Voice, Viola, and Piano. The piano part features dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *p*, and multiple triplet markings in the right hand.

26

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*mp*

*p*

31

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*gliss.*

*mf*

*mf*

36

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*pp*

*mf*

I am on

41 *ff*

Voice: fi - re \_\_\_\_\_ and I've de- *p*

Vla. *ff* 3 3 3 *p*

Pno. *ff* 3 3 *p*

49

Voice: ci - ded to be ve - ry calm a - bout it \_\_\_\_\_

Vla. trill with fundamental trill with fundamental *gliss.*

Pno.

57

Voice: af - ter all bur - ning \_\_\_\_\_ is one way to go *1/2 step trill*

Vla. *pp* 3 3 3

Pno. *pp*

*Rushing forward.....*

63

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

*a tempo primo*

67

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*lunga*

whole step trill

*lunga*

*lunga*

*ff* *p* *mf*

♩ = 60 **Dreamy**

73 *mp*

Voice: I hold you in the space of ot - ther

Vla. *gliss.*

Pno. *p*

77

Voice: — worlds a rad - i - o - sig - nal go - ing on and

Vla. *trill with fundamental* *gliss.* *trill with fundamental*

Pno.

81 *rit.* *mf* *p*

Voice: on and on and on

Vla. *trill with fundamental* *slow gliss.* *gliss.* *f* *p*

Pno. *mf* *pp*

$\text{♩} = 145$  **Anxious**

86

Voice *mp*  
Love falls a - round us

Vla. *p* *mp*

Pno. *p*

94

Voice *f*  
the un - ru - ly em bers!

Vla. *gliss.* *mf* *f*

Pno. *f* *mf* *f*

99

Voice *p*  
of a wind - blown camp fi - re

Vla. *pp* *gliss.* *tr* *ff*

Pno. *pp* *ff*



# II. No

♩ = 48 **Dark**

104

Voice

Vla. n.v. L.H. pizz. arco IV *gliss.* *molto vib.* pizz.

*p* < *mf* > *pp* *ppp* *mp* *p* *mf* *f*

Pno.

108 *accel.*..... *rit.*.....

Voice

Vla. *be judicious about vibrato* arco U.H. *p*

*mp* *f*

Pno.

111 ♩ = 60 *rit.*..... ♩ = 48

Voice

Vla. *ff* *gliss.* U.H. *p* *pp*

*quick strum inside of piano*

Pno. *ff* *hit strings on the inside of piano hard with palm* *f*

*pedal held down until measure 119*

114 *p*

Voice: when you say no\_ I fall down this long dark well a dis-car-ded - instru - ment with *mp*

Vla. *pp* arco, going in and out of sul pont until m.119 pitch bend

Pno. *f* knock on iron frame inside piano *p* slow strum inside of piano *gliss.*

### Empassioned

118 *p*

Voice: strings still gent-ly vi - bra ting

Vla. *pp* sul tasto → ord. U.H. *gliss.* *mf*

Pno. *pp* *mf*

121 *mp*

Voice: but I too mean what I say and

Vla. *tr* whole step trill *p*

Pno. *mp* *sub. p*

124

Voice: what I say is that life is rush - ing

Vla. 3rd position

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

whole step trill

125

Voice: by us so fast so

Vla.

Pno. *f*

126

Voice: fast that we are

Vla. *f* *ff*

Pno. *f* *ff*

127

mp

al-rea-dy dea.....d and since we are all rea-dy dead it

whole step trill tr n.v. use open strings..... molto vib

ff 6

Piano part with rests and notes.

rit..... ♩ = 40 rit.....

132 *pp* *mp* *p*

fol-lows that we don't have to feel like it's a risk to burn in the light

trill with open strings

tr

pluck strings inside the piano take your time.....

*mf* *p* *mp* *p*

Red. \_\_\_\_\_

### III. After You

♩ = 50 **Fragile**

136

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*mp*

*p*

141

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*mf*

*rit.....*

*p*

*8va*

*loco*

**a tempo**

145

Voice

Vla.

Pno.

*p*

*gliss.*

*p*

It was-n't just that one time it was ev'ry time it was that and no oth - er

149 *p* *f*

Voice

it was buzz and snap crack-le fly fall

Vla.

*fp* *mf* *ff*

Pno.

*f* *mf*

152 *mf* *p*

Voice

af-ter-wards turn-ing in-ward bro-ken op en re - sol-ving re - solved

Vla.

sul pont *mp* *mf*

Pno.

*p*

loco

158 *mf* *mp*

Voice

it felt like it - self grasp - ing bro - ken o - pen

Vla.

*mp* *p* *gliss.*

Pno.

trill with fundamental

January 26th, 2022 NYC/Miami