

N° 1123B

Eve Beglarian

It Happens Like This

for violin, viola, and actor

commissioned by Mary Sharp Cronson and Works and Process, Inc.



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## IT HAPPENS LIKE THIS

by James Tate

I was outside St. Cecelia's Rectory smoking a cigarette when a goat appeared beside me. It was mostly black and white, with a little reddish brown here and there. When I started to walk away, it followed. I was amused and delighted, but wondered what the laws were on this kind of thing. There's a leash law for dogs, but what about goats? People smiled at me and admired the goat. "It's not my goat," I explained. "It's the town's goat. I'm just taking my turn caring for it." "I didn't know we had a goat," one of them said. "I wonder when my turn is." "Soon," I said. "Be patient. Your time is coming." The goat stayed by my side. It stopped when I stopped. It looked up at me and I stared into its eyes. I felt he knew everything essential about me. We walked on. A policeman on his beat looked us over. "That's a mighty fine goat you got there," he said, stopping to admire. "It's the town's goat," I said. "His family goes back three-hundred years with us," I said, "from the beginning." The officer leaned forward to touch him, then stopped and looked up at me. "Mind if I pat him?" he asked. "Touching this goat will change your life," I said. "It's your decision." He thought real hard for a minute, and then stood up and said, "What's his name?" "He's called the Prince of Peace," I said. "God! This town is like a fairy tale. Everywhere you turn there's mystery and wonder. And I'm just a child playing cops and robbers forever. Please forgive me if I cry." "We forgive you, Officer," I said. "And we understand why you, more than anybody, should never touch the Prince." The goat and I walked on. It was getting dark and we were beginning to wonder where we would spend the night.

From *Lost River* by James Tate, published by Sarabande Books, Inc.  
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To the musicians:

The basis for the violin and viola parts is a traditional Persian *chaharmezrab* melody and dance rhythm. I am happy to supply you with a recording of this *chaharmezrab* performed on setar to help you get some ideas about how to play the piece. You want to feel it in one; it could as easily be notated in 6/8 as 3/4. The two musicians sing the vocal part while playing; please feel free to sing in whatever octave is most comfortable for you. It should feel decorative and fanciful, but natural and unforced.

To the actor:

The text is lined up in the score to roughly indicate cues with the string lines. Within these guidelines, you can pace your reading very freely. As you rehearse with the players, you will be able to work out the important cues together to give you maximum freedom while still interacting most effectively.

#### PROGRAM NOTE

*It Happens Like This* sets the recitation of a poem by James Tate against an adaptation of a traditional Persian *chaharmezrab* melody and dance rhythm. Perhaps the cyclical embroiderings of the *chaharmezrab* echo the successive embroiderings of the narrator's tale of the goat. *It Happens Like This* was commissioned by Mary Sharp Cronson and Works and Process, Inc. for a celebration of James Tate at the Guggenheim Museum. Many thanks to Mary Rowell for her ideas and advice for this duo version. The piece was written while in residence at the Civitella Ranieri and is dedicated with affection to Diego Mencaroni, who once loved a goat.

# It Happens Like This

Eve Beglarian  
text by James Tate

$\text{♩} = 56$

vox

I was outside St. Cecelia's Rectory smoking a cigarette when a goat appeared beside me.

vln

vla

*mf*

9

It was mostly black and white, with a little reddish brown

vln

vla

16

here and there. When I started to walk away, it followed.

vln

vla

23

I was amused and delighted, but wondered what the laws were on this kind of thing.  
There's a leash law for dogs, but what about goats?

vln

vla

31

People smiled at me and

vln

vla

38 and admired the goat. "It's not my goat," I explained. "It's the town's goat. I'm just taking my turn caring for it."

Musical score for measures 38-44. The score is written for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part is in treble clef and the viola part is in alto clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

45 "I didn't know we had a goat," one of them said. "I wonder when my turn is."

Musical score for measures 45-51. The score is written for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part is in treble clef and the viola part is in alto clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

52 "Soon," I said. "Be patient. Your time is coming."

Musical score for measures 52-58. The score is written for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part is in treble clef and the viola part is in alto clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

59 The goat stayed by my side. It stopped when I stopped. It looked up at me and I stared into its eyes.

Musical score for measures 59-65. The score is written for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part is in treble clef and the viola part is in alto clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

66 I felt he knew everything essential about me.

Musical score for measures 66-72. The score is written for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part is in treble clef and the viola part is in alto clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

73

We walked on. A policeman on his beat looked us over. "That's a mighty fine goat you got there," he said,

Musical score for measures 73-79. The score consists of three staves: Violin (vln), Viola (vla), and Voice (vox). The violin and viola parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The voice part is silent for these measures.

80

stopping to admire. "It's the town's goat," I said. "His family goes back three-hundred years with us," I said, "from the beginning."

*con 8<sup>va</sup> ad lib.*

Musical score for measures 80-86. The score consists of three staves: Violin (vln), Viola (vla), and Voice (vox). The violin and viola parts continue with their rhythmic accompaniment. The voice part begins with the lyrics "la la la la la la la la" starting in measure 80. The instruction *con 8<sup>va</sup> ad lib.* is written above the voice staff.

87

The officer leaned forward to touch him, then stopped and looked up at me. "Mind if I pat him?" he asked.

Musical score for measures 87-93. The score consists of three staves: Violin (vln), Viola (vla), and Voice (vox). The violin and viola parts continue with their rhythmic accompaniment. The voice part begins with the lyrics "la la la la la" starting in measure 87.

94

"Touching this goat will change your life," I said.

Musical score for measures 94-100. The score consists of three staves: Violin (vln), Viola (vla), and Voice (vox). The violin and viola parts continue with their rhythmic accompaniment. The voice part begins with the lyrics "la la la la la la la la la la la" starting in measure 94.

101 He thought real hard for a minute,

vox  
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

vln

vla

107 and then stood up and said, "What's his name?"

vox  
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

vln

vla

114 "He's called the Prince of Peace," I said.

vox  
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

vln

vla

120 "God! This town is like a fairy tale. Everywhere you turn there's mystery and wonder.

vln

vla

127

And I'm just a child playing cops and robbers forever. Please forgive me if I cry."

Musical score for measures 127-133. The score is for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the viola provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

134

"We forgive you, Officer," I said. "And we understand why you, more than anybody,

Musical score for measures 134-140. This system includes a vocal line (vox) and instrumental parts for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The vocal line consists of a series of 'la' syllables with long horizontal lines underneath, indicating sustained notes. The instrumental parts continue with their respective melodic and rhythmic patterns.

141

should never touch the Prince."

The goat and I walked on.

It was getting dark

Musical score for measures 141-147. This system includes a vocal line (vox) and instrumental parts for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The vocal line has 'la la la la' followed by several measures of rests. The instrumental parts continue with their respective melodic and rhythmic patterns.

148

and we were beginning to wonder where we would spend the night.

Musical score for measures 148-154. The score is for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the viola provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

155

Musical score for measures 155-161. The score is for Violin (vln) and Viola (vla). The violin part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the viola provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).