

N° 1150

Eve Beglarian

Light up Your face

2013

for actor, voice, and piano



EVBVD MUSIC
468 Sixth Avenue #4
New York, NY 10011
www.ebvvd.com

Light up Your face is a piece about the murder of Medgar Evers on 12 June 1963. Eudora Welty wrote a story the next night from the point of view of the murderer, who had not yet been identified. It has been hailed as an uncanny portrait of the killer, but it is wrong in one important respect. Byron De La Beckwith was not an impoverished nearly illiterate redneck, he was an upstanding middle class salesman and WWII veteran, who along with participating in the White Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan, regularly attended the Episcopal Church in Greenwood, MS.

That last fact is the inspiration for the piece, which includes an excerpt from Eudora Welty's story against a harmonization of the chant version of the refrain of Psalm 80: Light up Your face, that we may be rescued.

After three trials, Byron De La Beckwith was finally convicted of first-degree murder in 1994.

•

To the performers: I have supplied a score with the spoken text interleaved, but I am quite flexible about how the singing and talking line up. The singer should begin shortly after "standing dark against the light." The second vocal repetition (with the piano accompaniment) should start so that the actor says "he walked with it on his back to better light" under the first vocal phrase "Domine." Beyond that, both the vocal/piano and the spoken parts need to follow their own internal tempi and phrasing. As you listen to one another in rehearsal, you may find other compelling guideposts and collisions.

The performance of the Psalm should in no way be altered by the actor's words. Similarly, the actor's words must be performed with absolutely no irony or distancing.

As soon as I heard wheels, I knowed who was coming. That was him and bound to be him. It was the right nigger heading in a new white car up his driveway towards his garage with the light shining, but stopping before he got there, maybe not to wake 'em. That was him. I knowed it when he cut off the car lights and put his foot out and I knowed him standing dark against the light. I knowed him then like I know me now. I knowed him even by his still, listening back.

Never seen him before, never seen him since, never seen anything of his black face but his picture, never seen his face alive, any time at all, or anywheres, and didn't want to, need to, never hope to see that face and never will. As long as there was no question in my mind.

He had to be the one. He stood right still and waited against the light, his back was fixed, fixed on me like a preacher's eyeballs when he's yelling "Are you saved?" He's the one.

I'd already brought up my rifle, I'd already taken my sights. And I'd already got him, because it was too late then for him or me to turn by one hair.

Something darker than him, like the wings of a bird, spread on his back and pulled him down. He climbed up once, like a man under bad claws, and like just blood could weigh a ton he walked with it on his back to better light. Didn't get no further than his door. And fell to stay.

He was down. He was down, and a ton load of bricks on his back wouldn't have laid any heavier. There on his paved driveway, yes sir.

Everybody: It don't get you nowhere to take nothing from nobody unless you make sure it's for keeps, for good and all, for ever and amen.

• Eudora Welty: *Where is the Voice Coming From?*

Light up Your face

Eve Beglarian
Eudora Welty; Latin chant

As soon as I heard wheels, I knowed who was coming. That was him and bound to be him. It was the right nigger heading in a new white car up his driveway towards his garage with the light shining, but stopping before he got there, maybe not to wake 'em. That was him. I knowed it when he cut off the car lights and put his foot out and I knowed him standing dark against the light.

30 *p flexible, legato*

vox

Do - - - mi - ne - - - - de - us vir - tu - - -

I knowed him then like I know me now. I knowed him even by his still, listening back.

37

tum - - - - con - ver - - -

Never seen him before, never seen him since, never seen anything of his black face but his picture, never seen his

44

te - - - - nos - - - -

face alive, any time at all, or anywheres, and didn't want to, need to, never hope to see that face and never will.

52

et - - - os -

As long as there was no question in my mind. He had to be the one. He stood right still and waited

59

ten - - - de - - - fa - ci - em - - - tu - - - -

against the light, his back was fixed, fixed on me like a preacher's eyeballs when he's yelling "Are you saved?"

67

am, - - - - et sal - - - -

He's the one.

I'd already brought up my rifle, I'd already taken my sights.

75 

And I'd already got him, because it was too late then for him or me to turn by one hair. Something darker than him,

84 

like the wings of a bird, spread on his back and pulled him down. He climbed up once, like a man under bad claws,

92 

and like just blood could weigh a ton he walked with it on his back to better light.

100 

Didn't get no further than his door. And fell to stay. He was down.

108 

He was down, and a ton load of bricks on his back wouldn't have laid any heavier. There on his paved driveway,

116

yes sir.

Everybody: It don't get you nowhere to take nothing from nobody unless you make

124

sure it's for keeps, for good and all, for ever and amen.

131

139

148

Musical score for measures 148-154. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The piano accompaniment includes chords with slurs and a fermata over the final measure.

155

Musical score for measures 155-161. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The piano accompaniment includes chords with slurs and a fermata over the final measure.