

If I Were a Dog
GP - R017.1
SSA choir, piano

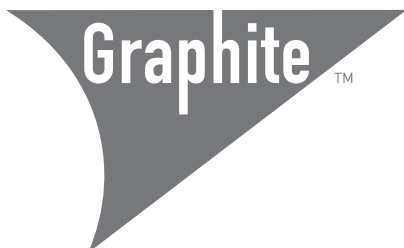
Paul John Rudoï

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Paul John Rudoï

If I Were a Dog

for SSA choir and piano



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Text:

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I would trot down this road sniffing
on one side and then the other
peeing a little here and there
wherever I felt the urge
having a good time what the hell*
saving some because it's a long road

but since I'm not a dog
I walk straight down the road
trying to get home before dark

if I were a dog and I had a master
who beat me I would run away
and go hungry and sniff around
until I found a master who loved me
I could tell by his smell and I
would lick his face so he knew

or maybe it would be a woman
I would protect her we could go
everywhere together even down this
dark road and I wouldn't run from side
to side sniffing I would always
be protecting her and I would stop
to pee only once in awhile

sometimes in the afternoon we could
go to the park and she would throw
a stick I would bring it back to her

each time I put the stick at her feet
I would say this is my heart
and she would say I will make it fly
but you must bring it back to me
I would always bring it back to her
and to no other if I were a dog

- "If I Were a Dog" by Richard Shelton, from *The Last Person to Hear Your Voice*. © University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007. Reprinted with permission.

From the Composer:

I own many different books of poetry, from local writers to the legends we know and love which I reference to find the right texts for new commissions and projects. But Richard Shelton's wonderfully vibrant "If I Were a Dog" came from one of my occasional encounters with *The Writer's Almanac*, NPR's indispensable resource for downright great poems. I wanted to set this beautifully crafted gem without feeling fake, and I hope I've done it some justice.

TM
Above all, don't take it too seriously or too lightly. Deliver the text clearly and phrase as you would speak it. Don't go overboard with tempo shifts and let the piano bounce rather than tiptoe. No need to hit an audience over the head with a wink (e.g. measures 51-53) or something deeper (e.g. measures 67-70). In essence, let Shelton's words do the work and revel in the joy of a pet's unconditional love.

- Paul John Rudoi, 2018

Performance Notes

* In m. 12, while the score uses the alternate word "heck," the original text is found on this page. Feel free to use either at your discretion.

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Commissioned by Will McLean for the South Salem High School Chamber Men's Choir

If I Were a Dog

for SSA choir and piano

Richard Shelton

Paul John Rudoj

Thoughtful (♩ ~ 72) Trotting (♩ ~ 116)

mp **Graphite** notable. elevated.

Soprano 1
If I were a dog... TM

Soprano 2
If I were a dog...

Alto
If I were a dog...

Thoughtful (♩ ~ 72) Trotting (♩ ~ 116)

Piano *mf* **Graphite** notable. elevated.

* Play full duration, non staccato.

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Lyrics from the poem "If I Were a Dog" TM from *The Last Person to Hear Your Voice*,
by Richard Shelton, © 2007. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press,
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Please report performances of this piece to the composer at paul@pauljohnrudoj.com

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5

mf

S1 I would trot down this road sniff-ing on one

mf

S2 I would trot down this road sniff-ing on one

mf

A I would trot down this road sniff-ing on one

8

S1 side and then the oth-er pee-ing a lit-tle here and there

S2 side and then the oth-er pee-ing a lit-tle here and there

A side and then the oth-er wher - ev-er I felt the

11

f

S1 hav-ing a good time what the heck* sav-ing some — be-cause it's a

S2 hav-ing a good time what the heck* sav-ing some — be-cause it's a

A urge hav-ing a good time what the heck* sav-ing some — be-cause it's a

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14

mf

S1 long road I walk

S2 long road I walk

A long road but since I'm not a dog I walk

mp *mf*

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* See performance notes.

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17

rit. *a tempo*

S1
straight down the road try - ing to get home be - fore dark *p*

S2
straight down the road try - ing to get home be - fore dark *p*

A
straight down the road try - ing to get home be - fore dark *p*

rit. *a tempo*

p

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20

mf

mf

24

S1 *mp* if I _____ were a dog

S2 *mp* if I _____ were a dog

A *mp* if I _____ were a dog

p

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27

S1 *mf* and I had a mas - ter who beat me

S2 *mf* and I had a mas - ter who beat me

A *mf* and I had a mas - ter who beat me

mp *p non cresc.*

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30

S1 *p* I would run a - way *mf* and go

S2 *p* I would run a - way *mf* and go

A *mf* and go

mp

33

S1 *f* hun - gry and sniff a - round un - til I found a mas - ter who loved me

S2 *f* hun - gry and sniff a - round un - til I found a mas - ter who loved me

A *f* hun - gry and sniff a - round un - til I found a mas - ter who loved me

f

36

mf

S1 I could tell by his smell and I would lick his

S2 I could tell by his smell and I would lick his

A I could tell by his smell and I would lick his

mf

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39

mp legato

S1 face so he knew or may-be it would be a

S2 face so he knew

A face so he knew or may-be it would be a

mp

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42 *mf*

S1 wo-man I would pro- tect her we could go eve- ry-where to- geth- er

S2 *mf*
I would pro- tect her we could go eve- ry- where to- geth- er

A *mf*
wo-man I would pro- tect her we could go eve- ry-where to- geth- er

45

S1 e- ven down— this dark and I would-n't run from side to side

S2 e- ven down— this dark and I would-n't run from side to side

A e- ven down— this dark road *mp*

no pedal

48

S1 *mp* sniff - ing al - ways be pro - tect - ing her *mf*

S2 *mp* sniff - ing al - ways be pro - tect - ing her *mf*

A *mf* I would al - ways al - ways be pro - tect - ing her

no pedal

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51

S1 *sub. p* and I would stop to pee on - ly once in a - while

S2 *sub. p* and I would stop to pee on - ly once in a - while

A *sub. p* and I would stop to pee on - ly once in a - while

p

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54

S1 *espress. mp* some - times in the af - ter -

S2 *espress. mp* some - times in the af - ter -

A *espress. mp* some - times in the af - ter -

mp dolce *p*

pedal harmonically

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57

S1 *rit.* noon we could go to the park and she would throw a

S2 noon we could go to the park and she would throw a

A noon we could go to the park and she would throw a

mp *p* *mp* *p*

rit.

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Tempo I (♩ ~ 72)

60

S1
stick _____ back to her

S2
stick _____ back to her TM *notable. elevated.*

A
stick I would bring it back to her

Tempo I (♩ ~ 72) *sustained, not detached*

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63

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67 *p*

S1
each time — I put the stick at her feet I would say — this is my

S2
p
each time — I put the stick at her feet I would say this is my

A
p
each time — I put the stick at her feet I would say this is my

freely to the end

70 *mf* *p*

S1
heart and she would say I will make it fly

S2
heart and she would say I will make it fly

A
heart and she would say but you must

freely™ to the end

73

S1 *sempre p*
I would al - ways bring it back to her

S2 *sempre p*
I would al - ways bring it back to her

A *mf* *p* *sempre p*
bring it back to me I would al - ways bring it back to her

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76

S1 *mf* *p*
and to no oth - er if I were a

S2 *mf* *p*
and to no oth - er if I were a

A *mf* *p*
and to no oth - er if I were a

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79

S1 dog...

S2 dog...

A dog...

l.h. r.h. l.h. *p* *rit.*

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Paul John Rudoï



Paul John Rudoï is an award-winning composer, conductor, tenor vocalist, and arts entrepreneur.

Deemed “indisputably unique, confident, and innovative” through the American Prize, Paul’s award-winning compositions have been commissioned and performed by various ensembles and artists throughout North America and Europe. Garnering grants and support from the Jerome Foundation, the ACF, MRAC, MSAB, the NEA, and ASCAP, his music is published through PJR Music alongside Graphite, Santa Barbara, Walton, Morningstar, and ECS music publishers.

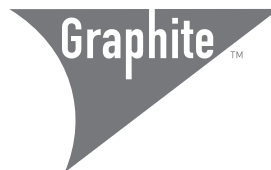
As a professional tenor vocalist, Paul has performed and recorded a wide range of music in professional ensembles nationwide including Seraphic Fire, The Santa Fe Desert Chorale, True Concord, the Oregon Bach Festival Chorus, and most notably Cantus.

Paul is also a fierce advocate for new music trends, resources, and issues. His most recent project Consortio is a commissioning platform bringing composers, conductors, and ensembles together over common themes, interests, and accessibility. Visit consortio.io for more information.

Paul holds degrees from The Hartt School and the University of Oregon, and his teachers have included Sharon Paul, Craig Phillips, Robert Kyr, Libby Larsen, and Edward Bolkovac.

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