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JULIANA HALL

# FABLES FOR A PRINCE

6 Songs for Soprano, Mezzo Soprano,  
Tenor, Baritone, and Piano

on Fables by  
Jean de La Fontaine

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Cover design by David Sims.

**TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DAUPHIN**

I sing when Aesop's wand animates my lyre.  
 Make-believe is here in its antique attire—  
 Insight confirmed by direct observation;  
 Even fish speak. As each finds expression,  
 Animals enact my universal theme,  
 Educating man, fantasist though I seem.  
 DAZZLING CHILD OF A PRINCE whom the gods have made their care,  
 All eyes converge upon what you may be and are.  
 With the noblest minds acknowledging your sway,  
 You'll count your days by conquests in glittering array.  
 Resonance deeper than mine must sing  
 What it was and is to have been born a king.  
 These verses sketch on unassuming textures,  
 The byplay of inconsequential creatures;  
 And if I have failed to give you real delight,  
 My reward must be that I had hoped I might.

**THE FOX AND THE CROW**

On his airy perch among the branches  
 Master Crow was holding cheese in his beak.  
 Master Fox, whose pose suggested fragrances,  
 Said in language which of course I cannot speak,  
 "Aha, superb Sir Ebony, well met.  
 How black! who else boasts your metallic jet!  
 If your warbling were unique,  
 Rest assured, as you are sleek,  
 One would say that our wood had hatched nightingales."  
 All aglow, Master Crow tried to run a few scales,  
 Risking trills and intervals,  
 Dropping the prize as his huge beak sang false.  
 The fox pounced on the cheese and remarked, "My dear sir,  
 Learn that every flatterer  
 Lives at the flattered listener's cost:  
 A lesson worth more than the cheese that you lost."  
 The tardy learner, smarting under ridicule,  
 Swore he'd learned his last lesson as somebody's fool.

**THE HEN THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGGS**

Take all that is there and forfeit increment,  
 Is a truth too clear for argument  
 In the old fairy tale in which golden eggs were laid,  
 One a day. The poor owner would stare  
 At the hen, till sure there was gold in her to share,  
 Then killed, spread out the bird, and of course was repaid  
 By no more than would be found in an ordinary hen.  
 He had cut the magic chain and she'd never lay again.  
 Think of this when covetous!  
 How many we have seen in our own century  
 Reduced to poverty by striving hard to be  
 Prematurely prosperous.

**THE HORSE AND THE ASS**

If we lend no aid in this world of care  
 When a neighbor is dying of despair,  
 Then we find that his load is our own.

An ass took the road next a horse of marked surliness—  
 A beast with no weight on him but his harness;  
 Whereas the ass was so burdened that he was thrown.  
 He begged that the horse assist him in some way  
 Lest reaching the city be impossible;  
 Saying, "My prayer is hardly culpable;  
 As much as half my load would be to you but child's play."  
 The horse made a rejoinder so coarse it must be implied  
 While watching the ass plod and stumble till he died—  
 A repercussion to deplore,  
 Since afterward he had to bear  
 Both the load that had been the ass's share  
 And the hide of the former servitor.

**THE PHYSICIANS**

Now one of Doctor Fear-the-Worst's cases was sad,  
 Attended also by a Doctor Hope-the-Best,  
 Who swore he'd cure the man whose condition was bad;  
 Whereas the other thought he'd earned eternal rest.  
 Contradictory remedies failed to cure,  
 And Death interposed the sentence which all must endure.  
 Doctor Fear-the-Worst felt that he had been justified—  
 In fact, each thought he'd prescribed judiciously.  
 "Dead," said one, "as he was warned." The other replied,  
 "He'd be living now if he'd listened to me."

**EPILOGUE**

Our peregrination must end there.  
 One's skin creeps when poets persevere.  
 Don't press pith from core to perimeter;  
 Take the flower of the subject, the thing that is rare.  
 Besides, I'd best conserve my pen  
 And energies to write again  
 And sound another kind of praise.  
 Love, who inspires my fantasies,  
 Is restive and craves a change, he says—  
 The tyrant whom I have to please.  
 Let Psyche be my theme again; Damon, you ask that I express  
 Her mourning and her joyousness.  
 I shall try; I kindle when  
 She bids me tune and touch my lute,  
 So long as Love does not torment me again,  
 Setting similar tasks to execute!

—Jean de La Fontaine

for James Clynych, with affection

# Fables for a Prince

for Soprano, Mezzo Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, and Piano

To His Royal Highness the Dauphin

Jean de La Fontaine

English translation by Marianne Moore

Juliana Hall

(b. 1958)

Magically (♩ = 40)

♩ = 56

Magically (♩ = 40)

♩ = 56

3

♩ = 69

♩ = 69

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0

sing when Ae - sop's wand an - i - mates my

sing when Ae - sop's wand an - i - mates my

sing when Ae - sop's wand an - i - mates my

sing when Ae - sop's wand an - i - mates my

Ped. \* Ped. \*

8<sup>va</sup> gliss.

8

lyre.

lyre.

lyre.

lyre.

Ped. 6 \*

10

*mf*  
Make - be - lieve is here. <sup>10</sup> in its an - tique at - tire

*mf*  
Make - be - lieve

12

*mp marcato*  
In - sight con - firmed by di - rect ob - ser -

*mp marcato*  
In - sight con - firmed by di - rect ob - ser -

*mp marcato*  
In - sight con - firmed by di - rect ob - ser -

*mp marcato*  
In - sight con - firmed by di - rect ob - ser -

*mp marcato*

## The Fox and the Crow

Jean de La Fontaine  
English translation by Marianne Moore

Juliana Hall  
(b. 1958)

1 Simply, as a story (♩ = 60)

*mp*  
On his air - y perch a - mong the branch - es

Simply, as a story (♩ = 60)

*p*

3  
Mast - er Crow was hold - ing cheese in his beak.

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5

*mp*

Mast - er Fox, whose pose sug - gest - ed fra - gran - ces,

*mp*

6

*f*

Said in lan - guage which of course I can - not speak,

*f*



## The Hen that Laid the Golden Eggs

Jean de La Fontaine

English translation by Marianne Moore

Juliana Hall

(b. 1958)

As a statement (♩ = 66)

1

*mf*

Take all that is there and for - feit in - cre - ment, —

*mf*

Take all that is there and for - feit in - cre - ment, —

*mf*

Take all that is there and for - feit in - cre - ment, —

*mf*

Take all that is there and for - feit in - cre - ment, —

As a statement (♩ = 66)

*mf*

3

Is a truth too clear for ar - gu - ment —

Is a truth too clear for ar - gu - ment —

Is a truth too clear for ar - gu - ment —

Is a truth too clear for ar - gu - ment —

*mf*

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Magically

Magically

# The Horse and the Ass

Jean de La Fontaine  
English translation by Marianne Moore

Juliana Hall  
(b. 1958)

1 **Expressive** (♩ = 63) *mp*

If we lend no aid in this

If we lend no aid in this

**Expressive** (♩ = 63) *mp*

world of care When a neigh - bor is

world of care When a neigh - bor is

world of care When a neigh - bor is

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dy - ing of des - pair, Then we  
dy - ing of des - pair, Then we

*mp*

*mp*

7  
find that his load is our own.  
find that his load is his own.

*pp*

*pp*

## The Physicians

Jean de La Fontaine  
English translation by Marianne Moore

Juliana Hall  
(b. 1958)

1 Casually (♩ = 80)

mp

Now one of Doc - tor Fear - the - Worst's

mp

Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \*

3

mp energetic

At - tend - ed al - so by a

cas - es was sad.

Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \*

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5

*mf*

Doc - - - tor. Hope - the - Best,

*energetic mf*

Who

7

swore he'd cure the man whose con - di - tion was bad;

Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \*

## Epilogue

Jean de La Fontaine  
English translation by Marianne Moore

Juliana Hall  
(b. 1958)

1 **Magically** (♩ = 40) ♩ = 56

**Magically** (♩ = 40) ♩ = 56

*mp*  
Our

*p*  
Ped. \* Ped. \*

3  
*mp*  
Our per - e - gri - na - tion must end there.  
per - e - gri - na - tion must end there.

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6 *mp*

One's skin creeps when poets persevere.

One's skin creeps when poets persevere.

8 *mp*

Don't press pith from core to periphery;

*p* *mp*

Ped. \*