

N° 1123

Eve Beglarian

It Happens Like This

for cello 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 cellist:

The basis for the cello part 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. The slurs indicate how you want to phrase the line even when you can't actually slur the notes. Please feel free to perform the singing 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 cello line. Within these guidelines, you can pace your reading very freely. As you rehearse with the cellist, you will be able to work out the important cues together to give you maximum freedom while still interacting most effectively with the cello and voice.

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 Greg Hesselink for help and advice with the cello notation. 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

music: eve beglarian
text: james tate

$\text{♩} = 112$ I was outside St. Cecelia's Rectory smoking a cigarette
when a goat appeared beside me.

mf

10 It was mostly black and white, with a little reddish brown here and there.

17 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?

24

31 People smiled at me and admired the goat.

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

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

53 "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.

60

The musical score is written for a single instrument, likely a piano, in a 6/8 time signature. It consists of ten staves of music, each labeled 'play' on the left. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups. There are several measures with rests, particularly at the beginning of each line. The dynamic marking 'mf' (mezzo-forte) is placed below the first staff. The lyrics are written above the notes, with some lines spanning across multiple staves. The piece ends with a final chord on the tenth staff.

I felt he knew everything essential about me.

We walked on.

67
play

A policeman on his beat looked us over.

“That’s a mighty fine goat you got there,” he said, stopping

75
play

to admire. “It’s the town’s goat,” I said. “His family goes back three-hundred years with us,” I said, “from the beginning.”

81
sing

81
play

The officer leaned forward to touch him, then stopped

and looked up at me.

“Mind if I pat him?” he asked.

89
play

“Touching this goat will change your life,” I said.

“It’s your decision.”

95
sing

95
play

He thought real hard for a minute, and then stood up and said,

102
sing

102
play

“What’s his name?”

“He’s called the Prince of Peace,” I said.

109
sing

109
play

116 “God! This town is like a fairy tale. Everywhere you turn there’s mystery and wonder.”

sing

play

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

123

play

“We forgive you, Officer,” I said. “And we

131

sing

play

understand why you, more than anybody, should never touch the Prince.”

138

sing

play

The goat and I walked on. It was getting dark and we were beginning to wonder

144

play

where we would spend the night.

150

play

156

play