

Winter Scenes

by Donald M. Skirvin

I. Shuddering Stars

II. Unfaltering Fire

III. Strange Twilight

IV. Dusky Gold

The Winter Scene by Bliss Carman

I

The rutted roads are all like iron; skies
Are keen and brilliant; only the oak-leaves cling
In the bare woods, or the hardy bitter-sweet;
Drivers have put their sheepskin jackets on;
And all the ponds are sealed with sheeted ice
That rings with stroke of skate and hockey-
stick,
Or in the twilight cracks with running whoop.
Bring in the logs of oak and hickory,
And make an ample blaze on the wide hearth.
Now is the time, with winter o'er the world,
For books and friends and yellow candle-light,
And timeless lingering by the settling fire.
While all the shuddering stars are keen with cold.

II

Out from the silent portal of the hours,
When frosts are come and all the hosts put on
Their burnished gear to march across the night
And o'er a darkened earth in splendor shine,
Slowly above the world Orion wheels ¹⁾
His glittering square, while on the shadowy hill
And throbbing like a sea-light through the dusk,
Great Sirius rises in his flashing blue. ²⁾
Lord of the winter night, august and pure,
Returning year on year untouched by time,
To hearten faith with thine unfaltering fire,
There are no hurts that beauty cannot ease,
No ills that love cannot at last repair,
In the victorious progress of the soul.

III

Russet and white and gray is the oak wood
In the great snow. Still from the North it comes,
Whispering, settling, sifting through the trees,
O'erloading branch and twig. The road is lost.
Clearing and meadow, stream and ice-bound
pond
Are made once more a trackless wilderness
In the white hush where not a creature stirs;
And the pale sun is blotted from the sky.
In that strange twilight the lone traveller halts
To listen to the stealthy snowflakes fall.
And then far off toward the Stamford shore, ³⁾
Where through the storm the coastwise liners
go,
Faint and recurrent on the muffled air,
A foghorn booming through the Smother-hark! ⁴⁾

IV

When the day changed and the mad wind died
down,
The powdery drifts that all day long had blown
Across the meadows and the open fields,
Or whirled like diamond dust in the bright sun,
Settled to rest, and for a tranquil hour
The lengthening bluish shadows on the snow
Stole down the orchard slope, and a rose light
Flooded the earth with beauty and with peace.
Then in the west behind the cedars black
The sinking sun stained red the winter dusk
With sullen flare upon the snowy ridge,–
As in a masterpiece by Hokusai, ⁵⁾
Where on a background gray, with flaming breath
A scarlet dragon dies in dusky gold.

Notes

- 1) Orion: Winter constellation in the Northern Hemisphere named after a hunter with belt and sword.
- 2) Sirius: Brightest star in the night sky, located in the constellation Canis Major.
- 3) Stamford: Town in Connecticut.
- 4) Smother: Thick cloud of snow, fog, or spray.
- 5) Hokusai: Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese artist (1760-1849). Perhaps his most iconic painting is *The Great Wave at Kanagawa* from a Series of Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji.

Notice that the poem uses a form of pentameter blank verse, although the poem doesn't always follow the iambic pattern.

Bliss Carman (1861–1929) was a Canadian poet who lived and worked most of his life in the United States and was acclaimed, at least unofficially, as Canada's poet laureate during his later years. This four-poem work, *The Winter Scene*, was first published in the magazine, *The Nation*, in January, 1917.

I have chosen to call this work "Winter Scenes" and given each movement a title that derives from text in each poem. The intent is to create music that mirrors the strong images Bliss Carman created in his four-part poem. Movements I and IV are SATB. Movement II is SSAA, and movement III is TTBB. This work has instances of *divisi* in all movements but especially movements I and IV. Performance time is approximately 18–20 minutes.

Donald Skirvin–Seattle–June, 2015

Winter Scenes

Bliss Carman
The Winter Scene (1917)

Dedicated to Dr. Barlow Bradford

Donald M. Skirvin

I. Shuddering Stars

SATB

Soprano
p
 shud-der - ing — stars —

Alto
p
 shud-der - ing — stars —

Tenor
p
 shud-der - ing —

Bass
p
 shud-der - ing —

Piano
p
 shud-der - ing —

Perusal Score for Performance

Notice that the piano part in this score is to be used only with the SATB + piano performance version and for rehearsal purposes. For the version with instrumental accompaniment, there is a separate piano part.

4

S *p* The rut-ted roads are all like iron;

A *p* The rut-ted roads are all like iron;

T stars Ah

B stars Ah *Baritones only*

4 *mp* *p*

9 S skies Are keen and bril - liant; on-ly the oak-leaves cling In the bare woods,

A skies Are keen and bril - liant; on-ly the oak-leaves cling In the bare woods,

T

B

9 *8va* *loco*

3 3 3

13

S or the har - dy bit - ter-sweet;

A or the har - dy bit - ter-sweet;

T *mp* Driv-ers have put their sheep-skin jack-ets on; And all the

B *mp* Driv-ers have put their sheep-skin jack-ets on; And all the

13 *Sw----- loco*

17

S

A

T That rings with stroke of skate and hock-ey stick,
ponds are sealed with sheet-ed ice

B That rings with stroke of skate and hock-ey stick,
ponds are sealed with sheet-ed ice

17

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 112)

20

S

A

T

B

Or in the twi-light cracks with run-ning whoop. whoop.

Or in the twi-light cracks with run-ning whoop. whoop.

20

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 112)

22

S

A

T

B

Bring in the logs of oak and hick - o - ry, Bring in the logs

Bring in the logs of oak and hick - o - ry, Bring in the logs

Bring in the logs of oak and hick - o - ry, Bring

Bring in the logs of oak and hick - o - ry,

22

TWO PAGES REMOVED

42 *a tempo primo* ♩ = 68 *mp*

S Now is the time, with win-ter o'er the world,

A Now is the time, with win-ter o'er the world,

T Now is the time, with

B Now is the time,

42 *a tempo primo* ♩ = 68

S win-ter o'er the world,

A win-ter o'er the world,

T win-ter o'er the world, win-ter o'er win-ter o'er the world,

B with win-ter o'er the win-ter o'er the world,

48

48

Not for Perusal Score

52 *mf*

S Now is the time, with win-ter o'er the world,

A *mf* Now is the time, with win-ter o'er the world,

T *mf* Now is the time, o'er the world,

B *mf* with win-ter o'er the world,

52 *mf*

56

S Now is the time, For books and friends and yel - low

A Now is the time, For books and friends and yel - low

T For books and friends and yel - low

B For books and friends and yel - low

56

59 *mp* *p*

S can-dle-light, For books and friends and yel-low can-dle-light, And

A can-dle-light, For books and friends and yel-low can-dle-light, And

T can-dle-light, For books and friends and yel-low can-dle - light, And

B can-dle-light, Now _____ is _____ the time, And

59 *mp*

63 *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

S time-less lin-ger - ing by the * set - tl - ing fire.

A time-less lin-ger - ing by the * set - tl - ing fire.

T time-less lin-ger - ing by the * set - tl - ing fire.

B time-less lin-ger - ing by the * set - tl - ing fire.

63 *pp*

* Sung as "set-tuh-ling"

68 *ppp*

S And time - less lin - ger-ing set - tl - ing fire.

A *ppp* And time - less lin - ger-ing set - tl - ing fire.

T *ppp* lin-ger-ing by the set-tl-ing fire.

B *ppp* lin-ger-ing by the set-tl-ing fire.

68

74 *p* While all the shud-der-ing stars are keen with *pp*

A *p* While all the shud-der-ing stars are keen with *pp*

T *p* While all the shud-der-ing stars are keen with *pp*
Add a few baritones MM 75 - 80

B *p* While all the shud-der-ing stars are keen with *pp*

74

pp

78

S *p* cold. shud-der-ing stars *pp* While all the stars

A *p* cold. shud-der-ing stars *pp* While all the stars

T *p* cold. shud-der-ing stars *pp* shud-der-ing stars

B *p* cold. shud-der-ing stars *pp* shud-der-ing stars

78 *ppp* *pp* *pp*

83 *ppp* are keen with cold. shud-der-ing stars

A *ppp* are keen with cold. shud-der-ing stars

T *ppp* are keen with cold. shud-der-ing stars

B *ppp* are keen with cold. shud-der-ing stars

83 *ppp* *ppp*

Add a few baritones MM 85 - 87

ppp

Winter Scenes

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The Winter Scene (1917)

Donald M. Skirvin

II. Unfaltering Fire SSAA

Adagio ♩ = 54

p

Soprano 1

Out from the si-lent por-tal of the hours,

p

Soprano 2

Out from the si-lent por-tal of the hours,

p

Alto 1

Out from the si-lent por-tal of the hours,

p

Alto 2

Out from the si-lent por-tal of the hours,

Adagio ♩ = 54

p

Piano

8va

4

S1 *mp*
When frosts are come and all the hosts put on Their

S2 *mp*
When frosts are come and all the hosts put on Their

A1 *mp*
When frosts are come and all the hosts put on Their

A2 *mp*
When frosts are come and all the hosts put on Their

4 *15^{ma}*
3 5 3 5

6

S1
bur-nished gear _____ to march a - cross the night _____ And o'er a

S2
bur-nished gear _____ to march a - cross the night _____

A1
bur-nished gear _____ to march a - cross the night _____

A2
bur-nished gear _____ to march a - cross the night _____

6 *15^{ma}*
3 5 3 5

Not for Perusal Score Performance

8 *pp*

S1 dark-ened earth _____ in splen-dor shine, Oh _____

S2 dark-ened earth in splen - dor shine, _____ Oh _____ *pp*

A1 dark-ened earth in splen - dor shine, _____ *p* Slow - ly a -

A2 dark-ened earth in splen - dor shine, _____ *p* Slow - ly a -

8 *15^{ma}* *Sua* *loco*

S1 _____ Oh _____ while on the sha-dow-y hill *mp*

S2 _____ Oh _____

A1 bove the world O - ri-on wheels His glit-ter-ing square, Oh _____ *pp*

A2 bove the world O - ri-on wheels His glit-ter-ing square, Oh _____ *pp*

12

3 3 3

17 *mf*

S1 And throb-bing like a sea-light through the dusk, Great Si-ri-us ri -

S2 *mf* Great Si-ri-us ri -

A1 *mf* Great Si-ri-us ri -

A2 *mf* Great Si-ri-us ri -

17 *mf*

21 *f*

S1 - ses in his flash-ing blue. Lord of the win-ter night, Lord of the

S2 *f* - ses in his flash-ing blue. Lord of the win-ter night, Lord of the

A1 *f* - ses in his flash-ing blue. Lord of the win-ter night, Lord of the

A2 *f* - ses in his flash-ing blue. Lord of the win-ter night, Lord of the

21 *f*

TWO PAGES REMOVED

45 *p*

S1 There are no hurts that beau-ty can - not ease, No ills that love

pp *p*

S2 There are no hurts that beau-ty can-not ease, No ills that love

pp *p*

A1 There are no hurts that beau-ty can-not ease, No ills that love

pp *p*

A2 There are no hurts that beau-ty can-not ease, No ills that love

45

S1 *p*

— can-not at last re - pair, No ills that love can-not at last re - pair,

p

S2 *p*

— can-not at last re - pair, No ills that love can-not at last re - pair,

p

A1 *p*

— can-not at last re - pair, No ills that love can-not at last re - pair,

p

A2 *p*

— can-not at last re - pair, No ills that love can-not at last re - pair,

51

51

8vb — — — *loco* *8vb* — — — *loco*

58

S1 *pp*
In the vic-tor-i-ous pro-gress of the soul. In the vic-tor-i-ous

S2 *pp*
In the vic-tor-i-ous pro-gress of the soul. In the vic-tor-i-ous

A1 *pp*
In the vic-tor-i-ous pro-gress of the soul. In the vic-tor-i-ous

A2 *pp*
In the vic-tor-i-ous pro-gress of the soul. In the vic-tor-i-ous

58

64

S1 Upper note: one soprano
pro-gress of the soul.

S2
pro-gress of the soul.

A1
pro-gress of the soul.

A2
pro-gress of the soul.

64

8va

Winter Scenes

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III. Strange Twilight TTBB

Moderato ♩ = 74

mp

Tenor 1

Rus-set and white and gray is the oak wood In the

Tenor 2

mp

Rus-set and white and gray is the oak wood In the

Bass 1

Bass 2

Moderato ♩ = 74

mp

Piano

6

T1 great snow. Still from the North it comes, Whis-per-ing, set - tl -

T2 great snow. Still from the North it comes, Whis-per-ing, set - tl -

B1 *mp* great snow. Still from the North it comes,

B2 *mp* great snow. Still from the North it comes

6

T1 ing, sift - ing through O'er - load - ing branch and twig.

T2 ing, through the trees, O'er - load - ing branch and

B1 sift - ing through the trees, O'er - load - ing branch and

B2 sift - ing through the trees, O'er - load - ing branch and

11

11

14

T1 *mf*
Clear-ing and mea - dow, ice-bound pond Are made once more a

T2 *mf*
twig. Clear-ing and mea - dow, ice-bound pond Are made once more a

B1 *mf*
twig. stream and ice-bound pond Are made once more a

B2 *mf*
branch and twig. stream and ice-bound pond Are made once more a

14

T1 *meno mosso p*
track-less wil - der - ness In the white hush white hush where not a crea-ture

T2 *p*
track-less wil - der - ness In the white hush white hush where not a crea-ture
Add a few baritones to T2 for balance as needed mm 21 - 27.

B1 *p*
track-less wil - der - ness In the white hush white hush where not a crea-ture

B2 *p*
track-less wil - der - ness In the white hush white hush where not a crea-ture

18 *meno mosso*
p

TWO PAGES REMOVED

46

T1

shore, Where through the storm the coast-wise lin-ers go,

T2

shore, Where through the storm the coast-wise lin-ers go,

B1

through the storm the coast-wise lin - ers

B2

through the storm the coast-wise lin - ers

46

T1

Faint and re - cur - rent on the muf - fled air, muf - fled air, A fog-horn

T2

Faint and re - cur - rent on the muf - fled air, muf - fled air,

B1

go, Faint and re - cur - rent on the muf - fled air,

B2

go, Faint and re - cur - rent on the muf - fled air,

51

51

54

T1 boom - ing through the Smo-ther -hark! Smo-ther -hark!

T2 A fog-horn boom - ing through the Smo-ther -hark! Smo-ther -hark!

B1 A fog-horn boom - ing through the Smo-ther -hark!

B2 A fog-horn boom - ing through the Smo-ther -hark!

54

T1 *p* -hark! -hark! -hark! -hark! -hark!

T2 *p* -hark! -hark! -hark! -hark! -hark!

B1 *p* Smo-ther -hark! -hark! -hark!

B2 *p* Smo-ther -hark! [Boom] [Boom] [M] *pp*

58

Stagger breathing as needed, all parts

58

61

T1

-hark! _____ -hark! _____

T2

-hark! _____

B1

_____ -hark! _____

B2

pp *pp* *pp*

[Boom] [M] [Boom] [M]

61

The musical score is for a scene titled 'Strange Twilight' from 'Winter Scenes', page 27. It features five staves: four vocal parts (T1, T2, B1, B2) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The vocal parts have lyrics '-hark!' and '[Boom] [M]'. The piano part includes dynamics like *pp* and *ppp*. A large diagonal watermark 'Perusal Score Not for Performance' is overlaid on the page.

Winter Scenes

Bliss Carman
The Winter Scene (1917)

Donald M. Skirvin

IV. Dusky Gold SATB

Adagio ♩ = 48

Soprano *p* When the day changed

Alto *p* When

Tenor *p* When

Bass *p* When

Piano *p* *mp*

5

S *mp* and the mad wind

A *mp* When the day changed and the mad wind

T *mp* When the day changed and the mad wind

B *mp* When the day changed and the mad wind

5

S *p* *mp*

A *p* *mp*

T *p* *mp*

B *p* *mp*

9

S died down, The pow-der-y drifts that all day long had blown A - cross the

A died down, The pow-der-y drifts that all day long had blown A - cross the

T died down, The pow-der-y drifts that all day long had blown A - cross the

B died down, The pow-der-y drifts that all day long had blown A - cross the

9

13

S
mea-dows and the o - pen fields, Or whirled like

A
mea-dows and the o - pen fields,

T
mea-dows and the o - pen fields,

B
mea-dows and the o - pen fields,

13

15

S

dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Or whirled like dia-mond dust

A

Or whirled like dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Or whirled like

T

Or whirled like dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Or whirled like

B

Or whirled like dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Or whirled like

15

P

17

S in the bright sun, Set-tled to rest,

A dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Set-tled to rest,

T dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Set-tled to rest,

B dia-mond dust in the bright sun, Set-tled to rest,

17

3 3 8 3 3 5

p

pp

poco meno mosso

20

S and for a tran-quil hour The length-en-ing blu-ish sha-dows on the snow

A and for a tran-quil hour The length-en-ing blu-ish

T and for a tran-quil hour The length-en-ing blu-ish

B and for a tran-quil hour The length-en-ing blu-ish

20

pp

poco meno mosso

3 3 8

a tempo primo ♩ = 48

24

S Stole down the or - chard slope, _____

A sha - dows on the snow Stole down the or - chard slope, _____

T sha - dows on the snow Stole down the or - chard slope, _____

B sha - dows on the snow Stole down the or - chard slope, _____

24

a tempo primo ♩ = 48

p

28

poco meno mosso *mp* *pp*

S and a rose light Flood-ed the earth with beau-ty and with peace.

A and a rose light Flood-ed the earth with beau-ty and with peace.

T and a rose light Flood-ed the earth with beau-ty and with peace.

B and a rose light Flood-ed the earth with beau-ty and with peace.

28

poco meno mosso *p*

TWO PAGES REMOVED

46

S snow-y ridge,- As in a mas-ter-piece by — *mp*

A snow-y ridge,- As in a mas-ter-piece by — *mp*

T snow-y ridge,- As in a mas-ter-piece by — *mp*

B snow-y ridge,- As in a mas-ter-piece by — *mp*

46

S Ho-ku-sai, Where — on a back-ground gray, *p*

A Ho-ku-sai, Where on a back-ground gray, *p*

T Ho-ku-sai, on a back-ground gray, — *p*

B Ho-ku-sai, on a back-ground gray, *p*

50

50

8va loco *8vb loco*

8vb loco *8vb loco*

Not for Performance

54

S Where on a back-ground gray, with flam-ing breath

A Where on a back-ground gray, with flam-ing breath

T Where on a back-ground gray, back-ground gray, with flam-ing breath

B Where on a back-ground gray, back-ground gray, with flam-ing breath

54

S *f* with flam-ing breath

A *f* with flam-ing breath

T *f* with flam-ing breath

B *f* with flam-ing breath

58

S *f* with flam-ing breath

A *f* with flam-ing breath

T *f* with flam-ing breath

B *f* with flam-ing breath

58

f loco

mf *Sra*

Sub - - -

61 *mp*

S A scar-let drag-on dies in dusk-y gold.

A *mp*

A scar-let drag-on dies in dusk-y gold.

T *mp*

A scar-let drag-on dies in dusk-y gold.

B *mp*

A scar-let drag-on dies in dusk-y gold.

61 *mp* *p*

8vb loco

65

S *p*

A scar-let drag - on dies in dusk - y

A *p*

A scar-let drag - on dies in dusk - y

T *p*

A scar-let drag - on dies in dusk - y

B *p*

A scar-let drag - on dies in dusk - y

65 *loco* *loco* *loco*

8vb

69

S

gold.

A

gold.

T

gold.

B

gold.

69

mp

pp

ma

loco

6

5

4

3

2

1

^