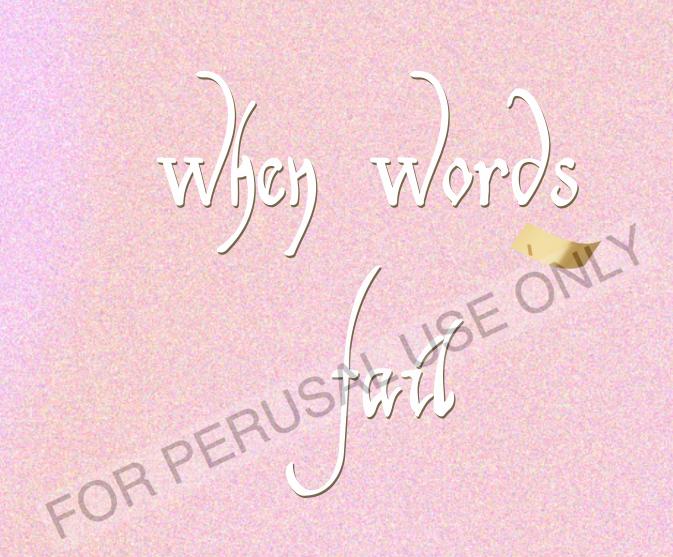
JUDITH MARKOVICH



SUITE FOR VIOLA & HARP



Some pages are missing to protect copyright.



could we with ink the ocean fill,

And were the skies of parchment made;

Were every stalk on earth a quill,

And every man a scribe by trade.

To write the love of God above,

Would drain the ocean dry;

Nor could the scroll contain the whole

Tho' stretched from sky to sky.

PROGRAM NOTES

Those words were scratched on the wall by a patient of a California insane asylum in 1917 and found after he was carried to his grave. A pastor sat on an empty lemon box and pushed against the wall with a stub pencil and paper to duplicate them. What he didn't know, however, is that while that patient wrote those words, he only recited them, for they had been written a thousand years earlier in a Jewish poem called "Akdamut."

COMPOSER NOTES

A couple of years ago, I saw "When Words Fail" as a title in my mind, but I didn't know what future piece it was for, or if it was just "a good idea." In 2022 I had a dream in which I saw a score cover in pink with a hue of gold. There was confetti on the cover. For fun, I recreated what I saw. A few months after I stored it away, Rachel Talitman contacted me with a commission for harp and viola. I woke out of another dream soon after and heard a viola playing a beautiful, soaring line that came down and ended in a stutter. I realized I had heard a clip of the new piece but suddenly I realized the reason for a stutter. It is, in a sense, an inability to express words. Then I knew where the title belonged and put it on the cover. As if that wasn't enough, a month later I received a gift from an out-of-town friend who knew nothing about this. The gift was a small dish with the words: "when words fail, music speaks." I was "tickled pink!"

~ Judith Markovich

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World Premiere: December 2023
(violist Pierre Henri Xuereb and harpist Rachel Talitman)

MOVEMENTS

I. Were Endless Oceans of Ink
II. Selah One
III. Were Vast Skies of Parchment
IV. Selah Two
V. Were Every Stalk a Quill
*VI. Selah Three
VII. Were Every Man a Scribe

ERUS 14113"

INSTRUCTION: 1

Harmonics in harp sound an octave higher than written pitch.

Patetico: with feeling, movingly

Affectuoso: tender

*VI. can be performed on viola d'amore.

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Commissioned by Rachel Talitman

WHEN WORDS FAIL

Suite for Viola and Harp

I. Were Endless Oceans of Ink





II. Selah One

Were Every Star a Gentle Sound



III. Were Vast Skies of Parchment



IV. Selah Two Were Myriads of Tongues a Chorus



V. Were Every Stalk a Quill





*VI. Selah Three

Were Highest Heavens a Voice



VII. Were Every Man a Scribe

