Jake Runestad

FIREFLIES

SATB choir
I. Living Light
My fancies are fireflies –
specks of living light
twinkling in the dark.

II. The Day Will Break
Let me not grope in vain in the dark
but keep my mind still in the faith
that the day will break
and truth will appear
in its simplicity.

III. The Worm
The worm thinks it strange and foolish
that we do not eat our books.

IV. Love Is An Endless Mystery
Let my love, like sunlight, surround you
and yet give you illuminated freedom,
for love is an endless mystery.

V. Fireflies
The fireflies, twinkling among the leaves,
make the stars wonder.

About the Work
Rabindranath Tagore’s “Fireflies” is a collection of quirky, humorous, wise, and profound aphorisms offering powerful poetic punches. Each mini-poem expresses a world of its own, so I assembled five of these morsels to create a multi-movement musical work illuminating thoughts on life, love, joy, empathy, and beauty. The Iowa All-State Choir is one of the largest in the country, yet is capable of such detailed singing. In creating this work, I wanted to allow the ensemble to find the nuance and uniqueness of character in each movement. Because choral music serves as an important educational tool in the classroom, “Fireflies” can also function as a collection of etudes to develop choral techniques, study compositional devices, inspire in-depth conversations about poetic meaning, and embody diverse emotional landscapes.

The work should not have large breaks between movements — it is best to follow the score as it appears with the breaks as notated. It is imperative that all triplets are stretched (think jazz) and never verge on sounding like a shorter, duple note value. Err on the side of making them too long (especially if there’s a rest on the first triplet)! Take the initiative to find your way into each musical line to give it a meaningful shape as you see fit. There’s a lot of room for interpretation!

About the Composer
Considered “one of the best of the younger American composers” (Chicago Tribune), award-winning composer and conductor Jake Runestad has received commissions and performances from leading ensembles and organizations including Voces8, Washington National Opera, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, the Netherlands Radio Choir, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Seraphic Fire, the Dallas Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, the Pacific Chorale, and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. “The Hope of Loving,” the first album dedicated to Runestad’s choral music, recorded by Craig Hella Johnson and Conspirare, received a 2020 GRAMMY® Award nomination. In 2019, Jake became one of the youngest composers ever awarded the prestigious Raymond C. Brock commission by the American Choral Directors Association.

Dubbed a “choral rockstar” by American Public Media, Jake is one of the most frequently performed composers in the world and has traveled to work with ensembles on all but one continent. Jake Runestad holds a Master’s degree in composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University where he studied with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts.

Learn more at: JakeRunestad.com
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This page contains sheet music for a song titled "fireflies." The music is written for four parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Piano (Pno.). The score includes dynamic markings such as "molto rit." and tempo indications like "oo." The sheet music is arranged to show the melody and harmony of the song, with the piano part providing accompaniment. The score is designed for study and not for performance, as indicated by the warning on the page.
II. THE DAY WILL BREAK

Freely with Rubato $\downarrow = 54$

S

\( \text{Let me not grope in vain in the dark but} \)

A

\( \text{Let me not grope in vain in the dark but} \)

T

\( \text{Let me not grope in vain in the dark but} \)

B

\( \text{Let me not grope in vain in the dark but} \)

Freely with Rubato $\downarrow = 54$

S

\( \text{keep my mind still in the faith that the day will break and} \)

A

\( \text{keep my mind still in the faith that the day will break and} \)

T

\( \text{keep my mind still in the faith that the day will break and} \)

B

\( \text{keep my mind still in the faith that the day will break and} \)
truth will appear in its simplicity.
III. THE WORM

Quirky, with Drama & Humor \( \frac{3}{4} = 72 \)

Over-enunciate.
Exaggerate nasal ‘r’ sounds.

The worm thinks it strange and fool-ish that

Over-enunciate.
Exaggerate nasal ‘r’ sounds.

The worm thinks it strange and fool-ish that

we do not eat our books.

we do not eat our books.
IV. LOVE IS AN ENDLESS MYSTERY

Freely with Rubato $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{42}}$ accel. $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{54}}$

Let my love, like sunlight, let my

Freely with Rubato $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{42}}$ accel. $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{54}}$

Let my love, like sunlight, let my

Freely with Rubato $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{42}}$ accel. $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{54}}$

Let my love, like sunlight, let my

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love, like sunlight, surround you and yet give you ill-
love, like sunlight, surround you and yet give you ill-
love, like sunlight, surround you and yet give you ill-
love, like sunlight, surround you and yet give you ill-

Slower, Stretch  a tempo molto rit.     Grand $=52$

lu-mi-nat-ed free-dom, for love is an endless
lu-mi-nat-ed free-dom, for love is an endless
lu-mi-nat-ed free-dom, for love is an endless
lu-mi-nat-ed free-dom, for love is an endless

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fire-flies, twinkling among the leaves, make the leaves, make the