

by way of the wind



ROBIN SPIELBERG



by way of the wind

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All compositions by Robin Spielberg
Robin Spielberg, piano
with the Budapest Scoring Orchestra

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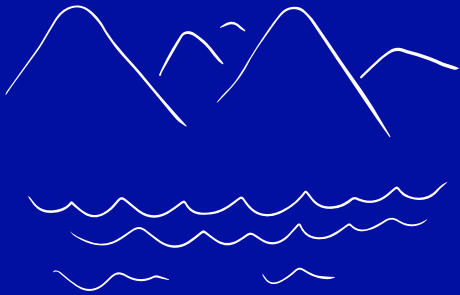


Dear Listener,

I am carried through life by way of the wind. Sometimes I am gliding like a bird, allowing myself to be borne by a breeze. On still days, I am in control of my flight, and I find myself working with intention and direction. On fortuitous days, the wind is at my back, guiding me where I need to go. And of course, there are times when I am flying against the wind and seem to get nowhere at all.

By Way of the Wind is music that reflects how we are carried, pushed, challenged, and guided through life by unseen forces.

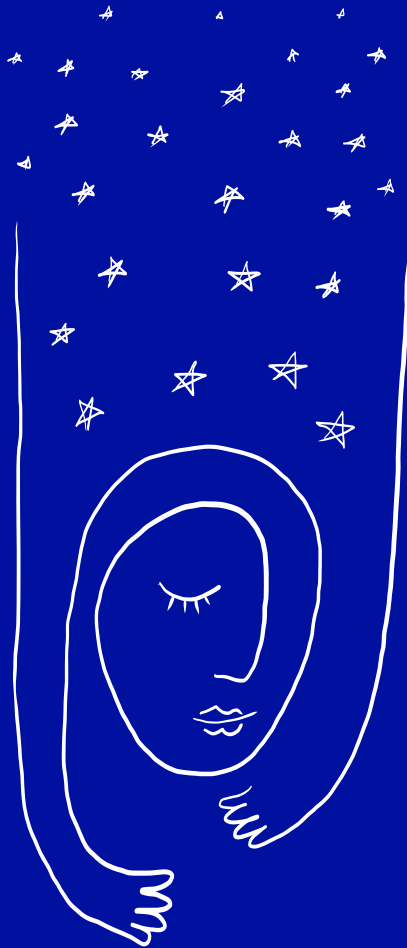
Love,



flying

If you could fly in your dreams,
where would you go?

In my dreams, I am flying. And I go everywhere. I float above the jet stream and follow its flow. I hover over mountains and take in the view. I fly above the ocean and visit the whales. And in each adventure, I am reminded that things look different from above. This piece was inspired by these dreams, and it is my wish that it give you a bird's-eye view of this beautiful world.



wherever
you go

Teachers play a tremendous role in forming our character. It is only long after the class is over that we realize how valuable their lessons really were. I dedicate this composition to my teachers—the ones who were teachers by profession, and those who have taught me life lessons in the course of our friendships. Wherever you go, my gratitude goes with you.



a song for jennie

Genia was in love. The fact that her parents did not approve made her love all the stronger. Her mother and father's protests fell on deaf ears. Genia married Rubin, the musician. Correspondence had been coming regularly from Rubin's brother Herman in America. American orchestras were hungry for the disciplined and skilled musicians of Eastern Europe. Every musician Herman knew who had emigrated was working. Herman was now working with Toscanini in the NBC Symphony Orchestra. Surely if Rubin came to America, he would find work too. Rubin was a fine flutist, but work in Russia had dried up after the revolution and the conservatory his family ran was struggling. Genia and Rubin talked it over, in the dark from their pillows, on walks in the woods, over breakfast tea. Then Genia discovered she was pregnant, and it was decided. They would start a new life in America.

Herman sent a ticket. Rubin would travel first, finding work and a suitable place to live. Once he saved enough money, he would send for Genia, and she would travel on the steamship first class. She was pregnant, after all, and the trip was long. Rubin himself traveled third class. That simply would not do; not for someone of Genia's standing.

Rubin's reunion with his siblings Herman and Irene was joyous. They laughed and cried and held one another close, happy to be together...and sad that their other siblings were refusing to leave Russia, which every day made for a more perilous and difficult life.

Toscanini did not have the flutist position he had promised open, but Rubin was asked to substitute on occasion. So he resigned himself to giving lessons. He picked up work here and there, for radio, for television, and for the occasional traveling show. Just when he had saved enough money to pay for Genia's passage on the steamship Olympic, her paperwork was denied. When asked when she could reapply for entry, he was told only, "in a few years." Rubin sent word to his love that he would be returning home to Russia, but Genia was adamant. "We'll starve to death here," she replied. "There is nothing left here for us. I will wait." And wait she did.

Martin was born a few months later. When she took the child out for walks in the carriage, the neighbors whispered, "Look!

There goes Crazy Genia. She says she has a husband in America, but we all know that child is a bastard. Poor crazy Genia." Time passed. One year, then two. Three, then four. The shunning grew and even their wedding guests seemed to forget that Genia was a married woman, as her husband had not been seen in years.

Six years after Rubin left for America, two first-class tickets for the RMS Olympic arrived on Genia's doorstep. Genia and six-year-old Martin set sail in May 1929.

The Olympic was massive and majestic. The sister ship to the Titanic, its magnificence was palpable even from a distance. Martin's fascination with the ship made Genia laugh and almost forget her trepidations. She had not set eyes on her husband in six years. He had not yet met their son. What was New York like? How long would it take her to learn English, and did she really have to? She was told by Rubin, as well as passengers on the ship, that almost everyone in Brooklyn spoke Yiddish and Hebrew, and Russian or Polish, and she already knew all four of those languages. Her father had died a few years prior, and she already missed her mother. Would she ever see her again? So many questions. So many things to worry about. At Ellis Island, Genia Spzilberg became Jennie Spielberg; the surname would be the same as the dozens of Spzilbergs who ventured to America before her.

Jennie and Rubin made their life in America, but it was far from the life Jennie had dreamed of. Brooklyn was a city. It was loud and dirty, and the apartment was small. Acclimating to this new environment after growing up on a country estate was difficult. People lived upstairs; they cooked with too much garlic. The smell gave her a migraine. People lived downstairs. They were the landlords and knocked loud and hard on their door on the first day of each month. But Jennie and Rubin paid their bills, and on time too. Jennie began to pick up English, and practiced by reading the daily paper. She listened to the radio. At night, when Rubin was not performing, they listened to orchestra 78 records, her head on his lap. The music carried them away. It was so beautiful, and sometimes it felt like it was all they had left to enjoy. Rubin would analyze the score out loud while stroking her head, and he could read her thoughts. He promised her things would get better.

Four months after Jennie disembarked from the passenger steamship Olympic, the stock market crashed and virtually all musicians were out of work. Desperate to make ends meet, Jennie went to work in a clothing factory, sewing buttons on men's coats. Catching sight of her reflection in the mirror, she hardly recognized herself looking like a common laborer. Hope sprang again three years later, in 1932, when she gave birth to Sheldon. Sheldon would be first-generation American.

Sheldon would not become a musician; she would not allow it. Sheldon would go to college. And just as she held Sheldon in her arms for the first time, thinking these very thoughts, her firstborn, Martin, was no more. In the excitement of meeting his baby brother for the first time, nine-year-old Martin had let go of Rubin's hand and ran ahead as they crossed the street to the hospital. He wanted to get to the hospital steps first and open the door himself. A delivery truck could not stop in time, and hit the boy. Jennie's grief was such that her milk dried instantly; she could not nurse Sheldon. He would be bottle fed.

Almost a decade later, in 1942, Jennie and Rubin welcomed their third and last child, a girl, Anita. Sheldon and Anita shared the room that was once Martin's, neither of them knowing the boy had existed.

"You look a lot like your brother," a neighbor had said to Sheldon in Yiddish, as she sat on the stoop snapping beans into a bucket. Sheldon and the neighborhood boys were playing a quick game of stickball before Shabbat started. "You must be mistaken, ma'am. I don't have a brother," said Sheldon, as he tapped the stickball bat onto the ground. "Well you did! He looked just like YOU! He was the boy we all said was too beautiful to live. Such a shame. He died the day you were born. Your father couldn't control him from running in the street. Tsk, tsk, tsk."

Postscript

She shook her head and went back to the beans. Sheldon took his ball and bat and went inside to the room he shared with his sister. He stayed there wondering for a long time, even well after supper was called. But to his parents, he never said a thing.

Rubin died suddenly of a heart attack on November 20, 1960. Exactly 2 years later, on November 20, 1962, I was born. Just like my namesake, Rubin, I became a musician, despite the protests of the people who loved me most. Perhaps it was fear of failure or heartache or poverty, or a mixture of these things, that caused my family to not fully embrace my chosen profession until the years proved that I was in it for good.

Jennie died more than fifty years later, on her 100th birthday. Over the years my grandmother told me many stories of her life “in the old country,” and reminisced about Martin, the boy who was too beautiful to live, and the people she left behind. While she never recovered from the loss of her firstborn, she found solace in books, joy in her grandchildren, peace during her summers in the Catskills, and comfort in the knowledge that the music was not altogether lost; it still remained. Inside of me.

Fast-forward to 1994. In a few hours I will be going on my first date with the man who would become my husband—the love of my life. I am thinking about what I will wear as I stir the soup on the stove. I am making chicken soup, and my thoughts turn to my grandmother Jennie’s chicken soup. I want my soup to taste like hers, so I use her secret and I add a sliver of butter to the broth. As I am cooking I hear a strange tune; I can’t tell where it is coming from, but I hear it clearly. Not only do I hear the tune, I feel it in my body. The tune is not melodic; it does not make sense in any kind of musical way, but it repeats over and over, insisting I pay attention. I put down the wooden spoon and walk over to my piano in the next room. Perfect pitch allows me to mimic on the piano keys exactly what I heard: F# C# E C# D A B A D A, B A D F#, G F# B E. What is this weird pattern of notes? I am befuddled. I forget about it.

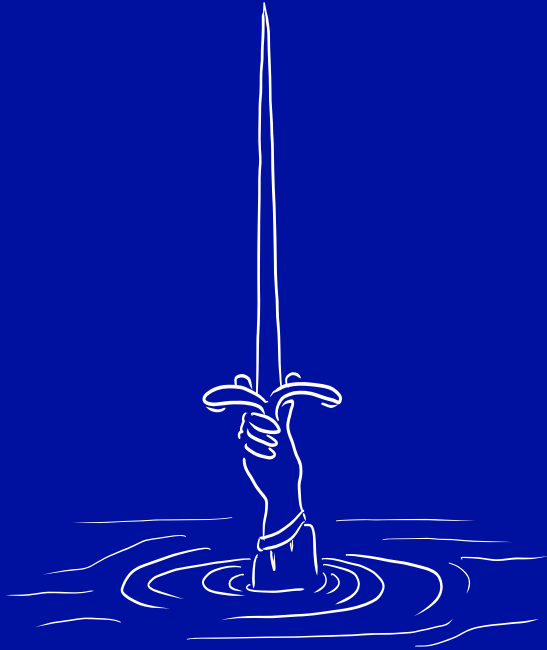
A few months later, while driving to Connecticut for a concert, my thoughts again returned to Jennie. A tune was playing on the radio, a tune I strangely remembered, but now played by an orchestra. I reached down to turn the volume up, only to realize that the radio was not on at all. These sounds were in my head. But now the unusual tune made sense to me—I knew what to do with it. The enigmatic notes became the opening melody to “A Song for Jennie (We’re Almost There),” and what follows is my tribute to her bravery and resilience: a soundtrack for her journey.



circle of life

I composed this piece in memory of my dear friend's brother, Peter Indovino, who was tragically killed in a hit-and-run accident. A year after his death, there would be a new baby in the family, who was named after him. While one life could never replace another, his birth was a reminder of the circular nature of life and death. As I grow older, I am constantly reminded that every interaction with a fellow human being has an effect, whether we realize it or not. Every life touches another. And while I did not know Peter very well myself, the grief I witnessed from his sister and her family affected me deeply—deeply enough that I composed this piece. It is my hope that it is a piece that provides comfort and solace to all.

Peter Indovino, 10/10/69 - 11/15/97



return of a knight

A soundtrack for King Arthur's return to Camelot after battle, *Return of a Knight* is a celebration of victory, loyalty, honor, and love.



in the arms of the wind

Inspired by *The Tale of the Sands*, a Sufi Teaching Story

A stream, from its course in far-off mountains, passing through every kind and description of countryside, at last reached the sands of the desert. Just as it had crossed every other barrier, the stream tried to cross this one, but found that as fast as it ran into the sand, its waters disappeared.

It was convinced that its destiny was to cross this desert, and yet there was no way. Then a hidden voice, coming from the desert itself, whispered: “The wind crosses the desert, and so can the stream.”

The stream objected that it was dashing itself against the sand, and only being absorbed: that the wind could fly, and this was why it could cross a desert.

“By hurtling in your own accustomed way you cannot get across. You will either disappear or become a marsh. You must allow the wind to carry you over, to your destination.”

But how could this happen? “By allowing yourself to be absorbed to the wind.”

This idea was not acceptable to the stream. After all, it had never been absorbed before. It did not want to lose its individuality. And, once having lost it, how was one to know that it could ever be regained?

“The wind,” said the sand, “performs this function. It takes up water, carries it over the desert, and then lets it fall again. Falling as rain, the water again becomes a river.”

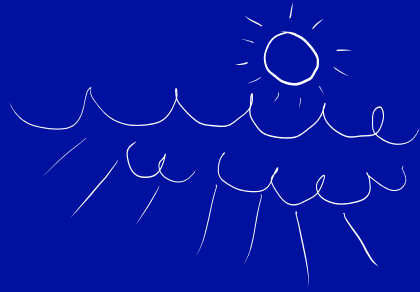
The stream protested, “How can I know that this is true?” “It is so, and if you do not believe it, you cannot become more than a quagmire, and even that could take many, many years. And it certainly is not the same as a stream.”

“But can I not remain the same stream that I am today?”

“You cannot in either case remain so,” the whisper said. “Your essential part is carried away and forms a stream again. You are called what you are even today because you do not know which part of you is the essential one.”

When it heard this, certain echoes began to arise in the thoughts of the stream. Dimly it remembered a state in which it — or some part of it? — had been held in the arms of a wind. It also remembered — or did it? — that this was the real thing, not necessarily the obvious thing to do.

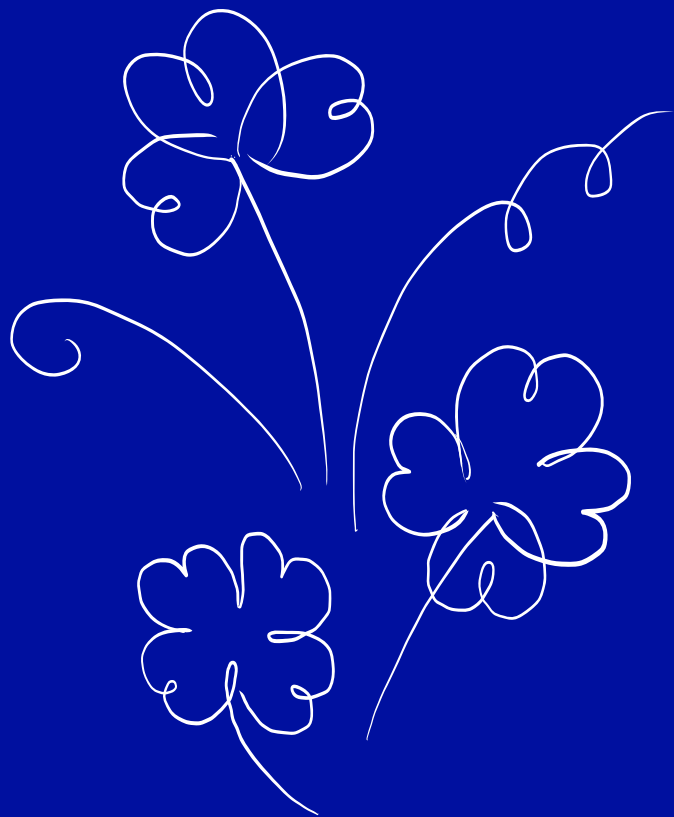
And the stream raised its vapor into the welcoming arms of the wind, which gently and easily bore it upwards and along, letting it fall softly as soon as they reached the top of a mountain, many, many miles away. And because it had its doubts, the stream was able to remember and record more strongly in its mind the details of the experience. It reflected, “Yes, now I have learned my true identity.”



walk with me

*If you want to walk fast, walk alone,
but if you want to walk far, walk together.*

– Ratan Tata



Ireland: an orchestral portrait

Years before I ever stepped foot in Ireland, I dreamed of it. My summer dorm room in Montpelier, Vermont had an old calendar on its wall, and on each page was a beautiful photograph of Ireland's countryside. As the only decor in the room, I looked at this outdated calendar quite a bit, and its images permeated my dream life. The melody lines and many of the "call and responses" you hear in *Ireland: An Orchestral Portrait* were born in this room. I recorded a solo piano version of this piece for my debut album of original piano solos, but only now, 30 years later, am I able to realize my complete artistic vision for the composition. *Ireland: An Orchestral Portrait*, celebrates the majesty of Ireland's landscape.

new freedom suite

The melodies that comprise the *New Freedom Suite* were conceived over the course of three decades. The suite begins with a wistful melody that builds to a triumphant conclusion, signifying a return to a fair and peaceful utopian society, the stuff on which storybook tales with happy endings are built. Part II, *Soldier's Journey*, starts with horns giving a traditional “call to arms” and proceeds with the gathering of soldiers to make their journey to war. They know not what conflict lies ahead; they travel with hope in their hearts and a yearning for justice to prevail. In Part III of the suite, the war wages on and the soldiers grow weary. Still, they are determined. With each passing day, they are one step closer to freedom and liberty. It is the resiliency of their spirits that allows them to carry on. May we all be one step closer to our dreams and our visions as each day passes.

- I. Memories of Utopia
- II. Soldier's Journey
- III. One Step Closer



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A Song for Jennie

"Oh, my darling boy, we're almost there... we're almost there..."



By the time of her retirement, Olympic had completed 257 round trips across the Atlantic, transporting 430,000 passengers including Rubin's grandmother, Jennie Spielberg, and her son, Martin Spielberg (above).

Class & type	Olympic-class ocean liner
Route	Southampton to New York
Maiden voyage	June 14, 1911
Last date of sail	April 15, 1935
Capacity	2,435 passengers
Crew	950
Decks	9 decks (1 crew deck)

Built in Belfast, Ireland, Olympic was the first of the three Olympic-class ocean liners – the others being Titanic and Britannic. They were the largest vessels built for the British shipping company White Star Line.

Changes in immigration laws in the United States in the 1920s greatly restricted the number of immigrants allowed to enter. This led to a major reduction in the immigrant trade for the shipping lines, forcing them to cater to the tourist trade to survive.

During the 1920s, Olympic remained a popular and fashionable ship, and often attracted the rich and famous of the day: Marie Curie, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and Prince Edward, then Prince Cary Grant (at the time a 16-year-old known as Archibald Leach) first set sail to New York on Olympic on July 21, 1920, on the same voyage on which Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford were celebrating their honeymoon. One of the attractions of Olympic was the fact that she was nearly identical to Titanic, and many passengers sailed on Olympic as a way of vicariously experiencing the voyage of her sister ship.

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*Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of nowhere.
Sometimes, in the middle of nowhere, you find yourself.*
– Unknown

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Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
The rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

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Immortality

by Clare Harner, 1934

Do not stand By my grave, and weep. I am not there, I do not sleep — I am the thousand winds that blow I am the diamond glints in snow I am the sunlight on ripened grain, I am the gentle, autumn rain.	As you awake with morning's hush, I am the swift, up-flinging rush Of quiet birds in circling flight, I am the day transcending night. Do not stand By my grave, and cry — I am not there, I did not die.
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Desiderata

by Max Ehrmann

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love,
for in the face of all adversity and disenchantment,
it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly to the counsel of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline,
be gentle with yourself.
You are a child of the universe,
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you,
no death the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be,
and whatever your labors and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life,
keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.
As far as possible, without surrender,
be on good terms with all persons.
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others,
even to the dull and the ignorant,
they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons,
they are venations to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain and bitter;
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.
Keep interested in your own career, however humble;
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs,
for the world is full of trickery.
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;
many persons strive for high ideals,
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

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