

# Synopsis #13: Thy Sting is Not So Sharp

# Lisa Bielawa

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## Note

Premiere: May 22, 2012, Boston Arts Academy Gala, Cyclorama, Boston, MA  
Duration: 4'  
Instrumentation: Violin duo

This subtitle is taken from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Originally created for one virtuoso violinist (Gabby Diaz, of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project) to play alone, the piece explores her particular affinity for the aching, yearning side of artistic expression (even though she is by nature a happy person). The piece gives the players material that they can really ache through. For inspiration I turned to Shakespeare, who really knows how to grab your soul. In all tragedy there is an element of comedy, of course, and so I recalled this passage from *As You Like It* is, his comedy that is nevertheless rife with aching, yearnings, poignancies. In it the character Amiens, one of the Lords of the Duke, is asked to offer a song to comfort and entertain, but the words he sings takes us to one of Shakespeare's darkest depictions of the human soul:

Blow, blow thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
    As man's ingratitude:  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
    Although thy breath be rude.  
Heigh-ho, sing heigh-ho, unto the green holly.  
Most friendship is faining, most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh-ho, the holly,  
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky  
That dost not bite so nigh  
    As benefits forgot:  
Though thou the waters warp,  
*Thy Sting is Not So Sharp*  
    As friend rememb' red not.  
Heigh-ho, sing, &c.

– Lisa Bielawa

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