

PAUL WINCHESTER

IF IT WAS  
YOUR SON

SATB chorus unaccompanied

If it was your son  
you would fill the sea with ships all by  
the millions  
acting as a bridge  
to get it through.  
But don't worry,  
He's just a child of lost humanity,  
of dirty humanity, which makes no  
noise  
He is not your son.  
Sleep peacefully,  
it's not yours...

- Muhammad Najem

This media is not available because  
it includes content you've chosen  
not to see

- Twitter User Interface

---

## Composer's Note

When I stumbled across this poem on facebook, I was immediately struck by the poignancy and truth of its words – about how easily we can look away from tragedy and fail to remedy human pain and suffering in favor of our own comfort. I was stunned to learn that the words were written by a very young man, a 16-year-old Syrian journalist reporting via social media on the horror, violence, and suffering in his country.

Posted with this short poem was a picture of a small child – probably 3 or 4 years old – in a life jacket on the shore, wailing, as his family seeks refuge from war. I had only seen this repackaged through facebook and so when I went to find the original post, made on Twitter, I found the image replaced with the disclaimer message printed above. Now, I never use Twitter, which means that whatever my content settings are are the default. I was so struck by the irony: the message of this poem paired with a disclaimer hiding the photographic subject of the work by default for fear of disrupting our peace and our worry – our false tranquility that requires the shutting out of the terrible suffering of those around us.

May all children be ours.

# IF IT WAS YOUR SON

Muhammad Najem;  
Twitter User Interface

Paul Winchester

Heartbroken, Angry ♩ = 58



Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass

Lyrics: If it was

ALTO SOLO\*: "This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see."

\*: Each of the spoken solos should be delivered quickly, pleasantly, and impersonally; almost like a pre-recorded message

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING  
INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

26 *mp with intensity*

ac - ting as a bridge \_\_\_\_\_

*mp with intensity* *p*

ac - ting as a bridge \_\_\_\_\_ If

*mp with intensity*

ac - ting as a bridge \_\_\_\_\_

bridge \_\_\_\_\_ If

ALTO SOLO\*: "This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see."

30 *p simply* *poco rit.*

ac - ting as a bridge \*gradually close (hum) \_\_\_\_\_

*p simply*

ac - ting as a bridge \*gradually close (hum) \_\_\_\_\_

*mp with intensity*

to get it through \_\_\_\_\_

*p simply*

ac - ting as a bridge

2 ALTO SOLOS (overlapping): "This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see."

34

but don't wor-ry, \_\_\_\_\_

but don't wor-ry, \_\_\_\_\_

but don't

*mf* *mp* *mp*

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING  
INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

50 *mf* *f* *ff*

*mf* *f* *ff*

no noise, makes no noise, makes no noise

*mf* *f* *ff*

which makes no noise

*mf* *f* *ff*

noise, which makes no noise, which makes no noise

*mf* *f* *ff*

noise

(B1 only) *ff*

if

\*each singer transitions between their held pitch and the spoken section at their own pace *c. 20"*

\*each singer repeats at their own pace until all cut off abruptly together *ff c. 7"*

54 *p* *ff*

This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see

*p* *ff*

This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see

*p* *ff*

This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see

*p* *ff*

This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see

This media is not available because it includes content you've chosen not to see

57 *p* *pp* *mp*

If it was your son

*pp*

if

*mp*

He is not your son.

*mp*

He is not your

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING  
INDEPENDENT ARTISTS