

# When the Song of the Angels is Stilled



Howard Thurman

SATB a cappella

## Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

## The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

From *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations* by Howard Thurman.  
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This musical setting's replacement of the word "sky" with the word "heavens"  
was done with express written permission of Friends United Press.

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**Howard Thurman** (1900-1981) spent most of his life engaged in the work of Christmas. In his early professional life, he was professor of religion and director of religious life at Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, and later was dean of Howard University. In 1944 he moved to San Francisco to co-found the first integrated, multi-cultural church in the United States, The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples. In 1936 Thurman led the first black delegation to Southern Asia, where he was profoundly affected by his meeting with Mohandas Gandhi. His 1949 book, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, inspired nonviolent civil rights movements in the United States and throughout the world.

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The cover art was created for this publication by Jonathan Machen. Jonathan lives in Boulder, Colorado with his wife and two young children. There he manages the Solstice Center LLC, a healing arts facility. He takes his inspiration from the people around him and the beauty of the Rocky Mountains and American Southwest. Other loves include playing with his kids, playing guitar, backpacking, skiing, bicycling and kayaking.

More of Jonathan's art can be seen at [www.haikutimes.com](http://www.haikutimes.com)



# When the Song of the Angels is Stilled

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SATB a cappella

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With vitality and joy

*p* *(mf 2nd time)*

S When the song of the an - gels is stilled, when the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the

A When the song of the an - gels is stilled, when the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the

T When the song of the an - gels is stilled, when the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the

B When the song of the an - gels is stilled, when the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the

4

S song of the an - gels is stilled, when the song of the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the kings and the

A song of the an - gels is stilled, when the song of the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the kings and the

T song of the an - gels is stilled, when the song of the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the kings and the

B song of the an - gels is stilled, when the song of the  
kings and the prin - ces are home, when the kings and the

6 *mp (f 2nd time)* *p (mf 2nd time)*

S an - gels is stilled, the work of Christ - mas be -  
 prin - ces are home, the work of Christ - mas be -

A *mp (f 2nd time)* *p (mf 2nd time)*

A an - gels is stilled, the work of Christ - mas be -  
 prin - ces are home, the work of Christ - mas be -

T *mp (f 2nd time)* *p (mf 2nd time)*

T an - gels is stilled, the work of Christ - mas be -  
 prin - ces are home, the work of Christ - mas be -

B *mp (f 2nd time)* *p (mf 2nd time)*

B an - gels is stilled, the work of Christ - mas be -  
 prin - ces are home, the work of Christ - mas be -



9

S gins, When the star in the hea - vens\* is gone, when the  
 gins, When the shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the

A gins, When the star in the hea - vens\* is gone, when the  
 gins, When the shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the

T gins, When the star in the hea - vens\* is gone, when the  
 gins, When the shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the

B gins, Oh, when the star in the hea - vens\* is gone, when the  
 gins, Oh, when the shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the



\* Original poem by Howard Thurman reads: "When the star in the sky is gone." Word substitution made by permission of Friends United Press.

12

S  
star in the hea - vens is gone, when the star in the  
shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the shep - herds are

A  
star in the hea - vens is gone, when the star in the  
shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the shep - herds are

T  
8 star in the hea - vens is gone, when the star in the  
shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the shep - herds are

B  
star in the hea - vens is gone, when the star in the  
shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the shep - herds are

14 *mp (f 2nd time)* *sfz* *mp (both times)*

S  
hea - vens is gone, Oh, the work of Christ - mas, the  
back with their flocks, Oh, the work of Christ - mas, the

A  
*mp (f 2nd time)* *sfz* *mp (both times)*  
hea - vens is gone, Oh, the work of Christ - mas, the  
back with their flocks, Oh, the work of Christ - mas, the

T  
8 *mp (f 2nd time)* *sfz* *mp (both times)*  
hea - vens is gone, Oh, the work of Christ - mas, the  
back with their flocks, Oh, the work of Christ - mas, the

B  
*mp (f 2nd time)* *sfz* *mp (both times)*  
hea - vens is gone, Oh, the work, the work of  
back with their flocks, Oh, the work, the work of

18

S work of Christ - mas, the work of Christ - mas, be -

A work of Christ - mas, the work of Christ - mas, be -

T work of Christ - mas, work of Christ - mas, of Christ - mas, be -

B Christ - mas the work of Christ - mas, of Christ - mas be -

22 *with precision and rhythmic energy*

S gins: To find the lost, to heal the bro -

A gins: To find the lost, to heal the bro -

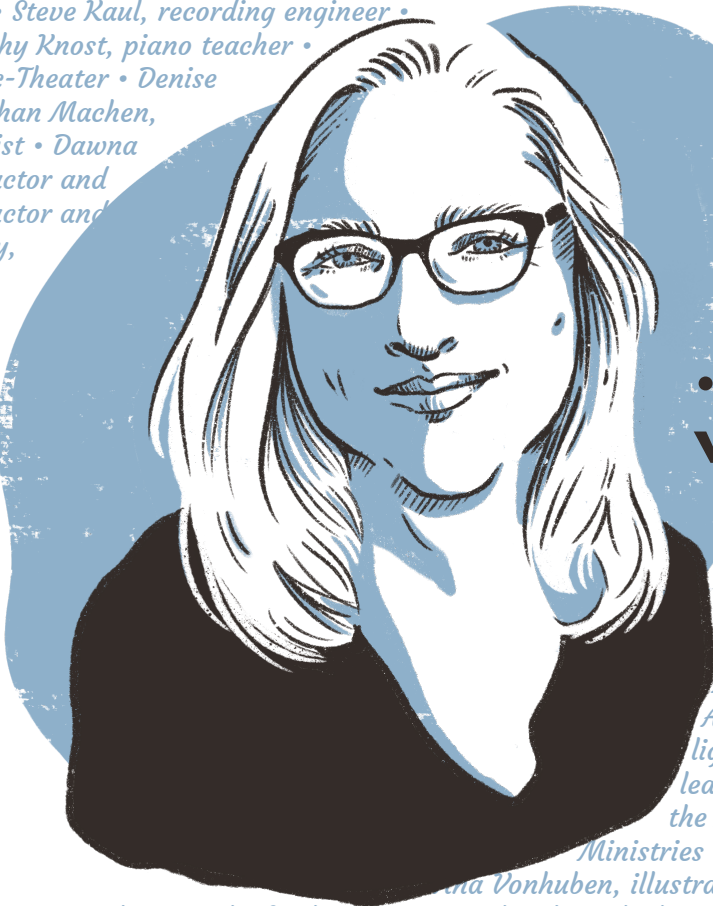
T gins, be - - gins: To find the lost, to heal the bro -

B gins, it be - gins: To find the lost, to heal the bro -

*with precision and rhythmic energy*

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet • Paul Adams, technological hero • Stephen Alexander, lyric consultant • Ginny Allen, Agile coach and friend • The great people at American Composers Forum • Yehuda Amichai, poet • A. R. Ammons, poet • Jennifer Anderson, conductor and composer advocate • Scott Bates, poet • Abbie Betinis, initiator of collaborative endeavors • Beth Norton, conductor and composer advocate • Dennis Blubaugh, more than just a music dealer • Michael deVernon Boblett, poet • Edna Busby, my first piano teacher • Ray Bradbury, writer • Augustin Cadena, translator • Norbert Capek, minister and advocate for religious freedom • Jessica Corbett, editor and composer • David Cummings, poet • Philip Dacey, poet • Catherine Dalton, composer and scrum partner • Emily Dickinson, poet • Evelyn Dudley, poet and caregiver • Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister and writer • Paul Fennell, poet and composer advocate • Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher and poet • Louise Erdrich, writer • David Allan Evans, poet • Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer • Richard M. Fewkes, minister and writer • Debra Gertler, poet • Jack Gallagher, composer and teacher • Paul Gerike, proofreader • Jocelyn Hagen and Mark Hakan, founders of Graphite Marketplace • Steve Harper, just about everything • Steve Harkins, web designer • Edie Hill, composer and friend • Langston Hughes, poet • Margaret and George Heald, printers • Martin Huby, piano technician • Karel Husa, composer and teacher • David Ignatow, poet • Kabir, mystic • Linda Kachelmeier, composer and scrum partner • Ruth Palmer, conductor and composer advocate • Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet • Paul Rardin, conductor and composer advocate • Kalidasa, poet • Steve Raul, recording engineer • Søren Kierkegaard, philosopher and poet • Dorothy Knost, piano teacher • Ben Krywosz, artistic director of Nautilus Music-Theater • Denise Levertov, poet • George Ella Lyon, poet • Jonathan Machen, vocalist • Dawna Markova, writer • Anne Matlack, conductor and composer advocate • Nancy Menk, composer advocate • Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet • Jane Ramseyer Miller, conductor, composer, social activist • Joe Mish, conductor and composer advocate • J. David Moore, composer and friend • John Muir, poet • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • George Shearing, composer and friend • King Sigismund III, religious reformer • Ann Silsbee, composer, poet and friend • Simon Alexander-Adams, sounding board, fellow creative, and awesome son • Steven Stucky, composer and teacher • Rabindranath Tagore, poet • Sister Peronne Marie Thibert, teacher and writer • Oliver Alexander-Adams, unconventional thinker and light of my life • Howard Thurman, civil rights leader and writer • Everyone whose work supports the Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries • Charles Varney, high school choral director • Anna Vonhuben, illustrator and graphic designer • Nancy White, poet • John Greenleaf Whittier, poet • Theodore Chickering Williams, poet • Daniel Winter, pianist and teacher • Nancy Wood, poet • Yehudi Wyner, composer and teacher

**A lot of hard work  
and creativity went  
into bringing this  
music to you...**



**...and some of it  
was even mine.**

**This page has been intentionally omitted.  
(You know why.) A complete perusal score may be  
purchased through any music store or dealer.**

*Elizabeth Alexander*

*Seafarer Press*

The Music of Elizabeth Alexander  
[www.seafarerpress.com](http://www.seafarerpress.com)

33

S mu - sic in the heart, to make mu - sic in the heart, to make

A mu - sic in the heart, to make mu - sic in the heart, to make

T mu - sic in the heart, to make mu - sic in the heart, to make

B mu - - - - sic, to make mu - - - - sic, to make

The musical score for measures 33-36 features four vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts have a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the Bass part has a more static line with long notes and rests. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

37

*f* S mu - - - - - sic, when the

*f* A mu - - - - - sic, when the

*f* T mu - - - - - sic, when the

*f* B mu - - - - - sic, when the

The musical score for measures 37-40 continues the vocal and piano parts. Measures 37-38 feature a forte (*f*) dynamic and a long melisma on the word 'sic' for all vocal parts. The piano accompaniment consists of sustained chords. In measures 39-40, the vocal parts move to new notes, and the piano accompaniment changes its harmonic texture.



41 1. *mf*

S star is gone, when the song is stilled, the work of

A star in the hea - vens is gone, when the song of the an - gels is stilled, the work of

T star in the hea - vens is gone, when the song of the an - gels is stilled, the work of

B star is gone, when the song is stilled, the work of

45 *mp*

S Christ - mas, the work be - gins, it be - gins when the

A Christ - mas, the work be - gins, it be - gins when the

T Christ - mas, the work be - gins, it be - gins when the

B Christ - mas, the work be - gins, when the

49 2.

S shep - herds are back, when the kings are home, when the

A shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the kings and the prin - ces are home, when the

T shep - herds are back with their flocks, when the kings and the prin - ces are home, when the

B shep - herds are back, when the kings are home, when the

**poco rit.**

53

S star is gone, when the song is stilled, \_\_\_\_\_ *mp*

A star in the hea - vens is gone, when the song is stilled, \_\_\_\_\_ *mp*

T star in the hea - vens is gone, when the song of the an - gels is stilled, \_\_\_\_\_ *mp*

B star is gone, when the song of the an - gels is stilled, \_\_\_\_\_ *mp*

**meno mosso*****pp***

57

S — the work of Christ - mas, the

A — the work of Christ - mas, the

T — the work of Christ - mas, the

B — the work of

**poco rit.**

61

S work be - gins.

A work be - gins, it be - gins.

T work be - gins, be - gins.

B work be - gins.

## Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

### **A Palette To Paint Us As We Are** (Gerald Rich)

SATB, piano • SEA-014-01

SSA, piano • SEA-014-02

### **Beware the Winter Settin' In** (Alexander)

SATB, Celtic band, opt. children's choir • SEA-139-00

### **Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs** (Boblett)

SATB • SEA-078-00

### **Cherish Your Doubt** (Alexander)

SATB, piano • SEA-063-01

SSAA, piano • SEA-063-02

### **Die Gedanken Sind Frei** (German protest song, arr.)

SATB, piano • SEA-087-00

### **Do Not Leave Your Cares at the Door** (Norman Naylor)

SATB • SEA-071-00

### **Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm** (Yehuda Amichai)

SATB • SEA-026-01

### **Faith Is the Bird That Feels the Light** (Tagore)

SSA • SEA-068-00

### **Fighting Over What We Believe** (Alexander)

SATB, soloists, piano • SEA-099-01

### **Finally On My Way To Yes** (Pesha Gertler)

SSATB, piano • SEA-019-00

### **Folks, I'm Telling You** (Langston Hughes)

SSATB, piano • SEA-027-00

### **Glen Song** (Scott Bates)

SSATB, piano • SEA-025-00

### **Handles** (Alexander)

SSA, piano • SEA-148-00

### **How To Sing Like a Planet** (Alexander)

SATB, piano • SEA-105-01

### **If You Can Walk You Can Dance** (Zimbabwean Proverb)

SAB, piano, claves • SEA-022-03

TBB, piano, claves • SEA-022-05

SSA, piano, claves • SEA-022-06

SATB, piano, claves • SEA-022-07

### **Immortal Love** (John Greenleaf Whittier)

SATB • SEA-017-00

### **Infant Holy, Infant Lowly** (Polish carol, arr.)

SSA • SEA-020-00

### **Jump!** (Ray Bradbury)

SSA, string quartet • SEA-090-00

### **Kindling** (Alexander)

SATB, chamber ensemble • SEA-123-00

SATB, piano • SEA-123-09

### **Let it Matter** (Alexander)

SSA, piano • SEA-125-03

SATB, piano • SEA-125-04

### **No Other People's Children** (Alexander)

1-4 part choir, soloist, piano • SEA-141-03

### **...or a musician** (Philip Dacey)

SATB, orchestra • SEA-007-00

### **A Palette To Paint Us As We Are** (Gerald Rich)

SA, piano • SEA-014-00

SATB, piano • SEA-014-01

### **Praise Wet Snow Falling Early** (Denise Levertov)

SATB, piano • SEA-015-00

### **Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery** (Alexander)

SSAA • SEA-091-00

### **Same Birds** (David Allen Evans)

SATB • SEA-128-00

### **Song of Kabir** (Kabir)

SATB • SEA-119-00

### **The Gate is Open** (Sister Peronne Marie Thibert)

SATB • SEA-097-01

### **They Have Freckles Everywhere** (Alexander)

SSAA, piano • SEA-076-00

### **To Make a Prairie** (Emily Dickinson)

SSA, piano • SEA-016-00

### **We Lift Up Our Hearts** (Richard Fewkes)

Unison children's choir, SATB, piano • SEA-021-00

### **We Remember Them** (Sylvan Kamens, Jack Riemer)

SATB, piano • SEA-083-01

### **Where There Is Light in the Soul** (Chinese proverb)

SAB • SEA-070-00

SATB • SEA-070-01

SSA • SEA-070-02

TBB • SEA-062-03

### **When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled** (Thurman)

SATB • SEA-062-00

TTBB • SEA-062-02

SSAA • SEA-062-04

SATB, flute • SEA-062-05

### **Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills** (Prefontaine)

SSAA • SEA-058-00