

Song of Kabir

SATB a cappella



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

You are in us, and we are in You,
Each being distinct, yet ever united.
You are the tree, the seed, and the cell;
You are the flower, the fruit, and the shade;
You are the sun, the light, and the lighted;
You are the manifold form of infinite space;
You are the breath, the word, and the meaning;
You are the limit and the limitless.
You are the Immanent Mind in us;
You are the Supreme Soul within the soul.
Blessed are all who see You.

Kabir, adapted from a translation by Rabindranath Tagore

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Composer’s Note: Most of my music has been commissioned for specific occasions or performers, so I don’t always have complete control over a given piece’s theme, length, difficulty, mood or style. These artistic “nudges” have often resulted in my growth as a composer, prompting me to get out of my comfort zone and write music that I would not have imagined otherwise.

But some pieces were written simply because I was inspired, growing out of exactly where I was at the moment I conceived them. *Song of Kabir* is one of those pieces. Once I heard how the opening measures could breathe and flow, I simply couldn’t wait for an interested commissioning party to come along. I fell headlong into Kabir’s universal and intimate vision of divine presence, both of and beyond this world.

The Indian poet **Kabir** (1440-1518) grew up amidst Hinduism and Islam, and was deeply influenced by both. Legend has it that he was abandoned by his unwed Brahman mother and adopted by a lower caste Muslim weaver, and was later influenced by the Hindu ascetic Ramananda.

Kabir had little use for the rites and trappings of any religion, and despised the pious quoting of scriptures, be it from the Vedas or from the Quran. His poetry invoked the divine using both Hindu and Muslim names – “Allah” as well as “Brahma” – but in all cases Kabir engaged with the divine in a deep and intimate way. Today he is revered by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike, and his songs are loved by people of all faiths.

About the translation: Rabindranath Tagore translated many of Kabir’s songs into English, introducing them to a worldwide audience. His 1915 rendering of this poem reflects the writing style of Tagore’s culture and time: “The creature is in Brahma, and Brahma is in the creature: they are ever distinct, yet ever united. He Himself is the tree, the seed, and the germ. He Himself is the flower, the fruit, and the shade...”

The lyric used in this musical setting is adapted from Tagore’s version, in a modern rendering which reflects the universality of Kabir’s deity as well as the less florid language of our time.

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Fluidly, as if chanted

S *p*
You are in us and we are in You, Each dis - tinct, yet

A *p*
You are in us and we are in You, Each dis - tinct, yet

T *p*
You are in us and we are in You, Each dis - tinct, yet

B *p*
You are in us and we are in You, Each dis - tinct, yet



5
S ev - er u - ni - ted. You are the tree, the seed, and the cell;

A ev - er u - ni - ted. You are the tree, the seed, and the cell;

T ev - er u - ni - ted. You are the tree, the seed, and the cell;

B ev - er u - ni - ted. You are the tree, the seed, and the cell;



Più mosso

8

S You are the flow'r, the fruit, and the shade; You are the

A You are the flow'r, the fruit, and the shade; You are the

T You are the flow'r, the fruit, and the shade; You are the

B You are the flow'r, the fruit, and the shade; You are the

11 *mp warmly*

S sun, the light, the light - ed; You are the

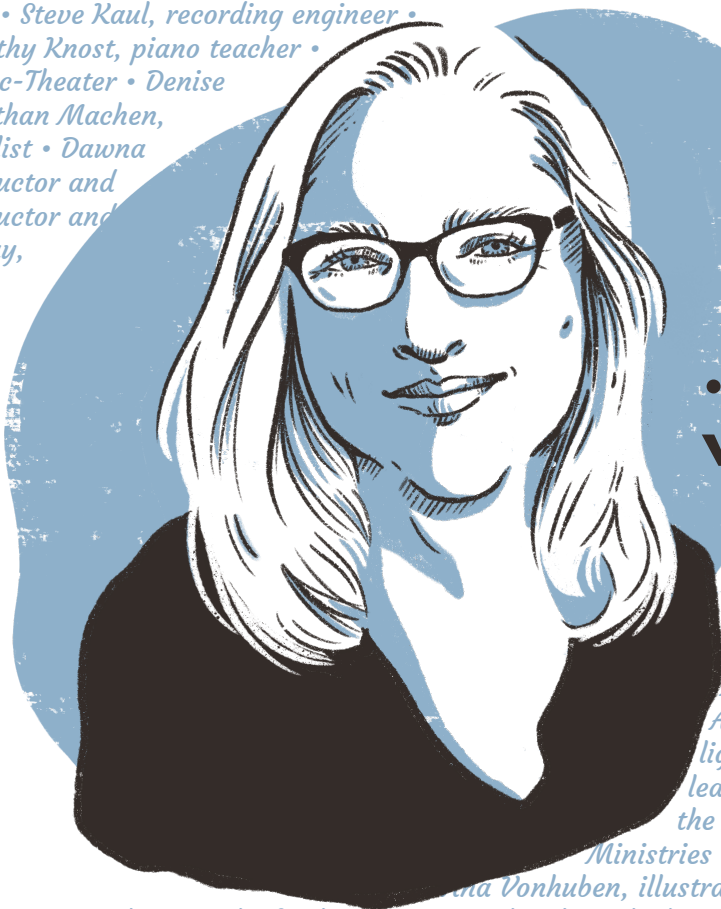
A *mp warmly* sun, the light, the light - ed; You are the

T *mp warmly* sun, the light, the light - ed; You are the

B *mp warmly* sun, the light, the light - ed; You are the

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, conductor, composer, social activist • Edna St. Vincent • Steve Miller, conductor, composer, social activist • Joe Mish, conductor and composer • J. David Moore, composer • Millie Morin, poet • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • Theodore Sautter, poet and 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

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S *mp* li - - - mit - less.

A *mp* lim - it, and the li - - - mit - less.

T *mp* lim - it, and the li - - - mit - less.

B *mp* lim - it, and the li - - - mit - less.

21

S The Im - ma - nent Mind in us; You are the

A You are the Im - ma - nent Mind in us; You are the

T You are the Im - ma - nent Mind in us; You are the

B You are the Im - ma - nent Mind in us; You are the

24 **ritardando**

S Soul Su - preme with - in the Soul.

A Soul Su - preme with - in the Soul.

T Soul Su - preme with - in the Soul.

B Soul Su - preme with - in the Soul.

27 **Meno mosso**

S *p* You are in us, and we are in

A *p* You are in us, and we are in

T *p* You are in us and we are in

B *p* You are in us and we are in

31

S
You, _____ Bless - ed are all who see You.

A
You, _____ Bless - ed are all _____ who see _____ You.

T
You, _____ Bless - ed are all who see You.

B
You, _____ Bless - ed are all who see You.

Cover Art: "Saint Kabir"

by Ketan S. Saindane (a.k.a. Ketology)



Ketan Saindane received his Diploma in Commercial Art at L.S. Raheja School of Art in Bandra, a suburb of West Mumbai. He owns Inkholics Tattoos in Navi Mumbai (New Bombay), where he lives with his family.

Kabir is typically depicted as a weaver, reflecting his humble and unpretentious life. About his unusual portrayal of Kabir, Ketan writes: "I wanted to make a sketch which would show Saint Kabir's passion, not his profession. To suggest the allure of his *dohas* (songs), I portrayed him singing with his *ektara* (instrument) in the woods. The deer – a very shy animal who doesn't like to be around humans – nevertheless feels very comfortable in the jungle, sitting beside a tree with Saint Kabir, without any fear, engrossed in the poet's divine songs. In this way I show that his poetry and music attract anyone and everyone."