



# Let it Matter

SSA and piano

Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*



# Let it Matter

Lyrics and Music by Elizabeth Alexander

You've got your own story –  
You and everybody else have got a bone story,  
Sunrise certain and touchstone true.  
A homegrown story that you've known  
    ever since you could say the words for  
    “us” and “them” and “you.”  
But every story's got a flip side –  
Underneath the surface there's a rip tide  
Powerful and yet denied.  
To know the story of a stranger:  
    That can be a mighty re-arranger.  
    Let it be a downright game changer.

## REFRAIN:

Let that story in. Let it matter.  
Let it open up the prison of your mind.  
There's so much pain and glory in everybody's story –  
Let it matter. Let it in.

Let it lead to honest conversation.  
Let it shape the things you say and do.  
Let it be the bridge that heals a nation.  
No matter what you've been through,  
Your own point of view  
Is just a little part of what is true.  
Don't be afraid to let that story in.

## REFRAIN

It's about the fears that lead to fences.  
It's about the dreams that fall apart.  
It's about what builds up our defenses.  
You've got to open your heart  
Your most tender part  
You'll find yourself alone until you start –  
Until you start to let that story in.

This is the work of justice,  
This is the work of trust,  
This is the work that is asked of us today.  
No one would ever call this “easy listening” –  
    Listen anyway.

## REFRAIN

No one would ever call this “easy listening.”

## Composer's Note on *Let it Matter*

Singing is a hopeful and revolutionary act. This is especially true when songs bend toward the difficult and unfamiliar, for that is when music's grace gives us access to things that words alone can't express.

*Let It Matter* grew out of my own experience of facing some unfamiliar and difficult things. As a "white American" I had always known that my life experiences were different from those of people of color. Nevertheless, I found that I had an inner resistance to believing that racism was deeply entrenched in my country's law enforcement departments. I had never witnessed or experienced police brutality myself, so it was tempting for me to presume that it was a rare occurrence. Yet evidence increasingly showed that that was clearly not the case. This concerned me greatly. I had some work to do.

While I was wrapping my head around this appalling reality, something else began to concern me. In their zeal to be heard and effect change, some protesters issued sweeping condemnations of absolutely everyone in law enforcement, or even everyone identifying as white. I worried that such blanket accusations could shut down the very conversations that might bring about change.



Cover art by Guy Denning  
[www.guydenning.com](http://www.guydenning.com)

Over time I came to realize that both of these world views were deeply rooted in authentic personal experience. Because of this, both held important pieces of the truth. But neither one encompassed the whole truth. As the opening lyric of *Let It Matter* asserts, "Every story has a flip side."

A third source of inspiration for *Let it Matter* was Circle of Peace, a neighborhood group that has met at my church for dinner every week for the past ten years. Circle of Peace is comprised of youth, parents, grandparents, police officers, business owners and community members. The agenda of these meetings is simple: To listen to and to speak personal stories, experiences and concerns in order to create a safer, more compassionate, and more just world.

It is an act of courage to simultaneously hold your own story and someone else's story in your hands with gentleness, without dismissing either one. But that is exactly what the members of Circle of Peace endeavor to do. I hope *Let it Matter* reflects in some way the dedication, pain, grit and hope that keep that circle alive week after week. I do know that for me, writing this song brought me a few steps closer to "opening up the prison of my mind."

# Let it Matter

SSA and piano

**Straightforward, passionately**  
(Somewhere around  $\text{♩} = 100$ )

Elizabeth Alexander

The musical score is for the song "You've Got Your Groove Back" by The Notorious B.I.G. It features four staves: S I (Soprano I), S II (Soprano II), A (Alto), and Pno (Piano). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into four measures. The vocal parts (S I, S II, A) are mostly silent, with S II and A having a short melodic phrase in the fourth measure. The piano part (Pno) is more active, featuring a mix of chords and moving lines in both the treble and bass staves. The piano part is marked with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The lyrics "You've got your groove back" are written below the piano part, aligned with the measures.

**Staff S I:** Soprano I part, mostly silent.

**Staff S II:** Soprano II part, mostly silent, with a short melodic phrase in the fourth measure.

**Staff A:** Alto part, mostly silent, with a short melodic phrase in the fourth measure.

**Staff Pno:** Piano part, featuring a mix of chords and moving lines in both the treble and bass staves. The piano part is marked with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic.

**Lyrics:** You've got your groove back

5

*mp*

S I

sun - rise cer - tain and touch - stone\_ true.

S II

own sto - ry; You and ev' - ry - bo - dy else have got a bone\* sto - ry, sun - rise cer - tain and touch - stone true. A

A

own sto - ry; You and ev' - ry - bo - dy else have got a bone\* sto - ry, A

G C/G Bb6 F9/A G C/G Bb6 F

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

\* Go ahead and slide up from the minor 3rd into blue notes such as these. Make 'em twang a little bit.

9

S I

us" and "them," and "you."

S II

home - grown\* sto - ry that you've known ev - er since you could say the words for "us" and "them," and "you."

A

home - grown sto - ry that you've known ev - er since you could say the words for "us" and "them," and "you."

G C/G B<sup>b</sup>6 F<sup>9</sup>/A G B<sup>b</sup>9

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

12

S I

*mp* But ev' - ry sto - ry's got a flip side,

S II

*mp* But ev' - ry sto - ry's got a flip side,

A

*C*<sup>9</sup>(omit3) *mf* *G* *C/G* *mp*

Ped. 1 2 3 Ped. Ped.

\* Yep, sopranos can sing blue notes too.

15 "stealth notes"\*

*mf*

S I (un - der - neath the sur - face) there's a rip - tide pow - er - ful and yet de - nied, —

S II un - der - neath the sur - face there's a rip - tide pow - er - ful and yet de - nied, — (To know the

A un - der - neath the sur - face there's a rip - tide pow - er - ful and yet de - nied, — To know the

Bb<sup>6</sup> F<sup>9</sup>/A G C/G Bb/F F

*mf*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

18 *sfz*

S I That can be a migh-ty re - ar - rang - er. Let it be a down-right game chang-

S II strug - gle of a stran - ger:) That can be a migh-ty re - ar - rang - er. Let it be a down-right game chang-

A strug-gle of a stran - ger: That can be a migh-ty re - ar - rang - er. Let it be a down-right game chang-

C/E G/D C G/B Bb Bb/F F

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

\* What are "stealth notes"? I'm glad you asked. They are little cue notes which you may sing quietly during early rehearsals, until you learn to confidently pull your next entrance note out of the air.

22

S I - er, Let it in, Oh \_\_\_\_\_ let that sto - ry in, -

S II - er, Let it in, Oh \_\_\_\_\_ let that sto - ry in, -

A - er, Let it in, \_\_\_\_\_ let it in, \_\_\_\_\_ Oh let that sto - ry in,

F/E $\flat$  E $\flat$  D7(sus4)

Red. Red.

**A**

26

S I Let it mat - ter, Let it o - pen up the pri - son of \_ your mind. There's so much

S II Let it mat - ter, Let it o - pen up the pri - son of \_ your mind. There's so much

A Let it in, \_\_\_\_\_ let it mat - ter, Let it o - pen up the pri - son of \_ your mind. There's so much

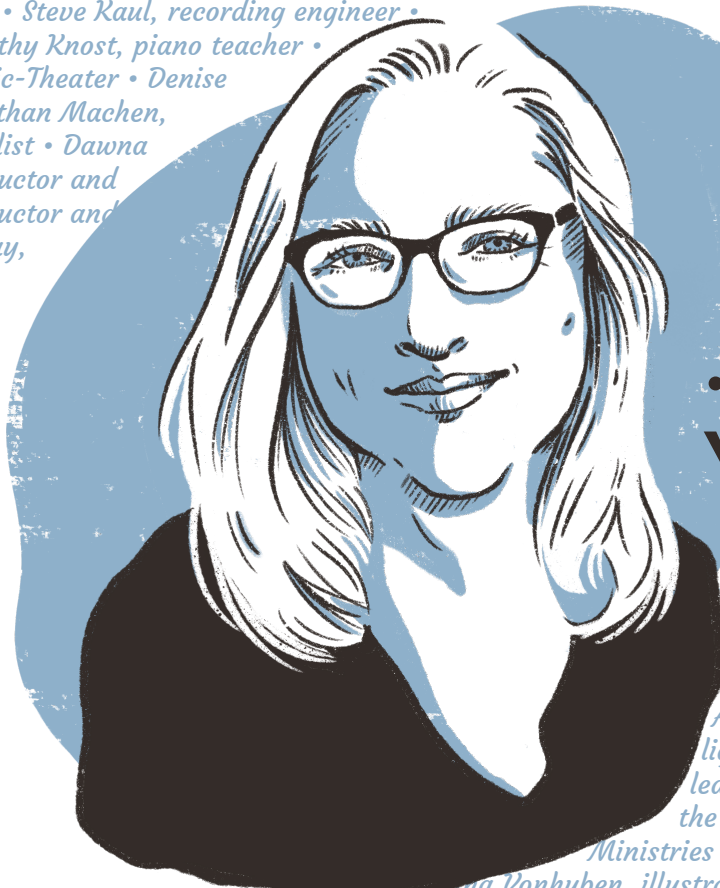
C $^9$ (sus4) D7(sus4) G C $^9$ (sus4) D7(sus4) G

*mp*

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.



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 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 • Pesha 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, parents • 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 • Millay, conductor and composer advocate • Joe Mish, conductor and composer advocate • J. David Moore, composer



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

John Greenleaf Whittier, poet • Theodore Chickering Williams, poet • Daniel Winter, pianist and teacher • Nancy Wood, poet • Yehudi Wyner, composer and teacher

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*Elizabeth Alexander*

*Seafarer Press*

The Music of Elizabeth Alexander  
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37

S I Let it in, — let it in, — No mat - ter

S II do. Let it be the bridge that heals a na - tion. No mat - ter

A do. Let it be the bridge that heals a na - tion. No mat - ter

G(sus4) G C<sup>9</sup> C G(sus4) G

Ped. Ped. Ped.

40

S I what you've been through, your own — point of view is just a lit - tle part — of what is

S II what you've been through, your own — point of view is just a lit - tle part — of what is

A what you've been through, your own — point of view is just a lit - tle part — of what is

Am<sup>7</sup> G/B C G/B Am<sup>7</sup> G/B

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

42

S I true, don't be a - fraid to let that stor - y in, —

S II true, don't be a - fraid to let that stor - y in, —

A true, don't be a - fraid to let that stor - y in, —

F# F# D7(sus4)

Ped. Ped.

44

**C**

S I *mf* Let it in, —

S II *mf* Let it mat - ter, Let it o - pen up the pri-son of \_your mind. There's so much

A *mf* Let it in, — let it mat - ter, Let it o - pen up the pri-son of \_your mind.

C# C# D7(sus4) G C#(sus4) D7(sus4) G

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

48 *mp*

S I Oh, Oh, Let it mat-ter, let it in,

S II pain and glo - ry in ev'-ry-bo-dy's sto - ry: Let it mat-ter, let it in. let it in, let it in,

A *mp* Oh, Let it mat-ter, let it in, let it in, let it in,

C<sup>9</sup>/E D/F# F C/E C C/D G<sup>9</sup>

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

**D** 52 *mf*

S I It's a - bout the fears that lead to fenc - es, It's a - bout the dreams that fall a - part,

S II *mp* Oh, let that sto - ry in,

A *mp* Oh, let that sto - ry in,

C<sup>9</sup>(sus4) C G(sus4) G C<sup>9</sup>(sus4) C

*mp*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

55

S I

It's a- bout what builds up our de - fen - ses, You've got to

S II

*mf* Let it in, let it in, You've got to

A

*mf* Oh, It's a- bout what builds up our de - fen - ses, You've got to

G<sup>9</sup> C<sup>9</sup>(sus4) C G(sus4) G

Ped. Ped. Ped.

58

S I

> o - pen your heart, the most ten - der part, you'll find your - self a - lone un - til you

S II

> o - pen your heart, the most ten - der part, you'll find your - self a - lone un - til you

A

> o - pen your heart, the most ten - der part, you'll find your - self a - lone un - til you

Am<sup>7</sup> G/B C G/B Am<sup>7</sup> G/B

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

60 **f**

S I start, un - til you start to let that sto - ry in (n), —

S II start, un - til you start to let that sto - ry in (n), —

A start, — Oh,

F#m D7(sus4)

**f**

Ped.

**E** 62 **pp** **p (but very intensely)**

S I This — is the work — that is asked

S II This — is the work — that is asked

A **p (but very intensely)** This is the work of jus - tice, this is the work of trust, this — is the work — that is asked

C/E G/D C<sup>9</sup>

**p**

Ped.

65

S I — of us to - day.

S II — of us. *mp* No - one would ev - er call this “eas - y lis - ten - ing.”

A — of us to - day.

G/B C Am<sup>7</sup> G/B G

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

68

S I *mp* Lis - ten an - y - way, Lis - ten an - y - way, —

S II Lis - ten an - y - way, — *mf* Lis - ten an - y - way, — Let it in, —

A *mp* Lis - ten an - y - way, —

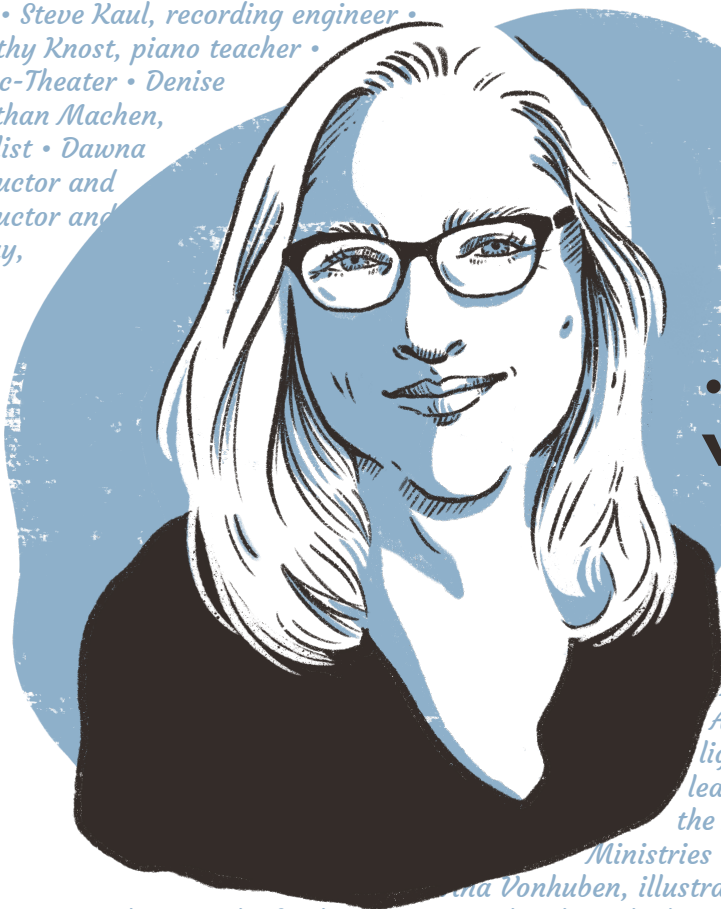
F<sup>9</sup>(omit3) F<sup>9</sup>(omit3) Am<sup>7</sup> Em D<sup>7</sup>(sus4)

*mp*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

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**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.  
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*Elizabeth Alexander*

*Seafarer Press*

The Music of Elizabeth Alexander  
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78 *insistently*

S I — let it in, let it in, let it in, Oh, let it in, let it in, —

S II Let it mat-ter, — let it mat - ter, — let it mat - ter, — let that stor - y mat - ter,

A *insistently*  
Oh, let it in, let it in, let it mat - ter, let that stor - y mat - ter,

Am<sup>7</sup> G/B C G<sup>9</sup>/D

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

82 *with reverence*

S I Let that stor-y mat - ter, let it in.

S II *with reverence*  
Let that stor-y mat - ter, let it in.

A *with reverence*  
Let that stor-y mat - ter, let it in.

C/E D/F G G/B F<sup>9</sup>/C

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Keep pedal depressed for the remainder of the piece.

86

*p* sing directly to the audience

S I

No - one would ev - er call this

*p* sing directly to the audience

S II

No - one would ev - er call this "eas - y lis - ten - ing."\_\_\_\_\_

*p* sing directly to the audience

A

No - one would ev - er call this "eas - y lis - ten - ing."\_\_\_\_\_

F<sup>9</sup>/C G<sup>7</sup>(add<sup>9</sup>)/D F<sup>9</sup>/C

*p*

89

*pp*

S I

"eas - y lis - ten - ing."\_\_\_\_\_ No - one would ev - er call this

S II

No - one would ev - er call this "eas - y lis - ten - ing."\_\_\_\_\_

*pp*

A

No - one would ev - er call this "eas - y lis - ten - ing."\_\_\_\_\_

G<sup>7</sup>(add<sup>9</sup>)/D F<sup>9</sup>/C G<sup>7</sup>(add<sup>9</sup>)/D

*pp*

92

S I "cas - y lis - ten- ing." Singers: gradually and unobtrusively close vowel to "ng"

S II *pp* Singers: gradually and unobtrusively close vowel to "ng"

A *pp* Singers: gradually and unobtrusively close vowel to "ng"

*F*<sup>9</sup>/*C* *G*<sup>7</sup>(add9)/*D* *F*<sup>9</sup>/*C*

**rallentando**

95

S I niente

S II niente

A niente

*G*<sup>7</sup>(add9)/*D*

## 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