

# Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills

Poem by Joan Wolf Prefontaine

SSAA a cappella



## Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

# Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills

For she misses the luxury of dribbling  
marinara sauce on white silk,

of merlot falling at uproarious dinner  
parties onto beige lace tablecloths,

picnics where mustard, baked beans,  
toasted marshmallows and melted

chocolate all leave their winsome,  
gregarious stains on Levis and lips.

For she misses the thrill and mess of it all:  
hands infatuated with bread dough,

logic blemished all day with sly innuendoes  
and double entendres, the child in the lap

with the histrionic green lime popsicle kiss,  
the kettle with its secret military spices

longing in its heart of hearts to spill the beans,  
mangoes eaten au natural in bathtubs,

sweet-talking, profane juices softening  
the millstones and milestones of the body,

the plum's intemperate noddings in a neighbor's  
nonchalant field, tartness oozing like ink

across obeisant fingers, strawberries,  
caught red-handed in golden-straw beds,

falling upwards towards one's mouth —  
small, fierce advocates of sumptuous rendezvous.

I say to her: Spill, Spurt, Squirt, Splash, Splatter,  
Spot, Spree, Sprinkle, Dribble, Drabble, Oozle,

Offend, Transcend, Transude, Transgress, Transpire,  
Perspire, Percolate, Partake, Propagate, Create!

*Joan Wolf Prefontaine*

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## Performance Note:

As singers become increasingly familiar with this song, they often start adding blues inflections to some of the A-naturals, either flattening the pitches so that they lie “in the cracks,” or singing actual A-flats. This is especially true in passages which contain a little attitude, like “Levis and lips.” I considered officially flattening some of those renegade A-naturals, but I decided not to because they aren't true A-flats; they are really “blues-inflected A-naturals.”

So although choral singing usually involves making a choir's vocal production as uniform as possible, this piece is not about conformity! I suggest leaning on some of those A-naturals with a little moxie, and letting the chips spill as they may. – E. A.

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## A note about this edition:

Performers who are familiar with the 2003 edition of this song may wonder how this version differs from the original. The truth is, these editions *sound* virtually identical to one another, because no notes or dynamics are changed!

The primary difference is that vocal lines that existed in more than one voice part are no longer duplicated, giving singers a few more chances to rest during this song. There are also twice as many examples of sample solos (located after the last page of music), as well as rehearsal letters and improved page turns.

Commissioned by the Cornell University Chorus, Scott Tucker, conductor  
"No Whining, No Flowers" Women's Choir Commissioning Project

# Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills

SSAA a cappella

Joan Wolf Prefontaine

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(♩. = 80-92)\* **Bluesy, gregarious, sweet & sly**

*P*

S I Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib-ble and Drab-ble and Drib-ble and Drab-ble and

S II

A I

A II

*for rehearsal only*

5

S I Splat.

S II Splat-ter and Spot, Spree and Drib-ble and Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib-ble and

A I

A II

\* With time, every choir finds its own tempo for this song, a spot where it feels vital but unrushed.

9

S I  
Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib - ble and Drab - ble and Drib - ble and Drab - ble and

S II  
Spill.

A I  
*p*  
Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib - ble and Drab - ble and Drib - ble, Drab - ble

A II

13

S I  
Splat-ter and Spot, Spree\_\_\_ and Drib-ble and Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib-ble and

S II  
Splat-ter and Spot, Spree\_\_\_ and Drib - ble Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib-ble and

A I  
Splat - ter, Spot, Spree\_\_\_ and Drib-ble and Drab - ble, Drab - ble, Drib-ble and

A II

17

S I  
Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib-ble and Drab-ble and Drib-ble and Drab-ble and

S II  
Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib - ble, Drab - ble and Drib - ble, Drab - ble,

A I  
Splat-ter and Spill, Spot, Spree and Drib - ble, Drab-ble and Drib - ble, Drab-ble and

A II  
Spill, Splat-ter and Spot Splat-ter and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab-ble and

21

S I  
Splat-ter and Spot, Spree and Drib-ble and Oo - zle. Why I

S II  
Splat-ter and Spot, Spree and Drib - ble, Oo - zle, Oo - zle, oo

A I  
Splat - ter Spot, Spree and Drib - ble, Oo - zle, Oo - zle, oo

A II  
Splat - ter Spot, Spree and Drib - ble, Oo - - - zle, oo -

*mp*

*gliss.*

**A**

27

S I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, \_\_\_\_\_

S II \_\_\_\_\_ *mp* Why I pit - y the wo - man who

A I Oo - - - - - zle, oo - - - - -

A II - - - - - zle, oo - - - - -

32

S I \_\_\_\_\_ *close lips on "m"* Why I pit - y, pit - y the wo - (m) - an, \_\_\_\_\_

S II <sup>2</sup> ne - ver spills, \_\_\_\_\_ *close lips on "m"* Why I pit - y, pit - y the wo - (m) - an, \_\_\_\_\_

A I \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* zle, oo - - - - - oo - - - - - Why I

A II \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* zle, oo - - - - - oo - - - - - Why I

37 *f*

S I I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver

S II the wo - man, I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver

A I pit - y the wo - man, I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver

A II pit - y the wo - man, I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver

41 *fall-off* *mp*

S I ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver spills, the wo - man who ne - ver, For she

S II ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver spills, the wo - man who ne - ver, For she

A I ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver spills, ne - ver, For she

A II ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver spills, ne - ver,

**B***...marinara...merlot...mustard...marshmallows...*

45

*legato lussuoso*

S I miss - es the lu - - xu - ry of

*legato lussuoso*

S II miss - es, mis - ses the lu - - xu - ry of

*legato lussuoso*

A I miss - es, mis - ses the lu - - xu - ry of

*mp* *legato lussuoso*

A II For she miss - es the lu - - xu - - ry of

49

S I drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing mar - i - na - ra sauce on

S II drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing mar - i - na - ra sauce on

A I drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing mar - i - na - ra sauce on

A II drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing, drib - bl - ing mar - i - na - ra sauce on



Solo: *ff* with mock distress

Tutti: *mp*

53

S I  
white silk, (eek!) For she miss - es the

S II  
white silk, miss - es, miss - es the

A I  
white silk, For she miss - es, the

A II  
white silk, miss - es, miss - es the

57 *legato lussuoso*

S I  
lux - u - ry of mer\* - lot fall - ing, fall -

S II  
lux - u - ry of mer\* - lot fall - ing, fall -

A I  
lux - u - ry of mer\* - lot fall - ing, fall - ing

A II  
lux - u - ry of mer\* - lot fall - ing, fall - ing,

\* In keeping with the exquisite "luxury" of this moment, let that 1st syllable of "merlot" rhyme with "hair," not "her."

62

S I *f* *p*  
 ing at up - roar - i - ous din - - - ner par - ties, fall -

S II *f* *p subito*  
 - ing at up - roar - - i - ous din - ner par - ties, fall -

A I *f* *p subito*  
 at up - roar - i - ous din - - - ner par - ties, fall -

A II *f* *p subito*  
 fall - ing at up - roar - - ri - ous din - ner par - ties, fall - -

66

S I  
 - ing on - - - to beige lace

S II  
 - ing on - - - to beige lace

A I  
 - ing on - - - to beige lace

A II  
 ing on - - - to beige lace

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 • David Cummings, poet • Philip Dacey, poet • Catherine Dalton, composer and serum 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 • Pasha Gertler, poet • Jack Gallagher, composer and teacher • Paul Gerike, proofreader • Jocelyn Hagen and Michael Hagan, 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, piano technician • Karel Husa, composer and teacher • David Ignatow, poet • Kabir, mystic • Linda Kachelmeier, composer and serum partner • Ruth Palmer, conductor and composer advocate • Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet • Paul Rardin, conductor and composer advocate • Kalidasa, poet • Steve Kaul, 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 • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • 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.**

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purchased through any music store or dealer.**

*Elizabeth Alexander*

*Seafarer Press*

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80

S I  
choc' - late, all leave their win - some stai - (ee)ns on

S II  
choc' - late, all leave their win - some stai - (ee)ns on

A I  
choc' - late, melt - ed, all leave their win - some stai - (ee)ns on

A II  
choc' - late, all leave their win - some stai - (ee)ns on

85

*f with abandon*

S I  
Le - vis and lips. gre - ga - ri - ous stai - (ee) - ains! \_\_\_\_\_

*f with abandon*

S II  
Le - vis and lips. gre - ga - ri - ous stai - (ee) - ains! \_\_\_\_\_

*f with abandon*

A I  
Le - vis and lips. gre - ga - ri - ous stai - (ee) - ains! \_\_\_\_\_

*f with abandon*

A II  
Le - vis and lips. gre - ga - ri - ous stai - (ee) - ains! \_\_\_\_\_

89 **C**

*p*

S I Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib-ble and Drab-ble and Drib-ble and Drab-ble and

*p*

S II Spill, Splat-ter and Spot and Spree and Drib - ble, Drab-ble and Drib - ble, Drab - ble,

*p*

A I Splat-ter and Spill, Spot, Spree and Drib - ble, Drab-ble and Drib - ble, Drab-ble and

*p*

A II Splat-ter and Spill, Spot, Splat-ter and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab-ble and

93 *mf subito*

S I Splat-ter and Spot Spree\_\_\_ and Drib-ble and Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, For she

*mf subito*

S II Splat-ter and Spot Spree\_\_\_ and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, For she

*mf subito*

A I Splat - ter, Spot, Spree\_\_\_ and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drab - ble, For she

*mf subito*

A II Splat - ter, Spot, Spree\_\_\_ and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, For she

97

S I *mp* *mf*  
miss - es the thrill, thrill of it all, she miss - es the thrill and the

S II *mf* *mp*  
miss - es the thrill, she miss - es the thrill, thrill and the

A I *mp*  
miss - es the thrill, thrill of it all, thrill of it and the

A II *mp*  
miss - es the thrill, thrill of it all, thrill and the

102

S I *mp* *f*  
mess of it all, thrill and the mess of it, for she miss - es the thrill and mess of it all, —

S II *f*  
mess, all the thrill and the mess of it, for she miss - es the thrill and mess of it all,

A I *f*  
mess of it all, the thrill of it and the mess of it, for she miss - es the thrill and mess of it all,

A II *f*  
mess, all the thrill and the mess of it, for she miss - es the thrill and mess of it all,

107

S I  
miss - es it all, \_\_\_ Hands in - fa - tu - a - ted with bread dough -

S II  
miss - es it all, \_\_\_ She miss - es the hands in - fa - tu - a - ted with bread dough -

A I  
miss - es it all, \_\_\_ Hands in - fa - tu - a - ted with bread dough -

A II  
miss - es it all, \_\_\_ She miss - es the hands in - fa - tu - a - ted with bread dough -

112

S I  
woh - oo - oh! \_\_\_ with sly in - nu -

S II  
- woh - oo - oh!\*\_ *p* mis - ses the lo - gic blem - ished all day \_\_\_

A I  
- woh - oo - oh!\*\_ *p* mis - ses the lo - gic blem - ished all day, all day, with sly in - nu -

A II  
- woh - oo - oh!\*\_ *p* mis - ses the lo - gic blem - ished all day, all day,

\* Let the word "dough" turn into a mighty wail!

118

S I - en - do, \_\_\_\_\_ sly in - nu - en - do and dou - ble en - ten - dre, \_\_\_\_\_

S II \_\_\_\_\_ sly in - nu - en - do, \_\_\_\_\_ and dou - ble en - ten - \_\_\_\_\_

A I - en - do, \_\_\_\_\_ in - nu - en - do, \_\_\_\_\_ and dou - ble en - ten - dre, \_\_\_\_\_

A II \_\_\_\_\_ sly in - nu - en - do, \_\_\_\_\_ and dou - ble en - ten - dre, \_\_\_\_\_

124

S I \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ The *mf*

S II *suggestively...* dre, Drib - ble and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_

A I *suggestively...* Drib - ble and Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ The *mf*

A II \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble, \_\_\_\_\_ Drib - ble \_\_\_\_\_ She mis - ses the *mf*



**D**

*...kisses...spices...*

129

S I  
child in the lap with the his - tri - o - nic green lime pop! pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle,

S II  
pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle, pop-si - cle kiss,

A I  
child in the lap with the his - tri - o - nic green lime pop-si - cle kiss, pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle,

A II  
child in the lap with the his - tri - o - nic green lime pop-si - cle kiss, pop!

*Make a big ol' kiss sound!*

***ff***

135

S I  
pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle pop.

S II  
pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle pop. The ket - tle with its se - cret mi - li - ta - ry spi - ces

A I  
pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle pop. The ket - tle with its se - cret mi - li - ta - ry spi - ces

A II  
pop-si - cle kiss - i - cle pop. The ket - tle with its se - cret mi - li - ta - ry spi - ces

141

*mf*

S I to spill the beans, I

S II long - ing in its heart of hearts to spill the beans, I

A I long - ing in its heart of hearts to spill the beans, I pit - y the

A II long - ing in its heart of hearts to spill the beans,

146

S I pit - y, I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, ne - ver spills, She mis - ses the

S II pit - y the wo - man, the wo - man who ne - ver, ne - ver spills,

A I wo - man, the wo - man who ne - ver, ne - ver spills, She mis - ses the

A II the wo - man who ne - ver ne - ver spills,

**E**

*...mangoes...*

151

S I  
man - - - goes, ea - ten in bath - - tubs

S II  
*mp* man - - - goes, oh - oo - oh - oo - oh - oo - oh - oo

A I  
*mp* man - - - goes, ea - ten in bath - - tubs *mf*

A II  
*mp* man - - - goes, oh - oo - oh - oo - oh - oo - oh - oo

157

S I  
*mp* au na - tu - ral, sweet - talk - ing juic - es, —

S II  
*mf* au na - tu - ral, *mp* miss - es the sweet - talk - ing juic - es,

A I  
*mf* au na - tu - ral, *mp* miss - es the sweet - talk - ing juic - es,

A II  
*mf* au na - tu - ral, *mp* miss - es the sweet - talk - ing juic - es,

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**F**

*...plums...*

170

S I  
oo oo

S II  
oo oo

A I

A II  
plum's in - tem - per - ate nod - dings in the

174

S I  
oo

S II  
Oo

A I  
oo

A II  
neigh - bor's non - cha - lant field,

178 *mp*

S I Tart - ness \_\_\_\_\_ ooz - ing like ink a - cross o - bei - - sant

S II Ooz - - - - ing like ink, \_\_\_\_\_ Oo - - -

A I *p* Oo - - - - zing like ink, \_\_\_\_\_ Oo - - -

A II *p* Oo - - - - zing like ink, \_\_\_\_\_ Oo - - -

182 *pure and round and sensuous*

S I fin - gers, \_\_\_\_\_ Oo \_\_\_\_\_

S II \_\_\_\_\_ zle, Oo - - - zle,

A I \_\_\_\_\_ zle, Oo - - - zle,

A II \_\_\_\_\_ zle, Oo - - - zle,

**G**

*...strawberries...*

186

S I  
red - hand - ed,

S II  
*mp*  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed,

A I  
*mp*  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed,

A II  
*mp*  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed,

190

S I  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed,

S II  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed, red - hand - ed,

A I  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed, red - hand - ed

A II  
Straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed, red - hand - ed straw - ber - ries,

194 *mf*

S I  
straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed in gold - en straw beds, straw - ber - ries

S II  
straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed in gold - en straw beds, straw - ber - ries

A I  
straw - ber - ries caught red - hand - ed in gold - en straw beds, straw - ber - ries

A II  
straw - ber - ries han - ded in gold - en straw beds,

198

S I  
fall - - - - ing, fall - - - - ing,

S II  
fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing,

A I  
fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing,

A II  
straw - ber - ries





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 • 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 • Pasha Gertler, poet • Jack Gallagher, composer and teacher • Paul Gerike, proofreader • Jocelyn Hagen and Michael 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, 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 Kaul, 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 • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • 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**

222

S I *mp*  
ad - vo - cates of sump - tu - ous ren - dez - vous,

S II *mp*  
ad - vo - cates of sump - tu - ous ren - dez - vous,

A I *mp*  
ad - vo - cates of sump - - - tu - ous ren - dez - vous,

A II *mp*  
ad - vo - cates of sump - tu - ous ren - dez - vous, of sump - tu - ous

226

S I *mf*  
sump - tu - ous ren - - - dez - vous, Why I

S II  
sump - tu - ous ren - - - dez - vous,

A I  
sump - tu - ous ren - - - dez - vous,

A II  
ren - - - dez - - - vous,

**H**

230

S I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, —

S II — I pi - ty the wo - man who

A I *mf* — I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, —

A II — I

233

S I — I pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, — who

S II ne - ver spills, — who

A I — I pit - y the wo - man who

A II pi - ty the wo - man who ne - ver spills, — who

236

S I  
ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver spills, who

S II  
ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver spills, who

A I  
ne - ver, ne - ver, pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, who

A II  
ne - ver, ne - ver, pit - y the wo - man who ne - ver spills, the wo - man who

240

S I  
ne - ver spills, I say to her: Spill, Spurt, Splash, Squirt,

S II  
ne - ver spills, I say to her: Spill, Spurt, Splash, Squirt,

A I  
ne - ver spills, I say to her: Spill, Spurt, Splash, Squirt,

A II  
ne - ver spills, I say to her: Spill, Spurt, Splash, Squirt,

244

*f*

S I Spree, Spot, Of - fend, Trans - cend,

*f*

S II Spree, Spot, Of - fend, Trans - cend,

*f* *mp*

A I Spree, Spot, Spot, Of - fend, Trans -

*f* *mp*

A II Spree, Spot, Spot, Of - fend, Trans -

247

*f*

S I Trans - gress, Trans - pi - (yer)\*, Per - spi - (yer)\*,

*f*

S II Trans - gress, Trans - pi - (yer)\*, Per - spi - (yer)\*,

*f*

A I - ude, Trans - gress, Trans - pi - (yer)\*, Per - spi - (yer)\*,

*f*

A II - ude, Trans - gress, Trans - pi - (yer)\*, Per - spi - (yer)\*,

\* "The woman who never spills" would probably feel squeamish singing "transpire" and "perspire" on three earthy syllables.  
I trust you have no such qualms.

250 *mf*

S I Per - co - late, Pro - pa - gate, Per - co - late, Pro - pa - gate,

S II *mf* Per - co - late, Pro - pa - gate, Per - co - late, Pro - pa -

A I *mf* Per - co - late, Pro - pro - gate, Per - co - late,

A II *mf* Per - co - late, Pro - pa - gate, Per - co - late, Pro - pa - gate, —

254 *p subito*

S I Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble,

S II *p subito* - gate, the wo - man who ne - ver spills, the wo - man who

A I *p subito* Drib - ble, Drib - ble, Drib - ble, Drib - ble,

A II *p subito* the wo - man who ne - ver spills, the wo - man who





267

S I Par - take, Cre - ate.

S II Par - take, Cre - ate.

A I Par - take, Cre - ate.

A II Par - take, Cre - ate.

**Repeat ad lib., growing gradually softer. Meanwhile several soloists improvise short phrases, soulful and unsynchronized, as if singing to themselves, creating a chorus of individual murmurs.**

**(See the next pages for some sample ad lib. solos)**

274

*poco a poco descrec. to pp* *Fine*

S I Cre - ate, Cre - ate.

S II Cre - ate, Cre - ate.

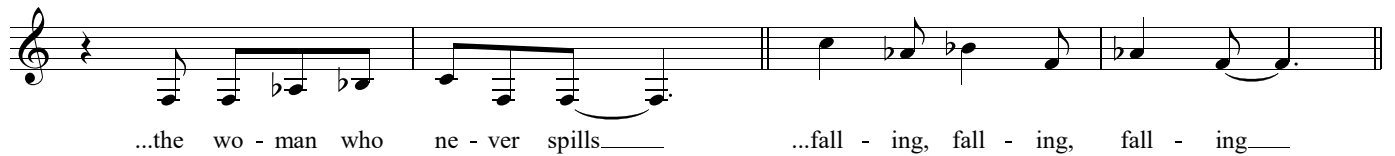
A I Cre - ate, Cre - ate.

A II Cre - ate, Cre - ate.

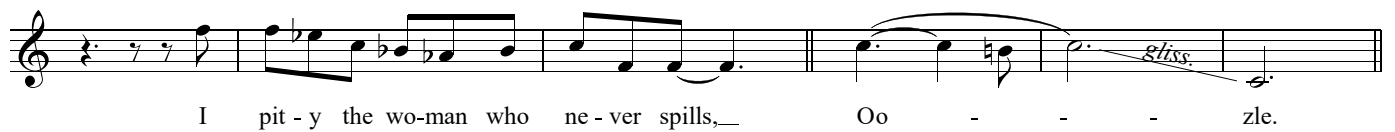
## Sample Solos

*Improvise solos that feel authentic in your own voice, with no attempt to observe a set tempo. You might wish to use words, ideas and motives from this song, or simply sing your favorite excerpt. For a bluesy sound, choose some pitches from the F Blues Scale: F, Ab, Bb, B $\natural$ , C and Eb.*

*Don't worry about your solo overlapping, conflicting or upstaging the other solos!  
Your solo is part of the gregarious thrill and mess of it all.  
A beautiful synchronicity is created by the layering of  
heartfelt and honest expressions of creativity, pain, hope and joy.*



...the wo - man who ne - ver spills\_\_\_\_\_ ...fall - ing, fall - ing, fall - ing\_\_\_\_\_



I pit - y the wo-man who ne - ver spills,\_\_\_\_\_ Oo - - - - - ze.



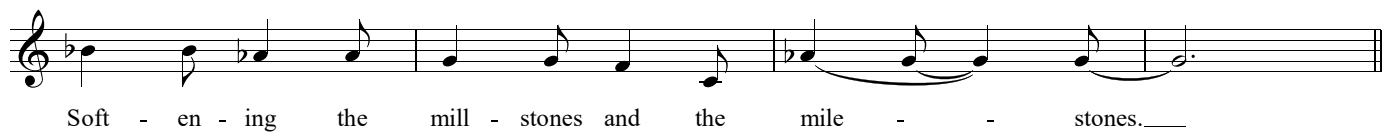
I pit - y the wo - man\_\_\_\_\_ who ne - ver spills\_\_\_\_\_



Drib - ble, Drab - ble, Drib - ble\_\_\_\_\_ The thrill\_\_\_\_\_ and the mess of it all.\_\_\_\_\_



What she mis - ses,\_\_\_\_\_ what she mis - ses\_\_\_\_\_ Drib-ble and Drab-ble, Drib - ble, Drab - ble,\_\_\_\_\_



Soft - en - ing the mill - stones and the mile - - - stones.\_\_\_\_\_



I say to her: Spill,\_\_\_\_\_ Of - fend, Trans - cend, oh\_\_\_\_\_ Spill.\_\_\_\_\_

### **Composer's Note:**

I'm not sure there's a woman anywhere who hasn't experienced pressure to act, look, sound, and perform flawlessly, which is why Joan Wolf Prefontaine's poem is funny and tragic and triumphant all at the same time. It is fitting that women should sing this musical setting of her poem together, because we are both a cause of this pressure and a remedy for it.

Two personal experiences dramatically underscored this truth for me. One evening when my friend Victoria was giving me a ride home from choir practice, she pointed to a particular dark stain on her car's ceiling and told me she loved it because she was almost certain it was hot chocolate. Two weeks later, a hostess publically chastised me because a single drop of red wine slid down the outside of my wine glass and onto her white kitchen tablecloth.

What a contrast those two attitudes were! Was it a coincidence that I stumbled upon Joan's poem just a few days after that?

### **Cover Art:** "I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills" by Leslie Williams

After hearing her local choir sing this song, artist Leslie Williams went to her studio and created this painting, which she rendered in bold acrylics on a large canvas.

(For the record, that means that this is a painting inspired by a piece of music that was inspired by a poem. What a fine thing it is when creativity won't stay in its own lane.

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## 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