

Looking for Light  
SSA, piano  
JH - GRL04

Sherry Blevins

pdf - \$1.95  
printed - \$3.25

# Looking for Light

## Sherry Blevins

for SSA choir and piano



COMPOSE  
LIKE A **GIRL**

Illustration: KT Thompson

*jh* music

## Text:

Tired of trying, lost in the dark,  
The weight of the world on our shoulders.  
Heavy with sorrow; nothing is right,  
Looking for light in the shadows.

Searching for meaning, wondering why...  
Why is the night so persistent?  
Maybe there's something amidst all the stars  
Something to hope and believe in.

For it is in the dark that the moon and stars will shine,  
And we'll find our way and tomorrow will be our time.  
This is where the hurting ends.  
This is where the joy begins.

Be ever hopeful; search for the light  
Even when promise eludes you.  
The smallest candle can pierce through the night  
Wait for the heavens to break through.

For it is in the dark that the moon and stars will shine,  
And we'll find our way and tomorrow will be our time.  
This is where the hurting ends.  
This is where the joy begins.

- Sherry Blevins

## From the Composer:

When director, Suzanne Fulton, reached out to me, it was at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. I knew I was feeling a great deal of loss. Chances were that Suzanne and her students were feeling the same. I was right.

I began by introducing myself to them via Zoom as they stared back through many tiny boxes on my computer screen – separated by almost 5,000 miles but connected by a common loss and a love of music. My goal was to help them believe that everyone can compose and to inspire them to do so, but to also create a space where they could express what was truly in their hearts and on their minds. As you can imagine, they were all feeling sadness over the isolation, loss of normalcy in their high-school experience, and over the impossibility of singing together safely in one space. As I asked them to share, they began to enter their thoughts and feelings into the chat box. Poetry began to take form and I asked for volunteers to sing their ideas. They sang these ideas with such heart as their teacher guided and encouraged them. Through their suffering, they collectively realized that they had the courage to hope, to dream, and to "...look for the light in the shadows." I have many favorite lines from this poetry, but one of my favorites speaks to anyone enduring suffering – especially

collective suffering: "...and we'll find our way, and tomorrow will be our time." These young women inspired me to hope for a better tomorrow. I know they will inspire you as well.

As you share this work with your singers, I'd like to call your attention to an important idea that can be beautifully conveyed with attention to dynamics in the last section of the piece. The choir felt that we should make a declarative statement about what we believe and how we plan to move forward – past the suffering and into a hopeful future. They sang, "This is where the hurting ends. This is where the joy begins." Following this statement, we wanted the raw emotion of the piece to shine. We decided to finish without text. The "ah" section begins at a piano dynamic and swells as the parts weave in and out. Each section builds on this idea and repeats – each time at a louder dynamic – until finally, the piece resolves at a fortissimo dynamic and in G major.

My huge thanks to Suzanne Fulton for her vision, leadership, friendship, and trust in me, to Mark Burleson for his friendship, artistry, and interpretation of the piano accompaniment, to Hey-Jung Choi for playing this piece so beautifully in rehearsal and performance, and to the students for the courage to not only express their fears, but to break through them in song. You have ALL inspired me! Dream on!

- Sherry Blevins

## From the Commissioner :

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.

- Leonard Cohen, from "Anthem"

One of my favorite quotes is the Leonard Cohen quote that inspired this piece: "There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." During the start of the pandemic, my students and I were lucky enough to find "light" in our classes together when we joined with Sherry Blevins to co-create the text and some melodic shapes for this piece that Sherry went on to compose for us. The powerful wordless ending of this composition provides a chance for both singers and audience to reflect and consider how each new moment may be "where the joy begins." We hope choirs everywhere will enjoy this special piece.

- Suzanne Fulton, Director of West Vancouver Schools' Senior Treble Honour Choir



**Sherry Blevins** is an award-winning composer/lyricist, conductor/clinician, and an award-winning music educator. Her first piece was published in 2018. Since then, more than 17 of her pieces have been published, and she is now with four publishing houses including Hinshaw, Fred Bock, BriLee and JH Music. Since then, she has enjoyed composing for and with a variety of singers and ensembles across North America. Sherry has a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a master's degree in music education from Appalachian State University. Her hope is that whether through composing or teaching, that the music she shares will bring hope, life, and light to others. To read more about Sherry or to contact her, go to [sherryblevinsmusic.com](http://sherryblevinsmusic.com).



Created with joy in a collaborative composing workshop with  
The West Vancouver Schools' Senior Treble Honour Choir,  
West Vancouver, British Columbia, Director, Suzanne Fulton

for all of the singers and directors affected by Covid-19

# Looking for Light

for SSA choir and piano

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Words and Music by  
Sherry Blevins,  
West Vancouver Schools' Senior Treble  
Honour Choir, and Erin White  
Piano arrangement by Mark Alan Burlison

Andante ♩ = 82

rall.

Piano

*mp*

continue pedaling harmonically throughout

5 a tempo rall. 8va

10 a tempo *mp* rall.

Unison

Tir-ed of try - ing, — lost in the dark, — the weight of the world — on our shoul - ders.



*jh* music

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14 **a tempo**

S Heav - y with sor - row, noth - ing is right.

A Sor - row, noth - ing is right,

16 **rall.**

S Look - ing for light in the sha - dows.

A oh.

19 **a tempo**

S1 Search - ing for mean - ing; won - der - ing why Why is the night so per - sis -

S2 Search - ing, won - der - ing why Why is the night so per - sis -

A Search - ing, won - der - ing why

22

S1 - tent? May - be there's some - thing a - midst all the stars, —

S2 - tent? Some - thing a - midst all the stars, —

A — May - be a - midst all the stars, —

joceelyn chagen

rit.

a tempo

25

S1 some-thing to hope — and be - lieve — in. For it is in the dark

S2 some-thing to hope — and be - lieve — in.

A Ah, be - lieve — in.

*mf*

28

S1 that the moon and stars will shine,

S2 *mf* In the dark the moon will shine.

A *mf* Ah, the moon will shine.

28

joceelyn chagen

31

S1 and we'll find our way, and to - mor-row will be our time.

S2 Find our way, ah.

A Oh, ah.

31

34

**poco rall.**

**a tempo**

S1

This is where the hurt-ing ends. —

S2

This is where the hurt-ing ends. —

A

This is where the hurt-ing ends. —

34

joce lyn chagen

37

**2nd time to CODA**

**poco rall.**

S1

This is where the joy be - gins. —

S2

This is where the joy be - gins. —

A

This is where the joy be - gins. —

37

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40

**a tempo**

S1 Ah, search for the light, —

S2 *melody* Be ev - er hope - ful; search for the light, —

A Be ev - er hope - ful; search for the light, —

40

joceelyn chagen

43

S1 ah. Ah, —

S2 ev - en when pro - mise e - ludes you. The small - est can - dle can

A ev - en when pro - mise e - ludes you. The small - est can - dle can

43



rall.

46

S1 ah.

S2 pierce through the night. Wait for the heav - ens to break through.

A pierce through the night. Wait for the heav - ens to break through.

joceelyn chagen

rall.

a tempo

49

S1 where the joy be - gins. Ah,

S2 where the joy be - gins. Ah,

A where the joy be - gins. Ah,

*p*

*p*

*p*

53 *mp* *mp*

S1 ah, Ah,

S2 *mp* *mp*  
ah, Ah,

A *mp* *mp*  
ah, Ah,

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53 *mp*



jocelyn chagen

rall.

78

57 *mf* *mf*

S1 ah, Ah,

S2 *mf* *mf*  
ah, Ah,

A *mf* *mf*  
ah, Ah,

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57 *mf*



62 *f* *sub. f* *rall.* *ff*

S1 ah, Ah, ah,

S2 *f* *sub. f* *ff*

A *f* *sub. f* *ff*

ah, Ah, ah,

62 *sub. f*

jocelyn chagen

♩ = 60 *rall.*

67 *mp* *mf*

S1 ah.

S2 *mp* *mf*

A *mp* *mf*

ah.

67 *mp*

# COMPOSE LIKE A GIRL



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