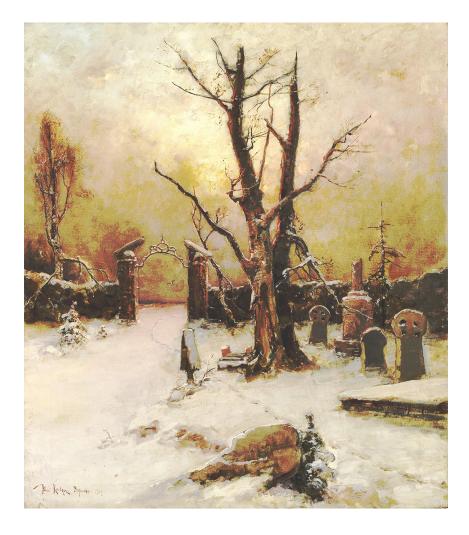
The Gate Is Open

Sister Peronne Marie Thibert

SATB a cappella



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

The Gate is Open

The gate is open dare we enter the snow looks heavy, deep, the woods, dark, deeper still

the Star, we're told, is somewhere beyond on the other side of fear, of hopelessness

The gate is open dare we enter dare believe...

Sister Peronne Marie Thibert

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"Forgotten Cemetery" by Julius Klever

The Gate is Open offers contemplative listeners a gentle unfolding, trembling with stillness and mystery. Its three central symbols – the gate, the woods, and the Star – are observed but not analyzed, examined but not explained. This intimate winter song makes no bold declarations but instead offers a small, powerful invitation: to enter deeply into what lies "on the other side of fear, of hopelessness."

This publication contains "The Gate is Open" in two different keys. You may choose the key that best suits your singers and the mood you wish to create.

> C minor page 1 D minor page 8

Composer's Note: I was introduced to Sister Peronne Marie Thibert's contemplative poem "The Gate is Open" on a handmade Christmas card. The card's creator was my friend Margaret Countryman, who knew and admired Peronne Marie's work as a poet, writer, translator, and beloved French teacher at Visitation School in Mendota Heights, MN.

Margaret was certain I would love the poem. She was right.

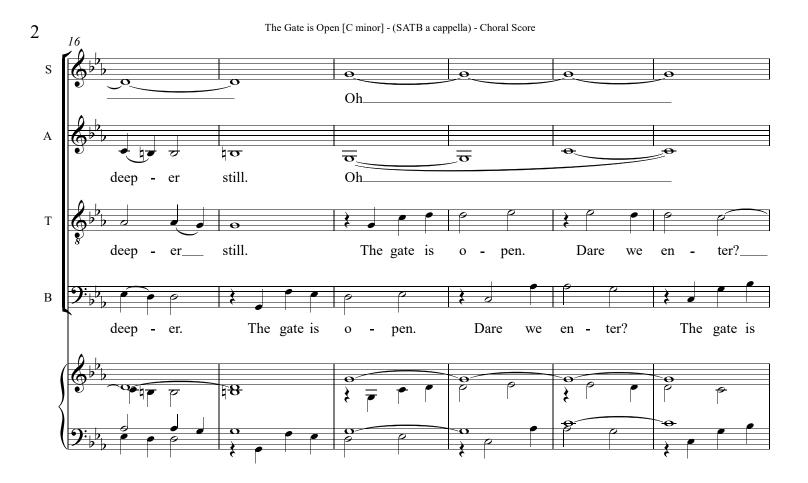
In 2008 I created a multilayered choral setting of "The Gate is Open" in which Peronne Marie's words emerged from a sea of overlapping Gregorian chants. Although the piece was an impressive "sound experience," I didn't find it personally moving. There was so much going on that I found it hard to connect with its deeply personal questions. Ten years later I returned to "The Gate is Open" and stripped away everything unessential. With the vulnerable heart of the song no longer obscured, it now breathed with tenderness and life.



* If the lower voices aren't entering with subtly and seamlessness, try one of these two tricks:

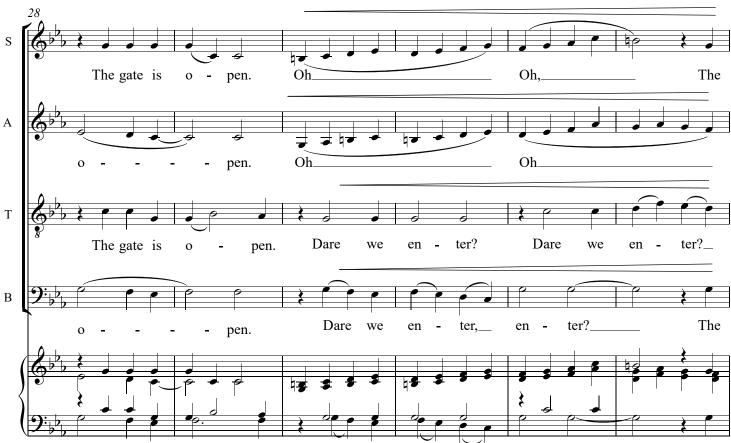
1) Ask only a subset of the lower voices to sing mm.14-17. (Perhaps the first and second tenors!)

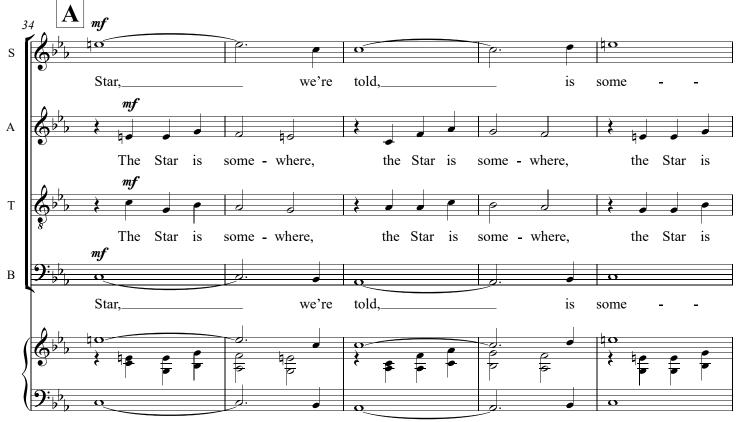
Ask the remaining basses to enter on the pickups to m.18, and the remaining tenors to enter on the pickups to m.19. 2) Some choirs are blessed with gorgeous low altos! If that's the case, ask the second sopranos to sing the alto part in mm.14-17, while assigning the tenor and bass parts to the altos. Ask all basses to enter on the pickups to m.18, and all tenors to enter on the pickups to m.19.



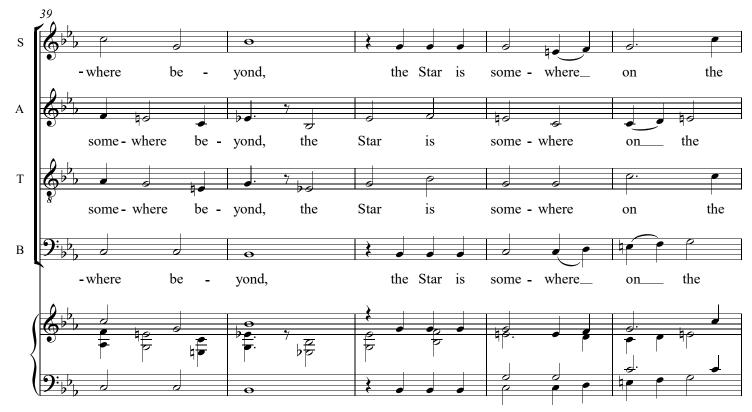


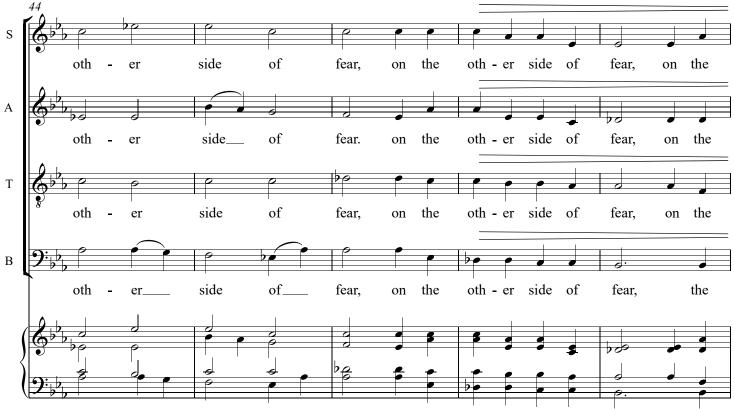
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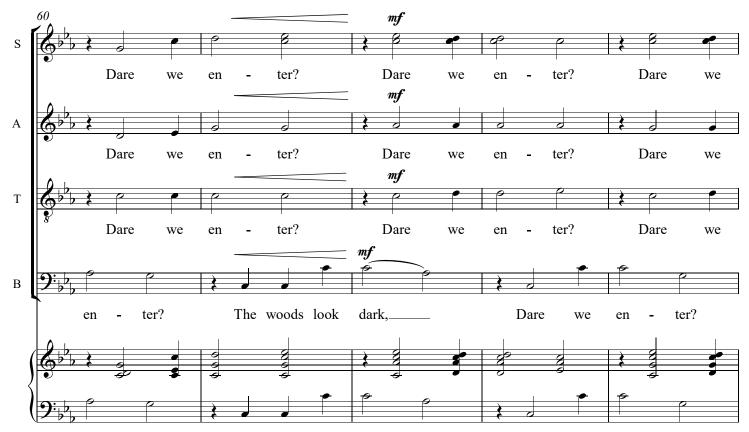
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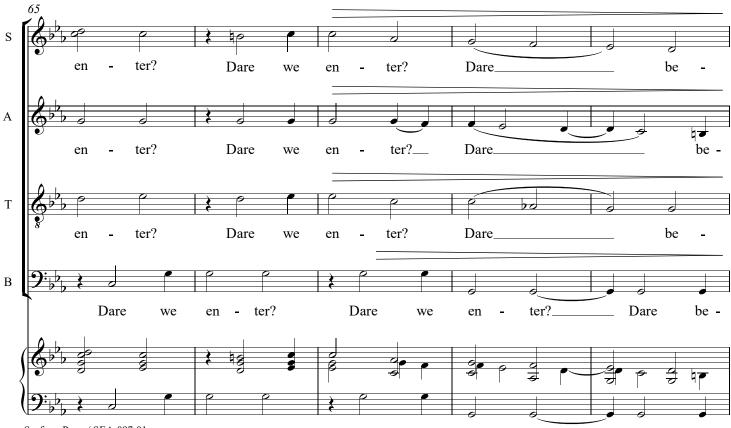
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Elizabet Alyander

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* That's right; there are FOUR options for the soprano solo.

Choose the solo that works best for the soloist, and for the mood of the concert.

Don't try to guess which solo the composer really wanted. That's not what this choice is about.

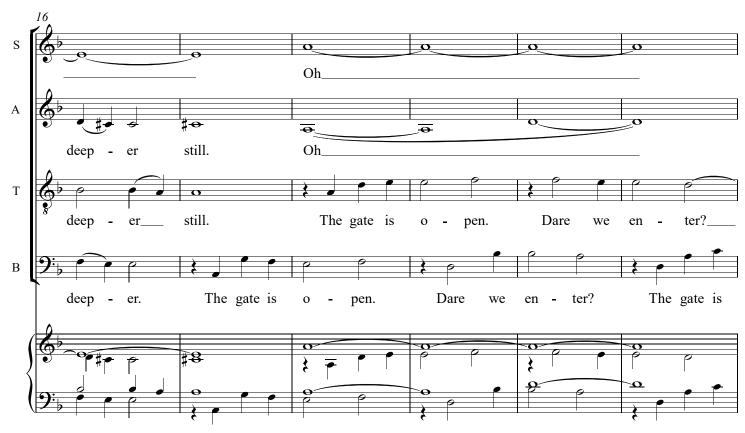
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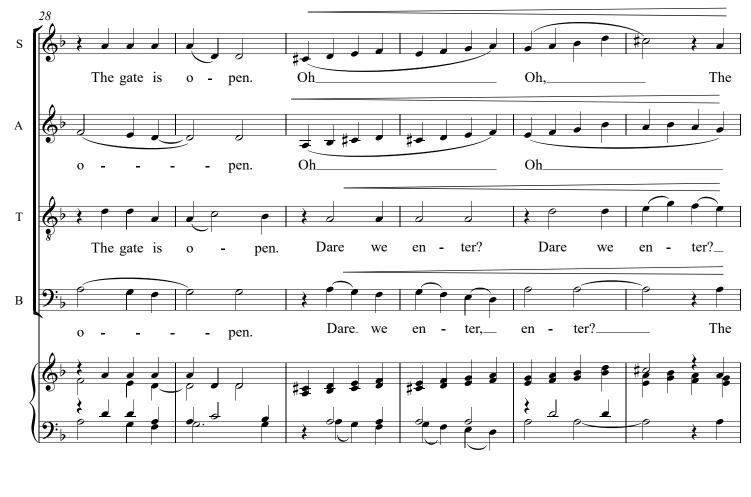
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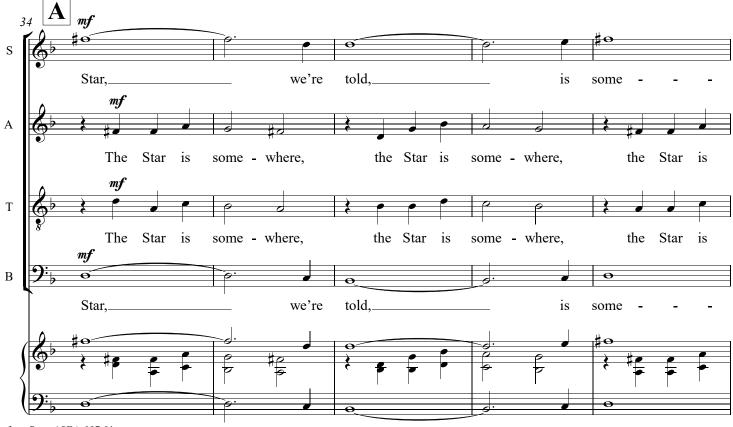
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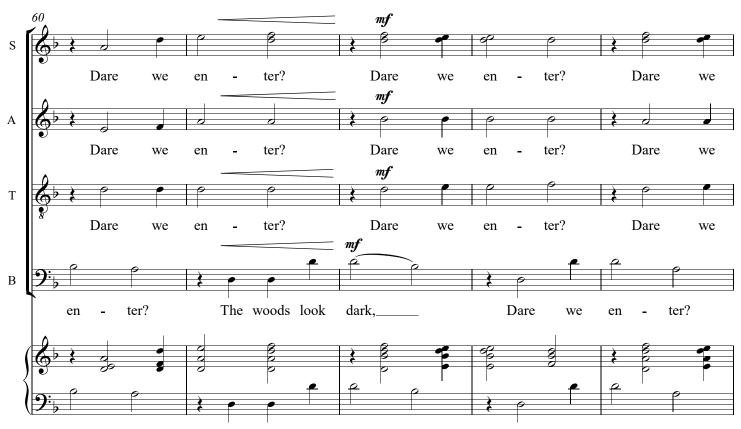
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