

SEA-097-01

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

Copyright 2004 by Sister Peronne Marie Thibert
Reprinted by permission of the author



"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.

The Gate is Open

[C minor]

Sister Peronne Marie Thibert

Elizabeth Alexander

Pensively, misterioso

Musical score for the first system of "The Gate is Open". It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The tempo/mood is "Pensively, misterioso". The lyrics are: "The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The snow looks hea - vy, deep, deep." The piano part is marked "for rehearsal only".

Musical score for the second system of "The Gate is Open", starting at measure 9. The lyrics are: "The woods look dark, dark, deep - er, deep - er still." The Soprano and Alto parts continue with the lyrics. The Tenor and Bass parts enter with the lyrics "Deep - er," in measure 17. The piano accompaniment continues.

* If the lower voices aren't entering with subtlety 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.

16

S Oh

A deep - er still. Oh

T deep - er still. The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter?

B deep - er. The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The gate is

22

S The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The gate is o - pen.

A Oh dare we, dare we en - ter? The gate is o - pen,

T Dare we en - ter? The gate is o - - - - pen.

B o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The gate is o - - - pen,

28

S The gate is o - pen. Oh _____ Oh, _____ The

A o - - - - pen. Oh _____ Oh _____

T The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?_

B o - - - - pen. Dare we en - ter, _ en - ter? _____ The

34 **A** *mf*

S Star, _____ we're told, _____ is some - -

A *mf* The Star is some - where, the Star is some - where, the Star is

T *mf* The Star is some - where, the Star is some - where, the Star is

B *mf* Star, _____ we're told, _____ is some - -

39

S
-where be - yond, the Star is some - where on the

A
some - where be - yond, the Star is some - where on the

T
some - where be - yond, the Star is some - where on the

B
-where be - yond, the Star is some - where on the

44

S
oth - er side of fear, on the oth - er side of fear, on the

A
oth - er side of fear. on the oth - er side of fear, on the

T
oth - er side of fear, on the oth - er side of fear, on the

B
oth - er side of fear, on the oth - er side of fear, 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 • 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 • Sasha 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 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.**

**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

60

S *mf*
Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare we

A *mf*
Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare we

T *mf*
Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare we

B *mf*
en - ter? The woods look dark, _____ Dare we en - ter?

65

S
en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare _____ be -

A
en - ter? Dare we en - ter? _____ Dare _____ be -

T
en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare _____ be -

B
Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? _____ Dare be -

70

Ossia*: *pp*

S Solo
Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

A Solo
Dare be - lieve? _____

p

T Solo
Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

S
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

A
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

T
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

B
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

* 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.

(And remember: higher is not necessarily better!)

The Gate is Open

[D minor]

Sister Peronne Marie Thibert

Elizabeth Alexander

Pensively, misterioso

p

S The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The snow looks hea - vy, deep, _ deep. _

A The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The snow looks hea - vy, deep, _ deep. _

T

B

for rehearsal only

9

S The woods look dark, _ dark, _ deep - er, deep - er still. _

A The woods look dark, _ dark, _ deep - er, deep - er still, _

T *p** Deep - er, _

B *p** Deep - er, _

* 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.

16

S Oh

A deep - er still. Oh

T deep - er still. The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter?

B deep - er. The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The gate is

22

S The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The gate is o - pen.

A Oh dare we, dare we en - ter? The gate is o - pen,

T Dare we en - ter? The gate is o - - - - pen.

B o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The gate is o - - - - pen,

28

S
The gate is o - pen. Oh, Oh, The

A
o - - - - pen. Oh Oh

T
The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?_

B
o - - - - pen. Dare we en - ter, en - ter?_ The

34 **A** *mf*

S
Star, we're told, is some - - -

A
mf
The Star is some - where, the Star is some - where, the Star is

T
mf
The Star is some - where, the Star is some - where, the Star is

B
mf
Star, we're told, is some - - -

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 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 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

49 **meno mosso**
p

S oth - er side of hope - less - ness, _____ of hope - less - ness. _____

A oth - er side of hope - - less - ness, of hope - - less - ness.

T oth - er side of hope - - less - ness, of hope - - less - ness.

B oth - er side of hope - - less - ness, The gate is

54 **B** **a tempo**

S The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?

A The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?

T The gate is o - pen. Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?

B o - pen. Dare we en - ter? The snow looks hea - vy, Dare we

60

Soprano (S): Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?

Alto (A): Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?

Tenor (T): Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter?

Bass (B): en - ter? The woods look dark, Dare we en - ter?

65

Soprano (S): en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare be - en - ter?

Alto (A): en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare be - en - ter?

Tenor (T): en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare be - en - ter?

Bass (B): Dare we en - ter? Dare we en - ter? Dare be - en - ter?

70

Ossia*: *pp*

S Solo
Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

A Solo
Dare be - lieve? _____

p

T Solo
Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

S
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

A
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

T
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

pp

B
- lieve? _____ Dare be - lieve? Dare be - lieve? _____

* That's right; there are THREE 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.

(And remember: higher is not necessarily better!)