

JOAN SZYMKO

*I Am a Ruby*

a choral setting on a poem by

Z. Kh. Sh. (Zay Khay Sheen)

translated from the Urdu by

GAIL MINAULT

for

ssaa chorus

piano &

oboe



**Joan Szymko** (b.1957)

Joan Szymko's music is regularly performed across North America and abroad including performances at national and international choral festivals and competitions. The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in North America by selecting her as a recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission (2010). She has been commissioned by all manner of choral ensemble and her choral works have been heard on stage or in session at every National Conference of the ACDA since 2003. Her 2016 concert length oratorio *Shadow and Light, an Alzheimer's Journey*, is a major new addition to the choral-orchestral repertory. As resident composer with Portland, Oregon based Do Jump! Movement Theater (1995-present), Szymko has created underscoring for several touring productions in the US, earning praise from the *New York Times* for her "ethereal vocal music."

As a visiting artist, Szymko workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational settings across the country and abroad. Her catalog of over 100 choral works is published by Joan Szymko Music, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Roger Dean Music Publishing, Treble Clef Music Press, earthsongs, Walton Music and Oxford University Press.

For additional information see  
[www.joanszymko.com](http://www.joanszymko.com)

**I Am a Ruby Wrapped in a Rag:  
A Veiled Woman's Song**

by Z. Kh. Sh. (Zay Khan Sheen); translated from Urdu  
by Gail Minault

*I am giving up using my comb,  
refusing to return the mirror's gaze  
I have no heart nor zest  
For self-displays.  
In any case,  
I am radiant of face.  
But if no one can observe,  
Of what use is grace?  
If someone is inclined,  
Let him change my mind.  
I am a spectacle, all alone,  
neither displayer nor displayed.  
I am ruby wrapped in a rag,  
The moon in its darkened phase;  
I am a rustic beauty,  
A blossom in a desolate place.  
As is gold buried in the dust,  
Or a pearl lost in the sea;  
A candle under cover,  
Or in the void, the song of the shahnai\*  
Why was the nightingale caged?  
Why was Yusuf enchained?\*  
Whose idea was that?  
What wisdom so ordained?  
What a shocking view it is,  
Astonishing beyond astonishment.  
That beauty of form  
can be seen as unfortunate.  
In the company of rivals,  
Like a candle, I weep  
Even with this beauty,  
In spite of all this grace.  
I cannot find the words  
My meaning to express.  
How can one so powerless  
Make clear her great distress?*

\* *shahnai*: Indian double-reed woodwind instrument

\* *Yusuf*: Joseph (coat of many colors)

Commissioned by Gail Minault for Chorus Austin, Ryan Heller, Artistic Director and Conductor

# *I Am a Ruby*

## *A Veiled Woman's Song*

Z. Kh. Sh. (Zay Khay Sheen)

Translated from the Urdu by Gail Minault

Joan Szymko

Musical score for Oboe, Soprano, Alto, and Piano. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked with a quarter note equal to 78 (♩=78). The Oboe part begins with a *mp* dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes. The Piano part begins with a *p* dynamic in the right hand and a *mp* dynamic in the left hand, which plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A large green watermark "FOR PERUSAL ONLY" is overlaid on the score. Pedal markings are present at the bottom of the piano part.

Musical score for Oboe and Piano. The Oboe part begins with a *mf* dynamic and features a melodic line with a triplet. The Piano part continues with a *mf* dynamic and includes a *ped. simile* marking. The score is in G major and 3/4 time.

9

Ob.

Pno.

rit.

8va

rit.

dim.

13 **A tempo** **A**

Ob.

*mp* *p*

S. Sopranos *mp* *mf*

**FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

I ... giv-ing up ... sing my ... tomb, Re-

**A tempo** **A**

Pno.

*mp* *p*

17

S.

fu-sing to re-turn the mir-ror's gaze. I have no heart nor

Pno.

*mf*

20

S. *mp*

zest For self-dis - plays.

Pno. *mp*

23

A. *mp* *mf* *mp*

In a-ny case, I am ra-di-ant of face. But if no one can ob - serve,

Pno. *p*

**FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

27

S. *mf*

If some-one is in - clined,

A. *mf*

Of what use is grace? If some-one is in - clined,

Pno. *mf*

**poco accel.**

31 **B** N.B.

S. *f* Let him change my mind. I am a spec - ta - cle, all a - lone,

A. *f* Let him change my mind. I am a spec - ta - cle,

**poco accel.**

**B**

Pno.

**FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

35 **rit.** **A tempo**

Ob. *mp*

S. *mp* Nei-ther dis-play-er nor dis - played.

A. *mf* all a lone, *mp* Nei-ther dis-play-er nor dis - played.

**rit.** **A tempo**

Pno. *mf*

For copyright protection,  
this page has been left blank.

47 *rit.* **D** ♩=68

Ob.

S. *p*  
beau-ty, a beau - ty, a blos-som in a de - so-late place.

A. *p*  
beau-ty, a beau - ty, a blos-som in a de - so-late place.

Pno. *8va* *rit.* **D** ♩=68 *ppp*

# FOR PERUSAL ONLY

51 *poco accel.*

S. *mp*  
Like gold bur-ied in the

S. *mp* *mp*  
Like gold bur-ied Like gold bur-ied in the

A. *p* *mp*  
in the

A. *p* *mp*  
Like gold bur-ied in the

Pno. *poco accel.* *p* *mp*

Tempo primo

54 *mf*

S. dust. Or a pearl lost in the sea.

S. dust. Or a pearl lost in the sea.

A. dust. Or a pearl lost in the sea.

A. dust. Or a pearl lost in the sea.

Pno. *mf*

# FOR PERUSAL ONLY

57 *poco a poco cresc.* *f* rit.

S. A can-dle un-der cov er, A can-dle un-der cover,

S. *poco a poco cresc.* *f* A can-dle un-der cov er, A can-dle un-der cover,

A. *poco a poco cresc.* *f* A can-dle un-der cov er, A can-dle un-der cover,

A. *f* A can-dle un-der cov-er, und-der cov er,

Pno. *f* rit.

60 **E** A tempo

Ob. *f* *mp*

S.  
S. *mp* Or in a

A.  
A. *mp* Or in a void,

**E** A tempo

Pno. *ff* *f* *mf* *mp*

# FOR PERUSAL ONLY

63

Ob. *mf* 6

\* shah - nah - ee

S.  
S. *cresc.* *mf* void, the song of the shah-na - i.\*

A.  
A. *cresc.* *mf* the song of the shah-na - i.\*

Pno. *mf*

66

Ob.

*mp* *mf*

S.  
S.

A.  
A.

Pno.

Why \_\_\_ was the night-in-gale caged? Why was Yu-suf en-

Why \_\_\_ was the night-in-gale caged? Why was Yu-suf en-

## FOR PERUSAL ONLY

69

Ob.

*mp*

S.  
S.

A.  
A.

Pno.

chained? Whose i-de-a was that?

chained? Whose i-de-a was that?

Musical score for measures 72-74. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The Oboe part starts with a *p* dynamic and a long note. The vocal parts have lyrics: "I am a ru-by", "What wis-dom so or - dained? I am a ru-by", and "I am a ru-by". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line with a *cresc.* marking and a sixteenth-note pattern.

**FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

Musical score for measures 75-77. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Oboe part starts with a *mf* dynamic. The vocal parts have lyrics: "As -" and "What a shock-ing view it". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line with a *mf* dynamic and a sixteenth-note pattern. A large green box with the letter 'F' is overlaid on the score.

79 *mf*

S. ton-ish-ing be-yond, be-yond as-ton-ish-ment — as un-for-tun ate.

S. *mf*  
that beau-ty can be seen as un-for-tun-ate.

A. A. is, that beau-ty can be seen as un-for-tun ate.

Pno. *mf*

## FOR PERUSAL ONLY

83 *poco accel.* *mp*  $\text{♩} = 86$

S. Like a can-dle, I weep.

S. *mp*  
Like a can-dle, I weep

A. *mp*  
In the com-pa-ny of ri-vals, I weep.

A. *mp*  
In the com-pa-ny of ri-vals, I weep.

Pno. *poco accel.* *mp*  $\text{♩} = 86$  *mf*

87

*mf*

S. E - ven with this beau - ty, In spite of all this

*mf*

S. E - ven with this beau - ty, In spite of all this

*mf*

A. E - ven with this beau - ty, In spite of all this

*mf*

A. E - ven with this beau - ty, In spite of all this

Pno. *f* *mf*

## FOR PERUSAL ONLY

90

*f*

S. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.

*f*

S. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.

*f*

A. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.

*f*

A. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.

Pno. *f*

93 **poco rit.** . . . . . **A tempo**

S. How can one so pow-er-less Make clear her great dis - tress?

S. Make clear her great dis - tress?

A. How can one so pow-er-less Make clear her great dis - tress?

A. How can one so pow-er-less Make clear her great dis - tress?

Pno. **FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

*mf* *f*

97 **poco rit.** . . . . . **Tempo primo**

Ob. *f* *mf*

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf*

102 **G**

Ob. *mp* *mf*

S. *mf* N.B.  
I am a ru-by The moon in its dark-est

A. *mf* 3 N.B.  
I am a ru-by wrapped in a rag, The moon in its dark-est

**G**

Pno. *mp* *mf*

# FOR PERUSAL ONLY

106

Ob.

S. *f*  
phase; I am a beau-ty

A. *f*  
phase; I am a rus-tic beau ty a

Pno. *mf*

*molto rit.*

109

Ob.

S.  
a beau ty, — a beau-ty, — a beau - ty, — *mf* a

S.  
a beau ty, — a beau-ty, — a beau - ty, — *mf* a

A.  
beau-ty, — a beau-ty, — a beau - ty, — *mf* a

A.  
beau-ty, — a beau-ty, — a beau - ty, — *mf* a

Pno.

**FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

*8va*

*molto rit.*

112

Ob.

*mp* *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

S.  
blos-som in a de - so - late — place. — *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

A.  
blos-som in a de - so - late — place. — *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

Pno.

*pp* *pp* *ppp*

Slower  
♩=60