

M. E. Valverde

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O u r P h o e n i x
for SATB chorus, piano, and trumpet

About the Poet

Amir Rabiya is a queer, trans, mixed race, disabled poet, educator, and librarian currently living in Central Pennsylvania. They are the author of *Prayers for My 17th Chromosome*, published by Sibling Rivalry Press in November 2017, and co-editor of *Writing the Walls Down: A Convergence of LGBTQ Voices*, published by Trans-Genre Press in October 2015. Amir writes about living with chronic pain and illness, war, trauma, spirituality, healing, redemption—and speaks on silenced places. Their other works have been published in *Mizna*, *580 Split*, *Flicker and Spark: A Contemporary Queer Anthology of Spoken Word and Poetry*, *Enizagam*, *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, *The Asian American Literary Review*, *Kweli Journal*, *Sukoon*, *Collective Brightness: LGBTIQ Poets on Faith, Religion and Spirituality* and more. Amir is a three-time VONA (Voices of our Nations) fellow. They were a finalist in the 2008 Joy Harjo Poetry contest, the 2012 Enizagam poetry contest, and the Atlanta Review's 2013 poetry contest.

Amir has travelled extensively all over the United States leading workshops and sharing their stories and poems. In 2009, Amir had the privilege of being an STP with June Jordan's Poetry for the People program at UC Berkeley where they supported emerging poets develop their craft and deepen their voice. Amir has participated in residencies at the Kimmel Nelson Harding Center in Nebraska, the Guapamacáaro Center for Art and Ecology in Michoacán, Mexico, and more. For more information or to contact Amir, visit www.AmirRabiya.com.

My Dear Beautiful People,

*Each time you are broken,
I break, I break,
I break a little more
then un-break,*

*I am piecing myself back together
with the care of a potter's hands
I clay phoenix*

*I feel the heat
of our resurrections burning
to glaze our skin into glow
my fire and my kiln
are these words, this space
the intimate threads
of our connection*

*...
I envision us going on
to eclipse, building, bigger, bigger,
bigger
more luminous
So bright*

*My beautiful people
our breaking is our making*

*...
[Let] us dream towards
what we want
beyond survival
Let us dream towards loving
ourselves
over and over again
My beautiful people
I can taste our honeyed victory
My beautiful people
our dangerous sweetness
is our rebellion*

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Composer's Notes

In a time when trans people are more visible than ever, we know that, just since the start of 2015, over 20 transgender Americans have been reported murdered at the hands of impassioned cowards. We also know that approximately 40% of trans Americans are documented to have attempted suicide. There are many obstacles for our LGBTQ family, and while it is not constructive to compare them by their gravities, we must acknowledge the egregious undervaluing of our trans population.

"Our Phoenix" is ours because we, the people, the queer population and our allies, all of us share this life-struggle. When one stripe of our rainbow is denied the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, when we are targeted and harassed, assaulted, or pushed beyond the edge of mortality, the impact comes back for everyone. We only have ourselves to hold accountable, and our response will set the tone for the generations who survive us.

My inspiration for this composition were the words "clay," "phoenix," "burning," "bright," "beyond survival," "loving," and "victory." The mention of "clay" is a metaphor for *humus*, the stuff from which our spiritual humanity was formed; "burning" suggests the hazardous process of forging us into something that will endure; and the "phoenix" is an allusion to the incandescent bird that is reborn rising from ashes to persist forever.

From disconnected melodic lines to resounding harmonies interwoven with trumpet declamations, this work is a lamentation, an outcry, and a rousing to a movement for equality. We must demand more from ourselves for ourselves and for those who follow us. Let us, then, be like the phoenix and rise.

dur. = ca. 4'

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River City Mixed Chorus of Omaha, Nebraska, Singing Out of Toronto, Ontario, and Voices of Kentuckiana of Louisville, Kentucky

Our Phoenix

for SATB chorus (div.), piano, and trumpet

Amir Rabiya

b. 1978

Mari Esabel Valverde

b. 1987

Trumpet in C *mf* *mp* **Warmly, freely** ♩ = ca. 69

Tpt in C *f* *mf dolce*

Tpt in C *rub.* *p* *p dolce*

S *p dolce* (9) 3

A *p dolce* (9) 3

T *p dolce* (9) 3

B *p dolce* (9) 3

Pno.

My Dear Beau-ti-ful Peo-ple, Each time you are

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23 **stringendo**

Tpt in C

S *mf* *molto espress.*

A *mf* *molto espress.*

T *mf* *molto espress.*

B *mf* *molto espress.*

Pno. *mf*

pot-ter's *hands I clay phoe - nix

*I clay I clay phoe - nix

pot-ter's *hands I clay phoe - nix

*I clay I clay phoe - nix

Fiery, but not heavy ♩ = ca. 96

28

Tpt in C *mp*

S *mp con spirito*

A *mp con spirito*

T *mp con spirito*

B *mp con spirito*

Pno. *sf*

I

I

I

I

*The end of the sopranos' and tenors' "hands" meld into the altos' and basses' "I clay" in order to create a continuous phrase.

molto rit.

Tpt in C

mf *f*

S

ger more lu - mi - nous So bright

A

ger more lu - mi - nous So bright

T

ger more lu - mi - nous So bright

B

ger more lu - mi - nous So bright

Pno.

mf *cresc.* *f*

div.

Tempo primo ♩ = ca. 69

Tpt in C

mf

S

My beau-ti-ful peo-ple our break-ing is our mak - ing [Let] us

A

My beau-ti-ful peo-ple our break-ing is our mak - ing

T

My beau-ti-ful peo-ple our break-ing is our mak - ing

B

My beau-ti-ful peo-ple our break-ing is our mak - ing

Pno.

mf

Poco più mosso ♩ = ca. 76

mf

58

S dream _____ Let us

A [Let] us dream to - wards what we want be - yond sur - viv - al

T [Let] us dream to - wards what we want be - yond sur - viv - al

B [Let] us dream to - wards what we want be - yond sur - viv - al

Pno. *mp* *mf*

61

Tpt in C *mf*

S dream _____ o - ver and o - ver a -

A Let us dream to - wards lov - ing our - selves o - ver and o - ver a -

T Let us dream to - wards lov - ing our - selves o - ver and o - ver a -

B Let us dream to - wards lov - ing our - selves o - ver and o - ver a -

Pno. *mp* *f*

Not authorized for performance!

64

Tpt in C

S

A

T

B

Pno.

mf *sempre cresc.*

gain My beau-ti-ful peo-ple I can taste our hon-eyed

mf *sempre cresc.*

gain My beau-ti-ful peo-ple I can taste our hon-eyed

mf *sempre cresc.*

gain My beau-ti-ful peo-ple I can taste our hon-eyed

mf *sempre cresc.*

gain My beau-ti-ful peo-ple I can taste our hon-eyed

mf

65

Tpt in C

S

A

T

B

Pno.

f

vic-tor-y My beau-ti-ful peo-ple

f *mf*

vic-tor-y My beau-ti-ful peo-ple

f

vic-tor-y My beau-ti-ful peo-ple

f *mf*

vic-tor-y My beau-ti-ful peo-ple

dim.

rub.

73

Tpt in C

S

A

T

B

Pno.

our dan - ger - ous sweet - ness is our

p *mp* *mf*

our dan - ger - ous sweet - ness is our

p *mf*

our dan - ger - ous sweet - ness is our

p *mf*

our dan - ger - ous sweet - ness is our

p *mf*

our dan - ger - ous sweet - ness is our

p *poco a poco cresc.*

76

Tpt in C

S

A

T

B

Pno.

re - bel - lion

mf *f*

re - bel - lion

f

re - bel - lion

f

re - bel - lion

f

re - bel - lion

f

re - bel - lion

f