

# April Rain Song

Langston Hughes

SATB a cappella



Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

# April Rain Song

Langston Hughes

Let the rain kiss you.  
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.  
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.

The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk.  
The rain makes running pools in the gutter.  
The rain plays a little sleep-song on our roof at night ---

And I love the rain.

“April Rain Song” © 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf. Renewed in 1960 by Langston Hughes.  
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**Performance Note:** In the *senza misura* measure the musical material of a free rhythmic nature. Black noteheads should have shorter durations, while white noteheads may be lingered on.

*April Rain Song* is the opening song in the three-movement work *Spring Revels* (SEA-006-00)

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**Composer Note:** I composed *April Rain Song* when my sons were still babies and I was singing lullabies to them several times a day. I made up most of the lullabies on the spot using whatever materials presented themselves at the moment. I listed their stuffed animals, I embroidered fantastic stories, and I invented new lyrics to familiar tunes. But my favorite lullabies were created by playing around with the syllables of their names. While in the rocking chair I would spin their names into long melismas. While pacing with a tired wailer I would repeat syllables until a rhythmic pattern gave me a groove to dance to. And when the inevitable boredom of day-in-and-day-out caregiving set in I would make up outlandish rhyming ditties.



Cover image by Mio Buono  
(Shutterstock)

I didn't realize it at the time, but my setting of Langston Hughes' "April Rain Song" was directly inspired by my children's "name lullabies." The complete text of the poem is sung by two or more soloists, while the choir itself creates a vocal accompaniment entirely from the syllables of the word "lullaby." Starting out as a light rain, the vocal texture eventually gives way to an unhurried, gently rocking sleep-song.

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Like a gentle rain (♩ = ca. 88)

First system of the musical score for SATB a cappella. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as ♩ = ca. 88. The dynamics are *p* (piano) and *p* *lightly*. The lyrics are "lop\* lop lop lop lop lop lop". The piano accompaniment is marked "for rehearsal only".

Second system of the musical score, starting at measure 5. It includes a Solo Soprano part and the SATB vocal parts. The dynamics are *mp* (mezzo-piano). The lyrics for the Solo Soprano part are "Let the". The lyrics for the SATB parts are "lop lop lop lop lop lop lop".

\* Articulate the final "p" just enough to lightly close the vowel.

9

S Solo  
rain

S  
lop lop lop lop lop

A  
lop lop lop lop lop lop lop

T  
8  
lop lop lop lop lop lop

B  
lop lop lop lop lop

13

S Solo  
kiss you.

S  
Lop lop lop lop lop

A  
Lop lop lop lop lop lop

T  
8  
Lop lop lop lop lop

B  
Lop lop lop lop lop

17 *mp*

S Solo  
Let the rain beat up - on your head with

S  
Lop lop lop lop lop

A  
Lop lop lop lop lop lop lop

T  
Lop lop lop lop lop lop

B  
Lop lop lop lop lop

21 *poco rit.*

S Solo  
sil - - - - ver li - - - - quid

S  
Lop lop lop lop lop

A  
Lop lop lop lop lop lop

T  
Lop lop lop lop lop

B  
Lop lop lop lop lop

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**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*

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33

S Solo  
lul - la - by. \_\_\_\_\_ sing \_\_\_\_\_ you a

S  
Lop lop lop lop lop

A  
Lop lop lop lop lop lop lop lop

T  
Lop lop lop lop lop lop lop

B  
Lop lop lop lop lop

37

S Solo  
lul - la - by. \_\_\_\_\_

S  
lul - - - la - by,

A  
lop lop lul - - - la - by, \_\_\_\_\_

T  
lop lop *(p)* lul - - - - - la -

B  
lop lop

42

S lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by,

A — lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la -

T - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la -

B *mp*

The

49

S lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by,

A - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la -

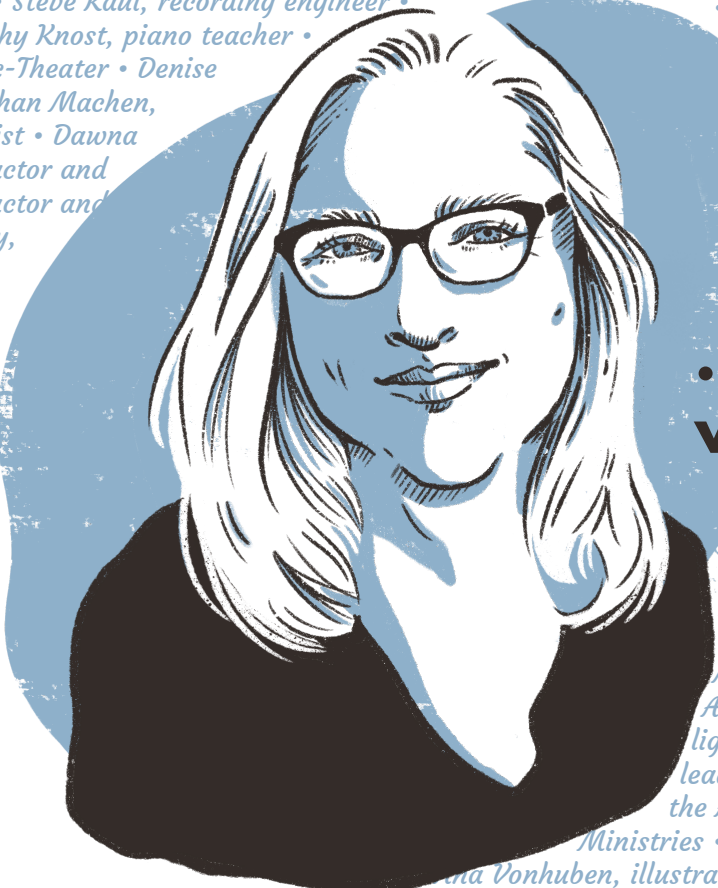
T by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la - by, lul - la -

B rain \_\_\_\_\_ makes \_\_\_\_\_ still pools on the side - walk \_\_\_\_\_



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**Senza misura**

*lunga*

*mp freely*

84

S Solo

and I \_\_\_\_\_ love

S

lul - la - by, lul - la - by,

A

lul - la - by, \_\_\_\_\_

T

B

87 **a tempo**

S Solo

the rain \_\_\_\_\_ (n)

S

(n) *pp*

A

lop lop (n) *pp*

T

lop lop lop lop

B

lop lop lop

## Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

**A Palette To Paint Us As We Are** (Gerald Rich)  
SATB, piano • SEA-014-01  
SSA, piano • SEA-014-02

**Beware the Winter Settin' In** (Alexander)  
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SSAA, piano • SEA-063-02

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**Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm** (Yehuda Amichai)  
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SSA • SEA-068-00

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SSATB, piano • SEA-025-00

**Handles** (Alexander)  
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SATB, piano • SEA-105-01

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SAB, piano, claves • SEA-022-03  
TBB, piano, claves • SEA-022-05  
SSA, piano, claves • SEA-022-06  
SATB, piano, claves • SEA-022-07

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SATB, piano • SEA-123-09

**Let it Matter** (Alexander)  
SSA, piano • SEA-125-03  
SATB, piano • SEA-125-04

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1-4 part choir, soloist, piano • SEA-141-03

**...or a musician** (Philip Dacey)  
SATB, orchestra • SEA-007-00

**A Palette To Paint Us As We Are** (Gerald Rich)  
SA, piano • SEA-014-00  
SATB, piano • SEA-014-01

**Praise Wet Snow Falling Early** (Denise Levertov)  
SATB, piano • SEA-015-00

**Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery** (Alexander)  
SSAA • SEA-091-00

**Same Birds** (David Allen Evans)  
SATB • SEA-128-00

**Song of Kabir** (Kabir)  
SATB • SEA-119-00

**The Gate is Open** (Sister Peronne Marie Thibert)  
SATB • SEA-097-01

**They Have Freckles Everywhere** (Alexander)  
SSAA, piano • SEA-076-00

**To Make a Prairie** (Emily Dickinson)  
SSA, piano • SEA-016-00

**We Lift Up Our Hearts** (Richard Fewkes)  
Unison children's choir, SATB, piano • SEA-021-00

**We Remember Them** (Sylvan Kamens, Jack Riemer)  
SATB, piano • SEA-083-01

**Where there Is Light in the Soul** (Chinese proverb)  
SAB • SEA-070-00  
SATB • SEA-070-01  
SSA • SEA-070-02  
TBB • SEA-062-03

**When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled** (Thurman)  
SATB • SEA-062-00  
TTBB • SEA-062-02  
SSAA • SEA-062-04  
SATB, flute • SEA-062-05

**Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills** (Prefontaine)  
SSAA • SEA-058-00