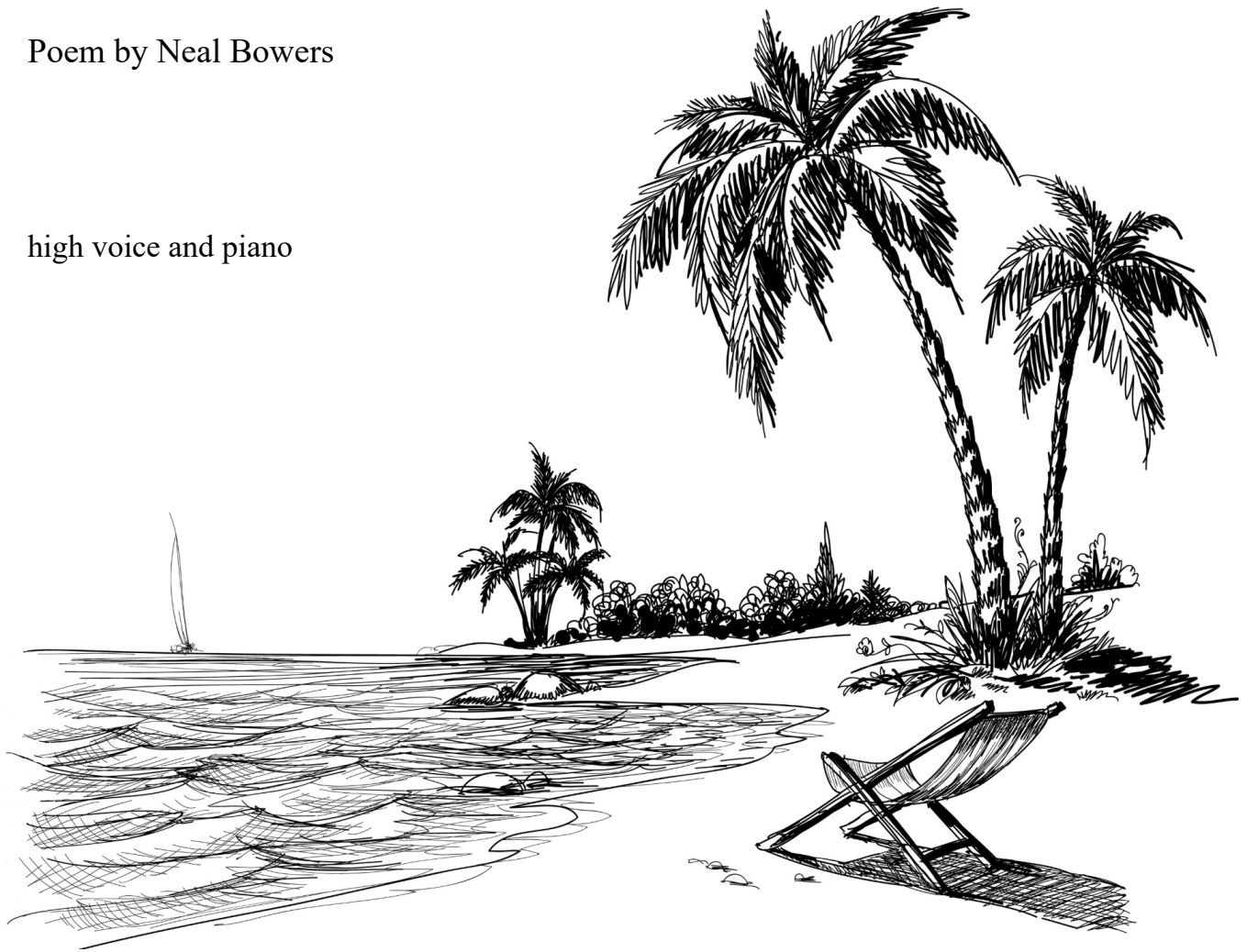


# Trouble in a Minnesota Town

Poem by Neal Bowers

high voice and piano



Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

## Trouble in a Minnesota Town

The sign in the grocery window says,  
NO MANGOES,  
and everyone who passes  
is seized with a tropical longing:  
the sun sets hot orange;  
a dense perfume  
loiters along the street;  
on the tongue is the memory  
of something softer than spun honey.

Before daylight, the whole town  
is mad for the flavor of mangoes.  
A spicy sweetness, almost a cross  
between cloves and ginger,  
lodges in the brain like a stuck tune.  
By noon the record shop  
has sold out of calypso albums;  
reggae and salsa are going fast.  
In the square, someone is showing how  
to dance the mambo, the rumba,  
pleading for a partner to tango,  
*por favor, por favor.*

When the sign goes up announcing  
a sale on papayas, guavas, bananas, avocados,  
it is already too late.  
The people have begun to paint  
their slogan on the walls--  
MANGOES O MUERTE--  
and the mayor has received  
a list of demands:  
Mangoes.  
Mangoes.  
Mangoes.  
Mangoes.

Neal Bowers

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for Yehudi Wyner

# Trouble in a Minnesota Town

high voice, piano

Neal Bowers

Elizabeth Alexander

**Brightly** (♩ = 144-152)

Musical score for measures 1-3. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a *senza pedale* instruction. The vocal line starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with some chords marked *sf* (sforzando).

Musical score for measures 4-6. The piano part continues with dynamics *p* (piano) and *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano). The vocal line has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with some chords marked *f* (forte) and *sf* (sforzando). The tempo changes to 6/4 for measures 5 and 6.

Musical score for measures 7-9. The piano part continues with dynamics *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *sf* (sforzando). The vocal line has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with some chords marked *sf* (sforzando). The tempo changes to 5/4 for measures 8 and 9.

Musical score for measures 10-12. The piano part continues with dynamics *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano). The vocal line has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with some chords marked *p* (piano). The tempo changes to 4/4 for measures 10 and 11. The lyrics "The sign in the grocery" are written under the vocal line. The piano part ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

14

win - dow\_ says,

*cresc. poco a poco*

18

*Senza misura* *passionately f* *lightly mp* *a tempo*

NO MAN - GOES, and ev - 'ry - one\_ who pas - ses,

*ff* *p* *f*

*Red.*

21

*Senza misura* *more intensely* *f* *mp slowly, lingering*

ev - 'ry - one who pas-ses- is seized with a tro - pi - cal

*sfz* *f*

*Red.*

24 **Tempo di habanera** (♩ = 96-104)

Musical score for measures 24-26. The vocal line (treble clef) has lyrics: "long - ing:\_\_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) includes a guitar strumming pattern and windchimes. Dynamics include *mp*. Pedal markings are present in the bass line.

Musical score for measures 27-29. The vocal line (treble clef) has lyrics: "the sun sets hot or - ange; a dense per -". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) includes a guitar strumming pattern and windchimes. Dynamics include *mp*. Pedal markings are present in the bass line.

Musical score for measures 30-32. The vocal line (treble clef) has lyrics: "fume loi - ters a - long the street:\_\_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) includes a guitar strumming pattern and windchimes. Dynamics include *mp*. Pedal markings are present in the bass line. The tempo marking **molto rit.** is present above the vocal line.

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 • 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 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.**

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purchased through any music store or dealer.**

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41 **più mosso**

*mp*

Be - fore day - light, \_\_\_\_\_

*marcato*

*mp*

*mp*

\* Ped. \* Ped. \*

44 **Senza misura**

the whole town is mad for the fla - vor of

*mf* *mp*

*mf* *mp*

\* Ped.

46 **Tempo di habanera** **poco accelerando**

man - goes. \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

*p*

Ped. Ped.

48 **più mosso**

*mf marcato*

\* Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. \* Ped.

51 *p*

A spi - cy sweet-ness, — *mf* al - most a cross be - tween cloves and

*p*

*mf*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. \* Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

54 *p*

gin - ger, — *p* lod - ges in the brain like a stuck tune. —

*p*

*p*

Ped. \* Ped. Ped. Ped. \* Ped.

*poco a poco accel.*

56 *mf*

By

*mf*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

59

noon\_\_\_\_\_ the re-cord shop has sold\_\_\_\_\_ out\_ of ca -

left hand over right hand

*Ped.* \*

62 *f*

- lyp - so al - bums;

*mp*

*f*

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**molto rall.** **Sultry tango tempo**  
*p*

74

the rum - ba, plead - ing for a part - ner to \_\_\_\_\_ tan -

*pp* *leggiero*

*ped.* \*

77

- - go, por fa - vor, por fa -

*mp*

**poco a poco accel.** *f*

81

- vor. \_\_\_\_\_ When the

*f*

84

sign goes up an - nounc - ing a sale

87

— on pa - pa - yas, gua - vas, ba - na - nas, a - vo - ca - dos,

**Senza misura**

**Militant tango tempo**

90

*Spoken ominously:*

It is already too late.

Play ominous chord cluster with both palms

*mp*

93 *f* Spoken: rising to a shout . . .

The people have begun to paint their slogans on the walls —

96 **molto rall.** *ff* *à la Pagliacci*

MAN - GOES O MUER - TE

*melodramatically, of course* *militantly*

*ff*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

99 **Pressing forward** *mf* *militantly*

And the may - or has re -

*mf*

8<sup>vb</sup>

102

- ceived a list of de - mands:

*f*

(8)-----

**Senza misura**

105

*f* Man - goes. Man - goes. Man - goes. Man - goes. *mp* longingly Man - goes.

*mp* dreamily

*Red.*

(8)-----

**Calypso, anyone?**

110

*Whispered passionately*

Man-goes.

*sharp and precise*

*mp*

*Red.* \*

### About **Trouble in a Minnesota Town**:

My friend Sam Bates could hardly contain his glee when he introduced me to Neal Bowers' poem, "Trouble in a Minnesota Town." He knew it would be love at first sight. The instant I read the climactic proclamation "MANGOES O MUERTE" I mentally began to set Bowers' whimsical words to music.

Creating a musical vocabulary as colorful as the poem's own freewheeling idiom was a giddy experience. I had never combined music from such vastly different styles before! During this process I thought frequently about Yehudi Wyner, a former composition teacher who also occasionally delighted in weaving diverse musical threads together.

When I put the finishing touches on *Trouble in a Minnesota Town* I had no idea how the song would be received by audiences. But I was certain of one thing. It might be the first genre-bending song I ever composed, but it certainly wouldn't be my last! – E.A.



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Neal Bowers grew up in Clarksville, Tennessee. He received a PhD from the University of Florida, and taught for many years at Iowa State University in Ames. His poetry collections include *Night Vision*, *Lost in the Heartland*, and *Out of the South*, which won the Society of Midland Authors 2002 Poetry Prize. A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the Frederick Bock Prize from Poetry magazine, his poetry has also appeared in the *Sewanee Review*, *Poetry* and the *New Yorker*.

His memoir *Words for the Taking: The Hunt for a Plagiarist* recounts his experience of searching for a plagiarist who had published his poems in several poetry journals, leading Bowers to explore the deeper implications of plagiarism. His other works include the novel *Loose Ends* and *Cats Rule: The Bookstore Cat's Guide to the Care and Training of Humans*.

## Selected Vocal Music by Elizabeth Alexander

**A Garret of Old Playthings** (Carl Sandburg)  
high voice, piano • SEA-028-00

**A Love Like That** (Hafiz/Ladinsky)  
low voice, piano • SEA-094-00  
medium voice, piano • SEA-094-01  
high voice, piano • SEA-094-02

**Die Gedanken Sind Frei** (German protest song, arr. Alexander)  
Vocal Duet: low voice, high voice, piano • SEA-087-01

**Grace** (Elizabeth Alexander)  
low voice, piano • SEA-127-00  
medium voice, piano • SEA-127-01  
high voice, piano • SEA-127-02

**I Write This Poem Out of Darkness** (George Ella Lyon)  
Vocal Trio: SSA, flute, violin, piano • SEA-024-01

**I'll Tell You a Story, then...** (Nancy White)  
low voice, piano • SEA-069-00  
medium voice, piano • SEA-069-01  
high voice, piano • SEA-069-02

**Infant Holy, Infant Lowly** (Polish carol, arr. Alexander)  
Vocal Trio: SSA a cappella • SEA-020-00

**Jo!** (The Edict of Torda)  
Vocal Trio: SSA a cappella • SEA-092-00

**My Aunt Gives Me a Clarinet Lesson** (Gregory Djanikian)  
soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, percussion • SEA-053-00

**No One Gets a Program** (Dutch proverb, Elizabeth Alexander)  
Vocal Duet: low voice, medium voice, piano • SEA-095-07

**Oath Taking** (Opal Palmer Adisa)  
high voice, piano • SEA-073-00

**On the Edge of the Water** (Elizabeth Alexander)  
low voice, piano • SEA-083-00

**Sleep Song** (Ann Silsbee)  
low voice, piano • SEA-61-00  
medium voice, piano • SEA-061-01  
high voice, piano • SEA-061-02

**The Eternal One** (Ralph Waldo Emerson)  
low voice, piano • SEA-093-00  
medium voice, piano • SEA-093-01  
high voice, piano • SEA-093-02

**The Gospel Isn't Written in the Bible Alone** (Elizabeth Alexander)  
low voice, piano • SEA-082-00  
medium-high voice, piano • SEA-082-02

**Trouble in a Minnesota Town** (Neal Bowers)  
medium voice, piano • SEA-047-01  
high voice, piano • SEA-047-02