

Faith is
the bird that
feels the light



Text by Rabindranath Tagore

SATB a cappella

Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

Faith is the bird that feels the light
and sings when the dawn is still dark.

Rabindranath Tagore, from *Fireflies*

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Calcutta in 1861, where he was exposed from an early age to both Indian and Western culture and thought. A prolific writer of poems, stories and novels, he is best known for *Gitanjali*, a book of poems about divine and human love. Tagore was also a musician and songwriter; two of his songs are now the national anthems of Bangladesh and India. The quote on which this song is based is taken from *Fireflies*, a collection of 256 epigrams and short verses from Southeast Asia.



Composer's Note: When I began composing this song I didn't know how it would end; in fact, I thought it would be significantly longer than it is. But after composing the first 10 bars of a small recapitulation, I stumbled upon a surprising and glorious six note chord, offering not resolution but possibility. I suddenly thought, "Good heavens, what if I stop right here?!"

I was so astonished I had to get up from the piano and take a brisk walk around the block. Returning to the piano, I took a deep breath and drew a double bar line after what is one of my favorite endings of all time.

Performance Note: Heck yes, this song may be sung with folk/blues inflections. The solo may be divided between more than one soloist if desired. This song works at a variety of tempos, but it loses some of its nuance when it gets too fast.



Cover art: "Dove of Peace" by Christina Franks

Christina Franks created "Dove of Peace" for a Father's Day card and letter which she gave to her father shortly before his death. These gifts prompted him to share with her that he had studied drawing as a child. A lack of confidence led him to abandon his art, which thenceforth found expression only in his strikingly elegant handwriting. Christina's drawing and her father's story are priceless testaments to the hope and faith they shared.

After graduating from Vanderbilt University, Christina worked for seventeen years as a computer science engineer, software designer, technical writer, and IT business analyst for Texas Instruments, FedEx, Lucent Technologies, and BMC Software. Her love of math and geometry naturally drew her to the art form of Zentangle. A voracious reader, she also writes poetry and creative non-fiction, develops Bible studies, and enjoys time with her beloved Shih Tzu.



To see more of Christina's art, visit www.flickr.com/photos/47191699@N02/

Faith is the bird that feels the light

Rabindranath Tagore

Elizabeth Alexander

(♩ = 92-100) Soulful, gutsy, sweet

mp

Alto

Faith is the bird_ that feels the light_ and sings when the dawn is still_ dark,

S

A

T

B

mp

O_____

5

S

Faith is the bird_ that feels the light, the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels_ the light,_____

A

Faith is the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels_ the light,_____

T

Faith is the bird_ that feels the light, the bird that feels the light, that feels_ the light,_____

B

Faith is the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels the light, that feels_ the light,_____

9

S
O Faith is the bird that feels the light, and sings when it

A
O Faith is the bird that feels the light, and sings when it

T
O Faith is the bird that feels the light, and sings when the dawn is

B
O Faith is the bird that feels the light, and sings when the dawn is

13

S
still is dark, the bird that sings, when it's

A
still dark, the bird that sings, and sings when the dawn is still

T
still, still dark, the bird that sings, and sings when it's

B
still dark, the bird that sings, and sings when the dawn is still

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.**

**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

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25

mf *f*

S feels the light and sings, that feels the light and sings, and

A light and sings, feels the light and sings, that feels the light and sings, and

T light and sings, that feels the light and sings, that feels the light and sings, and

B light and sings, that feels the light and sings, that feels the light and sings, and

29

Solo *mp*

S sings, and sings when the dawn is dark. Oh

A sings, and sings when the dawn is dark.

T sings, and sings when the dawn is dark.

B sings, and sings when the dawn is dark.

33 *mf*

Solo *mf*
feels the light and sings,

Solo
Faith is the bird that feels,

S *p* Faith is the bird, *mp* Faith is the bird,
mp

A *p* Faith is the bird, *mp* Faith is the bird,
mp

T Faith is the bird,
mp

B Faith is the bird,

37 *f*

Solo *f*
Sings when the dawn is dark,

S *mf* Faith is the bird, O Faith is the bird that *f*
f

A *mf* Faith is the bird, is the bird, O Faith is the bird that *f*
f

T *mf* Faith is the bird, is the bird, O Faith is the bird that *f*
f

B O Faith is the bird that *f*

41 *p subito*

S feels the light, it is the bird that sings when the dawn is dark. O

A feels the light, it is the bird that sings when the dawn is dark.

T feels the light, it is the bird that sings when the dawn is dark.

B feels the light, it is the bird that sings when the dawn is dark.

44 *with reverence*

S and

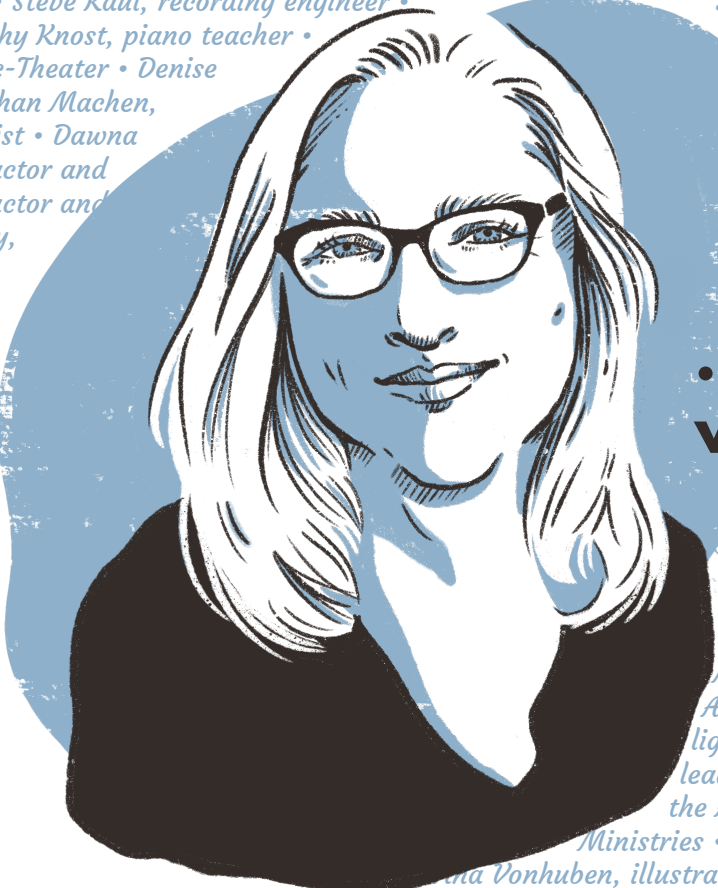
A *p subito* Oh and *with reverence*

T *p subito* O and *with reverence*

B *p subito* O and *with reverence*

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**...and some of it
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Elizabeth Alexander
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58 *mp* *mf*

S Faith is the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels the light,

A Faith is the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels the light,

T Faith is the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels the light,

B Faith is the bird that feels the light, the bird that feels the light,

61 *f* *lungissima*

S the bird that feels the light.

A the bird that feels the light.

T the bird that feels the light.

B *mf* *f* *lungissima*

the bird that feels the light.

Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

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SSA, piano • SEA-014-02
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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-014-01
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SSAA • SEA-091-00
- Same Birds** (David Allen Evans)
SATB • SEA-128-00
- Song of Kabir** (Kabir)
SATB • SEA-119-00
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- To Make a Prairie** (Emily Dickinson)
SSA, piano • SEA-016-00
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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