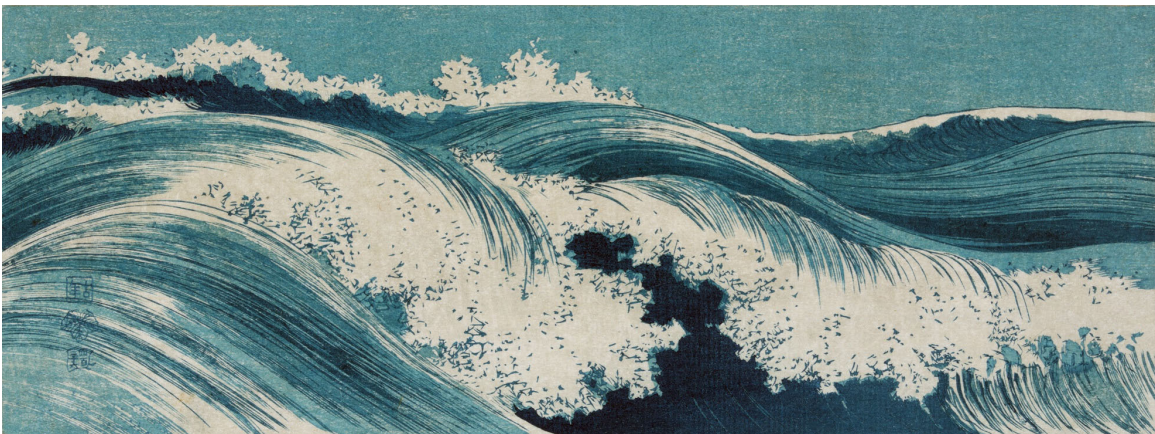


Calm the Tempests of My Heart

Søren Kierkegaard

Flexible Voicing Edition: 2-part, 3-part or 4-part choir



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

Calm the Tempests of my Heart

Adapted by the composer from a prayer by Søren Aabye Kierkegaard

Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God.
Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God.
Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee,
Bringing peace that the world can never take away.

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Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was a Danish philosopher, theologian, writer and social critic, often called the “father of existentialism.” By the time he was 21, many of his relatives had died, including his mother and four of his siblings. Like his pious, scholarly father, he would struggle with “melancholy” for most of his life – a condition we now refer to as depression.

Kierkegaard’s books and writings reflect his obsession with what he called “inwardness,” a realm completely separate from one’s outward demeanor or actions. He questioned whether the rational dialectical reasoning of his time could possibly bring about a spiritual life that was authentic. Instead, Kierkegaard encouraged seekers to engage passionately with their emotions, especially intense emotions such as anguish. In his best known work, *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard would describe “despair” as a frequently overlooked “sickness of the spirit,” writing: “Happiness is the greatest hiding place for despair.”

The prayer in this song speaks to Kierkegaard’s struggle with his own despair, which he called the “tempests of my heart.”

Composer’s Note: This song was inspired by both spiritual and practical needs. Conductor Joyce Harding needed a meditative choral response which could be sung at all of her church services during Lent – but the makeup of the choir was apt to vary from week to week, depending on members’ availability.

Calm the Tempests of My Heart was conceived with performance flexibility in mind. I crafted 2-part, 3-part, and 4-part voicings, so that it could be sung by a variety of high voice, low voice and mixed voice ensembles. Far from a rote exercise in arranging, this project gave me the chance to fashion a different character for each voicing, revealing different facets of Kierkegaard’s timeless prayer.

Calm the Tempests of my Heart

Two-part men's or women's choir

Sören Kierkegaard, adapted

Elizabeth Alexander

With placidness and grace

First system of the musical score. It features two vocal parts, I and II, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The lyrics for both parts are: "Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tempests of my heart, O my". The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

Second system of the musical score, starting at measure 5. The lyrics continue: "God, Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring-ing ten. pp". The piano part continues with accompaniment. The system concludes with a tenuto mark and a piano dynamic marking.

The last system on this page is omitted in this perusal score.

Calm the Tempests of my Heart

Three-part mixed choir

Sören Kierkegaard, adapted

Elizabeth Alexander

With placidness and grace

pp

S
Calm the tem-pests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tem-pests of my heart, O my

pp

A
Calm the tem-pests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tem-pests of my heart, O my

pp

B
Calm the tem-pests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tem-pests of my heart, O my

5

p

S
God, Be___ still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring - ing ten. *pp*

p

A
God, O my God, Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring - ing ten. *pp*

p

B
God, O my God, Be___ still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring - ing ten. *pp*

*The last system of the three-part mixed choir voicing
is omitted in this perusal score.*

Calm the Tempests of my Heart

Four-part mixed choir

Sören Kierkegaard, adapted

Elizabeth Alexander

With placidness and grace
pp

S
Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tempests of my heart, O my

A
Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tempests of my heart, O my

T
Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tempests of my heart, O my

B
Calm the tempests of my heart, O my God, Calm the tempests of my heart, O my

5

Soprano (S): *p* God, Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring-ing ten. *pp*

Alto (A): *p* God, O my God, Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring-ing ten. *pp*

Tenor (T): *p* God, O my God, Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring-ing ten. *pp*

Bass (B): *p* God, O my God, Be still, O my soul, so that God may rest in thee, bring-ing ten. *pp*

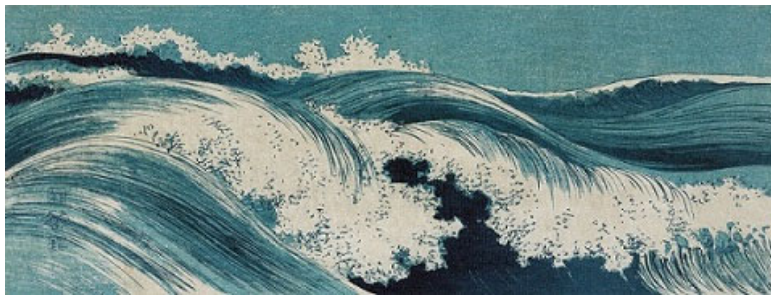
Piano accompaniment (P):

*The last system on this page
is omitted in this perusal score.*

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard's original prayer:

Calm the waves of this heart, O God;
Calm its tempests.
Calm yourself, O my soul, so that God is able to rest in you,
So that God's peace may cover you.
Yes, You can give us peace, O God,
Peace that the whole world can never take away.

Several different English translations of this prayer exist.
The translator of this version is unknown.



Cover Image: “Waves” Woodcut by Konen Uehara (ca. 1910)

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)
SATB, Celtic band, opt. children's choir • SEA-139-00
- Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs** (Boblett)
SATB • SEA-078-00
- Cherish Your Doubt** (Alexander)
SATB, piano • SEA-063-01
SSAA, piano • SEA-063-02
- Die Gedanken Sind Frei** (German protest song, arr.)
SATB, piano • SEA-087-00
- Do Not Leave Your Cares at the Door** (Norman Naylor)
SATB • SEA-071-00
- Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm** (Yehuda Amichai)
SATB • SEA-026-01
- Faith Is the bird that feels the light** (Tagore)
SSA • SEA-068-00
- Fighting Over What We Believe** (Alexander)
SATB, soloists, piano • SEA-099-01
- Finally On My Way To Yes** (Pesha Gertler)
SSATB, piano • SEA-019-00
- Folks, I'm Telling You** (Langston Hughes)
SSATB, piano • SEA-027-00
- Glen Song** (Scott Bates)
SSATB, piano • SEA-025-00
- Handles** (Alexander)
SSA, piano • SEA-148-00
- How To Sing Like a Planet** (Alexander)
SATB, piano • SEA-105-01
- If You Can Walk You Can Dance** (Zimbabwean Proverb)
SAB, piano, claves • SEA-022-03
TBB, piano, claves • SEA-022-05
SSA, piano, claves • SEA-022-06
SATB, piano, claves • SEA-022-07
- Immortal Love** (John Greenleaf Whittier)
SATB • SEA-017-00
- Infant Holy, Infant Lowly** (Polish carol, arr.)
SSA • SEA-020-00
- Jump!** (Ray Bradbury)
SSA, string quartet • SEA-090-00
- Kindling** (Alexander)
SATB, chamber ensemble • SEA-123-00
SATB, piano • SEA-123-09
- Let it Matter** (Alexander)
SSA, piano • SEA-125-03
SATB, piano • SEA-125-04
- No Other People's Children** (Alexander)
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