

# Pure Light Beyond Light

*Three Invocations of the Holy*

SATB a cappella



# Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

# Pure Light beyond Light

## I. Hear us, O Never-Failing Light

Hear us, O Never-Failing Light,  
May our souls be lamps of Thine,  
Kindled and illumined by Thee.  
May they shine and burn with truth,  
And never go out in ashes.  
May we be Thy dwelling,  
Shining from Thee, shining in Thee.  
May we shine and fail not;  
May we ever worship Thee.  
May we shine forth inwardly  
And the light of perpetual faith abide in us.

Mozarabic Easter Eve Blessing of the Paschal Candle  
(Mozarabic, Iberian Peninsula, 8<sup>th</sup> century)

Translation ca. 1862 by William Bright  
Adapted and abridged version © 2016 by Elizabeth Alexander

## II. Luminous Awakening

Holy Spirit, breath of every being,  
root of every creature,  
moving in all,  
bathing all lives  
with forgiveness and grace,  
and caressing wounds  
with the balm of boundless joy –  
Pure light beyond light,  
luminous awakening,  
radiant, bountiful,  
resurrecting everything  
again and again and again.

Hildegard of Bingen  
(Catholic, Germany, 12<sup>th</sup> century)

Translation © 2016 by Elizabeth Alexander

## III. Holy One, Source of Radiance and Reason

Holy One, Source of Radiance and Reason,  
Thou whose love endows and animates our lives,  
We acknowledge Thy presence within, among and beyond us.

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs  
(Unitarian-Universalist, United States, 21<sup>st</sup> century)

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## Pure Light Beyond Light: Three Invocations of the Holy

Complete SATB work: SEA-133-00

### I. Hear Us O Never-Failing Light (Mozarabic blessing)

2-4 part choir: SEA-134-00

### II. Luminous Awakening (Hildegard von Bingen)

SATB: SEA-135-00  
SSAA: SEA-135-01

### III. Holy One, Source of Radiance and Reason (Rob Eller-Isaacs)

SATB or 2-5 part canon: SEA-136-00

# Pure Light beyond Light

SATB a cappella

## I. Hear Us, O Never-Failing Light

Mozarabic Easter Eve blessing  
Trans. William Bright

Elizabeth Alexander

With a sense of mystery (♩ = 132-142)

*pp*  
S Hear us, O Ne-ver - Fail - ing Light, May our souls be lamps of Thine, kin - dled and il -  
A Hear us, O Ne-ver - Fail - ing Light, May our souls be lamps of Thine, kin - dled and il -  
T Mm, kin - dled and il -  
B Mm, Mm,

6  
S - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn with truth, and ne - ver go out in  
A - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn with truth, and ne - ver go out in  
T - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. Mm, and ne - ver go out in  
B Mm, and ne - ver go out in

13

S ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing, *mp* Shin - ing from Thee,

A ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing, *mp* Shin - ing from Thee,

T ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing, *mp* Shin - ing from Thee,

B ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing, *mp* Shin - ing from Thee,

20

S shin - ing in Thee, kin - dled and il - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. *pp* Mm,

A shin - ing in Thee, kin - dled and il - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. *pp* Mm,

T shin - ing in Thee, *pp* May we shine and fail not,

B shin - ing in Thee, *pp* May we shine and fail not,

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 • Louise Dickinson, 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 • Sasha 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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*Elizabeth Alexander*  
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## II. Luminous Awakening

Hildegard von Bingen  
Trans. Elizabeth Alexander

Elizabeth Alexander

Warmly, expansively (♩ = 52-60)

41 *pp*

S Ho - ly Spir - it, breath of ev'-ry be - ing, root of ev'-ry crea - ture, mov - ing in all. Ho - ly

A *pp*  
O breath of ev'-ry be - ing, root of ev'-ry crea - ture, mov-ing in all.

T *pp*  
O breath of ev'-ry be - ing, root of ev'-ry crea - ture, mov-ing in all.

B *pp*  
O, root of ev'-ry crea - ture, mov - ing in all. Ho - ly

45

S Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly

A Bath - ing all lives with for - give - ness and grace, Ho - ly Spir - - it, Ho - ly

T Bath - ing all lives, with for - give - ness and grace, Ho - ly Spir - - it, Ho - ly

B Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it Ho - ly Spir - - it, Ho - ly

48 *mp*

S Spir - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the

A *mp*

A Spir - - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the

T *mp*

T Spir - - it, And ca - ress - - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the

B *mp*

B Spir - - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the

51 *mf* *p intimately*

S balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly

A *mf* *p intimately*

A balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - - it, Ho - ly Spir - - - it,

T *mf* *p intimately*

T balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - - - it,

B *mf* *p intimately*

B balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly

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### III. Holy One, Source of Radiance and Reason

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs

Elizabeth Alexander

62 **Expansively, with awe** (♩ = 56-63)

*pp*

S

A

*pp*

*pp*

O

O

O

for rehearsal only

70

S

A

O

O

O

T

*p*

B

*p*

Ho - ly One, Source of Ra - diance and Rea - son, of Ra - - diance and

Ho - ly One, Source of Ra - diance and Rea - son, of Ra - - diance and

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88

S  
O

A  
O

T  
- yond us.

B  
- yond us.

92

S  
O

A  
*p*  
\* Ho - ly One, Source of Ra - diance and Rea-son, of Ra - - - diance and

T  
*pp*  
O \* Ho - ly One, Source of

B  
*pp*  
O \* Ho - ly One, Source of Ra - diance and Rea-son, of

\* During the canon at rehearsal letter A, feel free to redistribute singers into different voice parts to achieve better balance.

10

98 *P*

S \* Ho - - - ly One, Source of Ra - - - diance and Rea - - - son, of Ra - - - diance and

A Rea - - - son, Thou whose love en - - - dows and a - - - ni - - - mates our

T Ra - - - diance and Rea - - - son, of Ra - - - diance and Rea - - - son,

B Ra - - - diance and Rea - - - son, Thou whose

104

S Rea - - - son, Thou whose love en - - - dows and a - - - ni - - - mates our

A lives. We ac - - - know - - - ledge Thy pre - - - sence with - - - in, a - - - mong and be -

T — Thou whose love en - - - dows and a - - - ni - - - mates our lives. We ac -

B love en - - - dows and a - - - ni - - - mates our lives. We ac - - - know - - - ledge Thy pre - - - sence with -

110

S lives. We ac - know - ledge Thy pre - sence with - in, a - mong and be -

A - yond us.

T - know - ledge Thy pre - sence with - in, a - mong and be - yond us.

B - in, a - mong and be - yond us.

116

S *pp* SOLO OR SMALL GROUP: be - yond us.

A *pp* a - mong us.

T *pp* with - in us, a - mong us.

B *pp* with - in us.



# *Pure Light beyond Light*

## *Three Invocations of the Holy*

### Hear Us, O Never-Failing Light

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Iberian Peninsula came under Islamic rule, causing many Christians and Jews to migrate north. Among those who remained were the Mozarabic Christians, who flourished around Toledo and Córdoba. Over the next three centuries, this coexistence would lead to a dynamic blending of cultures. Many Mozarabs and Muslims intermarried, observed each others' holidays, translated and studied each others' sacred books, and in some cases even shared houses of worship.

Over time, the Mozarabs developed their own distinct prayers, chants and liturgy. One such ritual was the rich, evocative blessing of the Paschal candle on Easter Eve.

The Iberian Peninsula's comfortable distance from Rome kept the Vatican's powerful arm at bay until the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when Pope Gregory VII set out to destroy what he called "The Toledo Heresy." Papal forces drove the Muslims out of the region and abolished all Mozarabic practices, replacing them with those of Rome. Today the Mozarabic rite is still celebrated by a handful of devotees, including a Mozarabic brotherhood in Toledo and a Poor Claire community in Madrid.

### Luminous Awakening

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) was a German nun, theologian, writer, composer, mystic and *magistra*, or spiritual teacher, who founded and led convents in Rupertsburg and Eibingen. Her plainsong settings of chants, with both original and liturgical texts, were composed for the use of her fellow nuns. Recent decades have brought a resurgent interest in her music, along with thousands of publications, performances and recordings.

### Holy One, Source of Radiance and Reason

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs' small prayer "Holy One, Source of Radiance and Reason" invokes a divine presence both mysterious and rational. It also celebrates a faith that moves and works "within, among and beyond," stretching outward from an individual's personal spirituality in order to bless the whole world.

Rob's Unitarian Universalist ministry was shaped by his upbringing on the south side of Chicago, his training at Starr King School for the Ministry, and his commitment to the work of churches in diverse and dynamic urban communities. His church ministries in Boston, MA and Whittier, CA were followed by three decades of co-ministry with his wife Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs in Oakland, CA and St. Paul, MN.

## 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