

Hear Us, O Never-Failing Light

(from *Pure Light beyond Light*)

Ancient Mozarabic Easter Blessing

2, 3 or 4-part chorus
(SA, TB, SAB OR SATB)



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

This Flexible Voicing edition includes three completely different arrangements of this song:

2-part voicing (SA or TB)

3-part voicing (SAB or SSA)

4-part voicing (SATB)

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

Translation ca. 1862 by William Bright
Adapted Elizabeth Alexander

Hear Us, O Never Failing Light is the first movement in Elizabeth Alexander's *a cappella* work *Pure Light Beyond Light: Three Invocations of the Holy*. The texts, spanning different times, places and religious traditions, each express mystery and devotion through the imagery of light, fire and radiance.

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



Hear Us, O Never-Failing Light

2-part voicing (SA or TB)

Mozarabic Easter Eve prayer
Trans. William Bright

Elizabeth Alexander

With a sense of mystery (♩ = 132-142)

I *pp*
Hear us, O Ne-ver - Fail - ing Light, May our souls be lamps of Thine, kin - dled and il -

II *pp*
Hear us, O Ne-ver - Fail - ing Light, May our souls_ be lamps of Thine, kin - dled and il -

6
I - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn with truth, and ne - ver go

II - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn_ with truth, and ne - ver go

12
I out in ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing,

II out_ in ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing,

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 scrum 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 scrum 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

Seafarer Press

The Music of Elizabeth Alexander

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Hear Us, O Never-Failing Light

3-part voicing (SAB or SSA)

Mozarabic Easter Eve prayer
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 -

pp

A Hear us, O Ne-ver - Fail - ing Light, May our souls be lamps of Thine, kin - dled and il -

pp

B Hear us, O Ne-ver - Fail - ing Light, May our souls be lamps of Thine, kin - dled and il -

6

S - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn with truth, and ne - ver go

A - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn with truth, and ne - ver go

B - lu - men - a - ted by Thee. May they shine and burn with truth, and ne - ver go

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12

S
out in ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing,

A
out in ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing,

B
out in ash - es. May we be Thy dwell - ing, may we be thy dwell - ing,

19 *mp*

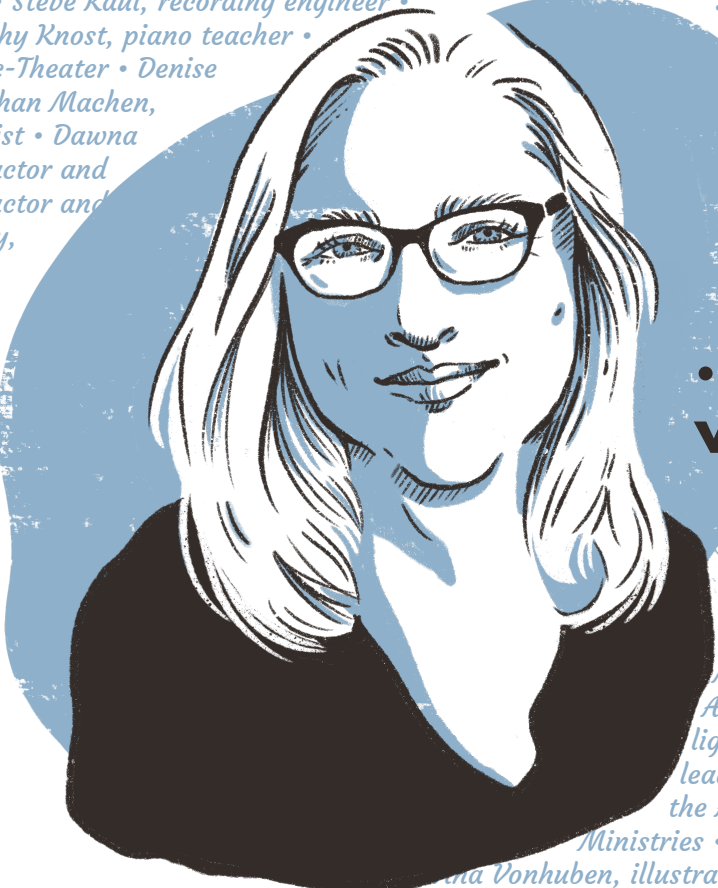
S
mp
Shin-ing from Thee, shin-ing in Thee, kin - dled and il - lu-men - a - ted by Thee.

A
mp
Shin-ing from Thee, shin-ing in Thee, kin - dled and il - lu-men - a - ted by Thee.

B
mp
Shin-ing from Thee, shin-ing in Thee, kin - dled and il - lu-men - a - ted by Thee.

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Hear Us, O Never-Failing Light

4-part voicing (SATB)

Mozarabic Easter Eve prayer
Trans. William Bright

Elizabeth Alexander

With a sense of mystery (♩ = 132-142)

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

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

T *pp*
Mm, _____ kin - dled and il -

B *pp*
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, May we shine and fail not, *pp*

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

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About the text:

In the 8th 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 other's holidays, translated and studied each other's sacred books, and in some cases even shared houses of worship.

Over time, the Mozarabs developed their own distinct prayers, chants and liturgy. The blessing of the Paschal candle on Easter Eve was a Mozarabic ritual not practiced by Roman Catholics, one whose rich imagery suggests a culture all its own.

The Iberian Peninsula's comfortable distance from Rome kept the Vatican's powerful arm at bay until the 11th 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.



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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