

# Luminous Awakening

(from *Pure Light beyond Light*)

Hildegard von Bingen

SSAA a cappella



Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

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

Translation© 2016 by Elizabeth Alexander

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*Luminous Awakening (SATB)* is the second movement of 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



# Luminous Awakening

SSAA a cappella

Hildegard von Bingen

Translated by Elizabeth Alexander

Elizabeth Alexander

Warmly, expansively (♩ = 52-60)

*pp*

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

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

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

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

5

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

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

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

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

8 *mp*  
Spir - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the  
*mp*  
Spir - - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the  
*mp*  
Spir - - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the  
*mp*  
Spir - - it, And ca - ress - ing wounds, and ca - ress - ing wounds with the

11 *mf* *p intimately*  
balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly  
*mf* *p intimately*  
balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - - it, Ho - ly Spir - - - it,  
*mf* *p intimately*  
balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - - - it,  
*mf* *p intimately*  
balm of bound - less joy. Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly

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.**

**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

[www.seafarerpress.com](http://www.seafarerpress.com)

**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.

**Composer Note:** My first setting of Hildegard von Bingen's *Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans* used an English translation by a well-known translator of spiritual writings. I was deep in the throes of composition and under a tight deadline, so it somehow failed to register with me that a modern translation of Hildegard's ancient words would be copyrighted material! Realizing that later, I felt pretty foolish – but not nearly as foolish as I would feel when, after months of haggling, the translator's publisher offered me a “generous” non-renewable 5-year contract for an exorbitant fee.

I headed back to the drawing board to see if there was an easy remedy to this quandary, but I had no luck. Substituting the original Latin text into my setting was a fruitless endeavor, and neither of the other two English translations I dug up managed to capture the music's sense of movement and grace.

I was close to giving up on the song altogether when I had a revelation: Why couldn't I create my *own* translation? I had studied Latin for a few years in high school, and I have plenty of experience writing and adapting lyrics. When I created a word-for-word translation of Hildegard's prayer and compared it with the three English versions, I understood immediately what qualities I wanted to invoke. Hildegard's writing is about the Holy Spirit being not only a steadfast root but also a *dynamic presence*. My guiding principle for the translation became *flow*, an eternally moving and changing breath. As I immersed myself in Hildegard's original words and crafted my own translation, I set out to make each word invite the listener into the next word, and the next, and the next.

**If you're curious about Hildegard's own plainsong setting of *Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans*, it has been transcribed by a number of musicologists in both plainchant and modern notation:**

Traditional plainchant notation by Jürgen Knuth,  
contributed to the Werner Icking Music Archive  
and distributed by the International Music Score Library Project.

*Knuth's transcription is covered under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA license*  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/Symphonia\\_et\\_Ordo\\_virtutum\\_\(Hildegard\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Symphonia_et_Ordo_virtutum_(Hildegard))

Modern music notation by Beverly R. Lomer,  
available through the International Society for Hildegard von Bingen Studies

*Lomer's transcription is made available to all "for the study and appreciation of Hildegard"*  
<http://www.hildegard-society.org/2014/11/spiritus-sanctus-vivificans-antiphon.html>

Links to the above sources are also available at  
[www.seafarerpress.com/works/luminous-awakening](http://www.seafarerpress.com/works/luminous-awakening)



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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