

M. E. Valverde

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When the Dust Settles
for SSAA chorus and piano

About the Poet

Amir Rabiya is a queer, trans, mixed race, disabled poet, educator, and librarian currently living in Central Pennsylvania. They are the author of *Prayers for My 17th Chromosome*, published by Sibling Rivalry Press in November 2017, and co-editor of *Writing the Walls Down: A Convergence of LGBTQ Voices*, published by Trans-Genre Press in October 2015. Amir writes about living with chronic pain and illness, war, trauma, spirituality, healing, redemption—and speaks on silenced places. Their other works have been published in *Mizna*, *580 Split*, *Flicker and Spark: A Contemporary Queer Anthology of Spoken Word and Poetry*, *Enizagam*, *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, *The Asian American Literary Review*, *Kaveli Journal*, *Sukoon*, *Collective Brightness: LGBTIQ Poets on Faith, Religion and Spirituality* and more. Amir is a three-time VONA (Voices of our Nations) fellow. They were a finalist in the 2008 Joy Harjo Poetry contest, the 2012 Enizagam poetry contest, and the Atlanta Review's 2013 poetry contest.

Amir has travelled extensively all over the United States leading workshops and sharing their stories and poems. In 2009, Amir had the privilege of being an STP with June Jordan's Poetry for the People program at UC Berkeley where they supported emerging poets develop their craft and deepen their voice. Amir has participated in residencies at the Kimmel Nelson Harding Center in Nebraska, the Guapamacátero Center for Art and Ecology in Michoacán, Mexico, and more. For more information or to contact Amir, visit www.AmirRabiya.com.

*You opened your arms for the forgotten ones
the discarded & misunderstood
you showed them a mother's love
enveloped them in a delicate
and powerful embrace, beautiful star
when the dust settles, we'll always remember
how you showed us how to fight
even while the jagged blade of sorrow
pressed on us, to fight
ceaselessly, to tend to one another
You said, when the dust settles
I hope my girls will be okay
You cried out from the cells of Attica
and outside Stonewall's battered streets
Do you hear me? Are you listening?
How many more have to die?*

*your heart bigger than any cage
even in the midst of so much loss
you remind us to dream
to hold tomorrow between our lips
we deserve to kiss without fear
to grow old
to sway our hips
to wear what we wish
to relish in the pleasure of our bodies
the seeds you planted continue to grow
into blooming song
when the dust settles, we will raise our voices
just as you have always done, in glorious proclamation
we will let everyone know—
We are still here!
We are still here!*

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Composer's Notes

We look to the intersections between those in the margins for humanity's nerve endings—our vastest source for empathy and nuanced outrage. There we find Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, holding the door open for "the forgotten ones, the discarded, and misunderstood," asking us all to stay "strong and delicate." A former grass roots organizer and lifelong transgender and intersex rights activist from coast to coast, Miss Major is a "veteran" of the Stonewall Riots. Hearing her speak today, you would not perceive within her voice the years of surviving our historically transphobic, racist, and often violent systems of oppression. And her fight to liberate her trans and queer descendants continues. At age 78, she has opened the House of GG, the Griffin-Gracy Educational Retreat and Historical Center for the transgender and gender non-conforming community, in Little Rock, Arkansas. For more information please visit: <https://HouseOfGG.org>.

"When the Dust Settles" is a culmination of trans stories brought to life through singing written in homage to Miss Major. Amir Rabiya's words synthesize themes of intersectional identity, survival, and humanity, striving to share a bit of Miss Major's perspective. They note, "Phrases such as 'when the dust settles,' and 'we are still here,' are direct quotes, while other statements and themes are paraphrased." Their words furthermore point toward a trans woman's right to life and to pleasure.

Following a harmonically lush introduction, the chorus sings about her legacy in Bb major, carrying along tones of Bb minor as badges for what she has survived to get to her "honeyed" days. #WeAreStillHere #StaySoft

dur. = ca. 5'

Jointly Commissioned by the Peninsula Women's Chorus, Dr. Martín Benvenuto, Artistic Director
and VOX Femina Los Angeles, Dr. Iris S. Levine, Artistic Director

When the Dust Settles

for SSAA chorus and piano

Amir Rabiya

b. 1978

Mari Esabel Valverde

b. 1987

With fullest affection ♩ = ca. 76

The musical score is written for piano and a four-part women's chorus (Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2). The piano part begins with a *mf* dynamic. The chorus parts enter with the lyrics: "You o-pened your arms for the for-got-ten ones the dis-". The score includes a circled number 4 at the start of the vocal lines. A large diagonal watermark reading "Not authorized for perusal only!" is overlaid across the entire score.

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rall.

A tempo

8

S 1
card-ed [and] mis-un - der stood

S 2
card-ed [and] mis-un - der stood

A 1
card-ed [and] mis-un - der stood

A 2
card-ed [and] mis-un - der stood

Pno.

12

S 1
You showed them a moth - er's love en-vel-oped them

S 2
You showed them a moth - er's love

A 1
You showed them a moth - er's love en-vel-oped them

A 2
You showed them a moth - er's love en-vel-oped

Pno.

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16 *p* kindly, firmly

S 1 in a del-i - cate and pow-er - ful em -

S 2 en - vel - loped them in a del-i - cate and pow-er - ful em -

A 1 in a del-i - cate and pow-er - ful em -

A 2 them in a del-i - cate and pow-er - ful em -

Pno. *dim.* *p*

20 *mf*

S 1 brace, —

S 2 *mf* brace, —

A 1 *mf* brace, —

A 2 *mf* brace, —

Pno. *mf*

24 *f* *mp poco a poco cresc.* *

S 1 beau-ti - ful star when the dus - t set-tles, we'll

S 2 beau-ti - ful star when the dus - t set-tles, we'll

A 1 beau-ti - ful star when the dus - t set-tles, we'll

A 2 beau-ti - ful star when the dus - t set-tles, we'll

Pno. *f* *mf*

27 *f* *opt. div.*

S 1 al-ways re-mem - ber how you showed us how to fight e - ven while the

S 2 al-ways re-mem - ber how you showed us how to fight e - ven while the

A 1 al-ways re-mem - ber how you showed us how to fight e - ven while the

A 2 al-ways re-mem - ber how you showed us how to fight e - ven while the

Pno.

*Suggested pronunciation: ['set.olz] or "SEH-tollz"

31 (9)

S 1 jag - ged blade of sor - row pressed on us, to fight

S 2 jag - ged blade of sor - row pressed on us, to fight

A 1 jag - ged blade of sor - row pressed on us, to fight

A 2 jag - ged blade of sor - row pressed on us, to fight

Pno.

34

S 1 cease-less - ly, to tend to one an - oth - er

S 2 cease-less - ly, to tend to one an - oth - er

A 1 cease-less - ly, to tend to one an - oth - er

A 2 cease-less - ly, to tend to one an - oth - er

Pno.

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57 *f* *mp poco a poco cresc.*

S 1 You said, when the dust settles I

S 2 You said, when the dust settles I

A 1 You said, when the dust settles I

A 2 You said, when the dust settles I

Pno. *f* *mf*

40 *f* *opt. div.*

S 1 hope my girls will be o-kay You cried out from the cells of

S 2 hope my girls will be o-kay You cried out from the cells of

A 1 hope my girls will be o-kay You cried out from the cells of

A 2 hope my girls will be o-kay You cried out from the cells of

Pno.

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44

S 1
At - tic - a and out - side Stone - wall's bat - tered streets Do you

S 2
At - tic - a and out - side Stone - wall's bat - tered streets Do you

A 1
At - tic - a and out - side Stone - wall's bat - tered streets Do you

A 2
At - tic - a and out - side Stone - wall's bat - tered streets Do you

Pno.

47

All
hear me? Are you list - en - ing?

Pno.

mp *mf* *rub.*

50

All
How man - y more have to die?

Pno.

sub.p *f*

breathily articulated, in desperation

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54 *p* *sfp*

S 1 your heart big-ger than an - y cage e-ven in the midst of so much loss

S 2 your heart big-ger than an - y cage e-ven in the midst of so much loss

A 1 your heart big-ger than an - y cage e-ven in the midst of so much loss

A 2 your heart big-ger than an - y cage e-ven in the midst of so much loss

Pno. *p*

58 *poco a poco cresc.* *f* *molto dim.*

S 1 you re-mind us to dream to hold to -

S 2 you re-mind us to dream to hold to -

A 1 you re-mind us to dream to hold to -

A 2 you re-mind us to dream to hold to -

Pno. *mf*

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62 *p* *pp strongly yet delicately*

S 1 mor - row be - tween our lips we de - serve to kiss with - out

S 2 mor - row be - tween our lips we de - serve to kiss with - out

A 1 mor - row be - tween our lips we de - serve to kiss with - out

A 2 mor - row be - tween our lips we de - serve to kiss with - out

Pno.

66

S 1 fear to rel-ish in the pleas-ure of our bo - dies

S 2 fear to growold

A 1 fear to wear what we wish

A 2 fear to sway our hips

Pno. *pp*

70

p *secretively* *mp* *sempre cresc.*

S 1 the seeds you plant - ed con - tin - ue to grow in - to bloom - ing bloom - ing

p *secretively* *mp* *sempre cresc.*

S 2 the seeds you plant - ed con - tin - ue to grow in - to bloom - ing bloom - ing

p *secretively* *mp* *sempre cresc.*

A 1 the seeds you plant - ed con - tin - ue to grow in - to bloom - ing bloom - ing

p *secretively* *mp* *sempre cresc.*

A 2 the seeds you plant - ed con - tin - ue to grow in - to bloom - ing bloom - ing

Pno. *poco a poco cresc.*

74

rit. *f* *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* **A tempo**

S 1 bloom - ing song when the dus - t set - tles, [we'll]

f *mp* *poco a poco cresc.*

S 2 bloom - ing song when the dus - t set - tles, [we'll]

f *mp* *poco a poco cresc.*

A 1 bloom - ing song when the dus - t set - tles, [we'll]

f *mp* *poco a poco cresc.*

A 2 bloom - ing song when the dus - t set - tles, [we'll]

Pno. *f* *molto espress.* *mf*

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77 *f* , *opt. div.*

S 1 raise our voi - ces just as you have al - ways done, in

S 2 raise our voi - ces just as you have al - ways done, in

A 1 raise our voi - ces just as you have al - ways done, in

A 2 raise our voi - ces just as you have al - ways done, in

Pno.

81

S 1 glo - rious proc - la - ma - tion [we'll] let eve - ry - one know - We

S 2 glo - rious proc - la - ma - tion [we'll] let eve - ry - one know - We

A 1 glo - rious proc - la - ma - tion [we'll] let eve - ry - one know - We

A 2 glo - rious proc - la - ma - tion [we'll] let eve - ry - one know - We

Pno.

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non rit.
f

85

S 1
are still here! We are still here! We are still here! We

S 2
are still here! We are still here! We are still here!

A 1
are still here! We are still here! We are still here!

A 2
are still here! We are still here! We are still here!

Pno.

89

S 1
are still here! *f* charged //

S 2
We are still here! *f* charged //

A 1
We are still here! *f* charged //

A 2
We are still here! *f* charged //

Pno.

f charged //