

Get Curious

SSAA a cappella



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

Get Curious

*Anger can be a beautiful thing. Powerful. Transformative.
But sometimes Anger can get the better of us.
We can get hijacked by Anger, get rigid, get self-righteous.
Anger can get in the way of listening.
When that happens, it's time for us to get Curious.*

Start wondering what's behind things,
beyond the daily grind of things,
within the intertwined of things – Get Curious.
Unpack the reason why of things,
the parts we can't deny of things,
the sweet imperfect sigh of things – Get Curious.

Wonder at the world like Alice,
Climb a tree like sister Eve,
Open a door like Goldilocks,
Peek into Pandora's box.

Behold the look-within of things,
the most authentic spin of things,
the sinew, sweat and skin of things – Get Curious.

Curious has a rotten reputation.
(We've been told it killed a cat!)
Lies like that erase imagination,
Shut it down in seconds flat.

Set aside the pride of things,
get past the true and tried of things,
the black and white divide of things,
wander on the other side – Get Curious.

It's the remedy for righteous Rage,
It's the best antidote to Furious,
Keeps Fear from flying out of control,
Keeps Bitter from moving right into your soul.

Get to know the grain of things,
the wane and wax and wane of things,
the ebb and flow and ebb of things,
the interdependent web of things...

Start wondering what's behind things,
beyond the made-up mind of things.

*Anger can be a beautiful thing.
Powerful. Transformative.*

Get Curious.

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Incisively (♩ = 88-96)

Words and Music by Elizabeth Alexander

Musical score for the first system of "Get Curious". It features four vocal parts: Soprano I (S I), Soprano II (S II), Alto I (A I), and Alto II (A II), along with a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked "Incisively" with a quarter note equal to 88-96 beats per minute. Dynamics include *sfz* (fortissimo), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p* (piano). The lyrics are: **t t t t t t k t k t t t k t k t t k t k t t*. The piano part consists of sustained chords in the right hand and bass notes in the left hand.

5 *Spoken slowly and thoughtfully. The timing doesn't need to correspond with the vertical lineup in the score.*

Musical score for the second system of "Get Curious". It features a Solo part and the same four vocal parts (S I, S II, A I, A II) and piano accompaniment as the first system. The Solo part has the lyrics: "Anger can be a beautiful thing. Powerful. Transformative." The lyrics for the vocal parts are: *t t t t t t t t t t k t k t t k t k t t*. The piano accompaniment continues with sustained chords and bass notes.

* "t" and "k" are *unvoiced*, with mouths shaped in "short i" shape as in "tip" or "kip."

** "gt" is *voiced*, a low utterance ending with a glottal stop rather than a hard "t." Shape mouth in a "short e" shape as in "get."

9

Solo **||**

But sometimes Anger can get the better of us. We can get hijacked by Anger. We can get rigid, self-righteous.

S I *t t t t t k t k t k t k t k t t* *sfz*

S II *mm*

A I *mm*

A II *gt t k t k t k gt gt* *sfz*

13

Solo **||**

It can get in the way of listening. When that happens it's time for us to get Curious.

S I *t t t t t t t t t k t k t t t*

S II *mm*

A I *mm* *p* Start

A II *gt gt gt gt gt gt*

17 *p*

S I *mm*

S II *mm*

A I
won-der - ing what's be - hind_ things, _____ be - yond the dai - ly grind_ of things, _____

A II
t t t t *p*
mm

20 *mp*

S I
t k t k t t

S II
with - in the in - ter - twined_ of things:

A I
mm Get

A II
mm Get

23

S I *whispered* *sfz* *sfz*
 k t k t *cu - ri - a ts ts

S II *sfz* *mp* *whispered*
 ts k t k t *cu - ri - a k Un -

A I *mp* *sfz* *sfz*
 cu - ri - ous. k ts k ts k Un -

A II *sfz* *mp* *whispered*
 cu - ri - ous. ts k t k t *cu - ri - a

* Hmm...why does the word "curious" lack its final consonant sound in measures 23 & 24?
 Look carefully and you'll see that a different voice part provides that final sound!

25

A

S I

S II - pack the rea - son why_ of things,___ the parts we can't_ de - ny___ of things,

A I - pack the rea - son why_ of things,___ the parts we can't_ de - ny___ of things,

A II mm the why of things,___

28

S I the sweet im - per - fect sigh of things: *port.* Get

S II the sweet im - per - fect sigh of things: Get

A I the sweet im - per - - fect sigh of things: Get

A II *we can't de - ny the sigh of things: Get

* If your voice part sings the truncated lyric "we can't deny the sigh of things," make sure your words don't obscure the complete lyric.

31

S I *whispered* cu - ri - ous. cu - ri - a k woh - oo - woh - oo - woh - oo -

S II *sfz* cu - ri - ous. k cu - ri - ous, ts! woh - oo - woh - oo

A I cu - ri - ous. k k cu - ri - ous, woh - oo - woh - oo - woh - oo

A II *whispered* cu - ri - ous. cu - ri - a k cu - ri - ous, woh - oo - woh - oo - woh - oo

B

33 *mf*

S I
- woh like Al - ice, t k t k

S II
Won-der at the world like Al - ice, ts Climb a tree__ like sis - ter Eve,

A I
Won-der at the world like Al - ice, ts Climb a tree__ like sis - ter Eve,

A II
Won-der at the world like Al - ice, ts Climb a tree__ like sis - ter Eve,

35

S I
O - pen a door__ like Gol - di - locks, Peek in - to Pan - do - ra's Box.

S II
O - pen a door__ like Gol - di - locks, Peek in - to Pan - do - ra's Box.

A I
O - pen a door__ like Gol - di - locks, Peek in - to Pan - do - ra's Box.

A II
O - pen a door__ like Gol - di - locks, Peek in - to Pan - do - ra's Box.

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**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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(You know why.) A complete perusal score may be
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41

S I
most au - then-tic *spin__ of things,___ the si - new, sweat, and

S II
most au - then-tic *spin__ of things,___ the si - new, sweat, and

A I
Most au - then - tic si - new,___ sweat, and___

A II
most au - then-tic *spin__ of things,___ the si - new, sweat, and

* This song is about many things, but it is not about the “sin of things,” so make sure you articulate the words “spin” and “skin” with care!

44

S I
*skin__ of things,___ Get get, get, get, get cu - ri - ous,

S II
skin* of things,___ Get get, get, get, get cu - ri - ous,

A I
skin* of things,___ Get, get, get, get cu - ri - ous,

A II
*skin__ of things,___ Get, get, get, get Oh, ts

D

47 *mf*

S I
Cu - ri - ous has a rot - ten re - pu - ta - tion,

mf

S II
Cu - ri - ous has a rot - ten re - pu - ta - tion,

mf *mp ...on little cat feet*

A I
Cu - ri - ous has a rot - ten re - pu - ta - tion, (We've been told it killed a cat.)

mf *mp ...on little cat feet*

A II
Cu - ri - ous has a rot - ten re - pu - ta - tion, (We've been told it killed a cat.)

49 *mf*

S I
Lies like that e - rase__ i - ma - gin - a - tion, shut it down in sec - onds flat.

mf

S II
Lies like that e - rase__ i - ma - gin - a - tion, shut it down in sec - onds flat. Get

mf

A I
Lies like that e - rase__ i - ma - gin - a - tion, shut it down in sec - onds flat. Get

mf

A II
Lies like that e - rase__ i - ma - gin - a - tion, shut it down in sec - onds flat. Get

51

S I *whispered*
k t k t k Get cu - ri - ous, cu - ri - a

S II
cu - ri - ous, Get cu - ri - ous,

A I
cu - ri - ous, k Get cu - ri - ous,

A II *whispered sfz fp*
cu - ri - ous, cu - ri - a ts k t k t k *ts

* Alto IIs: The last note in measure 52 – the quarter note “ts” – merges into the initial consonant of the word “Set” in the following measure.

53

S I
Set a - side_ the pride_ of things, get past the true_ and tried_ of things, the

S II
Set a - side_ the pride_ of things, get past the true_ and tried_ of things, the

A I
Set a - side_ the pride_ of things, get past the true_ and tried_ of things, the

A II

55

S I
black and white_ di - vide_____ of things, wan - der on the oth - er side: Get

S II
black and white_ di - vide_____ of things, wan - der on the oth - er side: Get

A I
black and white_ di - vide,_____ Oh_____ wan - der on the oth - er side: Get

A II
Oh,_____ wan - der on the oth - er side: Get

57 *f*

S I
cu - ri - ous, cu - ri - ous, k k k It's the

S II
cu - ri - ous, cu - ri - ous, cu - ri - ous, It's the

A I
cu - ri - ous, ts cu - ri - a, ts ts It's the

A II
cu - ri - ous, cu - ri - ous, ts cu - ri - a ts

E

59

S I re - me - dy___ for Right-eous Rage, Keeps

S II re - me - dy___ for Right-eous Rage, It's the best an - ti - dote to Fu - ri - ous, Keeps

A I re - me - dy___ for Right-eous Rage, It's the best an - ti - dote to Fu - ri - ous,

A II It's the best an - ti - dote to Fu - ri - ous,

61

S I Fear from fly - ing out___ of con - trol, Oo, *(fall)*

S II Fear from fly - ing out___ of con - trol, Oo, *(fall)*

A I Oh Keeps Bit - ter from mov - ing right in - to your soul.____

A II Oh Keeps Bit - ter from mov - ing right in - to your soul.____

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69

S I *p*
the ebb and flow and ebb and flow and ebb

S II *p*
the ebb and flow and ebb and flow and ebb

A I *p*
ebb and flow and ebb and flow and ebb and flow and ebb of

A II *p*
ebb and flow and ebb and flow and ebb and flow and ebb of

74

S I *sfz*
t k t k

S II
the in - ter - de - pen - dent web of things,

A I
things, mm

A II
things, mm

F

78

S I

S II

A I

A II

mm

Start won - der - ing what's be - hind things,

81

Meno mosso

S I

S II

A I

A II

mm

mm

be - yond the made - up mind of things.

84

Solo

Anger can be a beautiful thing. Powerful. Transformative.

S I
t t t t t t t t

S II

A I

A II

88

whispered sfz sfz

S I
t t k t k t k t k t k t k t cu - ri - a ts

S II
k ts

A I
p gt gt gt gt gt gt gt cu - ri - a ts

A II
k ts

Composer Note:

Twenty years ago while trying to make sense of what seemed like an impossible life situation, I found myself ranting in a therapist's office. "I hate this!" I said over and over. "How can I stop feeling angry so much of the time?"

At some point my therapist replied: "If you don't want to be angry, get curious. Because you can't be angry and curious at the same time."

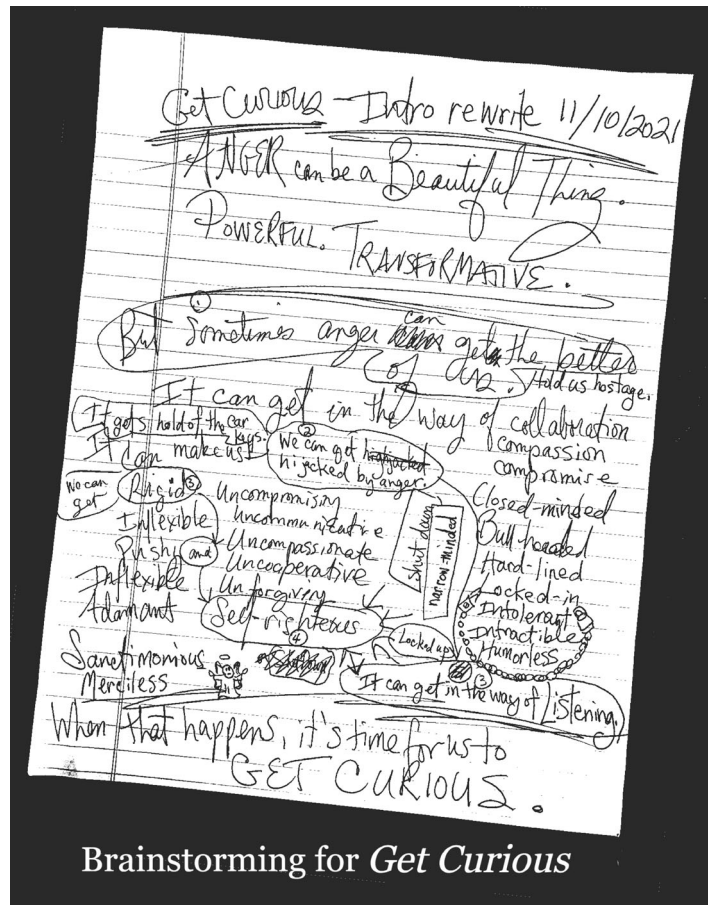
That was some of the best advice I've ever received. I was causing a great deal of suffering for myself and other people because there wasn't room in my hot little head for anything but my own displeasure. What a game changer it was when I stirred some curiosity into the mix!

I can still easily fall back into a bitter, judgmental place when I become indifferent about why other people speak, act, or think the way they do. But at least now I know the secret of getting unstuck.

Our whole fraught and fragile world is in desperate need of more curiosity. (If you're at all skeptical about this, just try reading the news for ten minutes.) You won't find an identity group anywhere that has a surplus of curiosity, whether it be a family, tribe, city, country, gender, sex, race, religion, company, profession, labor union, political party, social circle, book club, sports team, or community choir.

As someone who grew up in the Carolinas and Appalachian Ohio and now lives in a large Midwestern city, I am acutely aware of how uninterested people can be about the values, desires and needs of a different region. I often wonder how much our lack of curiosity feeds our country's deep and deepening cultural, political and economic animosities. I wonder how much healing might begin if we could all "start wondering what's behind things."

I'm curious about what that might look like.



Brainstorming for *Get Curious*

Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

- A Palette To Paint Us As We Are** (Gerald Rich)
SATB, piano • SSA, piano
- Beware the Winter Settlin' In** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SATB, Celtic band, opt. unison children's choir
- Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs** (Michael Boblett)
SATB a cappella • SATB, orchestra
- Cherish Your Doubt** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SATB, piano • SSAA, piano
- Die Gedanken Sind Frei** (German protest song, arr.)
SATB, piano • vocal duet, piano
- Do Not Leave Your Cares at the Door** (Norman Naylor)
SATB a cappella • TTBB a cappella
- Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm** (Yehuda Amichai)
SATB a cappella
- Faith Is the bird that feels the light** (Rabindranath Tagore)
SSA a cappella • SATB a cappella
- Fighting Over What We Believe** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SATB, soloists, piano • SSA, soloists, piano
- Finally On My Way To Yes** (Pesha Gertler)
SSATB, piano
- Folks, I'm Telling You** (Langston Hughes)
SSATB, piano
- Get Curious** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SSAA a cappella
- Glen Song** (Scott Bates)
SSATB, piano
- Grace** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SATB, piano • SSA, piano
- Handles** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SSA, piano
- How To Sing Like a Planet** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SATB, piano • TBB, piano
- If You Can Walk You Can Dance** (Zimbabwean Proverb)
SAB, piano, claves • TBB, piano, claves
SSA, piano, claves • SATB, piano, claves
- Immortal Love** (John Greenleaf Whittier)
SATB a cappella
- Infant Holy, Infant Lowly** (Polish carol, arr.)
SSA a cappella
- Jump!** (Ray Bradbury)
SSA, piano • SSA, string quartet
- Kindling** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SATB, piano • SATB, chamber ensemble
- Let it Matter** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SSA, piano • SATB, piano
- Like a Leaf** (Wendell Berry)
SATB, piano
- No Other People's Children** (Elizabeth Alexander)
1-4 part choir, soloist, piano
- ...or a musician** (Philip Dacey)
SATB, orchestra
- A Palette To Paint Us As We Are** (Gerald Rich)
SA, piano • SATB, piano
- Praise Wet Snow Falling Early** (Denise Levertov)
SATB, piano
- Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery** (Alexander)
SSAA a cappella
- Same Birds** (David Allen Evans)
SATB a cappella
- Sing Me Awake** (Gregory Orr)
SATB, piano, string quartet • SATB, piano, string orchestra
- Song of Kabir** (Kabir)
SATB a cappella
- The Gate is Open** (Sister Peronne Marie Thibert)
SATB a cappella
- They Have Freckles Everywhere** (Elizabeth Alexander)
SSAA, piano
- To Make a Prairie** (Emily Dickinson)
SSA, piano
- We Give Thanks for Being** (Traditional)
1-4 part choir, piano
- We Lift Up Our Hearts** (Richard Fewkes)
Unison children's choir, SATB, piano
- We Remember Them** (Sylvan Kamens, Jack Riemer)
SATB, piano
- Where there Is Light in the Soul** (Chinese proverb)
SAB a cappella • SATB a cappella
SSA a cappella • TBB a cappella
- When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled** (Howard Thurman)
SATB a cappella • TTBB a cappella
SSAA a cappella • SATB, flute
- Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills** (Joan Prefontaine)
SSAA a cappella

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