

JOAN SZYMKO

I Am a Ruby

a choral setting on a poem by

Z. Kh. Sh. (Zay Khay Sheen)

translated from the Urdu by

GAIL MINAULT

for

ssaa chorus

piano &

oboe



Joan Szymko (b. 1957)

Joan Szymko's music is regularly performed across North America and abroad including performances at national and international choral festivals and competitions. The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in North America by selecting her as a recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission (2010). She has been commissioned by all manner of choral ensemble and her choral works have been heard on stage or in session at every National Conference of the ACDA since 2003. Her 2016 concert length oratorio *Shadow and Light, an Alzheimer's Journey*, is a major new addition to the choral-orchestral repertory. As resident composer with Portland, Oregon based Do Jump! Movement Theater (1995-present), Szymko has created underscoring for several touring productions in the US, earning praise from the *New York Times* for her "ethereal vocal music."

As a visiting artist, Szymko workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational settings across the country and abroad. Her catalog of over 100 choral works is published by Joan Szymko Music, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Roger Dean Music Publishing, Treble Clef Music Press, earthsongs, Walton Music and Oxford University Press.

For additional information see
www.joanszymko.com

**I Am a Ruby Wrapped in a Rag:
A Veiled Woman's Song**
by Z. Kh. Sh. (Zay Khan Sheen); translated from Urdu
by Gail Minault

*I am giving up using my comb,
refusing to return the mirror's gaze
I have no heart nor zest
For self-displays.
In any case,
I am radiant of face.
But if no one can observe,
Of what use is grace?
If someone is inclined,
Let him change my mind.
I am a spectacle, all alone,
neither displayer nor displayed.
I am ruby wrapped in a rag,
The moon in its darkened phase;
I am a rustic beauty,
A blossom in a desolate place.
As is gold buried in the dust,
Or a pearl lost in the sea;
A candle under cover,
Or in the void, the song of the shahnai*
Why was the nightingale caged?
Why was Yusuf enchain'd?*Whose idea was that?
What wisdom so ordained?
What a shocking view it is,
Astonishing beyond astonishment.
That beauty of form
can be seen as unfortunate.
In the company of rivals,
Like a candle, I weep
Even with this beauty,
In spite of all this grace.
I cannot find the words
My meaning to express.
How can one so powerless
Make clear her great distress?*

* *shahnai*: Indian double-reed woodwind instrument

* *Yusuf*: Joseph (coat of many colors)

Commissioned by Gail Minault for Chorus Austin, Ryan Heller, Artistic Director and Conductor

I Am a Ruby

A Veiled Woman's Song

Z. Kh. Sh. (Zay Khay Sheen)

Translated from the Urdu by Gail Minault

Joan Szymko

J=78

Oboe

Soprano

Alto

J=78

Piano

p *mp*

ped. _____ *^* _____ *^* _____

8

5

Ob.

Pno.

mf

mf

ped. simile

38

9

Ob.

Pno.

rit.

dim.

p

13 **A tempo**

Ob.

A

Sopranos

mp

p

mf

A tempo

A

I am giving up

Re-

Pno.

17

S.

p

fu-sing to re-turn the mir-ror's gaze.

I have no heart nor

Pno.

mf

20

S. zest For self-dis - plays.

Pno.

23 Altos

A. In a-ny case, I am ra-di-ant of face. But if no one can ob -serve,

Pno.

27

S.

If some-one is in - clined,

A.

— Of what use is grace? If some-one is in - clined,

Pno.

poco accel.

31

S. **B** N.B.
Let him change my mind. I am a spec - ta- cle, all a- lone,

A. Let him change my mind. I am a spec - ta- cle,

poco accel.

B

Pno.

rit.**A tempo**

Ob. **FOR PERUSAL ONLY**

S. **mp**

Nei-ther dis-play-er nor dis - played.

A. **mf** **mp**

all a lone, Nei-ther dis-play-er nor dis - played.

rit.**A tempo**

Pno.

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47

Ob. - rit. **D** = 68

S. beau-ty, a beau-ty, a blos-som in a de-so-late place. **p**

A. beau-ty, a beau-ty, a blos-som in a de-so-late place.

Pno. **rit.** **D** = 68
8va **ppp**

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

51 poco accel.

S. - **mp** Like gold bur-ied in the

S. **mp** Like gold bur-ied **mp** Like gold bur-ied in the

A. - **p** **mp** Like gold bur-ied in the

A. **p** **mp** Like gold bur-ied in the

Pno. **p** **mp**

Tempo primo

9

54

S. *mf*
dust. Or a pearl____ lost in the sea.

S. *mf*
dust. Or a pearl____ lost in the sea.

A. *mf*
dust. Or a pearl____ lost in the sea.

A. *mf*
dust. Or a pearl____ lost in the sea.

Tempo primo

Pno. *mf* *mf* *mf*

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

57

poco a poco cresc. *f* rit.

S. A can-dle un-der cov er,____ A can-dle un-der cover,____

S. A can-dle un-der cov er,____ A can-dle un-der cover,____

A. A can-dle un-der cov er,____ A can-dle un-der cover,____

A. A can-dle #un - der cov er,____ und - der cov er,____ *f* rit.

Pno. *mf* *mf* *mf*

60 **E A tempo**

Ob. *f* *mp*

S. S. *mp*
Or in a

A. A. *mp*
Or in a void, _____

E A tempo

Pno. *ff* *f* *mf* *mp*

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

63

Ob. *mf*

S. S. * shah - nah - ee
void, the song of the *shah-na* - *i.** _____

A. A. cresc. *mf*
the song of the *shah-na* - *i.** _____

Pno. *mf*

66

Ob.

S. 3
S.
Why was the night-in-gale caged?

A. 3
A.
Why was the night-in-gale caged?

Pno.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

69

Ob.

S. 3
S.
chained?

A. 3
A.
chained?

Pno.

72

Ob. *p*

S. I am a ru-by_____

S. What wis-dom so or - dained? I am a ru-by_____

A. A. I am a ru-by_____

Pno. *mp* *p* *cresc.* 6 6

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

F

75

Ob. *mf*

S. As -

S.

A. A. What a shock-ing view it

Pno. *mf*

79

S. *mf*
ton-ish-ing be-yond, be - yond as - ton-ish-men-t — as un - for-tun ate.

S. *mf*
that beau-ty can be seen as un - for-tun-ate.

A. A.
is, that beau-ty can be seen as un - for-tun ate.

Pno.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

83 *poco accel.* *mp* *=86*

S. Like a can-dle, I weep.

S. Like a can-dle, I weep

A. *mp* In the com-pa-ny of ri- vals, I weep.

A. *mp* In the com-pa-ny of ri- vals, I weep.

Pno.

87

S. Even with this beau - ty, In spite of all this
 S. Even with this beau - ty, In spite of all this
 A. Even with this beau - ty, In spite of all this
 A. Even with this beau - ty, In spite of all this
 Pno. *f* *mf*

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

90

S. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.
 S. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.
 A. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.
 A. grace. I can-not find the words— my mean-ing to ex - press.

Pno.

93

poco rit. - - - A tempo

S. How can one so pow-er-less Make clear her great dis - tress?

S. Make clear her great dis - tress?

A. How can one so pow-er-less Make clear her great dis - tress?

A. How can one so pow-er-less Make clear her great dis - tress?

poco rit. - - - A tempo

Pno.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

97

poco rit. - - - Tempo primo

Ob. f mf

poco rit. - - - Tempo primo

Pno. mf f mf

102 **G**

Ob. *mp* *mf*

S. I am a ru-by The moon N.B. in its dark-est

A. I am a ru-by wrapped in a rag. The moon N.B. in its dark-est

Pno. *mp* *mf*

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

106

Ob.

S. phase; I am *f* a beau-ty

A. phase; I am *f* a rus - tic beau ty a

Pno. *mf*

109

Ob. - - - - -

S. a beau ty, a beau-ty, a beau - ty, a beau - ty, a
S. a beau ty, a beau-ty, a beau - ty, a beau - ty, a
A. beau-ty, a beau-ty, a beau - ty, a beau - ty, a
A. beau-ty, a beau-ty, a beau - ty, a beau - ty, a

Pno. 8va - - - - - molto rit.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

112

Slower
♩=60

Ob. *mp* *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

S. *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

A. *pp* *dim.* *ppp*

Pno. *pp* *pp* *ppp*

blos-som in a de - so - late place.
Slower
♩=60