SEA-027-01 \$4.75

# Folks, I'm Telling You

Langston Hughes

SSATB and piano



## Elizabeth Alexander







#### Advice

Folks, I'm telling you, birthing is hard and dying is mean — so get yourself a little loving in between.

Langston Hughes

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**Composer's Note:** One of the things I've always loved about Langston Hughes' poems is how he combines hard truth with deep love, creating a world in which penetrating reality and compassion coexist. The people he writes about are heartbreakingly vulnerable and infinitely resilient, often in the same breath. To my ear, his short and to-the-point poem, "Advice," cried out for edgy rhythms, complex chords, heartfelt passion, and a generous helping of the blues.

Folks, I'm Telling You was composed in 2002 for Common Chords Chorus of Ithaca, NY. - E.A.

Growing up in the Carolinas and Appalachian Ohio, **Elizabeth Alexander** gained her first love of language and music from her parents, a minister and a piano teacher. These twin passions are reflected in her catalogue of over 100 choral and vocal pieces, which have received over 20 national and international awards, and which have been performed by thousands of choirs. Her composition teachers have included Jack Gallagher at The College of Wooster, and Steven Stucky, Yehudi Wyner and Karel Husa at Cornell University, where she received her doctorate in music composition.

A recent McKnight Composition Fellow, Elizabeth lives in St. Paul, MN, where her frequent commissions include works for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles and solo musicians. In addition to composing, Elizabeth teaches little fingers to play, shamelessly encourages her teenagers' jokes, and tends her garden during the three month period in Minnesota that is not winter. She believes she has the best job in the world.

For more information about Elizabeth's music, visit www.elizabethalexander.com

Cover Art: "Play de Blues" by Aaron Douglas

After studying classical and modern art in his home state of Nebraska, Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) moved to New York City, where he became a major figure in the Harlem Renaissance. "Play de Blues" (1926) was an illustration for Langston Hughes' set of poems by the same name, published in the National Urban League magazine, *Opportunity*.

Douglas later founded the art department at Fisk University, where he taught for nearly three decades.



### Folks, I'm Tellin' You



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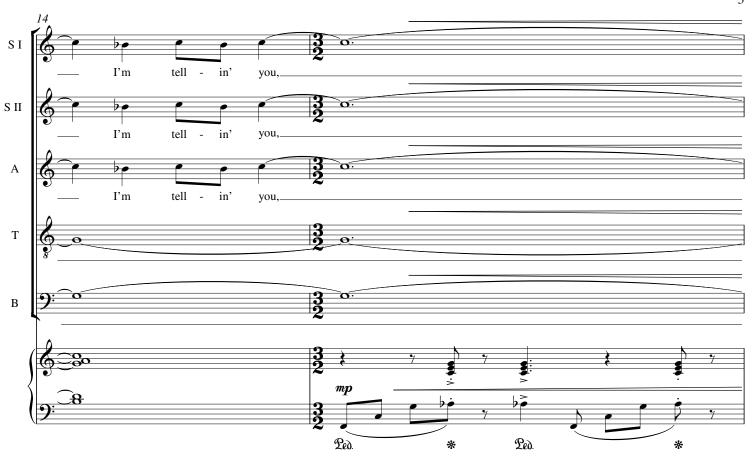
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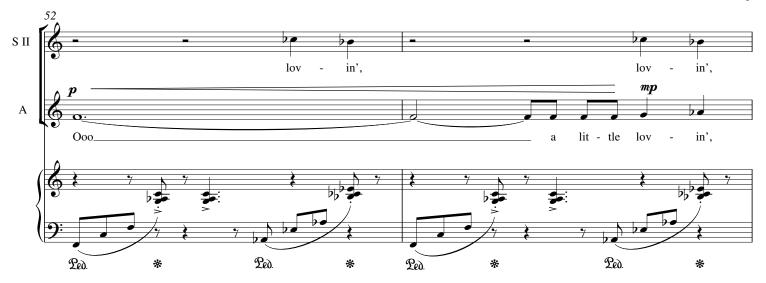
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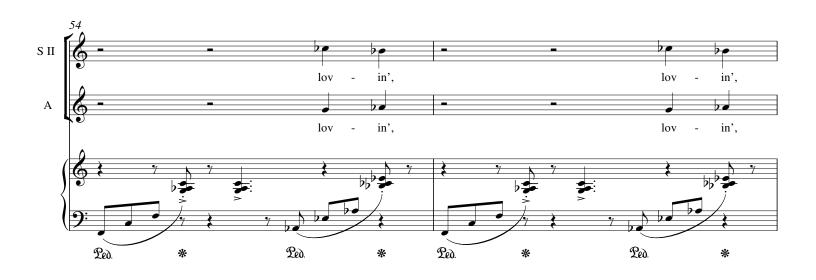
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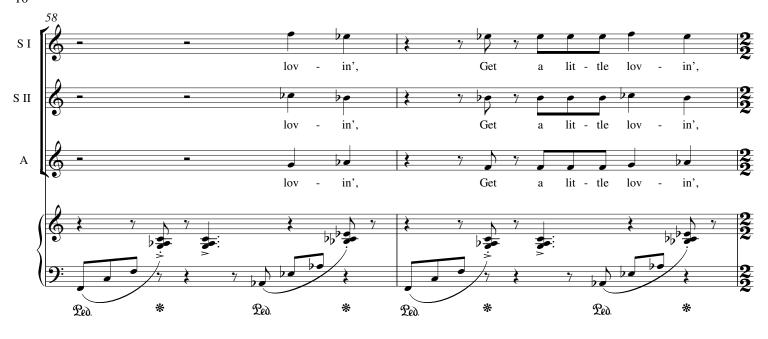


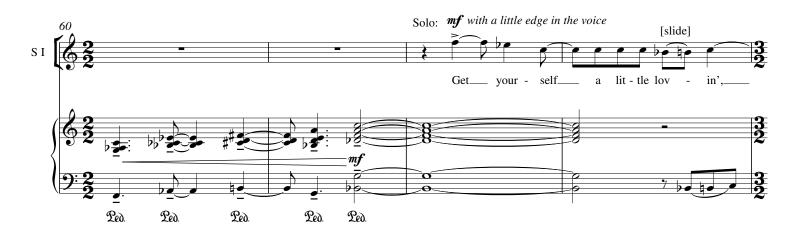


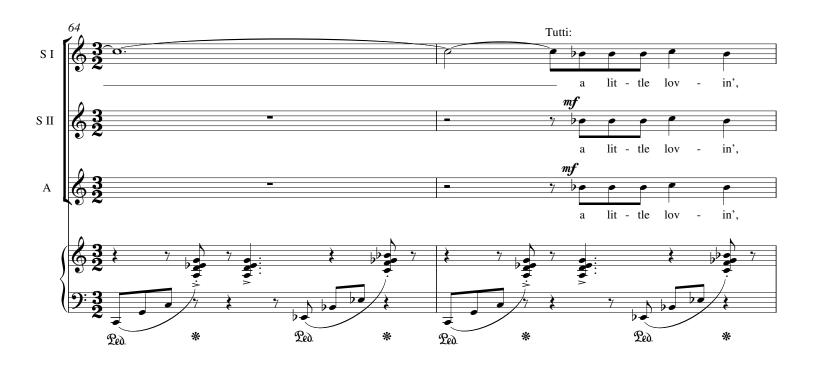














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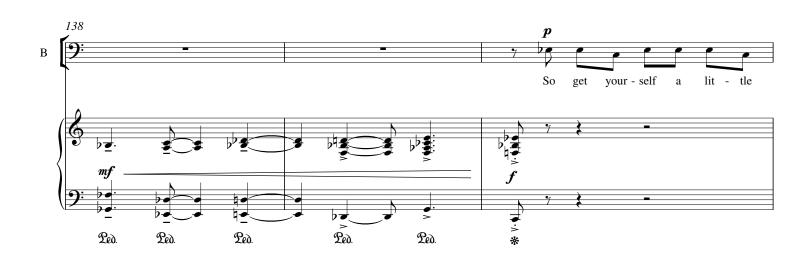
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