Things That Go Bump in the Night

A journey from dusk to dawn, in three movements

SATB, piano and optional flute

Elizabeth Alexander
Things That Go Bump in the Night

Elizabeth Alexander and students from Edward Smith School

I. And the moon is listening...

I lie in bed at night and listen.  
Doors creak and walls moan,  
Faucets drip and the house is settling.  
And the moon is listening...

I lie in bed at night and listen.  
Mice creep and clocks tick,  
Marking time while we are dreaming.  
And the moon is listening...

My cats go bumpity-bump all night,  
Mischief happening left and right.  
Bumpity-bumpity-bumpity-bumpity-bump!  

I lie in bed at night and listen.  
Snow falls and branches sway,  
Wind chimes clatter in the breeze.  
And the moon is listening...  
And I drift to sleep...

II. There it is again!

Cracking lumber  
Wakes me from my slumber,  
And my fear takes hold.  
Sky and clouds brawl,  
Simple things make my skin crawl,  
And the night grows suddenly loud and dark and cold.

I hold my breath and dare not make a peep.  
I try to go back to sleep...I can’t go back to sleep...

Ooooooooh, Ooooooooh —  
What’s that?

I hear a creaking and a moaning —  
Souls in agony are groaning.

Ooooooooh, Ooooooooh —  
There it is again! — Who’s there?

It’s getting louder, and louder, and louder!  
Something’s peeking in my window!
Something’s creeping under my bed!
Is it alive or is it dead?
Does it even have a head?
If I close my eyes, maybe it won’t be able to see me!

What’s that shadow that I see?
Is it a spider bigger than me?
Should I hide or should I flee?

There it is again!

I feel my house shaking...shaking...shaking...

No, YOU’RE shaking!

I’m so scared I rattle the sheets!
I’m so scared I start to freeze!
I’m so scared I start to grow a beard!

Footsteps in the hall...I’m not afraid, not at all....
Still, to be quite certain, I’ll hide behind the curtain,
Standing very still like a statue...

A roar and a rip and then I know it’s a... it’s a... it’s a...
And it’s coming closer, and closer, and closer...

Suddenly it’s here! I’m paralyzed by fear!
And it’s coming towards me and I hear this noise:

GET BACK IN BED!

I turn on the light, not a shadow in sight —
So I go back to sleep, and I don’t hear a peep.

III. Things That Go Bump in the Night

I pull the covers from my face, and glance around the room.
The light of dawn reveals no trace
That I had been visited by creatures of doom.

Things that go bump in the night just might
Make somebody get light with fright.
They get so scared that they won’t be prepared for the
Things that go bump in the night.

But they know it isn’t true,
And hopefully so do you.
WARNING: This piece is not for a shy choir!
Singers are asked to speak, whisper, shout, moan, click their tongues, rub their hands together, snap their fingers, stomp their feet on the floor, and become party cats.

Neither may the pianist be a shrinking violet!
The pianist is asked to strum, pat and dampen strings, as well as playing chord clusters with the whole forearm.

Many measures in this piece do not have time signatures. Do not panic. These measures contain special effects and spoken words, and should simply be given as much time as they need.

Composer’s Note: Things That Go Bump in the Night was composed with and for students at Edward Smith Elementary School through the Syracuse Society for New Music’s Composers-in-the-Schools program.

The composition of this piece was truly collaborative. Before I came on the scene, the students chose the theme, and produced a wealth of creative writing on that theme. I edited their poems, stories and descriptions, assembling the lyrics into three songs. Then, groups of student composers met with me, choosing time signatures, tempos, and chord qualities; composing melodies, rhythms and harmonies; assigning parts to instruments; and adding special effects. Finally, I forged their ideas into a large work which the student musicians performed for their teachers, parents, and friends.

After this piece was completed, I couldn’t believe how many adult choirs wanted to perform this work! Several did — adapting the children’s choir piece on their own — until finally The Festival Choir of Madison commissioned an actual SATB version of this song.

Student Lyricists: Zara Asman, Jessica Barbour, Kyle Bell, Clarence Brennen, Thomas Brown, Brandon Burchand, Nicole Caffy, Zack Clark, Kim Crossway, Nick DeCarlo, Sarah Doucette, Corky Ellison, Joshua Gamage, Mallisa Gasparovic, Max Gerros, Erin Godwin, Caitlin Gucker-Kantor, Anna Guisbond, Gwen Hayward, Jenna Hawkins, Eddie Herron, Kamesha Huddleston, Stacey Karpouzes, Patrick Kelly, Meagan Kennedy, Nikki King, Jennifer Knight, Michael McLaughlin, Meghan Mehan, Sean Moore, Kristen Myrick, Katie Ninno, Claire Pietrzak, Logan Pistello, Josh Pagan, Andrew Post, Kate Price, Chris Resti, Crysten Rushmore, Sulaiman Abdul Sabur, Amy Savage, Sarah Schechter, Lauren Shaw, Ashley Spinks, Katie Steele, Beth Stricker, Maggie Stonecash, Amanda Sullivan, Kent Sutherland, David Swift, Daquan Thomas, Joel Tillman, Eric Uhlig, Porsche Walker, Dorsey Williams, Sierra Williams, Rhiannon Wilson, & Jordan Wood & Katie Wood

Student Composers: Mikel Ashkin, Sean Bailey, Kirsten Barrett, Kim Crossways, Robert Dougherty, Lisa Eade, Emile Godwin, Jaqual Green, Matt Guisbond, Shatosha McMullen, Ana Riley, Meredith Robson, Katie Scheutzow, Kye Smith, Alexandra Watson, Matt Abbott, Jessica Barbou, Chris Hall, Elizabeth Klemperer, Elisha Maxfield, Brian McCulley, Maggie Stonecash, Kent Sutherland, Joel Tillman, Katie Wood, Ashley Bailey, Kyle Bell, Clarence Brennen, Grace Broadwater, Zach Chase, Sarah Floyd, Tyler McAndrew, Evi Robinson, Daquan Thomas, & Eli Tiffault

Funding for this project was provided by New York State Council on the Arts; The Copland Fund; Martin A Yenawine and I’m Smart of CNY, Inc. Special thanks to grant-writer Billie Burdick, Neva Pilgrim, and the teachers at Edward Smith School.

Cover Image: “Halloween Tree” by Lorelyn Medina. GL Images
Things That Go Bump in the Night

SATB, piano and optional flute

I. And the moon is listening...

Elizabeth Alexander
and students at
Edward Smith Elementary School

Each new note like a distant bell

I lie in bed at night and listen,

Doors creak and walls moan, Faucets drip and the house is settling,
Tongue clicks, like a dripping faucet. Form mouth into large and small “O”s.

And the moon

is

listening.

And the moon

is

listening.
I lie in bed at night and listen.

Mice creep and clocks tick, marking time while we are dreaming.

And the moon is

Tongue clicks, like a ticking clock. Form mouth into large and small “O”s

Tongue clicks, like a ticking clock. Form mouth into large and small “O”s
Meow, with a rather pronounced dipthong

Ss!  Fierce hiss

cats go bump-i-ty bump all night,
cats go bump-i-ty bump all night,
A LOT OF HARD WORK & CREATIVITY WENT INTO BRINGING THIS MUSIC TO YOU...

...AND SOME OF IT WAS EVEN MINE.

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

(YOU KNOW WHY.)

A COMPLETE PERUSAL COPY MAY BE PURCHASED FROM ELIZABETH ALEXANDER AT

Seafarer Press
www.seafarerpress.com
Repeat a few times if desired

Sopranos and Altos become total party cats: break out the birthday-type noisemakers, slide whistles, maracas, and toy ratchets! (If you can throw in a quick non-deafening vuvuzela blast, go for it!)

Once again, cats become responsible choral singers. My, how innocent they look!

My

My

Once again, cats become responsible choral singers. My, how innocent they look!

mis chief - hap pen - ing - left and right,

mis chief - hap pen - ing - left and right,

cats go bump i - ty bump all night,

cats go bump i - ty bump all night,
bump-ity, bump-ity, bump-ity, bump-ity bump!

I lie in bed at night and listen,

bump-ity, bump-ity, bump-ity, bump-ity bump!

I lie in bed at night and listen,
Wind chimes clatter in the breeze,

Snow falls and branches sway,

And the moon is
And I drift to sleep.

And I drift to sleep.

And I drift to sleep.

And I drift to sleep.
II. There It Is Again!

Mysteriously
Senza misura

\( \text{Rub hands together} \)
\( \text{Exhale, making wind sounds} \)

\( \text{Pat lowest strings with palm} \)

\( \text{Glissando on middle strings with fingernail (remain seated)} \)

\( \text{(} \text{=} \text{ approx. 60)} \)

\( \text{Crack - ing lum - ber} \) \text{ wakes me from my slum - ber,} \quad \text{and my fear} \quad \text{takes} \)

\( \text{Spoken} \)

\( \text{mf} \) \text{ gliss.}
Exhale, making wind sounds

Snap fingers rapidly

Exhale, making wind sounds

Snap fingers rapidly

Sky and clouds brawl, simple things make my skin crawl and the

Sky and clouds brawl, simple things make my skin crawl and the
A lot of hard work & creativity went into bringing this music to you...

...and some of it was even mine.

This page has been intentionally left blank.

(You know why.)

A complete perusal copy may be purchased from Elizabeth Alexander at

Seafarer Press

www.seafarerpress.com
try to go back to sleep, I try to go back to sleep.

try to go back to sleep, I try to go back to sleep.

try to go back to sleep, I try to go back to sleep.

try to go back to sleep, I try to go back to sleep.

to sleep.
I can’t go back to sleep!

Moaned (higher)

Moaned (lower)

Moaned (higher)

Moaned (lower)

Oooooh

Oooooh

Oooooh

Oooooh

Scratch, scratchity, scratch...

WHAT'S THAT?
I hear a creak-ing and a moan-ing, such a
creak-ing and a moan-ing, such a
creak-ing and a moan-ing, such a
creak-ing and a moan-ing, such a
Souls in a-gon-y are groan-ing, such a
squeaking and groaning, and creaking and moaning and squeaking and groaning,

THERE IT IS AGAIN!

**Senza misura**

Solo

Moaned (higher)

Moaned (lower)

Ooooh

Ooooh
WHO'S THERE?

Shouted

Whispered repeatedly

Scratch, Scrunchity, Scritch

It's getting -

Glissando on middle strings with fingernail

It's getting louder,

It's getting -

It's getting louder,

It's getting
molto accel.

S

A

T

B

louder, louder, louder, louder

louder, and louder, and louder, and louder

louder, louder, louder, louder

louder, and louder, and louder, and louder

mf

and

f

f

f

f
A lot of hard work & creativity went into bringing this music to you...

...and some of it was even mine.

This page has been intentionally left blank.

(YOU KNOW WHY.)

A complete perusal copy may be purchased from Elizabeth Alexander at

Seafarer Press

www.seafarerpress.com
Should I hide or should I flee?

Is it a spider bigger than me?

Senza misura

There it is again!

Scratch, scrunchity, scritch...

I feel my house shaking........ shaking........ shaking...........

No, YOU'RE shaking!
Solo

I'm so scared I rattle the sheets!

Tutti

Spoken.

I'm...

Dampen strings with right hand

Solo

I'm so scared I start to freeze!

Tutti

Spoken.

I'm...

Solo

I'm so scared I start to grow a beard!

Tutti

Spoken.

I'm...
230
Tutti
I'm...

236
(8..)

H

240
Footsteps in the hall, I'm not afraid at all,

S

A

244
Still, to be quite certain, I'll hide behind the curtain,

T

B
Standing very still like a statue...

A roar and a rip and then I know it's a... it's a... it's a...
Inhale audibly, in a long slow collective gasp.

and it's coming closer, and closer, and closer,

Suddenly it's here!  I'm paralyzed by fear!  And it's coming

Spoken. This may be a choir member if you wish, although my favorite option is planting a deep-voiced male in the audience (with or without a hand held microphone).

GET BACK IN BED!

(towards me and I hear this noise, I hear this noise:)

(keep pedal depressed)
I turn out the light, not a shadow in sight, and I go back to sleep, and I don’t hear a peep.
III. Things That Go Bump In the Night

(\( \text{do}=\text{approx. 60} \)) Placidly

Flute

Right hand notes are for rehearsal only, or in performance without a flutist.

I pull the covers from my face and glance a-round my room.

I pull the covers from my face and glance a-round my room.
The light of dawn reveals no

ponderously that I had been visited by creatures of

trace that I had been visited by creatures of

The light of dawn reveals no

ponderously that I had been visited by creatures of

trace that I had been visited by creatures of
A LOT OF HARD WORK & CREATIVITY WENT INTO BRINGING THIS MUSIC TO YOU...

...AND SOME OF IT WAS EVEN MINE.

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

(YOU KNOW WHY.)

A COMPLETE PERUSAL COPY MAY BE PURCHASED FROM ELIZABETH ALEXANDER AT

Seafarer Press

www.seafarerpress.com
They get so scared that they won't be prepared for the things that go bump in the night.

Things that go bump in the night just might make somebody get light with fright.
Things that go bump in the night just might make some-body get light with fright.

They get so scared that they might be cared by the

Things that go bump in the night, things that go bump in the night,

They get so scared that they
Things that go bump in the night just might make some-body get light with fright.

They get so scared that they won't be prepared for the things that go bump in the night.

Things that go bump in the night, bump, bump, bump, bump, bump.

They get so scared that they won't be prepared for the things that go bump in the night.
won't be prepared. Oh,

They get so scared that they

Things that go bump, bump, bump, things that go bump, bump, bump,

Things that go bump in the night just might make some-body get light with fright.

won't be prepared for the

Things that go bump in the night, things that go bump in the night,

They get so scared that they
Things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump,
bump, bump, bump, bump, bump, bump, bump, bump,

Things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump,

won't be prepared for the

Things that go bump in the night.

Things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump,

Stomp with opposite feet Stand very still!

Things that go bump in the night.

Things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump,

Stomp with opposite feet Stand very still!

Things that go bump in the night.

Things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump,

Stomp with opposite feet Stand very still!

Things that go bump in the night.

Things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump, things that go bump,
But they know it isn't true, and

But they know it isn't true, and

But they know it isn't true, and

But they know it isn't true, and

But they know it isn't true, and

But they know it isn't true, and

hope-fully so do you!

hope-fully so do you!

hope-fully so do you!

hope-fully so do you!

hope-fully so do you!
HERE YOU GO: ONE FINAL STOMP! *

* In the original children's choir version of this piece, I wrote "Bring Down the House!" here. I am reluctant to write this in the adult choir arrangement, lest you actually bring down the risers! So I will instead ask for singers standing on the floor or stage to give us a whoppin' stomp, and those on risers to stomp less dramatically. - E.A.
Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

April Rain Song  (Langston Hughes)  SATB  ................................................................. SEA-006-01
Before the Bread  (English folk prayer)  SSSS  ......................................................... SEA-023-00
Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs  (Michael deVernon Boblett)  SATB  ..................... SEA-078-00
Cherish Your Doubt  (Alexander)  SATB & piano / SSAA & piano  .................................. SEA-063-01 / SEA-063-02
Climb  (Edna St. Vincent Millay)  SATB & piano  ....................................................... SEA-059-00
Dragon Dance  (Elizabeth Alexander)  S & piano  ....................................................... SEA-001-00
Die Gedanken Sind Frei  (15th century German protest song, arr.)  SATB & piano  .......... SEA-087-00
The Earth Called To My Friend  (Nancy Wood)  SSA & piano  ........................................ SEA-057-00
Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm  (Yehuda Amichai)  SATB  ................................. SEA-026-01
Faith Is the Bird That Feels the Light  (Rabindranath Tagore)  SSA  ............................ SEA-068-00
Fighting Over What We Believe  (Alexander)  SAB youth choir, SATB & piano  .......... SEA-099-00
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
For So the Children Come  (Sophia Fahs)  SATB & piano  ........................................... SEA-010-00
Glen Song  (Scott Bates)  SSATB & piano  ................................................................. SEA-025-00
Go Out!  (John Murray)  SATB & piano  ................................................................. SEA-081-00
I Write This Poem Out of Darkness  (George Ella Lyon)  SSA, flute, violin & piano  .... SEA-024-00
If You Can Walk You Can Dance  (Zimbabwean Proverb)  SAB & piano / TTB & piano  SEA-022-03 / SEA-022-05
Immortal Love  (John Greenleaf Whittier)  SATB  .................................................... SEA-017-00
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly  (arr. Polish carol)  SSA  ..................................................... SEA-020-00
The Journey  (Evelyn Dudley)  TTBB / SATB  ............................................................ SEA-075-00 / SEA-075-01
Jump!  (Ray Bradbury)  SSA & string quartet  ............................................................ SEA-090-00
Life is not a Garden  (Alexander)  SATB & piano  ..................................................... SEA-064-00
May This Be a Working Alleluia  (Alexander)  S children’s choir, SATB & piano (opt. flute & 2 trumpets)  SEA-098-00
Morning Bread  (Amy Lowell)  SATB  ................................................................. SEA-060-00
...or a musician  (Philip Dacey)  SATB & orchestra  .................................................... SEA-007-00
A Palette To Paint Us As We Are  (Gerald Rich)  SA & piano / SATB & piano  ............ SEA-014-00 / 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
Spring Grass  (Carl Sandburg)  SATB  ........................................................................ SEA-006-03
They Have Freckles Everywhere  (Alexander)  SSAA & piano  ..................................... SEA-076-00
Those Who Wish To Sing Always Find a Song  (Swedish proverb)  SSS, oboe & piano  ................................................... SEA-022-01
To Make a Prairie  (Emily Dickinson)  SSA & piano  .................................................... SEA-016-00
Tomorrow, God Willing  (Garrison Keillor)  TTBB  .................................................... SEA-077-00
Trust the Seeds  (Alexander)  SATB  ........................................................................ SEA-009-00
We Lift Up Our Hearts  (Richard Fewkes)  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/SATB  .................................... SEA-070-00 / SEA-070-01
When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled  (Howard Thurman)  SSAA / TTBB  ............... SEA-062-04 / SEA-062-02
Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills  (Joan WolfPrefontaine)  SSAA  ..................... SEA-058-00

CD: Finally On My Way To Yes — Award-winning choral works by Elizabeth Alexander  ........ SEA-CD-001

For a complete catalog of over 60 pieces for mixed, women’s, men’s & children’s choirs, along with recordings and score excerpts, visit:

Seafarer Press - www.seafarerpress.com