

I wrote your name

*I wrote your name
On the notebooks of the rain,
On the sheets of ice,
On the blankets of snow,
And on the pine cones.*

*Then I shared with you
The names of the trees,
And I translated for you
The nightly conversations of the crickets;*

*I gave to you the secret addresses
Of the faraway stars.*

A setting of the last seven lines of the first letter
in the collection *One hundred love letters* by Nizar Qabbani,
in Arabic and English, translated by the composer,
for twelve-part mixed chorus (SSSAAATTTBBB) *a cappella*

Eric Banks

Commissioned by Anthony Trecek-King, and composed
in August 2012 for the Boston Children's Chorus,
revoiced and revised in May 2014 for The Esoterics.

About this work

Nizar Qabbani was born in 1923 in Syria to a traditional, well-to-do family. Qabbani's poetry has been described "more powerful than all the Arab regimes put together" (*Lebanese Daily Star*), and "like water, bread, and sun in every Arab heart and house" (*Tishreen*). Qabbani's verses are simple and direct, describing everyday life. He was a constant campaigner for women's rights, and a great many of his poems praise the beauty of the feminine form. He was an Arab nationalist, but often criticized Arab dictators for the lack of freedom that they caused throughout the Arab world. He worked as a diplomat in Syria for more than two decades, but settled in London in the mid-1960's for political reasons. Qabbani died in London in 1998, and is buried in Damascus.

Here are the eight lines of *I wrote your name* in their original Arabic, and in IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet):

'æɲæ kætæɲbtuki
ʕælæ dæfæɲɪræɪl-mɔʔɪɾ,
wæ ʃæɲæʃɪfɪθ-θæɲɪ
wæ 'ækwæz 'ɒʃ-ʃʊnæwɒɪɾ.

'æɲæ ʕællæmtuki 'æsmæ'æʃ-ʃɒʒɪɾ,
wæ ɛɬwæɪɾʃ-ʃɪɾɪʃɪræɪl-læɲɪjæh,
wæ 'ɔʕɲɔʔtuki
ʕæɲæwɪnæn-nʊzʊmɪl-bæʕɪdæh.

Here is a pronunciation key of the IPA for Arabic vowels:

æ	between bat and bet
ɔ	as in bought
ɒ	as in but
i	as in beet
ɪ	as in bit
ʊ	as in book
u	as in boot

And key of of the IPA for Arabic consonants:

bdfkhlmnstz	are pronounced as in English
ɖʂʐ	are retroflex versions of their English equivalent, and are pronounced with the back of the tongue raised to the palate
ʕ	a velar approximative, pronounced as the ŋ as in song without touching the tongue to the palate
ð	a voiced fricative, as in <i>thus</i>
θ	an unvoiced fricative, as in <i>thin</i>
ħ	a 'glasses-fogging' version of ɧ, high in the mouth
q	a guttural k, produced in the back of the throat
r	a lightly flipped r, as in Italian
ʁ	a guttural r, as in French
ʃ	an unvoiced fricative, as in <i>shin</i>
ʒ	a voiced fricative, as in <i>pleasure</i>
x	as in the German <i>ich</i>
ʔ	the glottal stop, as in 'us
j	as in <i>yet</i>
w	as in <i>wet</i>

The pitches of this piece (G Ab B C D Eb F# G) comprise a transposition of the maqam Suzidil. The translation of Nizar Qabbani's poem is my own, and has been tailored especially for this work.



أَنَا كَتَبْتُكَ
عَلَى دَفَاتِرِ الْمَطَرِ،
وَشَرَّاشِفِ الثَّلْجِ،
وَأَكْوَاظِ الصُّنُوبَرِ.
أَنَا عَلَّمْتُكَ أَسْمَاءَ الشَّجَرِ،
وَحَوَارِ الصَّرَاصِيرِ اللَّيْلِ،
وَأَعْطَيْتُكَ
عَنَاوِينَ النُّجُومِ الْبَعِيدَةِ.

I wrote your name

Eric Banks

Delightfully $\text{♩} = 198$ ($\text{♩} = 99$; $\text{♩} = 66$)
(beat 3+2+3+3 throughout)

pp 2 3 4

S1 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

S2 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

S3 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

A1 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

A2 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

A3 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

T1 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

T2 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

T3 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

B1 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

B2 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

B3 I wrote your name _____ on the note-books of the rain, _____

NB: Diamond noteheads connote pitches that are out of standard range, and are to be phonated lightly, only to follow the monody through the chorus.

SAMPLE

5

6

7

8

S1
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

S2
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

S3
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

A1
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

A2
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

A3
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

T1
8 — on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

T2
8 — on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

T3
8 — on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

B1
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

B2
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

B3
— on the sheets of ice, on the blan-kets of snow,

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SAMPLE

9 10 11 12

S1
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

S2
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

S3
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

A1
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

A2
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name... *mf* 'æ-næ kæ-

A3
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

T1
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

T2
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

T3
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

B1
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

B2
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

B3
— and on the pine cones. I wrote your name...

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SAMPLE

13

14

15

S1

S2

S3

A1

A2

A3

T1

T2

T3

B1

B2

B3

tæb - tu-ki... 'æ - næ kæ -
mf *goccioline, schizzato (come la pioggia)*
 ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti-ræel - ml-ʃlɹ... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti-ræel - ml-ʃlɹ...

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SAMPLE

16

17

18

S1

S2

S3

A1

A2

A3

T1

T2

T3

B1

B2

B3

tæb - tu-ki... 'æ - næ kæ -
 ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr...
mf *scorrevole, scilvoloso (come una lastra de ghiaccio)*
 wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæɪ - ʒi... wæ ʃæ -
mf *scorrevole, scilvoloso (come una lastra de ghiaccio)*
 wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæɪ - ʒi...

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SAMPLE

19

20

21

S1

S2

S3

A1

A2

tæb - tu - ki... 'æ - næ kæ -

A3

ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr...

T1

T2

T3

mf *compatto, spino* (*come una pigna*)

wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌs - ʃu - næ^w - blɜr...

B1

mf *compatto, spino* (*come una pigna*)

wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌs - ʃu - næ^w - blɜr...

B2

ræ - ʃi - fɪθ - θæɪ - ʒi... wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fɪθ - θæɪ - ʒi...

B3

wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fɪθ - θæɪ - ʒi... wæ ʃæ -

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SAMPLE

22

23

24

S1

S2

S3

A1

A2

A3

T1

T2

T3

B1

B2

B3

tæb - tu - ki...

'æ - næ ʃæ -

ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræ - ml - tʌr...

ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræ - ml - tʌr...

ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræ - ml - tʌr...

wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌs - sʊ - næw - blr...

wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌs - sʊ - næw - blr...

wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fɪθ - θæ - ʒi...

wæ ʃæ -

ræ - ʃi - fɪθ - θæ - ʒi...

wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fɪθ - θæ - ʒi...

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SAMPLE

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S1

S2

S3
crescente, rampicante (come un albero)
mf 'æs - mæ - 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A1
crescente, rampicante (come un albero)
mf 'æs - mæ - 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A2
læm - tu - ki... 'æ - næ ʃæ -

A3
ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræl - mʌ - tʌr...

T1

T2

T3
wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌs - ʃu - næ^w - blr...

B1
wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌs - ʃu - næ^w - blr...

B2
ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæ - ʒi...^{wæ} ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæ - ʒi...

B3
wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæ - ʒi...^{wæ} ʃæ -

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SAMPLE

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32

33

S1
 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-ʃi - dæh... fæ-næ-wi - næn-nu -

S2
 fæ-næ-wi - næn-nu - 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-ʃi - dæh...

S3
 - - 3ʌr... 'æs - mæ - 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A1
 - - 3ʌr... 'æs - mæ - 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A2
 læm-tu-ki... 'æ - næ fæll-

A3
 fæ-læ dæ-fæ-ti-ræel - ml-ʃʌr... fæ - læ dæ-fæ-ti-ræel-ml-ʃʌr... fæ - læ dæ - fæ-ti-ræel - ml-ʃʌr...

T1
 8 li - 'æh... wæ ʰʌ - wær ʌʃ-ʃʌ-rʌ-ʃʌr æl-læll-

T2
 8 li - 'æh... wæ ʰʌ - wær ʌʃ-ʃʌ-rʌ-ʃʌr æl-læll-

T3
 8 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ-su - næw-blr...

B1
 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ-su - næw-blr...

B2
 ræ - ʃi-frθ-θæel-ʒi... wæ ʃæ - ræ-ʃi-frθ - θæel - ʒi...

B3
 wæ ʃæ - ræ-ʃi-frθ - θæel-ʒi... wæ ʃæ-

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SAMPLE

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S1
 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-si - dæh... fæ-næ-wi - næn-nu -

S2
 fæ-næ-wi - næn-nu - 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-si - dæh...

S3
 - - 3Ar... 'æs - mæ - 'æf - ʃl - - - - -

A1
 - - 3Ar... 'æs - mæ - 'æf - ʃl - - - - -

A2
 læm-tu-ki... 'æ - næ 'ɔf -

A3
 fæ-læ dæ-fæ-ti-ræel - ml-ʃAr... fæ - læ dæ-fæ-ti-ræel-ml-ʃAr... fæ - læ dæ - fæ-ti-ræel - ml-ʃAr...

T1
 8 li - 'æh... wæ hA - wær 'ʌʃ-ʃA-rA-ʃr æl-læll-

T2
 8 li - 'æh... wæ hA - wær 'ʌʃ-ʃA-rA-ʃr æl-læll-

T3
 8 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ-su - næw-blr...

B1
 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ-su - næw-blr...

B2
 wæ ʃæ - ræ-ʃr-ftθ - θæl-ʒr... wæ ʃæ -

B3
 ræ - ʃr-ftθ-θæl-ʒr... wæ ʃæ - ræ-ʃr-ftθ - θæl - ʒr...

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SAMPLE
DO NOT PRINT

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S1 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-ʃi - dæh... ʃæ-næ-ʷi - næn-nu -

S2 ʃæ-næ-ʷi - næn-nu - 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-ʃi - dæh...

S3 - 3ʌr... 'æʃ - mæ - 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A1 - 3ʌr... 'æʃ - mæ - 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A2 ʃɔ̃-tu - ki... 'æ - næ 'ɔ̃-

A3 ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræel - mʌ - ʃʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræel - mʌ - ʃʌr... ʃæ - læ dæ - fæ - ti - ræel - mʌ - ʃʌr...

T1 8 li - 'æh... wæ hʌ - wær ʌʃ - ʃʌ - rʌ - ʃiʀ æl - læll-

T2 8 li - 'æh... wæ hʌ - wær ʌʃ - ʃʌ - rʌ - ʃiʀ æl - læll-

T3 8 wæ 'æek - wæz 'ʌʃ - ʃu - næʷ - bʌr...

B1 wæ 'æek - wæz 'ʌʃ - ʃu - næʷ - bʌr...

B2 ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæel - ʒi... wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæel - ʒi...

B3 wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃi - fiθ - θæel - ʒi... wæ ʃæ -

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SAMPLE

DO NOT PRINT

40 41 42

S1 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-fi - dæh... fæ-næ-wi-næn-nu -

S2 fæ-næ-wi-næn-nu - 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-fi - dæh...

S3 - - 3ʌr... 'æ - mæ 'æf - ʃʌ - - - - -

A1 - - 3ʌr... 'æ - mæ 'æf - ʃʌ - - - - -

A2 tɔl-tu-ki... 'æ - næ 'oʃ -

A3 fæ-læ dæ-fæ-ti-ræel - mʌ-ʃʌr...

T1 li - 'æh... wæ hʌ - wær 'ʌʃ - ʃʌ - rʌ - ʃɪr æl - læil-

T2 li - 'æh... wæ hʌ - wær 'ʌʃ - ʃʌ - rʌ - ʃɪr æl - læil-

T3 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ - ʃʌ - næw-blʌr...

B1 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ - ʃʌ - næw-blʌr...

B2 wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃɪ-fiθ - θæl-ʒɪ...

B3 ræ-ʃɪ-fiθ-θæl-ʒɪ... wæ ʃæ - ræ - ʃɪ-fiθ - θæl - ʒɪ...

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43 44 45

S1 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-fi-dæh... fæ-næ-ʷi-næn-nu -

S2 fæ-næ-ʷi-næn-nu - 3u - - - - - mil-bæ-fi - dæh...

S3 - - 3ʌr... 'æs - mæ 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A1 - - 3ʌr... 'æs - mæ 'æʃ - ʃʌ - - - - -

A2 tɔl - tu - ki... 'æ - næ 'ɔ - æ -

A3

T1 8 li - 'æh... wæ ʰʌ - wær ʌʃ - ʃʌ - ʃʌ - ʃʌ æl - læl' -

T2 8 li - 'æh... wæ ʰʌ - wær ʌʃ - ʃʌ - ʃʌ - ʃʌ æl - læl' -

T3 8 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ - ʃʌ - næʷ - blɹ...

B1 wæ 'æk - wæz 'ʌʃ - ʃʌ - næʷ - blɹ...

B2

B3

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S1 3u - - - - - ml-bæ-fi-dæh... fæ-næ-wi-næn-nu -

S2 fæ-næ-wi-næn-nu - 3u - - - - - ml-bæ-fi - dæh....

S3 - - 3Ar...

A1 - - 3Ar...

A2 tɔl - tu - ki... 'æ - næ fæl -

A3

T1 li - iæh... wæ HA - wær lʃ - ʃA - rA - ʃr æl - læll -

T2 li - iæh... wæ HA - wær lʃ - ʃA - rA - ʃr æl - læll -

T3

B1

B2

B3

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