

Judith Shatin

LA Frontera

For Mezzo & Piano

Poem by Unidentified Detained Immigrant Youth



**La Frontera (The Border)*
Translation by Seth Michelson

*un lugar a que todo el mundo vamos al tener un
sueño
y ver a mi familia feliz*

*pero no nos dejan llegar a la frontera por ser de
otro país*

*y me pregunto por qué
si todos somos seres humanos somos
los mismos
no tenemos papeles
porque estamos en el mismo mundo tenemos
sentimientos iguales*

*el color de piel es diferente
pero eso no quiere decir que no somos iguales es que en este
país en mi país
hay mucha gente racista*

*el ser blanco, el ser negro no
quiere decir*

*que somos iguales somos todos
iguales tenemos la misma mente
la misma meta*

*el caminar días por el desierto al
inmigrar nos agarra*

*a place the whole world goes when we
dream
and want to see our families happy*

*but they don't let us reach the border because
we're from other countries*

*and I ask myself why
if we're all human beings if we're
all the same don't we have
papers too
because we're all in the same world have the
same feelings*

*though our skin colors may differ
but that doesn't mean we're not the same it means that
in this country in my country there are lots of racists*

*to be white, to be black doesn't mean
we are unequal*

*we're equal
we have the same thoughts the
same goal*

*to walk for days across the desert called to
immigrate*

Program Note

La Frontera (The Border) is a poem by an undocumented immigrant youth imprisoned in an American maximum security detention center. Sadly, we cannot know the identity of the author due to government restrictions. But the words cry out to be heard and immortalized in music, scored here for tenor and piano. I was drawn to set this poem because it captures the dark realities of the immigration process as well as the powerful desire to immigrate to America. As the granddaughter and wife of immigrants, indeed as a citizen of the United States, I am deeply aware of both the astonishing and ongoing contributions of immigrants as well as the despicable treatment so many experience. Why do we forget our own status as immigrants or descendants of immigrants, and then deny the status of those who descend from indigenous peoples?

This poem, and the others published in the collection *Dreaming America: Voices of Undocumented Youth in Maximum Security Detention*, were written during workshops for immigrant youths in detention led by poet Seth Michelson. Some were created in collaboration with students from Washington and Lee University; others benefitted from visits by guest artists Jimmy Santiago Baca and Ricardo Dominguez. Larry Moffi, publisher of Settlement House Books, brought the book, *Dreaming America* to fruition, and kindly granted permission to set this poem. Profits from the book sales were donated to the Children's Program of the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights (amicacenter.org, formerly the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition), as are 100% of the score sales of this composition. For more information visit www.judithshatin.com –JS

*From *Dreaming America: Voices of Undocumented Youth in Maximum-Security Detention*, used by kind permission of poet Seth Michelson and Larry Moffi, publisher of Settlement House Books, First Edition

La Frontera

Unidentified Detained Immigrant Youth

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Mezzo **Strong** ♩ = 68 **f**

Piano **mf**

La fron -
te - ra, la fron - te - ra, la fron te ra, fron - te - ra, fron -
te - ra un lu - gar a que to - do el mun - do va - mos —
al te - ner un sue - ño — te - ner, un

17 *f*

sue - ño y ver a mi fa - mi - lia fe - liz

21 *cresc.*

Pe - ro no, pe - ro no, pe - ro no, no, no, no, no, no, no,

25 *ff*

no, no, no, no, no pe - ro no nos de - jan lle - gar

29

— a la fron - te - ra por ser de o - tro — país

33 *mf*

Y me pre - gun - to — por qué si to - dos so - mos



37 *f*

se - res — hu - ma - nos — so - mos los mis - mos



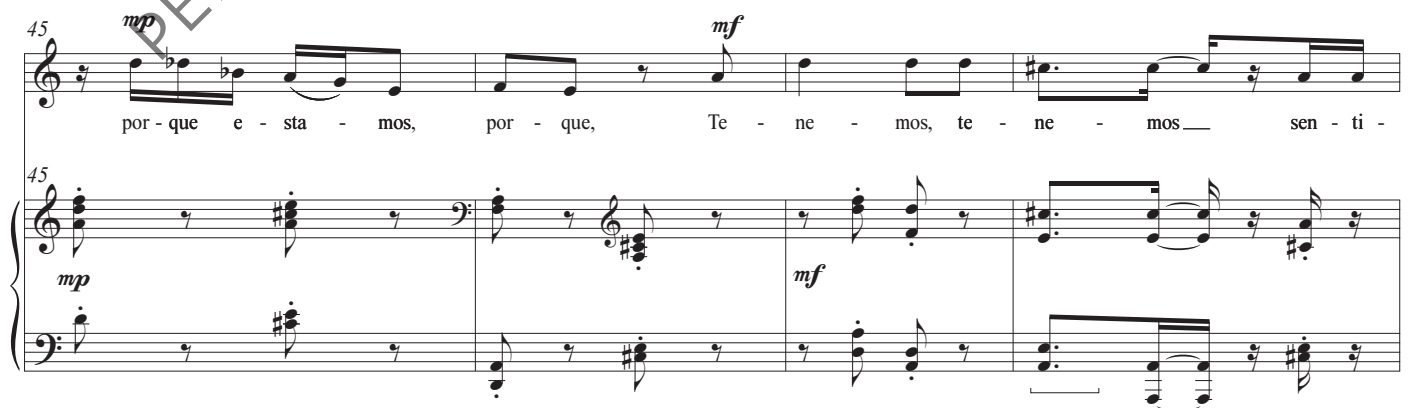
41

no — te - ne - mos pa - pe - les, pa - pe - les,



45 *mp* *mf*

por - que e - sta - mos, por - que, Te - ne - mos, te - ne - mos — sen - ti -



49 mien - tos i - gua - les i - gua - les, i - gua - les *f*

49 el co - lor de piel *mf*

53 es di - fe - ren - te Pe - ro es - so no *f*

61 que - re de - cir que so - mos i - gua - les *mf*

65 *mf*
es - que en es - te país en mi

69 *mf* *f*
país hay mu - cha gen - te ra -

73 *ff*
cis - ta, ra - cis - ta, ra - cis - ta, ra - cis - ta

77 *poco più mosso* *mp*
el ser blan - co

Assertive

83 *f*

el ser ne - gro no quie - re de - cir que so - mos i -

89 *mf*

gua - les Te - ne - mos la mis - ma men - te la mis - ma

Resigned ♩ = 68

94

me - ta

100 *mp* *p*

el ca - mi - nar di - as,

106 *mp*

ca - mi - nar, ca - mi - nar di - as por el de -

111

sier - to, ca - mi - nar por el de sier - to

117 *mf* *cresc.*

al in - mi - grar nos a -

122 *f*

ga - rra nos a - ga - rra, al

126 *mf*
in - mi - grar, al ca - mi - nar di - as,

130 *f* *mp*
al ca - mi - nar di - as, al ca - mi - nar

136 *p* *p* *pp* *p*
di - as, di - as, di - as.