

# Judith Shatin

## LA Frontera

For SATB Choir & 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 held in an American maximum security detention center. Sadly, we cannot know the identity of the author due to government restrictions. I was drawn to set this poem because it captures the stark 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* was 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 are donated to the Detained Children's Program of the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition ([www.caircoalition.org](http://www.caircoalition.org)) as are profits from this composition. For more information visit [www.judithshatin.com](http://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 Press.

Duration: 4:30

# La Frontera

SATB Choir, piano

Unidentified detained immigrant youth

Judith Shatin

**Strong** (♩ = 68)

SA

TB

Piano

*f*

*f*

*f*

La fron -

5

te - ra, la fron - te - ra, la fron - te - ra, fron - te - ra, fron - te - ra un lu -

9

gar a que to - do el mun - do va - mos

13

*mf*

al te - ner un sue - ño te - ner, un  
te - ner, un  
al te - ner un sue - ño te - ner, al te - ner un

*mf*

17

*f*

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

*f*

21

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

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

*cresc.*

21

*cresc.*

25

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

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

*ff* *f*

*ff* *f*

29

a la fron-te-ra por ser de o-tro pa-ís

33

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

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 33 through 36. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a rest, then enters with the lyrics 'Y me pre - gun - to — por qué si to - dos so - mos'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) above the vocal line and below the piano accompaniment.

37

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

*f*

*f*

*f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 37 through 40. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'se - res — hu - ma - nos — so - mos los mis - mos'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) above the vocal line and below the piano accompaniment.

41

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

Detailed description: This system contains measures 41 through 44. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'no te - ne - mos pa - pe - les, pa - pe - les,'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines. There are no dynamic markings in this system.

45 *mp* *mf* te - ne - mos, te  
 por - que e - sta - mos *mf* te - ne - mos, te -  
*mp* *mf*  
 en el mis - mo mun - do *mf* te -

45 *mp* *mf*

48 ne - mos sen - ti - mien - tos i - gua - les  
 ne - mos sen - ti - mien - tos i - gua - les

51 *f* i - gua - les, i - gua - les  
 i - gua - les, i - gua - les



54

*mf*

el co - lor de piel es di - fe -

*mf*

58

ren - te Pe - ro es - so no quie - re de - cir

*f*

*mf*

62

que no so - mos i - gua - les

que so - mos i - gua - les

65

65

66 *mf*

es - que en es - te pa - ís en mi pa - ís hay

*mf*

71

mu - cha gen - te ra - cis - ta, ra - cis - ta, ra -

*f*

75 *ff* **77** Poco più mosso *mp*

cis - ta, ra - cis - ta el ser blan - co

**77** Poco più mosso

*ff* *p* *mp*

83

*f* assertive

no — que - re de - cir que no so - mos i - gua - les —

*mp*

*f* assertive

el ser ne - gro — no — que - re de - cir que no so - mos i - gua - les —

*f* assertive

90

Te - ne - mos la mis - ma men - te, — la mis - ma me - ta —

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

95 **Resigned** (♩ = 68)

**Resigned** (♩ = 68)

108

103 *mp*

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

*mp*

108

110

por el de - sier - to

*mp*

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

117

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

al in - mi - gar nos a - ga - rra nos a - ga - rra,

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

al in - mi - gar nos a - ga - rra nos a - ga - rra

125

al in - mi - grar, al ca - mi - nar di - as, \_\_\_

*mf* *mf*

130

al ca - mi - nar di - as, al ca - mi - nar

*mp* *mp*

136

di - as, di - as, di - as.

*p* *p* *pp* *n*

*p* *pp* *p*

*ob*