

## TEXTS/TRANSLATIONS

### “The Heart of a Woman”

The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn as a lone bird, soft winging so restlessly on. Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam, in the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.

The heart of a woman falls back with the night and enters some alien cage in its plight, and tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars while it breaks on the sheltering bars.

### “Escuchame”

Where are you, Cristobal? Have I come here to lose you again? Has the voracious jungle taken you away from me once more? Why do I feel you so close? Hear me! My voice flies to you like a bird, and hovers over the love of the world. My song was born for you, between your hands that dream and wake up worship-butterflies. I know you are listening to me because my song flies. If you didn't listen to me my voice wouldn't fly.

My song was born from you, for you can cross the tumultuous river of days, and the serene river of the nights; and there on the other shore stop to listen to her own rumor of water in love. I feel you beating on the wings of every butterfly, in every green glow, the wind, the water, in the background of the jungle. In life or death I feel you throb. In the flight of my song, in the soft air, I feel you. I feel you here in my song.

### “The Alchemist”

My life has been an evolving mosaic; bits of colored glass mark each moment of my journey. But then you entered my world, and the tiny specks of dull glass transformed to brilliant sparkling sapphires, rubies, amethysts, and emeralds. As the diamond of you claimed its place inside my heart.

You, the alchemist, who with a single kiss ignited in each tinted fragment a splendid explosion of joy, fulfilling their destiny to bring me home to you.

### “My Man's Gone Now”

My man's gone now; ain't no use a-listenin' for his tired footsteps climbin' up the stairs. Old Man Sorrow's come to keep me company, whisperin' beside me when I say my prayers. Ain't that I mind workin'; work and me is travellers journeyin' together to the promised land. But Old Man Sorrow's marchin' all the way with me, tellin' me I'm old now since I lose my man. Old Man Sorrow's sittin' by the fireplace, lyin' all night long by me in the bed, tellin' me the same thing mornin', noon, and evenin', that I'm all alone now since my man is dead.

## BABY BOOK

### "Objects"

To mourn a woman, carry her picture, wear her lapel pin. There's nothing to wear, carry after a miscarriage. In Japan, mother's mourn lost "water children". Gardens of small statues in red knitted hats, bibs. Hands in my pockets, I stand at the edge of the Tidal Basin, wilted cherry blossoms above and below.

### "Children's Pool Game"

Even with closed eyes, we can find each other again.

I'll shout Marco!

You'll shout Polo!

OK?

Marco!

.....

### "Trouble Done Come My Way"

Trouble done come my way. My mother she taught me to sing an' pray when trouble done come my way. The rocks was hard and my bones they ached. Oh Lord, what must I do? Got on my knees, began to pray, callin' You, my Jesus, You. The chains fell off an' the sun came out. The shinin' light broke thro'. The devil, he can't make me stop lovin' You, my Jesus, You.

### "Quickening" (Week 22)

Quickening of the morning light. Quickening of my heartbeat on the stairs. And your quickening. Flutters of joints, or whole body. All while I reach for something,

while I stretch out on my left side. Quickening! Quickening! Oh! The smallest of miracles these human movements.

“Looking Out” (eleven weeks old)

Strips of early day across the floor. Blinds half open like your eyes as you extend – swaddled arms break free.

We face each other as I carry you for your walk. We stop under the hilltop tree, sky peeks through the green layers. In a few years we’ll sit at those picnic tables, I tell you, and eat mozzarella sandwiches.

You close your eyes, lean towards me. Our heart face the other.

“Searching” (eight weeks old)

For years, I looked for you around corners, between small hours of morning. And now, here you are in my arms, limbs heavy and sodden with sleep.

You weigh less awake, head bobbing, as you push your legs against my lap, hands against my chest, to look behind me out the window – towards the sunshine.

“Songs My Mother Taught Me”

Songs my mother taught me in the days long vanished; seldom from her eyelids were the teardrops banished. Now I teach my children each melodious measure. Oft the tears are flowing; oft they flow from my memory’s treasure.

“Children Will Listen” (concert version)

How do you say to a child in the night, “Nothing’s all black, but then nothing’s all white.” How do you say, “It will all be all right” when you know that it mightn’t be true? What do you do?

Careful the things you say; children will listen. Careful the things you do; children will see and learn. Children may not obey, but children will listen. Children will look to you for which way to turn, to learn what to be. Careful before you say “Listen to me!”; children will listen.

Careful the wish you make; wishes are children. Careful the path they take; wishes come true, not free. Careful the spell you cast, not just on children.

Sometimes the spell may last past what you can see, and turn against you. Careful the tale you tell; that is the spell. Children will listen.

How can you say to a child who's in flight, "Don't slip away and I won't hold so tight?". What can you say that, no matter how slight, won't be misunderstood? What do you leave to your child when you're dead? Only whatever you put in its head. Things that your father and mother had said which were left to them, too. Careful what you say.

Careful you do it, too. Guide them, but step away; tamper with what is true and children will turn, just to be free. Children will listen.

"My Mother is a Singer"

My mother is a singer. Sing, Mama. Sing of how you gave up everything, Mama. Burned your whole career for a fling, Mama. Sing! Sing of all your courage. What, Mama? Who said life is fair, you know it's not, Mama. Please, you know you've given us a lot, Mama. Sing!

Sing of all your sorrow. Dream, Mama. Borrow what was pretty when you slept, Mama. Make believe a promise can be kept, Mama. Sing! I love you more and more now. Yes, Mama. Even though this life is such a mess, Mama. Just to hear your voice is a caress, Mama. Sing!

Sing of how it's not what you expected. Sing, at least one thing can be perfected. No, one isn't born to be rejected. Sing! Sometimes when you're singing, it's funny, something in your face becomes so real, Mama. What're all those things you seem to feel, Mama? Sing!

My mother is a singer. Sing, Mama. Sing of what you gave up for the ring, Mama. Sing of what you take and what you bring, Mama. Sing!

"Cantares"

Ay! The closer I feel to you, the more I run from you; for your image haunts the very shadow of my thoughts. Say it to me again. Enthralled yesterday, I heard you without hearing, and looked at you without seeing.

"She Used to Be Mine"

It's not simple to say. Most days I don't recognize me with these shoes and this apron. That place and its patrons have taken more than I gave them.

It's not easy to know. I'm not anything like I used to be, although it's true; I was never attention's sweet center. I still remember that girl: She's imperfect, but she tries. She is good, but she lies. She is hard on herself. She is broken and won't ask for help. She is messy, but she's kind. She is lonely, most of the time. She is all of this, mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie. She is gone, but she used to be mine.

And it's not what I asked for. Sometimes life just slips in through a back door and carves out a person, and makes you believe it's all true. And now I've got you. And you're not what I asked for. If I'm honest I know I would give it all back for a chance to start over, and rewrite an ending or two for the girl that I knew who'd be reckless just enough; who'd get hurt, but who learns how to toughen up when she's bruised, and gets used by a man who can't love. And then she'll get stuck and be scared of the life that's inside her, growing stronger each day 'til it finally reminds her to fight just a little to bring back the fire in her eyes that's been gone, but used to be mine. She is gone, but she used to be mine.

#### "Rebuke To Words"

I have bad news to share, oh pretty words on the card. It will be bitter to bare; facing our flaws is so hard. I'm sorry to say that you fail to convey "my profound emotion of deepest devotion, gratitude, and love". You know the rules of grammar, and utilize them to impress. But words are only clamor when trying our best to express. "A love that's deeper than the . . ." What word can capture that? "A gratitude for her that's . . ." All language falls so flat. "Admiration that is more . . ." You see my problem, I'm sure. Yes, even the word "adore" will ensure a verb so trite, it can't bring delight. Words can't describe, you see, not even in elegant prose, what my lover means to me. I hope (oh, how I hope) she knows.

#### "Gracias a la vida" (Thanks to life)

Thanks to life which has given me so much. It gave me two stars which, when I open them perfectly, distinguish black from white. And in the tall sky its starry backdrop, and within the multitudes the one that I love. Thanks to life which has given me so much. It gave me sound and the alphabet. With them the words I

think and declare: "Mother, Friend, Brother", and light shining down on the road of the soul of the one I'm loving. Thanks to life which has given me so much.

"I Am Alive"

I close my eyes and feel the rush. I tremble, trying to control. Shall I explode? I close my eyes and hear the call; I weep with desperate longing to embrace it all. I am alive.

I close my eyes and feel the pain. My heart can shatter into shards. I feel the pain. I close my eyes and hear the song; of life's euphoric melodies, I hear them all. I am alive.

No more mindless wandering; no more those dullish hues. No more crowded loneliness; no more the numbing ruse.

I close my eyes and lose myself. Into the oneness of it all I lose myself. I close my eyes and see the truth. Illusions disappear like dreams; I see the truth. I am alive.

## **PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES**

DAVID RIVERA BOZON is an international tenor with more than seventeen years of performing experience. The core of his career is to share with love the joy of singing.

Recent highlights include Boston Singer's Resource Composers Lab, Opera Talk Italy Virtual Serenade, Opera On Tap OperaGrams, NEMPAC Balcony Series at Tresca, Opera Evening with Veronica Robles Cultural Center, the title role in Mozart's IDOMENEO with the New England Conservatory Opera, Dallas from SERVICE PROVIDER by Christopher Weiss with Helios Opera, and Alfredo from LA TRAVIATA with MassOpera.

David proudly holds degrees from the New England Conservatory and the National University of Colombia Conservatory.

KEITH ERIC BRINKLEY, baritone, is a multi-faceted performer with style credits in opera, musical theater, gospel, and religious music. His formative musical training began in church and from singing male soprano with the world-renowned Indianapolis Children's Choir. Locally he has performed with companies such as Boston Opera Collaborative, Paul Madore Chorale, Chorus Pro Musica, and Boston Classical Orchestra. Keith holds a Bachelor of Music from Heidelberg University, a Masters of Music from Boston University, and a GPD from the Longy School of Music at Bard College.

MELYNDA DAVIS, soprano, is a Boston-based singer who specializes in opera, oratorio, and art song. Ms. Davis has performed with companies such as Opera Boston, Opera Providence, Boston Lyric Opera, Empire Opera, NY Lyric Opera, MassOpera, and the Boston Pops. She has also been a finalist in Connecticut Opera Guild's Competition, placed First in the Rhode Island NATS Competition, and placed Second in Boston's Leontyne Price Vocal Arts Competition.

Melynda serves as a Board member for Opera On Tap Boston and is a member on their roster. In 2022 she will make her debut with Greater Worcester Opera in the title role of SUOR ANGELICA.

LUISAMARIA HERNANDEZ is a Dominican American soprano based in Boston. Recently she presented the recital “Una Noche in Maschera” in Boston’s historic North End. Her recent company debut with Boston Opera Collaborative was the role of The Daughter in THE COURSE WE SET, by Puerto Rican composer Johanny Navarro, and as a soloist in THE LIVES THEY LIVED. As an active recitalist and concert curator Luisa Maria has made Latin American, Caribbean, and Spanish art music the center of her storytelling and performance practice. She will sing the title role in Carla Lucero’s East Coast premiere of JUANA with dell’Arte Opera Ensemble in New York City. Upcoming engagements include recitals in Boston, Florida, and Dominican Republic.

KATHRYN McKELLAR, soprano, has been commended for her “elegant singing” and “polish” by the Boston Globe and has distinguished herself as a “visually and vocally stunning performer” by the Classical Music Intelligencer. She performs regularly with Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Stage Company of Boston, and is co-founder/director of Opera On Tap Boston. Kathryn recently made her Opera Theater Cape Cod debut as Micaela in TRAGEDIE DE CARMEN and received critical praise for her creation of the role Lina Cavalieri in DIVAS by Laura Neil with Opera Hub. Recently she has sung with Boston Modern Orchestra Project and Boston Youth Orchestra in several opera performances.

Kathryn lends her voice equally to operatic, recital, and concert repertoire, and has performed across the US and in Europe. She received her Masters of Music from The Boston Conservatory where she was a member of the Opera Studio. Originally from Texas, she currently resides in Boston with her husband and two baby boys.

TIMOTHY STEELE is an active vocal coach, collaborative pianist, and conductor, and has taught for twenty-nine years on the opera faculty at New England Conservatory. He has conducted for outreach tours with the Boston Lyric Opera and is a former music director for Opera Providence. He has served as assistant conductor/pianist for over 190 productions with twenty-five opera companies, including Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Wolf Trap Opera, Central City Opera, and Opera Maine. He assisted with the Pulitzer Prize winning opera

MADAME WHITE SNAKE for productions in Boston and Taiwan and the OUROBOROS TRILOGY in 2016, and for three years collaborated with WaterFire-Providence on a unique and popular series of opera evenings. For the last eight years he has been music director at First Parish of Milton-UU and producer of Milton Community Concerts. In Boston he has performed with Emmanuel Music, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, among others.