

ANDREA CLEARFIELD



Transformed by Fire

Choral Suite

for baritone and soprano soloists, SATB chorus and piano

SCORE

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Cover Art: "FireSpirit Wolf" by Mia Bosna
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Program note:

Transformed by Fire was inspired by the story of a man and a wolf. The man was a young Aldo Leopold; the wolf, a proud mother. Leopold's essay "Thinking Like a Mountain" in his book "A Sand County Almanac," recounts their story. They met in 1909 in the Arizona Blue Range mountains as the wolf was crossing a river with her pups. Leopold took aim and fired his shotgun; she was to him and his hunter friends a nuisance of the times. One of the pups was wounded. The mother, fatally so. Before she died, that mother wolf looked at Leopold, and he saw in her eyes what he called "a fierce green fire" – which he never forgot. We know he never forgot because it was three decades after their encounter that Aldo Leopold wrote about the meeting, and how it changed him. In those three decades, Leopold married and had five children. Through his conservation work and teaching he became known as the father of Wildlife Management and Wildlife Ecology. The mother wolf was a wild Mexican gray wolf, or lobo. This subspecies of the gray wolf lived in the wilderness of Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico until the late 1970s when the last of the five remaining Mexican wolves were captured in the hopes they might be bred and one day returned to the wild. For three decades no lobos roamed free. They have since been reintroduced into the same Blue Range where the mother wolf lived, and now populate a small region of their former territory. Their numbers are few, and their future, like that of all wolves (and all predators), is on uncertain ground.

In 2017, writer Ariana Kramer and composer Andrea Clearfield were awarded an Aldo & Estella Leopold Writers Residency through the Leopold Writing Program. The residency was held at Aldo Leopold's Mi Casita 1912 cabin in Tres Piedras, NM where Andrea lived and worked during the summer of 2017. As their collaborative project, Ariana wrote a poetic text which Andrea set to music. The five movement song cycle, *Transformed by Fire*, explored Aldo Leopold's changing perception of wolves and the necessary role they play in our ecosystems. Ariana and Andrea have expanded the work into a choral suite of 9 movements, scored for baritone and soprano solos, chorus and piano.

The *Transformed by Fire Choral Suite* was commissioned by two Taos, New Mexico residents for a premiere performance with the Taos Community Chorus. *The Transformed by Fire* project was initiated by an Aldo & Estella Leopold Writers Residency in Trè Piedres, NM granted through the Leopold Writing Program, and further supported by an artist residency through Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island, WA.

Performance note: accidentals refer to the octave in which they appear. Some courtesy accidentals are included for ease. Alto divisi staves are indicated A1 and A2. "A" indicates all Altos and "B" indicates all Baritones and Basses.

For more information about Andrea Clearfield, visit www.andreaclearfield.com

For more information about Ariana Kramer, visit www.arianakramer.com

TRANSFORMED BY FIRE CHORAL SUITE

Poetry by Ariana Kramer

Prologue: Frolic – *soprano solo*

A mother plays
at the river bank,
crosses water.

Her yearlings
frolic.

She raises her head.

1. Encounter - *baritone solo*

I see her eyes.
They burn
with a green fire.

My shot a thought ringing out.
My bullet the force
of Man against Wolf.

I am young.
I stand on rimrock,
look to dark mountain skies.

My thought:
fewer wolves, more deer;
no wolves, hunter's paradise.

I still see her eyes - still.
They burn me
with a fierce green fire.

2. Spark (*baritone, soprano and chorus*)

A spark
smolders, ignites,
passes through wingtips
of migrating cranes.

I kneel
to small green stems of white stars
I catch their tiny flash in my hands.

3. Bowstring (*baritone and chorus*)

I have drawn my bowstring
across my heart. I have found my love.

We have taught our children
to swim, to fish, to track, to hunt,
to learn the land.

We have taught them to love
the smell of campfire supper-smoke.
Around the dancing flames
we sing our songs. I whistle along.

We plant trees
to restore the lonely land.

I have drawn my bowstring
across my heart. I have found my love.

We have taught our children
to feel, to see, to hear, to know,
to love the land.

We have taught them to listen
when the wild geese call.

We have taught them to love
the wild places in their hearts.

Together we have learned to love.

4. Family – *soprano and SA*

Wolf is mother, father, sister, brother.
Wolf is not alone, not a—lone, not a—

lone. Wolf is a playful family
rambling across the land.

Over the land we roam, we roam.
We chase rabbits, run with deer.
We follow elk and buffalo.

Strong - we hunt
Wise - as one body.
With twists and turns,
we dart, we bite.

Oh, how we feast
shoulder to shoulder -
my love and I
my love and I.

Our pups growl, and suckle.
Our pups sleep.

We have taught our children
to swim, to fish, to track, to hunt,
to learn the land.

Our den smells of ancestors
a thousand years old.

Wolf fits the land
like a thumbprint fits the thumb

knowing
knowing

each hill, each valley.

Wolf mothers
grow
Wolf families
grow
Wolf traditions
grow

knowing
knowing

each hill, each valley.

What Wolf knows, what I know, reaches back –
far into memory, deep into the land (we roam).

Wolf is mother, father, sister, brother.
Wolf is not alone, not alone

5. Extermination – soprano, baritone and chorus

Now, Wolf's howl
Poison. Trap. Snare. Bullet.
Now, Wolf's howl
Poison. Trap. Snare. Bullet.

Now, Wolf's howl
no longer
straightens my spine
in the early morn.

6. Consequence - baritone

I walk in a wolfless wilderness.

I see deer – dead,
thin from starvation.

Too many to feed.
Trees stripped bare.

7. Questions – baritone, soprano, chorus and solos within Chorus

What have we done to the wilderness?
What have we done to the wilderness in us?

How can they love deer and hate Wolf?
We are two parts of one whole.

What have we done to the wilderness?
What have we done to the wilderness in us?
How can we love deer and hate Wolf?

We are two parts of one whole.

In the early morning hours, what will my children hear?

8. Understanding - Finale, tutti

I am older.
I know, now.
A green flameburns in each of us.

Wolf enlivens the land
like a fragrant fire.
Wolf runs deer
like water over mountains.

Saplings grow strong.
Bird song fills their branches.

I know, now. I know, now
a green fire, the green fire.

Everything on, over and in
the land belongs together.

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Full Score

TRANSFORMED BY FIRE

CHORAL SUITE

Poetry by Ariana Kramer

Andrea Clearfield, 2017
(arr. 2020)

PROLOGUE: FROLIC (soprano)

Moderato ♩ = 66

p

Soprano Solo

A

Piano

Solo S

moth-er plays _____ at the riv-er bank, cross-ing wa-ter, _____

Pno.

loco

Solo S

mp

her year- lings fro-lic, _____ she rais-es her head _____

Pno.

Loc.

Loc.