

The Price of Ambition



Music by Melissa Dunphy
Poetry by Shelley Zhang

for SSAA choir and piano
4 min

Commissioned for Every BODY

2023

The Price of Ambition

for SSAA choir and piano

Music by Melissa Dunphy

Poetry by Shelley Zhang

I wish
My body would forgive
My mind.
For one pushed the other
Too far.
And now my body rebels.
It bleeds.
It bleeds too much.
I beg it to stop.
But it won't listen,
Because I didn't listen.

And so I hold myself—
Tight.
I hold myself,
And wait.
I forgive myself
And hope
That slowly,
My body
Will forgive
My mind.
And we can be healed,
And rejoice—
Together.
And rest.

—Shelley Zhang

Cover art by Abigail Markov.

Commissioned for *Every BODY* by the following choruses:
Atlanta Women's Chorus, Dr. Melissa Arasi, artistic director
Appalachian Equality Chorus (Knoxville, TN) Dr. Alan Stevens, artistic director
Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC, Dr. Thea Kano, artistic director
One Voice Chorus (Charlotte, NC), Cory Davis, artistic director
Turtle Creek Chorale (Dallas, TX), Sean Baugh, artistic director
Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, Dr. Gerald Gurss, artistic director



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Poetry by Shelley Zhang

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Moderato espressivo ♩=c.56

Musical score for Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is Moderato espressivo with a metronome marking of ♩=c.56. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: "I wish my bod - y would for-". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Musical score for Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is Moderato espressivo with a metronome marking of ♩=c.56. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: "give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. I". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes dynamic markings of *mp* and *p*.

7

S1. wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. For_ one pushed the oth - er too

S2. *mp* I wish_ my bod - y would for - give. One pushed the oth - er too

A1. *mp* I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. For_ one pushed the oth - er too

A2. wish my bod - y would for - give, for - give. One pushed the oth - er too

10

S1. *mf* far. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. I wish my

S2. *mf* far. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for

A1. *mf* far. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for

A2. *mf* far. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for

14

S1. bod - y would for - give my mind, for - give. For -

S2. give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind. For -

A1. give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for - give.

A2. give my mind. I wish my bod - y would for - give my mind.

17

S1. one pushed the oth - er too far. *mf* And now my bod - y re - bels, *f* my

S2. one pushed the oth - er too far. *mf* And now my My bod - y re - bels, *f* my

A1. one pushed the oth - er too far. *mf* And now my bod - y re - bels, *f* my

A2. One pushed the oth - er too far. *mf* And now my bod - y re - bels, *f* my

20

S1. *p* bod-y re - bels. *p* It bleeds. *p* It bleeds too much. *p* I

S2. *p* bod-y re - bels. *p* It bleeds. *p* It bleeds too much. *p* I

A1. *p* bod-y re - bels. *p* It bleeds. *p* It bleeds too much. *p* I

A2. *p* bod-y re - bels. *p* It bleeds. *p* It bleeds too much. *p* I

24

S1. *mp* beg, *mp* beg it to stop. *mf* But it won't lis - ten, *mf* be - cause

S2. *mp* beg, *mp* beg it to stop. *mf* But it won't lis - ten, *mf* be - cause

A1. *mp* beg, *mp* beg it to stop. *mf* But it won't lis - ten, *mf* be-cause

A2. *mp* beg, *mp* beg it to stop. *mf* But it won't lis - ten, *mf* be-cause

27 *f* *p* *mf warmly* *rit.* *a tempo*

S1. I did - n't lis - ten. And so I hold my-self tight. I

S2. I did - n't lis - ten. And so I hold my-self tight. I

A1. I did - n't lis - ten. And so I hold my-self

A2. I did - n't lis - ten. And so I hold, I

31 *mf warmly* *rit.* *a tempo*

S1. hold my-self and wait. I hold my - self tight. I hold my-self, and wait.

S2. hold my-self and wait. I hold my - self tight. I hold my-self, and wait.

A1. tight and wait. I hold my - self tight, hold, and wait. I for -

A2. hold my-self and wait. I hold my-self tight, hold and wait. I for -

34

S1. I hope that slow - ly, slow - ly, slow - ly my bod - y will for -

S2. I hope that slow - ly, slow - ly, slow - ly my bod - y will for -

A1. give my-self and hope that slow - ly, slow - ly, slow - ly my bod - y will for -

A2. give my-self and hope that slow - ly, slow - ly, slow - ly my bod - y will for -

p

37 poco rit. a tempo

S1. give my mind. And we can be healed and re - joice. And

S2. give my mind. And we can be healed and re -

A1. give my mind. And we can be healed and re -

A2. give my mind. And

mp

poco rit. a tempo

40

S1. *mf*
we can be healed and re - joice, can re - joice,

S2. *mf*
joice, we can be healed and re - joice, be healed and re -

A1. *mf*
joice, we can be healed and re - joice,

A2. *mf*
we can be healed, and re - joice. And we can be healed and re -

43

S1. *f*
can be healed and re - joice, can re - joice. And

S2. *f*
joice, and we can re - joice. And

A1. *f*
can be healed and re - joice, and we can re - joice.

A2. *f*
joice, and we can re - joice. And

46 rit.

S1. we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce to -

S2. we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce to -

A1. *f* We can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce to -

A2. we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce, and we can re-joyce to -

f

rit.

49 Poco meno mosso

S1. geth - er.

S2. geth - er. *p* And rest, and rest, and rest, and rest,

A1. geth - er. *p* And rest, and rest, and rest, and rest, and

A2. geth - er. *p* And rest, and rest, and rest, and rest,

Poco meno mosso

p

52

mp

S1. And rest, and rest, and rest, and rest,

mp

S2. and rest, and rest, and rest, and rest,

mp

A1. rest, and rest, and rest, and rest, and

mp

A2. and rest, and rest, and rest, and rest,

54

rit.

S1. and rest, and rest.

S2. and rest, and rest.

A1. rest, and rest, and rest.

A2. and rest, and rest.

rit.