

# Judith Shatin

## LA Frontera

For Tenor & 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](http://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](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 Books, First Edition

# La Frontera

Unidentified Detained Immigrant Youth

Judith Shatin

Strong ♩ = 68

*f*

Tenor

Piano

La fron -

5

te - ra, la fron - te - ra, la fron - te - ra, fron - te - ra, fron -

8

te - ra un lu - gar a que to - do el mun - do va - mos —

12 *mf*

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, no, no

25 *ff* *f*

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

29

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

33

*mf*

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

*mf*

37

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

*f*

41

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

45 *mp*

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

53 *mf*

el co - lor de piel

57 *f*

es di - fe - ren - te Pe - ro es - so no

61 *mf*

quie - re de - cir que so - mos i - gua - les

65 *mf*

es - que en es - te pa - is en mi pa -

69 *mf* *f*

is 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, el ser

*p* *mp*

**Assertive**

84 *f*

ne - gro no quie - re de - cir que so - mos i - gua - les

*f*

90 *mf*

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

*mf*

**Resigned** = 68

95 *mf*

*mf*



103 *mp* *p*

el ca - mi - nar di - as,

108 *mp*

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

115 *mf* *cresc.*

sier - to al in - mi - gar nos al

122 *f*

ga - rra, nos a - ga - rra, al

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

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

137 *p* *pp* *n*  
di - as, di - - - as.

PERUSAL SCORE, NOT FOR PERFORMANCE