

beati qui esuriunt

for satb *divisi* voices and tenor solo unaccompanied
by hunter t. johnson

text by hunter t. johnson, inspired by Luke 1:53 and
Matthew 5:6. Latin assistance and review by Iris Coats

Background Notes

beati qui esuriunt is a reflection on hunger. hunger manifests itself in our lives every single day. hunger can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. one can hunger for grain the same way they hunger for love. hunger is felt by people in positions of power and privilege and by those who are marginalized, oppressed, and starved.

this work engages with socio-cultural power structures through the use of latin and the refraction of compositional styles popular in early church choral music. the relationship between spiritual fulfillment and literal sustenance will present itself differently to every person, much in the same way that hunger itself presents differently to every person.

on a more personal note, i began this work to reflect on my own experiences in eating disorder recovery. i had not felt hunger (a real, physical side-effect of some eating disorders) in years. as i wrote this work, my hunger began to return, and i have truly begun to learn how to fulfill myself.

if you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, resources can be found through the National Eating Disorders Association: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support/contact-helpline>

Text & Translation

beati qui esuriunt panem
esurivi panem
perivi fame
ego implevi me

blessed are those who hunger for bread
i was hungry for bread
i was starving
i filled myself

blessed are those who hunger
this bread is life

Performance Notes

beati qui esuriunt should be performed with great flexibility in all regards. in particular, the solo line should be treated with much freedom, and should feel free to hold notes over into the choral lines whenever a pause is not explicitly indicated. throughout the work, a strong sense of rhythmic freedom and thoughtful shifts in the tempo are both welcome and appreciated.

performers should engage with stylistic performance practices of early church choral music and stylistic renaissance polyphony, leaning heavily on these techniques and engaging with sections of the work that fall outside of their scope with flexibility.

expression texts constitute an engagement between composer and performer; take from them what you need and consider them my letters to you.

blessed are those who hunger for bread.

Composer Biography

hunter t. johnson (he/him) is a dynamic young composer with a rapidly growing catalog of choral works, art songs, and chamber pieces. He takes inspiration from issues of social justice and conflict, working to give voice to sentiments and ideas that he feels are ignored in everyday life. In composing vocal works, he seeks poetry and texts that range from those that explore nature and beauty to those that examine social issues such as self-harm, suicide, and other traditionally avoided topics. He has completed commissions for art songs and choral works, including several works for Grammy Award-winning soprano Christine Brewer. Other commissioning ensembles include Emmanuel Episcopal Church and the Lindenwood University Concert Choir directed by Pamela Grooms.

An active choral musician, hunter has performed with and conducted groups in concerts across the United States. He is a co-founder and the conductor of the choral ensemble catenary. hunter's composition Stars was awarded the 2017 Missouri Choral Director's Association Opus Award, which recognizes an outstanding choral composition by a Missouri-based composer.

hunter is pursuing a Master's of Music Degree in Composition at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music where he has studied with Dr. Han Lash and Dr. Don Freund and holds a B.M. in Composition from Webster University, where he studied with Dr. David Werfelmann and Kim Portnoy.

for more information, works, and to contact, visit huntertjohnson.com

14

with deep, biting pain
p *mf* *mp* *mf*

s. per - i - vi fa - - - - - me.

a. *mf* *p* *mp*
 - i - vi fa - me. per - - -

t. *mp* *mf* desperate *mp* *mf*
 - me. pa - - - - - nem.

b. *with deep, biting pain*
p *mf* *mp* *mf*
 per - - i - vi fa - - - - - me.

21

like naming what you always needed but could never explain before
f *mf* non dim.

s. pa - - - - - nem.

a. *mf* *f* agonized, crazed *mf* non dim.
 - i - vi fa - - - - -

t. *like naming what you always needed but could never explain before*
f *mf* non dim.
 pa - - - - -

b. *like naming what you always needed but could never explain before*
f *mf* non dim.
 pa - - - - - nem.

rit. *the softest blue-gold light from the tv washing your tears off the living room couch* **pp**

s. *pa - - - - - nem.*

a. *me. pa - - - - - nem.*

t. *nem. pa - - - - - nem.*

b. *pa - - - - - nem.*

flexible ♩ = 80 *fixated, stuck, saying the same thing over and over again and desperately wishing for it to be true* **pp** **p** **mp**

soprano *be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be -*

alto *fixated, stuck, saying the same thing over and over again and desperately wishing for it to be true* **pp** **p** **mp**

be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be -

tenor *solo pp tender, hopeful p honest, gentle mp stronger, harder*

be - a - ti. be - a - ti. be - a - ti.

gli altri

fixated, stuck, saying the same thing over and over again and desperately wishing for it to be true **pp** **p** **mp**

be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be -

fixated, stuck, saying the same thing over and over again and desperately wishing for it to be true **pp** **p** **mp**

bass *be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur-i-unt. be -*

40

s. *mf* *rit.* *f* *mf*

a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt.

a. *mf* *f* *mf*

a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt.

t. *mf* *desperate* *f* *mf* *with conviction*

be - a - ti.

b. *mf* *f* *mf*

a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt. be - a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt.

a tempo

46

s. *mp* *rit.* *p* *mp*

be - a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt pa - - nem.

a. *mp* *p* *mp*

be - a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt pa - - nem.

t. *mp* *p* *mp*

a - ti. be - a - ti, be - a - ti, be - a - ti.

b. *mp* *p* *mp*

be - a - ti qui e - sur - i - unt pa - - nem.

like the cold, twisted-blue tone of a small brassy bell in a church you once dreamt about on a thursday night

p *pp*

bright, cheery $\text{♩} = 72$
p the light **mf**

s. e - - go im - ple - - - vi, im - ple - vi

a. **p** the light **mf**
 e - - go im - ple - - -

t. **p** the light
 e - - -

b. - - -

58 **mf** a plea for forgiveness and a promise of grace **mf**

s. me. e - - go im -

a. **mp** **mf**
 - vi, im - ple - vi me.

t. **mf** a plea for forgiveness and a promise of grace **mf**
 -go im - ple - - vi, e - -

b. **p**-the light **mf**
 e - go im - ple - - -

63 *f* *mf* rit. *mp*

s. ple - - - - - vi.
a plea for forgiveness and a promise of grace

a. *f* *mf* *p*
e - - - go im -

t. *f* *mf* *mp*
go im - ple - - - vi me.

b. *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*
- vi me.

a little dimmer $\text{♩} = 66$

the real, unbridled joy of giving yourself something that you desperately needed these past few weeks

68 *mf*

s. im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi - me, im - ple - vi -

a. *mf* the real, unbridled joy of giving yourself something that you desperately needed these past few weeks *mf*
ple - - - vi, im - ple - vi me, im -

t. *mf* the real, unbridled joy of giving yourself something that you desperately needed these past few weeks
e - - - go im - ple - vi, e - - go,

b. *mf* the real, unbridled joy of giving yourself something that you desperately needed these past few weeks
e - go im - - -

72 *with clarity, coming back*
mp

s. me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi

a. ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me,

t. **mf** im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me,

b. **mf** ple - vi, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me,

76 *rit.*

s. me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im -

with clarity, coming back
mp

a. im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me,

with clarity, coming back
mp

t. im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple -

with clarity, coming back
mp

b. im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi

80

like walking in place in the empty, quiet food court of an abandoned mall
p *p*

s. ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me.

like walking in place in the empty, quiet food court of an abandoned mall
p *p*

a. im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me.

like walking in place in the empty, quiet food court of an abandoned mall
p *p*

t. vi me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me.

like walking in place in the empty, quiet food court of an abandoned mall
p *p*

b. me, im - ple - vi me, im - ple - vi me.

prayerful ♩ = 42

like telling a child something that you desperately wish to believe yourself
p *mp* *p* *p* *mp*

soprano bless-ed are those who hun-ger. bless-ed are those who hun-ger.

like telling a child something that you desperately wish to believe yourself
p *mp* *p* *p* *mp*

alto bless-ed are those who hun-ger. bless-ed are those who hun-ger.

solo *p* with love and real care kind gentle

tenor be - a - ti. gli altri be - a - ti. be - a - ti.

like telling a child something that you desperately wish to believe yourself
p *mp* *p* *p* *mp*

tenor bless-ed are those who hun-ger. bless-ed are those who hun-ger.

like telling a child something that you desperately wish to believe yourself
p *mp* *p* *p* *mp*

bass bless-ed are those who hun-ger. bless-ed are those who hun-ger.

reverent ♩ = 60

89 *the way you whisper to yourself under the covers* *p* *mp* *pp* *with reverence, true faith* 11

s. *bless-ed are those who hun-ger. this bread is life.*

a. *bless-ed are those who hun-ger. this bread is life.*

t. *be - a - ti. hungry*

b. *bless-ed are those who hun-ger. this bread is life.*

soft

94 *granting yourself the grace and permission to sleep, to rest, to breathe, to wait; to eat* *pp*

s. *this bread is life. this bread is life. this bread is life.*

a. *this bread is life. tired simple honest*

t. *be - a - ti. be - a - ti. be - a - ti.*

b. *this bread is life. this bread is life. this bread is life.*

pp

tenor *solo* *p* *the way your reflection seems changed somehow when you treat it as kindly as you would a soft, gentle, hungry friend*

be - a - ti... be - a - ti... be - a - ti qui e - - - sur-i- unt...