



Carol Barnett

Longing for Home

I. Jerusalem

*II. Mother

III. Voyager Dust

IV. A Letter to Marianne Moore

V. Dancing Toward the Promised Land

A song cycle for mezzo, baritone, and piano


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MOTHER

I wish that I could talk with her again.
That's what I thought of when I thought of home,
Always supposing I had a home to come to.
If she were here, we'd warm the Chinese pot
To brew a jasmine-scented elixir,
And I would tell her how my life has been—
All the parts that don't make sense to me,
And she would let me talk until the parts
Fitted together.

That will never be.
She couldn't wait for me to come to her—
Ten years away. I couldn't wish for her
To wait, all blind and helpless as she was.
So now I have come home to emptiness:
No silly welcome-rhyme, no happy tears,
No eager questioning. No way to get
An answer to my questions. Silence fills
The rooms that once were vibrant with her song,
And all the things I wanted to talk out
With her are locked forever in my heart.

I wander through the rooms where she is not.
Alone I sit on the hassock by her chair,
And there, at last, I seem to hear her voice:
"You're a big girl now. You can work things out."

Bea Exner Liu (1907-1997)

duration: c. 3:45

Composer's note

Bea Exner Liu was born and raised in Northfield, Minnesota, and graduated from Carleton College. She moved to China in 1935 to teach English, since teaching positions were scarce in the United States during the Depression. While there, she married a Chinese classmate from Carleton, and witnessed the Japanese invasion of China during the years 1935 to 1945. The eventuality of a Communist takeover finally brought Liu and her family back to Minnesota. She later published an award-winning children's book as well as her memoir, *Remembering China, 1935–1945*.

Mother is the second of five songs comprising *Longing for Home*, a cycle written to celebrate Source Song Festival's fifth season. The texts all reference homecoming in various ways – the enduring wish to return to a place remembered with love and longing, as well as the uncertainty, the impossibility of doing so. The music of *Mother* mirrors the unsettled sadness of a daughter's long-delayed visit home, now bereft of its center of gravity. Memories of beloved rituals, of a sympathetic ear, are brought to life once more by the nearness of familiar objects, and finally, the almost tangible sound of her mother's voice: "You're a big girl now. You can work it out."

LONGING FOR HOME

II. Mother

Bea Exner Liu (1907-1997)

Carol Barnett

mezzo-soprano

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84; \text{ espressivo}$

mf

I wish _____ that I could talk with her a -

mezzo

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84; \text{ espressivo}$

mf *mp*

gain. _____ That's what I thought of _____ when I thought of

mezzo

11 *mp* 2

home, — Al - ways sup - pos - ing I had a home to come to. —

11 *p*

mezzo

16 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84$ 3 $(\text{♩} = \text{♩})$ 2 To

If she were here, we'd warm the Chi - nese pot

16 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 84$ *mp* *p* 2

mezzo

21 2

brew — a jas - mine - scent - ed e - lix - ir, — And

21

mezzo

26

I would tell her _____ how my life has been, _____ All the parts that don't _____ make

26

mezzo

31

sense to me, _____ And she would let me talk, _____

31

mezzo

36

mf

ah, _____ un - til the parts _____ Fit - ted to - geth - er, _____ to -

36

mp

dim. poco a poco

dim. poco a poco

mezzo 42 *p* ($\text{♩} = \text{♩.}$)

geth - er, _____ to - geth - er. _____

42 ($\text{♩} = \text{♩.}$) *p* *mp*

mezzo 48 ($\text{♩.} = \text{♩}$) *mp*

That will nev - er be. _____

48 ($\text{♩.} = \text{♩}$) *p*

mezzo 54 *p* *mp*

She could-n't wait for me to come to her, _____ Ten years a - way. _____ I could-n't

54

mezzo 59 *mf*
wish for her to wait, all blind and help - less as she was. So

mezzo 59 *cresc.*
now I have come home to emp - ti-ness:

mezzo 68 *mp* *mf*
No sil-ly wel-come rhyme, no hap-py tears, no ea-ger

mezzo

73

ques - tion - ing. — No way to get an an - swer to my ques - tions. —

73

mezzo

78

p Si - lence fills the rooms that once were vi - brant with her song, — *mf* And

78

mezzo

83

all — the things I want - ed to talk out with her are locked for -

83

mf

SP

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a mezzo-soprano and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 73, features the mezzo-soprano singing the lyrics 'ques - tion - ing. — No way to get an an - swer to my ques - tions. —'. The piano accompaniment includes triplets and a crescendo. The second system, starting at measure 78, shows the mezzo-soprano singing 'Si - lence fills the rooms that once were vi - brant with her song, — And'. The piano part has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo. The third system, starting at measure 83, shows the mezzo-soprano singing 'all — the things I want - ed to talk out with her are locked for -'. The piano accompaniment includes triplets and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. At the bottom of the third system, there is a section marked 'SP' with a long horizontal line.

87 mezzo *p*

ev - er in my heart.

87 *mp dim.*

93 mezzo *p*

I wan - der through the rooms where she is

93 *p*

99 mezzo *mp*

not. A - lone I sit on the has - sock by her chair,

99 *mp cresc. poco a poco*

II. Mother

mezzo

104 *mf* *f* *dim.*

And there, at last, ah I seem to

109 *mp*

hear her voice: "You're a big girl now. You can work things

109 *p*

114 *rit.*

out."

114 *mp* *dim.* *p*

3 *3*

The musical score is for a piece titled 'II. Mother'. It features a mezzo-soprano part and a piano accompaniment. The mezzo-soprano part begins at measure 104 with the lyrics 'And there, at last, ah I seem to'. The piano accompaniment starts at measure 104 with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf, f, dim., mp, p), articulations (rit.), and a triplet of eighth notes in the piano part at measure 114. The tempo is marked 'rit.' (ritardando) at measure 114. The score is written in 3/4 time and ends with a double bar line at measure 114.