

THE TURNING

I. Some things you don't know about me II. Then and now III. If I could say

TTBB a cappella

Maura Bosch

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Text:

I. Some things you don't know about me

I have been homeless.
I have been to China.
I am a quiet person.
I like to work outdoors.
I have made mistakes.
Some things you don't know about me.
I believe in myself.
I believe in change, but it takes time.

Some things you don't know about me: I lost my cool trying to protect my daughter. The cops showed up, and I could not find nobody to help me.

I have been homeless. I once was married. I am a quiet person. I believe in fairness.

I believe we're equal.

II. Then and now

Then my life was upside-down.
I was always confused.
I was drunk again with a new baby.
All I wanted was to make my family happy.

Then no two days were the same.
There was too much drama.
Someone got angry and pushed me,
and I pushed back.
I really could have used a friend.

Now, I am a proud father, I'm proud of myself. Now I know I won't make the same mistakes again.

Now, I am a proud father, I am Mister Mom!
Still, I miss my childhood, the summers, my freedom, still I feel alone.
One year later I'm still trying, trying to work this out on my own.

III. If I could say

It was her twenty-ninth birthday in three days.
I was outside playing, she was inside, in her room.
She had a heart attack.
The last thing I said before I went out, it was lucky I guess, I know I said, I love you, I love you very much.
If I could say to her, if I could say
I love you, I love you very much.
And then, I would say: look I'm grown.
Look, you have two grandsons now.
And then I would say: look there is the tree
You planted so long ago, it shades the
whole house now.

- Poetry by participants in an anger management class

Note:

My assignment was to listen to a group of men in an anger management class and to write songs that incorporated their stories. The men were required to attend the class because they had committed an offense involving family violence. These songs are about their thoughts and feelings as they reached this turning point in their lives. It was pure graciousness mixed with some vague hope of being heard that the men spoke to me at all.

I asked very specific questions to which the men gave verbal and written responses. The first song is a collage of short responses from nine men to several different questions. I asked everyone to tell something about himself that the others would not already know. At one point I asked them to complete the sentence "I believe...," which gave me a long list to choose from, including "I believe in change but it takes time." When I asked the men about how they came to be assigned to the group, I got stories with similar themes, "I lost my cool trying to protect my daughter," and "the cops showed up and I couldn't find nobody to help me."

For the second song, I asked them to write about what they were doing a year ago and also about the present. The first part of this song is a compilation of two men's responses and the second part is the response of one man. For the final song, I asked each participant to think about someone he had lost and to write about what happened, what was said, and the last time he saw that person. Then I asked what he might say to the person if he saw him or her again. This song is mostly the response of one participant writing about his mother. The final sentence about the tree is from a second participant, writing about his grandfather.

Please listen to these songs with the understanding that these men are not asking for sympathy or even forgiveness. They are only asking to be heard."

- Maura Bosch, 2007

Maura Bosch is an unashamed melodist. Since 1990, she has composed over fifty songs, nearly a dozen choral works and four operas. Then in 2015, she switched her focus from vocal music to instrumental chamber music. Recent works include two string quartets, a piano trio, a suite for solo cello-by-the-lake, and an evening-length work for solo piano inspired by the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop. She can be reached at maurabosch.com.

Cantus is widely known for its trademark warmth and blend, innovative programming and engaging performances of music ranging from the Renaissance to the 21st century. The Washington Post has hailed the Cantus sound as having both "exalting finesse" and "expressive power" and refers to the "spontaneous grace" of its music making. The Philadelphia Inquirer called the group nothing short of "exquisite."

Cantus performs more than 60 concerts each year both in national and international touring, and in its home of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. As one of the nation's few full-time vocal ensembles, Cantus has grown in prominence with its distinctive approach to creating music. Working without a conductor, the members of Cantus rehearse and perform as chamber musicians, each contributing to the entirety of the artistic process.

Committed to the expansion of the vocal music repertoire, Cantus actively commissions new music and seeks to unearth rarely performed repertoire for men's voices. The ensemble is heard frequently on both classical public radio nationwide and on SiriusXM Satellite Radio. Cantus has released 18 recordings on the group's self-titled label.

Integral to the Cantus mission is its commitment to preserve and deepen music education in the schools. Cantus works with more than 5,000 students each year in master class and workshop settings across the country.

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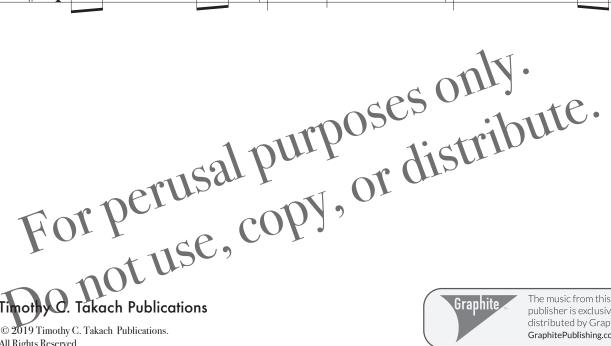




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