

Patchwork Project Inaugural Tour
“A Tapestry of American Song”
July and August, 2016

Texts

From *Hermit Songs* (1953)
Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
Texts: anonymous, 8th-13th c.

I. At St. Patrick's Purgatory

13th c., translated by Sean O'Faolain

Pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg!
O King of the churches and the bells
Bewailing your sores and your wounds,
But not a tear can I squeeze from my eyes!
Not moisten an eye after so much sin!
Pity me, O King!
What shall I do with a heart
That seeks only its own ease?
O only begotten Son
By whom all men were made,
Who shunned not the death
By three wounds,
Pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg
And I with a heart not softer than a stone!

II. Church Bell at Night

12th c., translated by Howard Mumford Jones

Sweet little bell, struck on a windy night,
I would liefer keep tryst with thee
Than be with a light and foolish woman.

V. The Crucifixion

From *The Speckled Book*, 12th c.
Translated by Howard Mumford Jones

At the cry of the first bird
They began to crucify Thee, O Swan!
Never shall lament cease because of that.
It was like the parting of day from night.
Ah, sore was the suffering borne
By the body of Mary's Son,
But sorer still to Him was the grief
Which for His sake
Came upon His Mother.

VI. Sea-Snatch

8th-9th c., translated by Sean O'Faolain

It has broken us, it has crushed us,
It has drowned us,
O king of the starbright Kingdom of Heaven;
The wind has consumed us, swallowed us,
As timber is devoured by crimson fire
From Heaven.
It has broken us, it has crushed us,
It has drowned us,
O king of the starbright Kingdom of Heaven!

VII. Promiscuity

9th c., translator unknown

I do not know with whom Edan will sleep,
But I do know that fair Edan will not sleep alone.

From *Craigslitlieder* (2006)

Gabriel Kahane (b. 1982)

Texts: anonymous Craigslist postings

I. Neurotic and Lonely

Neurotic and lonely, average height, brown eyes slightly disproportionate.
Brown curly hair Jewfro, twenty years old.
Slightly hunched, occasionally employed Anthropologist chain-smoking Jew, currently living with parents, off from school to deal with emotional problems.
Neurotic and lonely medicated seeks:
Gorgeous, artsy, genius woman interested in philosophical discourse.
Making out, television, Woody Allen movies, Thelonus Monk, the Nazis, Chinese food, Thomas Pynchon, DIGESTIVE DISORDERS!
Must enjoy video games must own a video game system.
My parents refuse to buy one for me!
NO UGG BOOTS, NO LONG ISLAND!

II. You Looked Sexy

You looked sexy even though you were having a seizure.
It was in the hair care section of the Vancouver Walgreens.
I was the guy in the blue shirt holding your legs while that old man put his wallet in your mouth
let's get together when you're feeling a little less woozy...

III. Today I Met...

Today I met the messenger of God.
He was selling M&M's on the F train.
God was selling M&M's on the F train.

IV. If anyone knows...

Two years ago my sister and I went from New York to Catskills.
Somewhere up there at one of those stands - as it was fall and there were pumpkins out - we pulled over and bought some stuff.
One of the things we bought was a kind of sandwich relish. It was super spicy, there is nothing like it in the grocery store, I know because I always look, yet I don't know what it was because some dipshit threw out my bottle of it.
You know those chopped up red peppers people put on sandwiches
It was kind of like that but so much more.
If anyone knows what I'm talking about please tell me cause it's driving me crazy
Etc.

From *Doctor Atomic* (2005)
John Adams (b. 1947)
Libretto: Peter Sellars

Am I in your light?

Am I in your light?
No, go on reading.
(The hackneyed light of evening quarreling with the bulbs; the book's bent rectangle solid on your knees; only my fingers in your hair; only my eyes splitting the skull to tickle your brain with love in a slow caress, blurring the mind, kissing your mouth awake, opening the body's mouth, stopping the words.)
This light is thick with birds, and evening warns us beautifully of death. Slowly I bend over you,
Slowly your breath runs rhythms through my blood as if I said I love you, and you should raise your head. I love you, as if I said I love you...
Listening, speaking into the covert night:
Did someone say something?
Love, am I in your light?
See how love alters the living face
Go spin the immortal coin through time
Watch the thing flip through space
Tick tick, tick tick, tick tick...

Spinning Song

Words and music by Hub Miller (1934-1982)

Sheep make a lamb, lamb make a skin,
Skin make a fur, fur make a wool,
Wool make a yarn, yarn make a cloth,
Cloth make a present for you!

See the world spin, spin, spin,
See the world spin.

Field had a tree, tree had a nest,
Nest had an egg, egg had a bird,
Bird had to fly, didn't know why,
Bird had to sing a song too!

As the bird flew, he sang,
Hear the bird sing, sing, sing,
See the world spin.

When the time comes, you are alone,
Dark is the night, cold is the wind;
Empty the heart, empty the soul,
Empty the hands, my friend.

So light up the fire, put on the tea,
Let the dark something inside you
Come out and be free to fly
Into the night and die,
Let the fire burn, burn, burn
Let the wheel turn, turn, turn,
Let the bird sing, sing, sing,
Let the world spin.

Bees make a buzz, fleas make a bite,
Love turns a great many wrongs into right,
Poets weave words into their songs,
Weavers string poets along.

Let the cruel words now fly
Through the sharp needle's eye,
Weavers and poets cry,
But while their fingers fly,
Like the bright bird, they sing,
Let the world spin, spin, spin,
Spin away.

Beautiful Music (Miller)

Sang the dark voice of nevermore:

“let there be”

And the stars gave forth light.

Through the long turning evermore

Came the song and the earth gave forth life.

What, by chance, this sweet harmony

Ring down through the farthest-off reaches of time?

Came the rock that is piled into mountains

That stand ever guard in the cold of the night,

Came the snow and the rain and the lake and the stream as it
flows to the swells of the sea,

Came the bush and the berry, the vine and the fruit and the
flower, the spring and the fall,

Came the bird and the bee, the doe and the dove, and the fox,
and the dog, and the flea...

Oh my lord, it's beautiful music to me.

What, by chance, this sweet harmony

Ring down through the reaches of time?

Came the laughter of stars as they whirl in the night, guiding
sailors that sail on the sea,

Came the weeping of rain as it falls on the fields of the farmers
that plough on the plains,

Came the song of the sparrow, the whisper of wind, and the
thundering silence of snow,

Came the mist and the moon and the call of the loon on the
lake as he longs for his love...

Oh my lord, it's beautiful music to me.

Half and Half (Miller)

Half the world is silver, half is blue.

Half the world is my world, half for you.

Half a tree grows upward, half grows down.

Half my heart stops beating when you frown!

When you frown, oh my dear, I don't know what to do!

Half the world is silver, half the world is not,

Half the world is blue.

Half the world is daytime, half is night.

Half a dog is tail wag, half is bite.

Half a man is loving, half is fight.

Half a smile from you makes all things right.

When you smile from the heart and I know it is true!

Half the world is silver, half is blue.

Half a foot's six inches, half that's three,

One, two, three!

Half the world is dry land, half is sea-

A, B, C!

Half my fun costs money, half is free, so,

Half a kiss for you know- half for me!

Oh come on, it won't hurt, it's the least you can do!

Half the world is silver, half the world is blue.

Nancy Hanks

Katherine K. Davis (1892-1980)

Text from "*A Book of Americans*" by Rosemary Benet

If Nancy Hanks

Came back as a ghost,

Seeking news

Of what she loved most,

She'd ask first

"Where's my son?

What's happened to Abe?

What's he done?"

"Poor little Abe,

Left all alone.

Except for Tom,

Who's a rolling stone;

He was only nine,

The year I died.

I remember still

How hard he cried."

"Scraping along

In a little shack,

With hardly a shirt

To cover his back,

And a prairie wind

To blow him down,

Or pinching times

If he went to town."

"You wouldn't know

About my son?

Did he grow tall?

Did he have fun?

Did he learn to read?

Did he get to town?

Do you know his name?

Did he get on?"

Flagmaker, 1775

From *Songs for a New World* (1995)

Jason Robert Brown (b. 1970)

With the guns flaring
And drums pounding
There's no hope of getting rest
With the lights glaring
And calls sounding
And the clenching in your chest
When the man's in battle
And the baby's rattle
Only makes you more depressed

The wise woman does what she knows:

If it's fighting she fights,
If it's sewing she sews
When the tension inside
Overflows and goes too far—

One more star, one more stripe
To escape your lonely bed
One more star, one more stripe
Join the blue, the white and red
One more star, one more stripe
As you pray your child's not dead

With the roof leaking
And walls wetter
And the night as black as pitch
With the wind shrieking
And his last letter
Says he's fighting in a ditch
Then the candle flickers
And the river bickers
What else can you do but stitch?

One more star, one more stripe
Til you feel the rising sun
One more star, one more stripe
Til this foolishness is done
One more star, one more stripe
We'll be waiting when we've won

Grab a needle, grab a thimble
If it's all that keeps you sane
Think of freedom as a symbol
Think of justice as a game
Think of life with independence
Think of muskets and brigades
Think of taking the oppressors

Think of banners and parades
When the gate creaks
And the paint cracks
And the cat cries
And the night falls
Raise a flag
Raise a flag
Raise a flag til you're free!

One more star, one more stripe
Til this bloodshed's finally through
One more star, one more stripe
Til they come back home to you
One more star, one more stripe
When there's nothing you can do

If they take all the things
That define what you were and are
One more star...

Your Absence (2016)

Pamela Stein Lynde (b. 1982)

Text by W.S. Merwin, "Separation"

Your absence has gone through me
Like thread through a needle.
Everything I do is stitched with its color.

From *Little Women* (1998)

Mark Adamo (b. 1962)

Libretto by the composer, after Louisa May Alcott

Kennst du das Land? (Do you know the land?)

Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühn?
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold Orangen glühn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still, und hoch der Lorbeer steht?
Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin!

O mein Geliebter, möcht ich mit dir,
O mein Geliebter ziehn.

Do you know the land where the lemon trees bloom,
and oranges like gold amid the leafy bloom?
A gentle wind from bluest heaven blows.
The myrtle green, and high the laurel grows.
Do you know that land?
'Tis there,
Ah! 'tis there!
Oh, my beloved
Ah 'tis there I dream we would go.

Loveliest of Trees

John Duke (1899-1984)

Text by A. E. Housman

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

Shelling Peas (Duke)

Text: Jessica Jackson

Hear the shells crack!
See the people fall!
Hear them thud and thump and bump and crash!
See the people fall!
Hear them: what people?
The people in the peapods.
Small people, tall people,
Soft people, hard people,
Old people, young people.
But all of them green people.
We crush their homes,
We drown them with water,
We stifle them with seasonings
And burn them with fire,
And eat them with teeth,
And absorb their heat with blood.
What people?
The poor little green people.

i carry your heart (Duke)

Text by e.e. cummings

i carry your heart with me (i carry it in
my heart) i am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)

i fear

no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

From *Cabaret Songs* (1963-1996)

William Bolcom (b. 1938)

Text: Arnold Weinstein

Song of Black Max

(as told by the de Kooning Boys)

He was always dressed in black,
long black jacket, broad black hat,
sometimes a cape,
and as thin as rubber tape:
Black Max.

He would raise that big black hat
to the big-shots of the town
who raised their hats right back,
never knew they were bowing to Black Max.

I'm talking about night in Rotterdam
when the right night people of all the town
would find what they could
in the night neighborhood of Black Max.

There were women in the windows with bodies for sale
dressed in curls like little girls in little dollhouse jails.
When the women walked the street with the beds upon their
backs, who was lifting up his brim to them? Black Max!

And there were looks for sale,

the art of the smile,
only certain people walked that mystery mile: artists,
charlatans, vaudevillians,
men of mathematics, acrobatics and civilians.
There was knitting needle music from a lady organ-grinder
with all her sons behind her: Marco, Vito, Benno (Was he
strong! Though he walked like a woman) and Carlo, who was
five. He must be still alive! Ah poor Marco had the syph, and if
you didn't take the terrible cure those days you went crazy and
died and he did. And at the coffin before they closed the lid,
who raised his lid? Black Max.

I was climbing on the train one day going far away to the good
old U.S.A. when I heard some music underneath the tracks.
Standing there beneath the bridge, long black jacket, broad
black hat, playing the harmonica, one hand free to lift that hat
to me: Black Max.

Toothbrush Time

It's toothbrush time, ten a.m. again and toothbrush time. Last
night at half-past nine it seemed O.K. But in the light of day
not so fine at toothbrush time.

Now he's crashing round my bathroom,
now he's reading my degree,
perusing all my pills, reviewing all my ills and he comes out
smelling like me.
Now he advances on my kitchen, now he raids ev'ry shelf till
from the pots and pans and puddles and debris emerges three
eggs all for himself.

Oh, how I'd be ahead if I'd stood out of bed; I wouldn't sit
here grieving, waiting for the wonderful moment of his leaving
at toothbrush time, ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.

I know it's sad to be alone,
it's so bad to be alone, still I should've known, that I'd be glad
to be alone. I should have known, I should have known!
Never should've picked up the phone and called him.

Hey – uh, listen, uhm. Uh, I've got to, uh, oh, you gotta go
too? So glad you understand. And by the way, did you say nine
tonight again? See you then. Toothbrush time!

My friend George used to say
“Oh call me Georgia, hon,
Get yourself a drink,”
and sang the best soprano in our part of town. In beads,
brocade and pins, he sang if you happened in through the door
he never locked and said, “Get yourself a drink,”
and sang out loud till tears fell in the cognac and the choc'late
milk and gin and on the beads, brocade and pins.
When strangers happened through his open door, George said,
“Stay, but you gotta keep quiet while I sing and then a minute
after. And call me Georgia.”

One fine day a stranger in a suit of navy blue took George's life
with a knife George had placed beside an apple pie he baked
and stabbed him in the middle of Un bel di vedremo as he sang
for this particular stranger who was in the United States Navy.

The funeral was at the cocktail hour. We knew George would
like it like that. Tears fell on the beads, brocade and pins in the
coffin which was white because George was a virgin.

Oh call him Georgia, hon, get yourself a drink.

“You can call me Georgia, hon, get yourself a drink!”

Waitin'

Waitin' waitin',
I've been waitin' all my life.
That light keeps on hiding from me,
but it someday just might bless my sight.
Waitin'.