



## Liner Notes and Lyrics

### About

This album started as a recording project during the height of the pandemic. I saw my singer colleagues suddenly and devastatingly out of work. Choirs weren't meeting. Concerts weren't happening. I had the good fortune to be gainfully employed through my church, but I still took a hit as my music sales, concerts, and premieres all dried up as well.

Through help from grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and Ramsey County, I had the means to record many of my solo compositions that had been previously unrecorded. Since this was pre-vaccine, all were able to be safe by recording in separate rooms at Wild Sound. We eventually did some on-site recording at churches with no one else around. Some of the piano tuning (or lack thereof) in the live recordings is evidence of this fallow time.

This collection of songs is eclectic, and is a good introduction to my range as a composer. Traditional art song (written to be sung in recital, typically with piano accompaniment and often set to a poem) is well represented, but I have also included pieces that would be comfortable in a jazz club or theater. Most of the lyricists/poets have Minnesota connections, and I have been honored to have collaborated with many of them.

### Acknowledgments

Cover Art: "Spring Rising" by Vicky Radel

Sound Engineer: Steve Kaul

Mixed and Mastered at Wild Sound Studio

Recorded at Wild Sound Studio, Minneapolis, Minnesota, except where otherwise noted.

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### Track Listing with Performers, Writers, and Lyrics

#### **1. Lake Superior Songs I. The Lake**

Georgia Jacobson, mezzo-soprano, Carson Rose Schneider, piano  
Louis Jenkins, poet

*Streets run straight downhill to the water.  
The lake brings the city to an end.  
It is there, always,  
changing the direction of my walks.  
Sometimes I go for days  
without coming near,  
catching only a glimpse through the trees:  
a sail, a white speck  
turning on the dark blue.  
Perhaps someone very old  
touched the back of my wrist, lightly,  
for only the briefest moment,  
or you said something to me.  
What was it?*

#### **2. Lake Superior Songs II. Picnic on the Shore**

Georgia Jacobson, mezzo-soprano, Carson Rose Schneider, piano  
Louis Jenkins, poet

*Shore grass growing  
among the big rocks  
enduring year after year.  
This is the way to live.  
A simple life,*

*the proper arrangement  
of a few elements.  
But here you are  
standing on slippery stone,  
trying to balance  
a full plate and a cup.  
What with the wrappers,  
the flies and the wind,  
already things  
have gotten out of hand.*

### **3. Lake Superior Songs III. Brighton Beach Waves**

Georgia Jacobson, mezzo-soprano, Carson Rose Schneider, piano  
Louis Jenkins, poet

*White-haired but determined,  
as if each had a purpose, a private destiny,  
someplace to go.  
Once the savior walked across the water  
to give each wave a hand up.  
Perhaps he is returning even now,  
but the road to the shore is long, long...  
The waves break and fall face forward,  
losing touch, losing credibility,  
losing all pretense of dignity.*

### **4. Lake Superior Songs IV. Driftwood**

Georgia Jacobson, mezzo-soprano, Carson Rose Schneider, piano  
Louis Jenkins, poet

*Driftwood on the beach,  
dry and bleached white, white  
as a bone you might say, or white as snow.  
If an artist (wearing a sweatshirt, blue jeans  
and tennis shoes without socks)  
came walking along they might,  
seeing the possibilities,  
pick up this piece of driftwood and take it home.  
Not me. I fling it back in the water.*

## 5. Truth and Beauty

Laurel Armstrong, Daniel Greco, baritone, Sonja Thompson, piano  
Alan Berks, lyrics

*BEAUTY: I am Beauty.  
You need me in your life to live.  
Born of Love and Art,  
sweet Comfort and Kindness are my children—  
the precious gifts I have to give.  
Turn from me, your world is nothing but sadness,  
Heartache, Loneliness, Madness.  
But I forgive and mix hope each day  
with sunshine and gladness.*

*TRUTH: Ha! Ha. You're not listening to that, are you?  
You'd like them to believe you.  
Take you at your word.  
No questions asked.  
The wool pulled over their eyes.  
To see what you want them to see.  
Ignore me.  
Ignore the Truth.  
Nice to me you.  
I am Truth.  
Worst of all—I can't believe they don't see this—  
after awhile, you just get so unbelievably tedious.  
No depth at all.  
You're boring.*

*BEAUTY: You're cruel.  
TRUTH: You're fickle.  
BEAUTY: You're stubborn.  
TRUTH: You like to trick people  
BEAUTY: And you berate them.  
TRUTH: You drive people mad.  
BEAUTY: You drive people mad.  
TRUTH: You ignore their need.  
BEAUTY: You steal their hope.*

*TRUTH and BEAUTY: You can't be trusted.*

*TRUTH: Fickle.*

*BEAUTY: Stubborn.*

*TRUTH: Deceptive.*

*BEAUTY: Judgmental.*

*TRUTH and BEAUTY: Don't trust him/her.*

*I know him/her well and I'm telling you,*

*He/She can't survive without me.*

*TRUTH: Because nothing survives for long without Beauty.*

*In Truth, you fill our lives with desire, joy, and duty.*

*I simply need to tell you when I think your friends betray you*

*For Vanity and Ego may ultimately slay you.*

*BEAUTY: Then Ugly Truth turns gentle suddenly,*

*and I wonder who I see.*

*Is the only lie he ever told*

*To pretend he doesn't love me?*

*TRUTH: She can't survive without me.*

*BEAUTY: He can't survive without me.*

*TRUTH and BEAUTY: He/She can't survive without me.*

## **6. Honestly**

Daniel Greco, baritone, Sonja Thompson, piano

Jeremiah Gamble, lyrics

*Sorry I'm late.*

*I'm never late.*

*I just feel awful traffic was terrible there was this horrible accident*

*actually two—honestly I'm lucky to even be here with you.*

*Honestly? I wasn't even gonna show*

*Honestly, I was actually gonna cancel*

*making up some random thing about a family emergency*

*and if you knew my family*

*it wouldn't be so hard to believe, honestly.*

*And honestly! Don't even like this stupid show*

*Honestly I could barely handle reading through that whole damned thing*

*and there doesn't really seem to be a role for me specifically*

*so why you even called me if frankly just beyond my belief, honestly,*

*honestly.*

*But honestly I hope you find a role for me  
I hope you cast it differently  
Cause honestly it's only when I'm someone else,  
I finally get to be myself  
So honestly there's nowhere that I'd rather be  
than on this stage,  
in this show,  
cause this is the only place I can go to be free  
honestly, free  
honestly, free  
Please give me this chance  
I just want a chance to be me—honestly*

## **7. Sometimes I Dream**

Laurel Armstrong, alto, Sonja Thompson, piano  
Kathleen Tucker, lyrics

*Sometimes I dream  
I'm not alone at twilight  
I hold a hand,  
we take a walk in moonlight  
Or in my dream,  
we laugh out loud in sunlight!  
How would it feel?  
To dare to touch  
To share the joy and aching  
To have it all—  
the giving and the taking  
To have no doubt  
that this is love we're making  
How will it feel?  
These tender words that dance inside me—  
Will they ever be spoken?  
The heart that doesn't get it's chance—  
That's the heart that's broken  
And so for now,  
I guess I'll keep on going  
While here inside,  
this little flame keeps glowing  
As days go by*

*I have no way of knowing  
If I will only love in dreams.  
If I will only love in dreams.*

## **8. La Promesse**

Linh Kauffman, soprano, Linda Kachelmeier, piano  
Alayna Jacqueline, lyrics

*That night held a breeze  
But the warmth of him had me melting  
my head on his chest,  
safe in his arms,  
wrapped in his scent,  
Losing myself in each pulse of his heart  
Falling into his breathing  
as he whispered promises he could not keep  
"The moon?" or was it the stars?  
"I'll fetch every one"  
Drunk off each word, I believed him  
Yet I remember wishing I could have danced  
with my father that night.  
Lightning came crackling in  
the thunder boldly rolled after  
My heart was violently trying to escape my chest  
Running to my father for refuge  
Hiding my head in his chest  
protecting myself in his arms  
He told me a tale about giants dancing in the sky  
He looked down on me with his brown . . .  
or were they hazel eyes?  
He promised "I will always be there to protect you"  
My brother never heard this story,  
I could not tell it the same way.  
There is this scorching pain devouring me from within  
I don't remember that swing or that empty seat.  
Was he waiting for . . .  
I promised him the moon and the stars  
i promised him protection  
I promised him I would never leave  
I should not have promised anything.*

*Can wounds from broken promises be healed?*

### **9. the gods knew how to make me stop**

Gary Briggie, narrator, Linh Kauffman, soprano, Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano,  
Roy Heilman, tenor, Jill Dawe, piano  
Katie Ka Vang, lyrics

*In isolation at the U of M in a unit overlooking the Mississippi River.*

*This was in the month of April. **The river was mostly frozen.** Lots of time to myself; managed to find different spots of the river that were thawed. Tried to **focus eyes like lasers** to those spots—my eyes as lasers. **The longer I stared** at those spots **the quicker the river would thaw** and flow and ultimately be the constant life-companion for me while being stuck in quarantine as a patient in this transplant unit. **Gave up** on the lasers **sometimes.** Other times, I heard the heartbeat of the room humming through the I.V. Pump.*

*Then, released. Went home . . . to my sister's house. Couldn't be around small children, sick people, or go outside or any public space or be near plants or animals. Was fortunate that my sister had a backyard—it was forest-like. Never noticed it before, maybe because I was too busy **trying to live** instead of, **just living.** In “acting” too busy, I also didn't notice how beautiful and large all of her trees were. The way they provide shade for all the things in the hot summers . . . or the way the **leaves and branches shifted back and forth** as though they were **talking to each other.** Got to notice the leaves, the trees, the birds—nature, the, everything, that was there all along—perhaps this was the only way the gods knew how to **make me stop** and **see the beauty** already around me. In the evenings . . . when the sun came down, I would secretly open the window in the bedroom and try to collect as much fresh air. Limited myself to five minutes . . . that was enough at the time—enough for me to breathe in 100 breaths and **store it in the core.***

*Snorkeled for the first time after being in quarantine for 100 days. It changed my life. It was the first time **I heard the earth's pulse.** I was **scared and excited** to dive in and take its temperature. I was full. Seeing life right in front of me.*

*Could've reached out and grabbed a fish if I wanted to. Could **see the colors** of the fish with the eyes. Nearly 5 inches away from the face. **The scales shining** in its naturalness, the mish mash of **blues, reds, oranges, and yellows** on its body that, on humans, might just clash, but on a fish was beautiful, wagging its tail back and forth, fins flowing with the life of the bay and adding to the **aqua** blue of the water. I was the intruder, yet it let me stay and admire.*



*They say try and not get cut by the coral reefs, otherwise the **scars are deep**. Tried my best not to but got nicked. Didn't care. A little bleeding happened from the scratch but the drops of blood are nothing really—nothing that a band-aid or two couldn't take care of.*

*The eyes went **up and down** and up and down the surface. Making sure I was really here. Gauging the temperature of this body. Seeing how the sun was hitting the water trying to follow the rays from the top of the water below.*

***Searching** and searching for the point where the sun rays stopped. Our guides told us to breathe through our mouths in this way:*

***in in out out in in out out.***

*Went parasailing a few days later. Got in the harness: was strapped in a parachute and they told us to hold on, opened our parachutes and shot us up in the air. Up we went, first at 200 feet, then at 300 feet, then at 400 feet, then 800, then 900, and then 1000 feet high. Drifting high next to the moving clouds.*

***Soared through the wind.** My heart adapting to the movement of the wind. I was alive. **Breathed in the air in huge chunks.** Was **afraid** it would end and **didn't want it to end** so kept taking big gulps of air like a little kid taking gulps and gulps of Pepsi.*

*Was up there dancing with the wind. Cried—felt those drops on my cheeks. Cried with the clouds. Didn't know I was crying, but the tears were quickly carried away with that wind—lifting me higher and higher and higher, almost higher than those clouds.*

*I screamed out loud, **anything and nothing**, nothing that made sense and nothing deep . . . YES. WOOH! OMIGOD. OHH SHIIIIIIIT. Hahahahaha. HERE I GOOOOOOO.*

*At times it came against my body and it felt, literally felt as though it was going to **carry me away**. If it did, then off I'd go. My mind? **Present** as fuck. Wouldn't dare be anywhere else—it knew better now.*

*Stared down at the blue of the water pouncing softly on the earth. Stared at the ridges of the crater, at Diamond Head Mountain. Stared at the brown of the sand, where it met the water. The water meeting all the different bodies on shore—jumping up and down, dunking and washing out stress. Perhaps this was the only way the gods knew how to make me stop and see the beauty already around me.*

## **10. I Give Voice to My Mother I. Inside a Gift**

Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano, Mary Jo Gothmann, piano

Athena Kildegaard, poet

*Inside a gift  
is something  
unexpected*

*just as  
inside a shell  
is the sound  
of the unseen*

*inside  
my heart  
is your voice*

*inside a snowflake  
an entire storm*

*inside an oxbow  
the river's direction*

*inside morning  
is evening.*

### **11. I Give Voice to My Mother II. A Healing**

Maria Jette, soprano, Sonja Thompson, piano

Athena Kildegaard, poet

Recorded Live from Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Keith Kopatz, sound engineer

*She pulled water  
from a bowl, flicked it  
across a shirt, a napkin, an apron—*

*and rolled each  
into damp fists.*

*I ironed handkerchiefs—  
my fathers', white cotton  
without embellishment,  
the sort that came in packages of ten  
from the five and dime.*

*Iron, fold, iron, fold  
down to perfect squares—  
geometry to heal loneliness.*

*When I no longer needed  
a box to stand on  
I ironed my father's dress shirts,  
my mother's blouses—  
collars and darts small challenges—  
skirts with box pleats,  
and the black and white  
cutwork tablecloth she labored at  
two winters, the linen heaped  
in her lap  
like a cat or a warming stone.*

*No, I did not iron that cloth  
for it came out of the linen closet  
only that once.*

## **12. I Give Voice to My Mother III. Song**

KrisAnne Weiss, mezzo-soprano, Kathy Kraulik, piano

Athena Kildegaard, poet

Recorded Live from Unity Unitarian Church, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Keith Kopatz, sound engineer

*At any given time she only owned  
one sturdy bra. After awhile white rubber threads  
escaped the cotton shell, and the shoulder straps*

*curled in delicate scallops over her shoulder.  
She bowed to settle her breasts into the cups.  
Her father, a preacher who believed*

*in the virtue of thrift, allowed one square  
of toilet tissue, three, if necessary. His pencils,  
(she told us many times—as if, though he died*

*when she was young, she still could not believe—)  
he arranged by size, each sharp as the poison of certainty.*

*From the alley on winter school-day afternoons*

*in the cold and hoary dark I watched her  
in the haloed light of the stove's hood.  
I could see her contentment*

*or her anger in how she bent to her task. She'd  
woven a nest of silence and dark around herself.  
I wanted to enter it a pilgrim but did not know how.*

### **13. I Give Voice to My Mother IV. Hands**

Maria Jette, soprano, Sonja Thompson, piano

Athena Kildegaard, poet

Recorded Live from Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Keith Kopatz, sound engineer

*Sometimes when I play—  
an invention, say, or a nocturne—  
I catch sight of her hands on the keys.*

*She pounded veal and threw  
a shuttle, played Liszt and Chopin,  
painted damask roses, darned socks,*

*read palms. Mine, finally, I'd begged enough.  
My hand in hers: perhaps she agreed  
for the heat. My right warming her left.*

*She stroked the lines and mounts,  
folded up the map of my fingers.  
When I was born she cried—her hand  
couching mine—because I looked like her.*

### **14. I Give Voice to My Mother V. Cadence**

KrisAnne Weiss, mezzo-soprano, Kathy Kraulik, piano

Athena Kildegaard, poet

Recorded Live from Unity Unitarian Church, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Keith Kopatz, sound engineer

*Pain just there, same*

*place as a month ago.  
You wouldn't obey  
the doctors, you said  
on the phone, you'd go  
home to Scarlatti  
and Brahms, to Minnie  
purring in your lap,  
you'd insist on the long  
strains between breaths,  
the pizzicati of oxygen.*

*At the end—my father told  
me on the phone—you gave  
yourself to your body,  
every breath a mark  
on time's surface, a shallow  
etching, shallower each one,  
as if a needle were rising  
from the groove,  
the cat purring in your lap,  
your hand in my father's,  
even at the end the cat  
purring in your warmth,  
and your eyes lifted upward  
to see what was taking  
its course, to see beyond  
your body, as if  
to witness your own cadence.*

### **15. I Give Voice to My Mother V. Some Mornings**

Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano, Mary Jo Gothmann, piano  
Athena Kildegaard, poet

*Some mornings  
I wake and know  
you've been with me*

*in the night  
while bats move through the air*

*collecting mosquitoes, and stars  
fall and never land.*

*Your voice—  
how can I not*

*hear it in daylight hours.  
It if knocks against*

*the membrane of day  
I am deaf to it.*

## **16. Among the Pines**

Corissa Bussian, soprano, Mary Jo Gothmann, piano  
Arthur Upson, poet

*The earnest pines are of the sober North.  
Cold twilights find them sombre as themselves,  
And the gold sun that down the red West delves  
Like broken-lanced knights doth set them forth.*

*There is among them only Autumn cheer,  
A mournful sweetness—yet they do not change,  
And their laced limbs are never bare and strange  
Under the swift reprisals of the year.*

*If constancy brings melancholy joy,  
This then is why these forests reach my heart  
With their deep changeless tones, why tears do start  
To-night when I behold their brave deploy.*

*Their constancy brings feelings linked to those  
The soul brought here, and keeps beyond life's close.*

## **17. Stars**

Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano and finger cymbals  
Marjorie Pickthall, poet  
recorded live at Landmark Center, St. Paul, MN  
Bill Lund, recording engineer

*Now in the West the slender moon lies low,  
And now Orion glimmers through the trees,  
Clearing the earth with even pace and slow,  
And now the stately moving Pleiades,  
In that soft infinite darkness overhead  
Hang jewel-wise upon a silver thread.  
And all the lonelier stars that have their place,  
Calm lamps within the distant southern sky,  
And planet dust upon the edge of space,  
Look down upon the fretful world, and I  
Look up to outer vastness unafraid  
And see the stars which sang when earth was made.*

### **18. Like Moonlight**

Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano, Mary Jo Gothmann, piano  
Lola Ridge, author of original poem, "Mother"

*Your love was like moonlight  
turning harsh things to beauty,  
so that little wry souls  
(reflecting each other obliquely  
as in cracked mirrors...)  
beheld in your luminous spirit  
their own reflection,  
transfigured as in a shining stream,  
and loved you for what they are not.*

*You are less an image in my mind  
than a luster  
I see you in gleams  
pale as star-light on a gray wall...  
evanescent as the reflection of a white swan  
shimmering in broken water.*

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